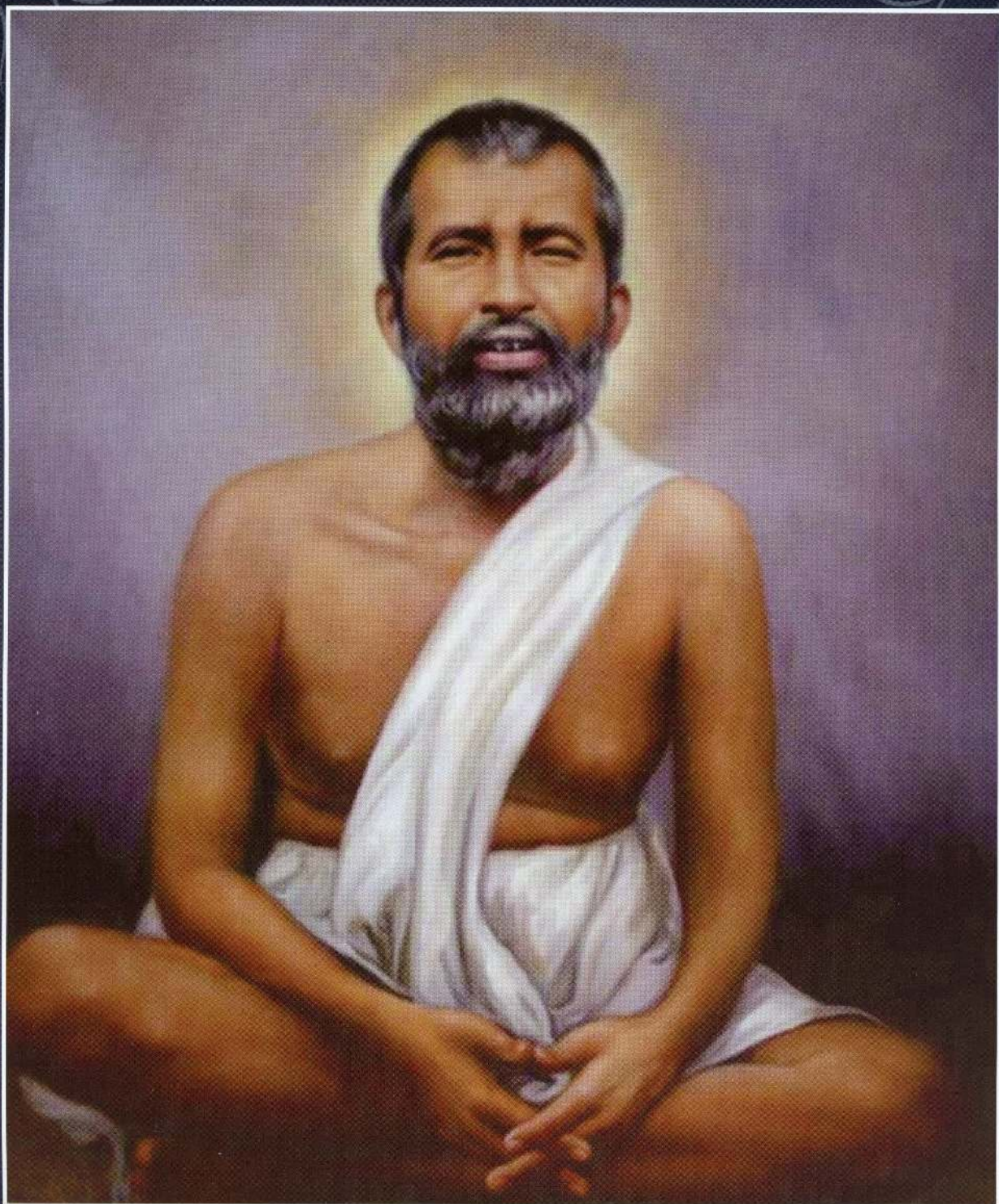


AMMA THE JOURNEY



Manonmany Sangarapillai

Birth: 30.06.1917 ❖ Death: 08.01.2016



SWAMI RAMAKRISHNA (1836 - 1886)
AMMA HAD UNFLINCHING FAITH AND DEVOTION TO HER GURU.

ஸ்ரீமதி
THE JOURNEY
▪ 1938 - 1990 ▪
சுருதி



Sangarapillai (Ayah) and Manonmani (Amma)

One came from abject poverty and one came from a wealthy family. They were united through marriage. They raised seven children. They went through many hardships in their life. Life was not easy for them. Their road was rough yet, they withstood all hardships with courage and determination - and overcame them.

BIBLIOGRAPHY



Title	:	AMMA the Journey (Biography of Mrs Manonmany Sangarapillai)
Language	:	English
Author	:	Dr. S. Manoharan
Edition	:	First Edition, February 2020
Paper	:	100 GSM Art Paper
Size	:	Daemy (28 x 22 CM)
Pages	:	280
Copies	:	200
Copyright	:	Dr Manoharan, The Author 18335 , Watson way, Yorba Linda, California, 92886, USA.
Proof Reading & Editing	:	Dr Andrew Veda
Graphic Designer	:	M Karthick
Publisher	:	R. Mathivanan, Proprietor Ulaga Thamizhar Pathippakam Chennai - 600 094. 9444111951,Email: eramathi@gmail.com

ABOUT AUTHOR



Dr.Sangarapillai Manoharan is one of the twins and youngest child of Ayah and Amma. (Sangarapillai). He was educated at one of the elite public schools in Colombo, Sri Lanka (Royal College). He is a Physician by profession and trained as an Emergentologist (Emergency room Physician).

He lives in Los Angeles. Dr. Manoharan, published all of Ayah's books after it was translated into english. Dr. Manoharan has a son and a daughter - Sathya and Prashanthi. His hobbies are Tamil literature, travel and writing. Currently, he is working on a book titled "Kumba Mela" (largest religious gathering in the world that takes place every twelve years in North India).

© All rights, including professional, amateur, motion picture, recitation, public reading, broadcasting and the rights of translation to any languages, are strictly reserved. No Part of this book may be reproduced in whole or part, or utilised in any form or by any means of electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system now known or here after invented, without the written permission of the author.



சிந்தனை

WRITTEN AND PUBLISHED BY
Dr. SANGARAPILLAI MANOHARAN
(The youngest son of Sangarapillai)

CALIFORNIA, FEBRUARY, 2020

செய்து

FOREWORD



This book is written for future generations of Sangarapillai families. Sangrapillai (Ayah) and Manonmany (Amma) were born and raised in Sri Lanka.

Ayah came from a very poor family while Amma was born into a rich family. Amma lost her mother when she was nine years old and her father remarried when she was eleven. She was born in Yangon (formerly Rangoon), Myanmar (formerly Burma), but settled down in Jaffna, Sri Lanka at the age of nine. Her maternal grandmother was very affectionate towards her and she was the one who brought her up.

She married Ayah when she was twenty one. Ayah had humble origins. He was a child prodigy who struggled through abject poverty in which his family were living at that time. By twenty three, he had graduated with three degrees from the University of London.

They raised eight children - five boys and two girls. The eldest son would die at the age of eight due to complications of appendectomy.

All his sons, except for one who became a chartered accountant, would become doctors. It was customary in those days for girls to be married when they were young and as per this Jaffna conservative tradition, both the girls were married off when they were young.

Being family with attachment to their native soil, the Sangarapillai family never thought that they would leave the shores of their motherland. Socio-politico-economic troubles and the ethnic riots forced the family to leave their beloved island.

The sons found their home in the United States while both the daughters settled in Sydney, Australia.

This book is written as a remainder of us of the humble origins of the Sangarapillai family. The patriarch of the family, Sangarapillai, made his family very prosperous, not only with the accumulation of material wealth through his hard work and perseverance but with the respect of the community earned through his honesty and philanthropy.

This book will be a testimony to the life of Ayah and Amma. Their hard work, sacrifice and dedication were alone responsible in giving their children an excellent education. It is their example that motivates us to follow in their footsteps of economic and social prosperity.

The current and future generation of Sangarapillais should always remember the humble beginnings and success story of Sangarapillai and should strive to emulate both Ayah and Amma. Their humble roots should never be forgotten and their memories should be cherished.

The future generations of Sangarapillai should visit their roots in Sri Lanka and see for themselves the humble beginnings of the Sangarapillai family. This book is dedicated to the memory of Ayah and Amma.

We want to thank R. Mathivanan , Proprietor Ulaga Thamizhar Pathipagam , a publishing company from Chennai , for undertaking the oversight and the printing of the book . He has been of immense help.

Thank you to Andrew Veda from Chennai for editing manuscript. He has done an excellent job .

My profuse thanks to Mr. Jamal, the painting artist, Chennai, for his colourful painting illustrations, adorn this book.

We also want to thank M. Karthick, Graphic designer (cursorgraphix@gmail.com , 91-9790832913) from Chennai for designing and providing the graphics for the book. He was innovative and creative with the design of the book.

Dr. Sangarapillai Manoharan
(youngest son of Sangarapillai)
Yorba Linda, California USA , 2019.

NOTES FROM AMMA'S DIARY



Prayer to Sri Ganesha
OM Ganesha Sharanam

I surrender to you Ganesha. You are full of perfect knowledge of and awareness. You are bliss and pure consciousness. Supreme wisdom. You are earth, water, fire and space. You are beyond the three Gunas. You are on the physical, mental and causal bodies. You are beyond time, Present and Future. You have three Saktis, Action, Knowledge and Will .

Chicago - 21.04.02

My dearest Children,

I am ever thankful in this life to our Lord almighty to have given me a long and healthy happy life. Blessed me with a good husband, seven children, five daughter in laws, two in-laws and 16 grandchildren. All loving family.

My guru Sri Ramakrishna has been guiding me in this life and will be with me in my next life.

The last wish is , each member of our family should do the best in their daily life and in every field of activities constantly remembering The Lord, our Creator.

A good and honest foundation has been laid for the Sangarapillai family tree.

Love Love Love Love Love Love Love . Bye

Amma

Amma's message, Chicago, Sept 94

My Parents were God loving good-hearted couple . My mother died when I was 10 years old leaving behind myself and four younger brothers. My father had a second wife and had two children. I was brought up by my grandmother. I got married when I was 21. The ten years I was with my grandmother, she taught me all the necessities for the conduct of a good wife and mother. She was out worldly not a religious person but a great Karma Yogini. Day and night, she suffered from asthma, yet she will not neglect her duties. My grandfather was a great eater and she (grandmother) cooked fresh dishes 3 times a day. I remember them daily in my prayers to grant them good life wherever they are.

Deep in heart, I thank God to have given me a beautiful family with loving and caring and grandchildren. God blessed me with good health up to old age. He will take care of me in my next incarnation. I am happy that I had done good work in life, given love to everyone and my family. My request to my children is to remember and Thank God morning and night in your prayers daily.

My Guru Sri Ramakrishna will bless all my children and families abundantly. Since I came to the States, I read 5 pages of the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna and 5 pages of Ramana Maharishi's teachings daily.

To my children: By doing this prayer and meditation in the morning and evening. Hope my children and grandchildren do this practice and try to be in good health and strong body and peaceful mind.

Pl give this book to Manoharan. Thanks for all the books and the scriptures which you brought from India for me. They were my companions. I had the greatest joy and satisfaction in reading the Vedas and understanding the truths of life. To leave the world peacefully is all I ask .

CONTENTS



1.	Koddady, Jaffna - Amma's Native Village	9
2.	Amma's Grandparents - Suppapillai & Thangamuthu	11
3.	A.M. Pillai - From Rags to Riches	13
4.	Amma's Father - Casinathar Kuti Thamby	15
5.	Amma's Mother - Kanmani	16
6.	Kanmani Marries Thamby	17
7.	Birth of Sangarapillai (Ayah)	18
8.	Birth of Manonmani (Amma)	22
9.	Rangoon Days	25
10.	Ponnambalm returns to Jaffna	26
11.	1926 - Wedding of Sellama - Ayah's Eldest Sister	28
12.	1926 - Tragic death of Ponnambalam	31
13.	Life after Ponnambalam	35
14.	1925 - 1928 Rangoon, Burma - Targedy strikes the Thamby Family	37
15.	1928 - Kanmani's Sixth Pregnancy	39
16.	1928 - Death of Kanmani	41
17.	Funeral of Kanmani	44
18.	Kanmani Kutti Thambi 1899 - 1928	47
19.	1930 - Return of C.K. Thamby	48
20.	1930- Kuttithamby Marries Again	49
21.	1930 - C.K. Thamby Marries Thillai Amma	51
22.	Koddady 1930 - 1935	52
23.	Amma's Life in Jaffna	54
24.	Thamby's Life in Jaffna	57
25.	Typhoid strikes Maviddapuram	59
26.	Search for the Bridegroom for Amma	60
27.	Wedding - July 7th, 1938	63
28.	Wedding - Part 2	65
29.	Starting a New Life - The Jounery	69
30.	The Birth of the First Child - Sitharthan 28.06.1939	71
31.	The Birth of the Chandramohan 25.09.1941	72
32.	The Death of C.K. Thamby	74
33.	Casinathar Kutti Thamby (C.K. Thamby) 1883 - 1943	78
34.	Death of Grandmother Thangamuttu - May , 1944	80
35.	The Birth of Asokan - 28.06.1944	82
36.	Ayah's Academic Achievements	85
37.	Death of Sitharthan - 28.6.1939 - 9.7.1943	87
38.	1947 - Birth of Nagendran - 16.06.1947	90
39.	1949 - Birth of Mahendran - 25.02.1949	92
40.	1950 - Rudramawatte - Our Sweet Home	94
41.	1952 - Daughter is Born - Jayanthi - 25.05.1952	99
42.	Life at Rudramawatte - 1955 - 1960	102
43.	Amma Loses her child at the 5th Month of Pregnancy	106
44.	The Birth of Twins - Manoharan and Manohari	109
45.	1958 - The First Racial Riots in Sri Lanka	111
46.	Ayah Retires over the Sinhala only Act	113

47.	Rudramawatte 1965- 1970	115
48.	Turning to Spirituality - New Birth for Amma	121
49.	Asokan, The First in the Family to Emigrate to USA	126
50.	Amma's First Trip abroad to India	128
51.	Asokan Marries Chitramali	130
52.	Rudramawatte 1970 - 1975	135
53.	Amma Meets Sathya Sai Baba	138
54.	Jayanthi Marries Suthanthira Raj	141
55.	Mahendran is Registered to Amirthavathy	146
56.	First Trip to USA and England	148
57.	Chandramohan marries Ranjana - 11.07.1977	150
58.	Rudramawatte 1975- 1980	154
59.	1980 - Nagendran Marries Gigi	157
60.	Empty Nest Syndrome	159
61.	Manaothari Marries Jeyandran - August 20th, 1982	161
62.	1983 - The Calm before Destruction	165
63.	July 1983- Racial Riots in Sri Lanka	168
64.	The Aftermath after the Riots	173
65.	The Flight to the USA	177
66.	Life after Amputation	180
67.	Life in America	182
68.	1988 - 50th Wedding Anniversary	189
69.	Ayah - The Author	192
70.	A Plan for Industrial Ceylon	195
71.	Ayah's Letters to Manoharan	196
72.	Manoharan Marries Mahaluckshmy - 09.03.1989	197
73.	Death of Ayah - February 18th , 1990	198
74.	Ponnambalam Sangrapillai "Karma Yogi" 13.12.1913 - 18.02.1990	203
75.	Amma Life After Ayah - 1990 - 2000	205
76.	Opening of Colombo Tamil Sangam Hall in Memory of Ayah - 2000	208
77.	Life after Ayah : 2000 - 2010	211
78.	Amma Celebrates 90th Birthday - 2007	215
79.	Grand Daughter's Wedding - 2008	217
80.	Amma's 94th Birthday - 2011	219
81.	Life after Ayah 2010 - 2014	221
82.	Amma's Last Couple of Years - 2014 - 2016	224
83.	Jayanthi's Untimely Death -2015	227
84.	Amma 's Death - 01.08.2016	232
85.	Amma - We Love You	235
86.	Chandra Mohan's Family	236
87.	Asokan's Family	239
88.	Nagendran's Family	243
89.	Mahendran's Family	245
90.	Jayanthi's Family	247
91.	Manoharai's Family	250
92.	Manoharan's Family	252
93.	Birthdays of Sangarapillai Family noted by Amma	256
94.	Time Line and Life Notes - From Amma's Diary	257
95.	Notes from Amma's Diary about her Spiritual Activities	259
96.	Family Tree Charts	264



Sivani Pannai Road, Koddady.
Amma's house was located on this road



Jaffna town, picture taken in 2010



The house Amma lived in Koddady - on the right side of the picture. The structure still exists and is more than a century old. Picture was taken in 2014. The house is not in use and is now dilapidated. The house was sold in the mid forties and the new owner built a new house behind the original structure.



Amma's dowry land. Ayah built a house on this in 1981.

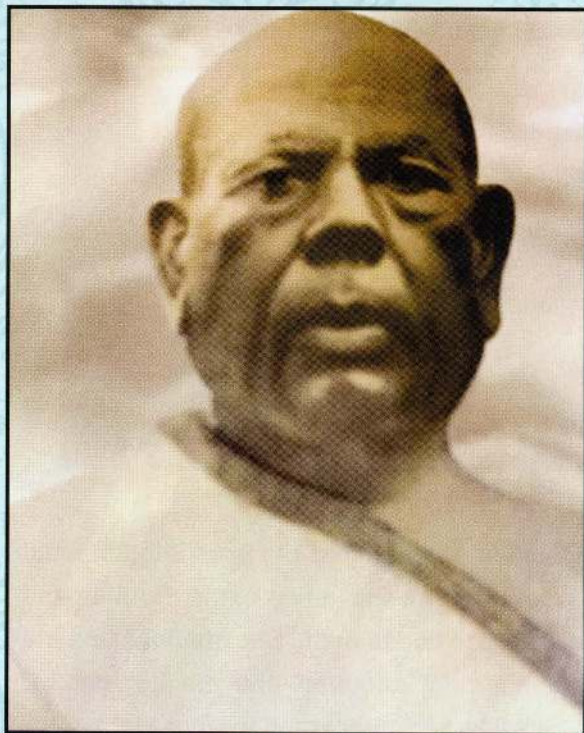
Amma's dowry also consisted of ancestral land, just a few meters from the ancestral house. Amma's uncle (Sinamama) had this land under his care for many years. In 1981, Ayah built a house as a dowry for his youngest daughter - Manohari. He had also planned to retire to this house after his retirement. But his hopes were dashed by the ethnic riots that broke out in 1983 in Sri Lanka. The house was sold in 1986 and is now used as a tourist home (picture taken in 2014).

Amma's Grandparents Suppapillai and Thangamuthu

Amma's Grandmother was Thangamauthu. It is widely believed that she never attended school. She was a tall, thin lady with a reputation for being strong. Though Thangamuthu did not have any formal education, she was a lady with much wisdom and with a propensity for hard work.

Her husband was Suppapillai. Suppapillai belonged to Koddady. Suppapillai ran a small grocery store in the town. Thangamuthu, like all other women in conservative Jaffna, was a housewife. No women in Jaffna worked in those days. They stayed at home and took care of the children and the house.

Both Thangamuthu and Suppapillai were believed to have been born around eighteen hundred fifty.

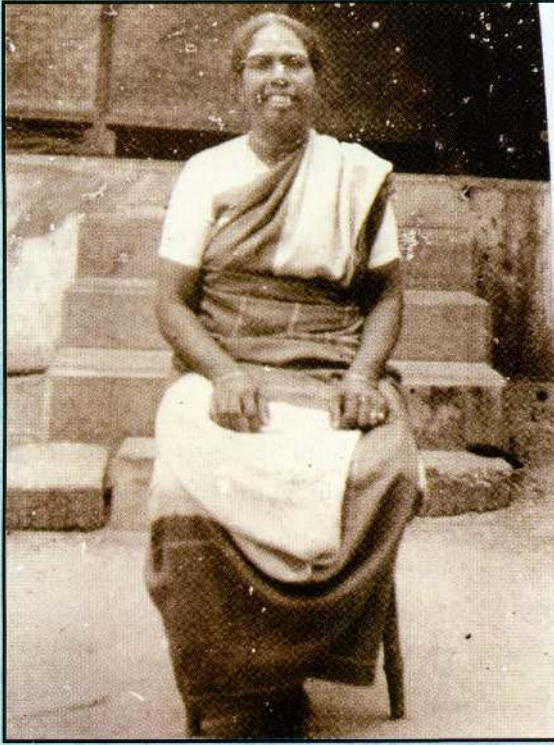


Suppapillai, Amma's maternal Grandfather, Jaffna, early 1900s

There are no pictures of Thangamuthu.

Both Suppapillai and Thangamuthu had four children.

Their first child (and daughter) was Sellachi. Next was a girl - Kanmani - born in 1899 - and Amma's mother. Their third child was a boy named Ramiah, named after the God Shiva of Rameswaram - a famous Temple town in South India. The fourth child was a boy who was named Rasiah.



Sellachi, eldest of the family, Jaffna, early 1950s



Ramiah, Jaffna, late 1970s



Kanmani, Amma's mother, Jaffna, 1915



Rasiah, Jaffna, mid 1960s, Youngest son of Thangamuthu

Amma would later recall that her grandmother used to work from the time she got up in the morning and until she retired to bed at night. She ate little. She ate only what her body required and did not eat for comfort. She was very concerned for those who were suffering and the poor. She would feed and entertain them in her house and only after that will she sit down to eat. Naturally, she was the last to eat. As she sat down to eat, if a stranger walked to the house hungry, she would gladly offer her meals to the visitor, saying "What is there in the food? You enjoy food only until it is swallowed." This philosophical approach towards food was admired by everyone who knew her, especially Amma.

Thangamuthu had a big influence in Amma's life. Amma spent ten years - most of her adolescence - with her grandmother. Amma always fondly remembered her grandmother with gratitude. Amma would say, "Whatever I learnt in my life, I learnt from this great lady whom I consider as a God."

From Rags to Riches

Amma's grandfather, Suppapillai was a tall man with a heavily built body. He had a younger brother whose name was Ambalvanar Murguseapillai (A.M.Pillai). They had a sister as well. Both the brothers were very much attached to each other. One day - in their teens - they were walking together in Jaffna town.

As they were walking and chatting, they came across Yogar Swami. Yogar Swami was considered a saint and was very much revered by the people of Jaffna.



Yogar Swami.

When the Brothers saw the Saint, their first intention was to get away from the Saint (The saint was known for his short temper and his use of colourful language).

The Saint shouted at them, asking them to come to him. When they reached him, he pointed to a ship that was anchored at the harbor and told the younger brother (A.M.Pillai) that very soon he would cross the seas and be settled in a foreign land where he would do extremely well.

Brothers did not pay much attention to the Saint's prediction. Very soon thereafter A.M.Pillai jumped on a ship and settled in Rangoon, Burma (now called Yangon, Myanmar).

A.M. Pillai lived in a mansion . His mansion has been demolished and a high rise building has come up in its place. Thompson street is close to the harbor where he had his shipping business.



A.M. Pillai family (A.M. Pillai seated to the left with a turban), Rangoon, early 1920s.



A.M. Pillai at his eldest son's wedding, Rangoon, 1921. A.M.Pillai seated on the left



Thompson Street where A.M. Pillai Lived. Picture taken in 2012.



Kali Temple, Minnigone, Yangon, Myanmar.
Temple built by A.M. Pillai. Picture taken in 2011.

A.M. Pillai soon would take over the shipping line business from an elderly English gentleman, and will go on to become one of the richest men in Rangoon at that time. He was also a philanthropist and built

two Hindu temples. These two temples are active even today and the Tamil community in Yangon are ever grateful to him.

A.M. Pillai never forgot his older brother - Suppa Pillai - after he settled down in Rangoon. Every month, he would send a money order for 100 Sri lankan rupees (a very big amount in Sri Lanka at that time) until he passed away - he passed away before his brother. Amma would later say that a few months after A.M. Pillai's death, the money order stopped coming.

A.M. Pillai was born in 1858 and passed away on March, 22nd, 1931.

Suppa Pillai was never employed since he was getting a generous monthly instalment from his brother. He was mostly unemployed though Amma would later recall that he did have some business dealings in the town.

Legal Guardians
FILL IN NAMES OF LEGAL GUARDIANS FOR ANY CHILD WHERE APPLICABLE. INCLUDING DATES, PLACES AND ANY INFORMATION YOU CONSIDER APPROPRIATE.

My Grandfather Suppapillai died in 1935
He had a brother and a sister. He was the youngest.
His elder brother A. M. Pillai (Mumgesapillai) went to Rangoon
He was the shipping agent for the British Babby Lines. He became
very rich. He had 4 daughters and two sons. During his time he was
a leading citizen of Rangoon. His eldest son Duraispillai carried on
the business of A. M. Pillai + sons.
Mumgesapillai was a great philanthropist. He never failed to help
his poor relatives in Taffra. He used to send money for his
brother (Suppapillai) and sister and about ten poor relatives
every month. While in Rangoon he used to invite the Sri Lankan
Taffra families for new year + Deepavali celebrations. Give
them a grand feast and give cash present according to each
one's need. At that time there were about 10⁵ families (Tamil) living
there. Mumgesapillai was educated at the Taffra Central College.
Dialka was a clerk for the shipping agent and later assumed the post of
the shipping agent.
While he was a student he had the good fortune to meet the famous sage
Kabait Swamy. The Swamy told 'You will go overseas and will be a very rich man'.
My Grandfather Suppapillai did not have English education
He was not lucky as his brother. But his brother sent him money every month
and also during new year, Deepavali and their parents yearlyalmiguni days.
So Grandfather was also rich in a sense. He also cared for the poor
and needy. He helped the low caste who lived near his place helping
them with cash for a wedding or a funeral. He had an urn (a small
urn in the middle of the chest) he was careful and lived till 1935. His brother
Mumgesapillai and sister died after him.

Amma's Father

CASINATHAR KUTI THAMBY



Thamby with his cousins, England, 1920s.
Thamby seated on the left.

Thamby was born in Tellippalai (8 miles north of Jaffna town) to an educated middle class family on October 21st, 1883.

After completing his education in Jaffna, he worked in Jaffna.

By early nineteen hundred, the British had completely annexed Burma (Myanmar), and made it as a province of India. This allowed thousands of Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils to migrate to Burma (Since Sri Lanka and India were under British rule as well) for better economic opportunities. Most of the Sri Lankan Tamils worked for the British government.

After completing his Law degree, Thamby migrated to Burma in 1911 (he was 29 years old) to work as a pleader - to provide an argument or appeal in the courts.

Thamby was an ambitious and hard working man. Nothing could stop his upward economic mobility. He was a good speaker and argued his case successfully in the courts.

Within a short time, he had earned enough money in Burma. His loving family was concerned about him being single. In those times, Sri Lankan Tamil men married very early - in their early twenties. Thamby was already 32. He was summoned by his parents to return to Sri Lanka for his marriage.

Thamby returned to Sri Lanka in 1915 to find his partner. His parent's search led to a beautiful young girl from Koddady, Jaffna with whom he succeeded in establishing a prosperous and large family.

Amma's Mother **Kanmani**

Amma's mother was Kanmani. She was born in Koddady, Jaffna in 1899. She had one older sister and two younger brothers. Her older sister's name was Sellachi. Her two younger brothers were called Ramiah and Rasiah. The youngest (Rasiah) was born after some time and was sadly afflicted with polio at a young age.



Kanmani, Amma's mother.
Picture taken in 1914, Jaffna. Aged fifteen.

It is believed that Kanmani did not have any formal education. In 1914, when she was fifteen years old, she was married to a lawyer, Casinathar Kuti Thamby (Thamby). The marriage was proposed by the elders in the family. Arranged marriages were the norm in those days. He was 33 years and Kanmani was 15 years but the age difference of 18 years was not considered an impediment to marriage. Kanmani was given jewellery, cash and a piece of land a few meters away from their ancestral house as part of her dowry. Unfortunately, there are no pictures of the wedding.

Kanmani Marries Thamby



Kanmani, 1915.

Thamby married Kanmani in Koddady in 1915. It is said that the wedding was organised in a grand manner. Unfortunately no wedding photos have survived to show us how grand it was. We can be sure photographs were taken at the wedding knowing Thamby's methodical organizing capabilities.

In the photograph above, Kutithamby is standing next to her. Unfortunately, that part of the picture has decayed. Kuthithamby is putting his hand around her shoulder. Picture was probably taken in Madras (Chennai) on their way to Burma immediately after the marriage.

After the marriage, the young bride and Thamby boarded the ship to Burma via Madras (Chennai), India.

By the time he married his young wife, Thamby was quite wealthy and owned a flat in the residential part of Rangoon.

The Birth of SANGARAPILLAI (Ayah)

MAVIDDAPURAM, JAFFNA

Maviddapuram lies about 10 miles north of Jaffna on the main freeway that connects Jaffna town with the harbor town of Kankesanthurai. The people in the village were mostly farmers. The soil was very fertile with rich red clay sand. The farmers mostly grew tobacco.



Maviddapuram Junction, picture taken 2010.

People in towns like Jaffna considered villages like Maviddapuram very ancient and socially backward. Everything moved very slow there.

The village was very famous for its ancient temple, Maviddapuram Kandaswamy temple.



Maviddapuram Kandaswamy temple.

It is believed - and as per the ancient sacred texts - that in the 9th century, there was a princess in South India with the facial features of a mongoose. The princess and her father, the King were very traumatized over her physical appearance. A sage informed them that she will be cured if she bathed in the springs in Keerimalai. At once, the Princess started her journey to Keerimalai (a beach town at the tip of Sri Lanka and a few miles north to Maviddapuram).



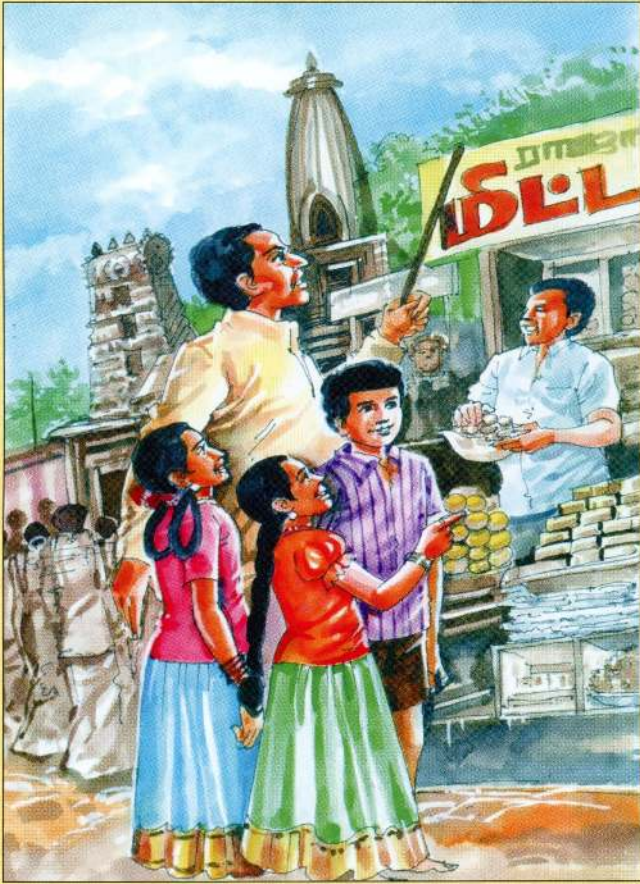
Inside Maviddapuram temple.

The princess took the advice of the sage very seriously and settled for some days in Keerimalai. She then took a dip in the hot water springs for many days. Over days her physical appearance slowly changed and she turned in to a beautiful princess.

She was very grateful and decided to build a temple dedicated to the boy-God, Lord Murugan.

Over the years this temple gained popularity and became a sacred spot. Today it is one of the most popular temples in Jaffna.

In this sleepy town, there was a wealthy farmer by the name of Sangarapillai who owned many lands. He had six children - five boys and a girl. He named his loving eldest daughter Achimuthu. Sangarapillai



Graphic description of Ponnambalam taking Ayah and his sisters and demanding sweets from the temple vendors. He carries a ratan cane in his hand .

Ponnambalam was feared in the village. Local villagers were scared of him. He always carried a small knife in his waist - guns were unheard of in those days in Jaffna.

Ayah would later recall that their father would take the children to the annual temple festival in the village. Ponnambalam would carry a rattan cane in his hand while the children carried bags.

As he walked the grounds of the temple with his small children, he would raise the rattan cane at the shop owners and demand they give sweets and other items to his children. His innocent small children would gladly accept these items. The children were impressed with their father's authority and power.

His only son, Sangarapillai (Ayah) did not approve of this. He was ashamed of his father's behaviour. Ayah was more interested in studies. His father would ridicule his son for focusing on studies. He wanted his son to follow his footsteps and become the village ruffian.

Ponnambalam was a free spending man. Soon he took his family into bankruptcy and poverty. The family had nothing left. They even found it difficult to have one full meal a day.

Ponnambalam's father in law (Sangarapillai) had enough of his son in law. He vowed that he would not put up with his son in law any more and he told his son in law to get out of his house.



Bullock cart, common form of transport, 18th and 19th centuries in Asia.

Ponnambalam got the message clearly. Next day, he jumped onto a ship sailing to Singapore - without informing his family. Like Burma, Singapore was a British colony. Like Burma, many Tamils from India and Sri Lanka had migrated there. Ponnambalam knew he could find a job there.

When he landed in Singapore, he found a job transporting people and cargo in a bullock cart. He vowed he would never step foot in his village as long as his father-in law lived. He was a man with a strong sense of pride in him.



Tobacco fields, Maviddapuram



Dilapidated ancestral house of Ayah, Maviddapuram, 2014

When Ponnabalam ran away from Sri Lanka, Ayah was only 10 years old. Ayah was a very studious student - perhaps even a child prodigy. He was devoted to his family and he was deeply attached to his mother.

He would get up early in the morning at around 4 am. He would run to the small field owned by his family. They were growing tobacco and Manioc. He had to pump water to the fields from the well manually. He would drop a bucket into the well. Then he would raise the bucket with the water. As it came out of the well, he would reach for the bucket and pour the water into the small channels on the ground. The channel took the water to the plants.

By the time the sun rose, he would return home. He would bath and have breakfast. Family was poor for hot breakfast. He would pour some hot water into the bowl of rice which was left over from the previous night. He would consume the old rice with a piece of hot green chili that was plucked from the garden.

Now it was time for school. School was about six miles away. Family could neither offer him a decent set of clothes nor transportation. He wore ragged shorts; he covered his upper body with a piece of



Ayah's ancestral house in Maviddapuram, Jaffna, 2014.

cloth. There was not much money that the family could spend on his clothes.

He would walk barefoot in the searing sun for six miles.

Ayah loved his school and studies. He excelled in his studies. Mathematics was the subject he loved the most. He had a photographic memory which helped place him in the top of the class. He excelled in English. However, his passion was for the Tamil language.

After returning from school, it was back to the fields where he toiled until sunset. Occasionally he played volleyball with his village friends.

Before dinner, he performed household chores, helping his mother and sisters. Dinner was spartan - mostly rice and fresh sambol (a dish made of fresh grated coconut mixed with hot grinded chilli, onions, salt and fresh lime).

After dinner, he did his school work for many hours. There was no electricity at that time in Jaffna or Sri Lanka. He studied under the feeble, flickering light of the oil lit lamps.



Marimani Sangerasulu

உள் ஒன்று வைத்து !
புறம் ஒன்று பேசாதே !

Speak your mind
upfront

Birth of **Manonmani (Amma)**

Thamby had a well established legal practice in Rangoon when he got married. He had purchased a large flat in the residential part of the city, very close to the Supreme Court where he practiced. When his young bride, Kanmani, arrived in Rangoon, she settled in this flat. It was in this flat that they started their family.



Entrance to Thamby's Flat, Rangoon, picture taken in 2011.
Manoharan (author of this book) seen at the entrance.



The Thamby family occupied the large flat on the top most floor.
Picture was taken in 2011. This flat is more than a century old.

Their first child was born on June 30, 1917 at 10:05 AM in Rangoon, Burma. They named her Manonmani (Amma). Amma was born in Leo ascendant. Manonmani meant a form of Shakthi - a female Hindu Goddess. It is surprising that Kanmani did not return to her parents in Jaffna for the delivery of her first child as was the common custom among the Jaffna Tamils.



Supreme court, Rangoon, Burma where Thamby practiced law.

Both the father and mother were thrilled at the arrival of their first child - a daughter. Thamby would later recall that his daughter brought tremendous luck and wealth for him and his family.

Mrs M. SANGARAPILLAI	
Date of Birth: 30/6/1917 at 10.05 AM.	
Place of Birth: Rangoon 16°45'N, 96°13'E	
Local Mean Time Rangoon - 9-59-40	
Sidereal Time at 5.30 PM	
on 26/6/1917 - 5.30 (L.H.T) - 82°30'E	11-57-59
Correction at $\frac{2}{3}$ secs per degree	
from 82-30	09
	11-57-50
add Interval between 5.30 PM	
& L.M.T Rangoon -	16-29-40
Correction for interval	
at 10 secs per hour -	2-45
Sidereal Time of Birth	28-30-15
Less	24
Sidereal Time of Birth	4-30-15

Amma's horoscope prepared by Ayah

Two years later in 1919, their second child - a boy - was born. They named him Jayaratnam. Their third child - another boy - was born in 1921. They named him Rasaratnam. In 1922, their fourth child - another son - was born. They named him

VIII 14° 38'	IX 15° 38'	JUPI 7° 25'	MERC 0° 53'
	X 16° 38'		SUN 15° 04'
	XI 16° 38'	MARS 15° 11'	XI 16° 38'
			KETHU 15° 12'
VII 15° 34'	NIRAYANA		VEN 2° 42'
URANUS 0° 42'	RASI CHART		SAT 5° 04'
	AYANAMSA		INEP 10° 59'
	22° 37'		XII 16° 38'
VI 16° 38'	Asc Leo		ASC 15° 54'
RAHU 18° 12'			
Y 16° 38'	IV 16° 38'	III 15° 38'	II 14° 38'
FOR TUNA 14° 34'		MOON 13° 49'	

Astrological chart of Amma by Ayah

Shanmugarajah. Kanmani travelled to Jaffna to give birth to all her three sons. She would take all her children when she went to Jaffna for the confinement. It took about 8 days for the ship to reach Sri Lanka from Burma.

Amma has mentioned that her mother had postpartum psychosis for a few months after the birth of Shanmugarajah. This manifested while Kanmani was on a pilgrimage in Kataragama - a famous Hindu Murgan temple in the deep south of Sri Lanka.

Thamby left for England for a year to qualify as a Barrister at Law in 1922. He sent his family to Jaffna while he travelled to England. The family travelled to Sri Lanka in one of the ships owned A.M. Pillai.

In England, he enrolled at the honourable Society of the Middle Temple, commonly known simply as Middle Temple. It is one of the four Inns of Court exclusively entitled to call their members to the



College of Middle Temple, London where Thamby was enrolled in 1922.

1923	Sept. 26	Ammerbal Vittal Pai, B.A., (Madras), of Dongerkery Street, Mangalore, Madras Presidency, (21 and 10 months), eldest son of Ammambal Srinicasa P., of Mangalore. Madras Presidency, vakil. Called 16 June 1926.	Sturgess, III, 874
1923	Oct. 5	Brij Nath Tondon, house proprietor, of Ajmer, Rajputana, India, (25), only son of Tai Sahib, M. Bishmaber Nath, of Ajmer, Rajputana, India, advocate. Called 26 Jan. 1926.	Sturgess, III, 875
1923	Oct. 8	Ghaisud Din Ahmad, B.Sc. (Punjab), of Ludhiana, Punjab, (24), eldest son of Khan Ferowzuddin Khan, of New Street, Ludhiana, retired inspector of police. Called 26 Jan. 1926.	Sturgess, III, 875
1923	Oct. 9	Alaptagin Khan Kundi, of Gul Imam, Rauk, Noeth West Frontier Province, and of 85 Warwick Road, Earl's Court, S.W.5. (28 and 4 months), only son of Sher Khan K., of Gul Imam, Dera Ismail Khan, N.W.F.P., landlord.	Sturgess, III, 875
1923	Oct. 13	→ Cassipillai Kuddy Tambe, vakil, of 1 Barr Street, Rangoon, Burma, and of 106 Gower Street, W.C.1, (36), youngest son of Cassipillai, of Tellippalai, Joffra, Ceylon, landowner, decd. Called in absence 17 Nov. 1924.	Sturgess, III, 875
1923	Oct. 27	Bhagwati Nath Sriwastava, vakil, M.A., LL.B., of 1 Golaganj Lucknow, (22 's), eldest son of B. Bisheshwar Nath S., of Lucknow, United Provinces, India, advocate. Called 6 May 1925.	Sturgess, III, 875
1923	Oct. 31	Sham Jee Mohan M.A., (Punjab), of Delhi, India, and of 112 Gower Street, W.C.1, (25), third son of the late Rai Giridhari Lal, of Delhi, India, government servant, decd.	Sturgess, III, 876
1923	Oct. 31	Mohomed Afzuluddin Faruqi, B.A. Muslim University, Aligarh, of Hyderabad State, India, and of Exeter College, Oxford, (22), eldest son of Mehomed Tajuddin F., of Hyderabad State, India, landlord, Called 19 Nov. 1926.	Sturgess, III, 876
1923	Nov. 7	Govindan Reghuveeran, B.A., (Madras), of Trivandram, Travancore State, and of 63 Gondar Gardens, W. Hampstead, N.W.6, (21), first son of K. Govinda Pillai, of Travancore, South India, government servant.	Sturgess, III, 876
1923	Nov. 7	Kasambhoy Alladinbhoj Somjee, vakil, M.A., LL.B. (Bombay), of the Bombay University, (32), youngest son of Alladinbhoj S., of Bombay, decd. Called in absence 17 Nov. 1924.	Sturgess, III, 876
1923	Nov. 7	Mir Akberali Khan, B.A., (Allahabad), of Hyderabad, Deccan, India, (21), third son of Mir Mahboobali K., of Hyderabad, Deccan, jagirdar, decd. Called 16 June 1926.	Sturgess, III, 876



The school Amma attended in Rangoon, Burma

After qualifying as a Barrister at Law, Thamby returned to Jaffna where he picked up his family before proceeding to Rangoon, Burma. Amma would recall her father bringing her beautiful frocks and ribbons from London. It is clear from the way she recalled it that she was much delighted at her father's return from London.

Their fifth child - a son - was born in Rangoon in 1924. They named him Thurairatnam. Amma, who was 7 years old at that time, vividly remembers her mother carrying the newborn and returning home.

Thamby was a successful criminal lawyer practicing at the Supreme Court in Rangoon, Burma.

Amma was enrolled at the Sidambara Reddiars High school in Rangoon where she continued her studies until 1927 when she left for Sri Lanka along with her mother. She never returned to Burma again.

English Bar as barristers, the others being the Inner Temple, Grays Inn and Lincolns Inn. It is located in the wider Temple area of London, near the Royal Courts of Justice, and within the City of London. Thamby was boarded at 106, Gower street, London



பேராசை
பெரும் தரித்திரம்.

Too much greed
brings misery.

Rangoon Days

Thamby was a highly successful criminal lawyer in Rangoon and he had a roaring practice. The couple had 5 children in quick succession (one girl and 4 boys). He had an excellent command over English and spoke English impeccably. He was invited to speak at various functions as a guest speaker.

He was also a savvy investor. Thinking that their future will be in Burma, he started to invest in real estate. He bought many real estate properties outside the city.

Thamby was a deeply religious man, just like his wife. The house had a separate shrine room. When he returned from work, he would quickly take a bath and then spend some time in the shrine room, with his family singing hymns before dinner.

He loved his young wife. He always felt that she brought much luck to him - both in terms of children and finances.

Because of his speaking skills, he was asked to join the local politics and contest the local municipal council election. In 1927, he contested the municipal council elections and won.

Here is what Amma wrote about her Rangoon Days.

“My mother was very sweet. I can remember her giving sweets and chocolate to the downtrodden. My mother was very religious. Tears will come to her

eyes when she goes to the temple. Such was her devotion. We had a separate shrine room on the 3rd floor apartment where we lived. We had a young boy as a cook and another young boy as a second servant for doing the other house work. We also had a chauffeur, who drove our chocolate colored car.

In the shrine room there were many Gods pictures. Every Friday, the servant cleaned the shrine room. In the evening, when father came, he would take a bath and then place flowers to all the pictures of Gods in the shrine room and then light the lamp. Mother will sing songs with tears running down her face. Father would then show the lighted fire. We would then all go to a nearby temple and then come home for dinner. When I came to Jaffna to live with my grandparents, this was not practiced since my grandparents were not religious.

My father went to Burma when he was 28. He worked as a pleader. He picked up the practice. He learnt Burmese. He went to England in 1924 to qualify as a Barrister. After that, he had a large practice. He was prosperous. He bought an estate in Kambay, Rangoon - just outside Rangoon. We used to spend our weekends there. He presided over many meetings and school functions. He was a very good speaker. The thirteen years after his marriage was the period of his life where he was most happy. Life went on well for him until 1928.”



The street where the flat is located. This picture was taken in 2014.

PONNAMBALAM

Returns to Jaffna

In 1923, Ayah's grandfather, Sangarapillai, died of natural causes. When Ponnambalam came to know about his death, he decided to go to Jaffna immediately. He sold his cows that pulled the bullock cart. He took the bullock cart to a cliff and then pushed the bullock cart off the cliff. That night, he boarded a ship that was sailing to Jaffna.

When he landed in Jaffna, he went straight to his wife's house. Achimuthu was surprised to see him. She had led quite a happy life without him. She had found means to bring up the five children.

Jaffna society and Jaffna Tamils are very conservative. Divorce was unheard of in the Jaffna society. The women always depended on their spouses both economically and socially. They put up with their husbands since the woman entirely depended on the husband economically. Many men physically and mentally abused their women.

A divorced woman was ridiculed and treated as an outcast in the Jaffna society. An abused woman - by her spouse - was far more safer in the Jaffna society than a divorced woman. Other men always cast their eyes on these wretched divorcees.

Most of the family disputes were taken upon and decided by the local village elders - all chauvinistic men. Women had no chance of victory or justice in such local village councils. Hence, most of the Jaffna Tamil women stuck with their husbands even if their husbands were physically and mentally cruel to them.

Achimuthu was no different. Though he had destroyed their wealth with his bad habits, she wanted him back in her life. Ponnambalam by the



Ayah's house damaged during the war. Picture taken in 2014

side gave her some status in the conservative Jaffna society. She could now go out with her husband for social functions such as weddings or funerals. She could wear colorful sarees and adore her with one or two of the jewels that she still had, especially the thali (golden chain) that was tied around her neck by her spouse at the time of the wedding.

Within a couple of months after Ponnambalam's return, Achimuttu was pregnant with her sixth child. There were no ultrasounds at that time to know the sex of the fetus. The sex of the baby was known only at the time of birth. The couple did not tell about the pregnancy to any one.

Though Ponnambalam had his share of bad habits, he loved his wife and children dearly. It was also well known in the village he was faithful to his wife and never had any affairs. He never cheated on her. Achimuttu was a beautiful, fair complexioned lady and came from an aristocratic family with much wealth. So, he was very happy and content with her.





Ponnambalam pushing his bullock cart off a cliff .

Wedding of Sellama - Ayah's Eldest Sister

Ponnambalam had a free reign in his house after his father-in law's death. There was no one to question his actions and he took advantage of that. He was unemployed and spent most of the time drunk. Not only was he an alcoholic, he was an excessive gambler as well. Without an active source of income, he used the family wealth to sustain his gambling and drinking habits.

In 1926, he had found a boy from the adjoining village - Tellippalai - for his eldest daughter, Sellama. The boy - Veerasingham - came from a good family. Veerasingham was a good man, however, like Ponnambalam, he also had some thuggish behaviour with those who disagreed with him.

Veerasingham loved the good things in life - good clothes and alcohol. Veerasingham always carried a rifle in a threatening way - rifles and guns were a rarity in those days in Jaffna. So he was all the more imposing. He was employed as a government contractor with the responsibility of repairing roads.

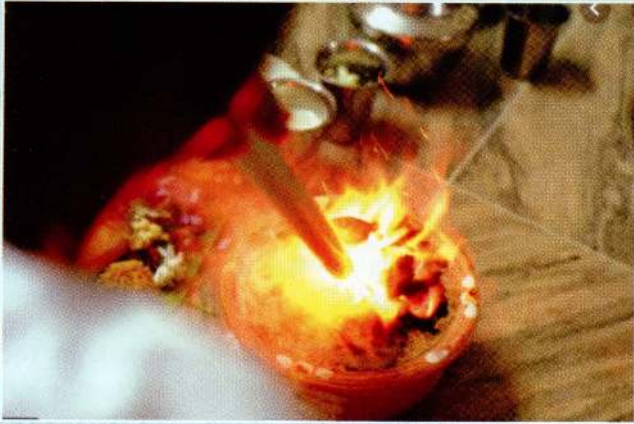
The Jaffna Tamil marriages were a grand affair and it usually went on for many days. Even if the family was poor, they borrowed money heavily and spent lavishly. This only led to more debt for poor families. Dowry was common and the potential brides have to give seizable amount of cash, jewelry and real estate as part of their dowry.

Tamil Weddings are usually extended for over a week. Generally, the house was cleaned and a new coat of paint was given to it. Relatives would gather at least a week before in droves. They usually camped in the wedding house. Food was grand, sumptuous - and free. Wedding was treated as a family gathering place for gossip; it was a place for other parents to find a suitable match for their young ones as well.

"Thaali" the Nuptial Cord and the Gold Melting Ceremony "Ponnurukku" are the most important items in a Hindu marriage in Jaffna as well as in South India. The nuptial cord is called Thaali. During the wedding, the bridegroom ties this cord with three knots on the bride's neck. This is the climax of the wedding ceremony and in the past women never removed their "Thaali" from their neck when their husband is alive and they gave great respect to this thaali. A proper Thaali is a small pendant attached to a cord.

A few days before the wedding day, a small ceremony with a small gathering of very close relatives is held at the groom's house. This is arranged for melting the gold for making the thaali. The Goldsmith, who was commissioned to make the thaali, performs the ceremonial

melting. The groom would sit in front of the gold smith during this melting process. If the gold melts and hardens to a uniform round shape piece, it is regarded as a good sign. The Goldsmith will use this gold for making thaali.



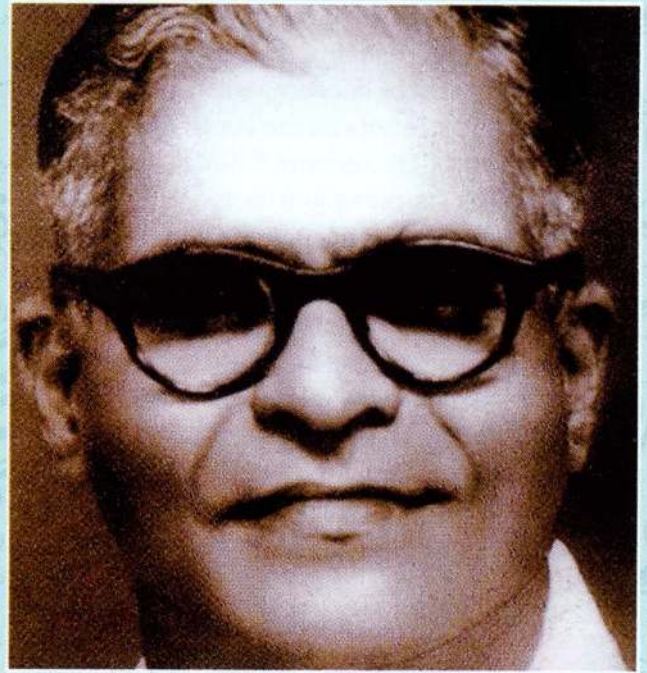
Gold being heated to make the thaali



The pendant in the middle is thaali, which is hung in a 22 karat gold chain. It is a symbol of marriage and married women consider this to be very sacred.

This wedding ceremony is held in traditional style. The bride, bridegroom and the visitors wear traditional dresses. During the wedding ceremony one of the bride's brothers, usually a younger one would act as the groom's companion. He would also wear a costume similar to that of the groom. He goes to the bridegroom's house with his relatives and accompanies the groom to the venue of the wedding. A Hindu priest officiates the wedding ceremony. Various elements and activities of this ceremony are highly symbolic.

The priest would sit in front of the ceremonial wedding seat and he creates a small fire there. The ceremony takes place in front of it. Fire is a witness to their wedding. When people refer to weddings, they say that the symbol of Fire witnessed these.



Ayah's brother in law, Veerasingham - meaning "brave man." This photo was taken perhaps in the late 1950s. This is the only photo we have of Veerasingham.



Sellama, Ayah's sister - photo taken in early 1940s in Jaffna. Her hair is bobbed, which is unusual for a Jaffna women. It is likely she had shaved her hair a few months before this picture was taken. The most likely reason for shaving her head is a vow to a temple deity or infestation of hair with bugs (common in Jaffna in those days)

First the groom comes and sits on the seat. The priest performs certain rituals. After this, the bride is brought to the seat by her companion. Usually one of the groom's sisters acts as the companion. She sits on the right side of the groom. A new silk sari known as the "Koorai" is presented to the bride and she goes back and changes her dress and comes back again dressed in the "Koorai" saree.

The rituals would continue and as a climax the groom ties the nuptial cord on the neck of the bride. At this point she becomes the wife of the man and switches their places so that the bride sits on the left side of the groom. As per Hindu tradition the wife sits on her husband's left side. During the wedding ceremony the traditional "Nadhaswaram" music is played.



Nadaswaram music at the Tamil weddings

food was consumed - meat was considered impure on such occasions. Usually a sumptuous non vegetarian meal was always served the following day after the wedding.

After lunch, the families took some rest. In the evening Sellama, Veerasingham and his family left for the bridegroom's house. It was the custom of Jaffna society that newly married couple would spend their honeymoon in the bridegroom's house - there were no hotels in jaffna at that time.

After the marriage, the Bride would permanently shift to her husband's house. When the bride left her house, the parents and her family wept. She no longer belonged to them. She has become a permanent member of her newly married husband's family.

There was a reason why the parents of the bride wept for their loving daughter as she left the house permanently. The bride (daughter) would now live in a house that was traditionally dominated by the mother in law. While most of the mother in laws were decent and good enough to treat their daughter in laws with kindness, there were many instances where the daughter in laws were treated harshly - both mentally and physically. This was especially so if the new bride did not bring the expected dowry with them.



Priest performing the ceremony

At the end of the ceremony, those who attended the wedding greet the couple by spraying rice mixed with some other auspicious things on their heads. After the ceremony is over lunch or dinner is served for the guests on plantain leaves on the floor.

As per custom, the wedding was held in the bride's house in Maviddapuram in the morning. Since early morning is considered as an auspicious time, most of the Tamil weddings are held in the morning.

Following the wedding, there was a grand vegetarian lunch. Since the wedding day was considered an auspicious and sacred occasion, only vegetarian



காலையும், மாலையும்
கடவுளைத் தொழு.

Pray to God
morning and evening.

The Tragic Death of Ponnambalam



Ponnambalam was very excited to go to his son in law's house that evening. He had vowed he would not touch alcohol until the marriage ceremony was over. He knew that his son in law would throw a lavish party that night at his house and plenty of expensive and foreign liquor would be served liberally. Ponnambalam who could afford only locally brewed liquor always looked forward to such occasions.

Ponnambalam left the house along with the marriage party to his son in law's house. They travelled in bullock carts while the newly married couple were being driven in an old Morris Minor car.

By the time Ponnambalam reached his son in law's house, the sun had set. The kerosene-filled lamps had been lit in the bridegroom's house. Men sat in the open lawn in front of the house, while women were confined to the house, where they spent the time, chatting and gossiping.

Liquor was freely flowing. Veerasingham was a great entertainer. Ponnambalam who had imposed self control all day could not restrain himself. He started binge drinking. Having used to pay for locally brewed alcohol every day, this was a divine gift - free and foreign.

He kept drinking and drinking. No one dared to stop him - even if they had, he would not have listened to them. He was becoming boisterous and abusive. People were becoming upset and wary of him.

When the word was sent to Achimuttu - about her husband's behaviour - she did what she would normally do at home when he got drunk.

She quickly filled a plate with rice and barbecued mutton - the favorite dish of her husband. Achimuttu rushed to her husband's side with the food plate and pleaded with him to eat.

Though Ponnambalam was unemployed and an alcoholic, he loved his wife and children. His wife tolerated her tall, handsome and loving husband. He would normally listen to his wife in all subjects with the exception of drinking - he was an addict. There were no alcohol rehabilitation centers in Jaffna at that time.

His wife then demanded that he go to bed. He obeyed his wife's orders.

There was a cot outside and he fell asleep. It was past midnight.

When the sun rose, most of the people were asleep. Achimuttu came to see her husband around 8 am. It looked like he was in a deep sleep.

However, his verti (the white cloth that is tied around the waist) had given away. He was partly naked. She went close to him to adjust his verti. As she touched his leg to pull his verti, she felt chilling cold in the legs. She froze. She immediately started to shout at him and shook him "Incharungo" (do you hear me) and "elumbungo" (get up)

Ponnambalam did not move. She shook him more and more. He would not move. She then let out a loud cry "Aiyu, Aiyu, Kadavule." (Oh God!).

By this time the relatives had rushed out of the house and gathered around Ponnambalam. They too thought that he was in deep sleep due to excessive consumption of liquor. Nothing could wake up Ponnambalam.

Fortunately there was a village doctor who had come for the wedding. He was not trained as a doctor but through experience he was treating the village people for minor ailments. He felt for a pulse. When he found out the body was cold, stiff and no pulse, he pronounced "Ponnambalam poyitaru" (he has left us).

Achimuttu let out a loud wail and then collapsed to the ground. She was immediately taken inside the house for first aid. A few minutes later she would wake up.

The family was inconsolable. Sellama - the new bride- felt personally responsible for her father's death. Amongst all members of the family, it was the 13 year old Ayah who kept calm.

Ayah later told that there was a possibility that he was poisoned to death. Ponnambalam had many enemies in the village.

Ayah immediately knew the immense responsibility that has fallen on him. The family was poor and there was no income. He had to take care of his widowed mother and his three young sisters.

The body of Ponnambalam was quickly taken back to his house in Maviddapuram. There was no embalming facilities in Jaffna in the mid nineteen twenties. Dead people had to be cremated within twenty four hours. Otherwise the body will decay due to the excessive heat and humidity.

When the body reached the house, as per local customs, the elderly village women wailed (opari).

Opari is sung by women during the death ceremony. Many communities use the oppari as a means to express their sadness. The song does not follow a set pattern; rather, the lyrics are sung impromptu, mostly improvised, and speak about the life of the person who has died. Opparis are rich in wordplay relating to names and events associated with the deceased person.

The body was laid in the main hall after a customary bath in the house well in the backyard. The body was dressed in a simple white shirt and verti. Three horizontal holy ash (white ash like powder made out of cow dung after it was heated and cooled, a highly significant symbol of Hinduism)

A single lamp was lit at the head of the corpse. Ayah - 13 years at that time - took charge of things. He was seen giving orders and directions to those around him.

By this time, Achimuttu was dressed in a white saree - a symbol of widowhood. She would never wear a colored saree in her life after the death of her husband. Adorning white saree by a woman after the death of her husband in Hinduism was an ancient tradition. White saree sent a strong message to men that she was not to be touched - whatever the age of the widowed woman.

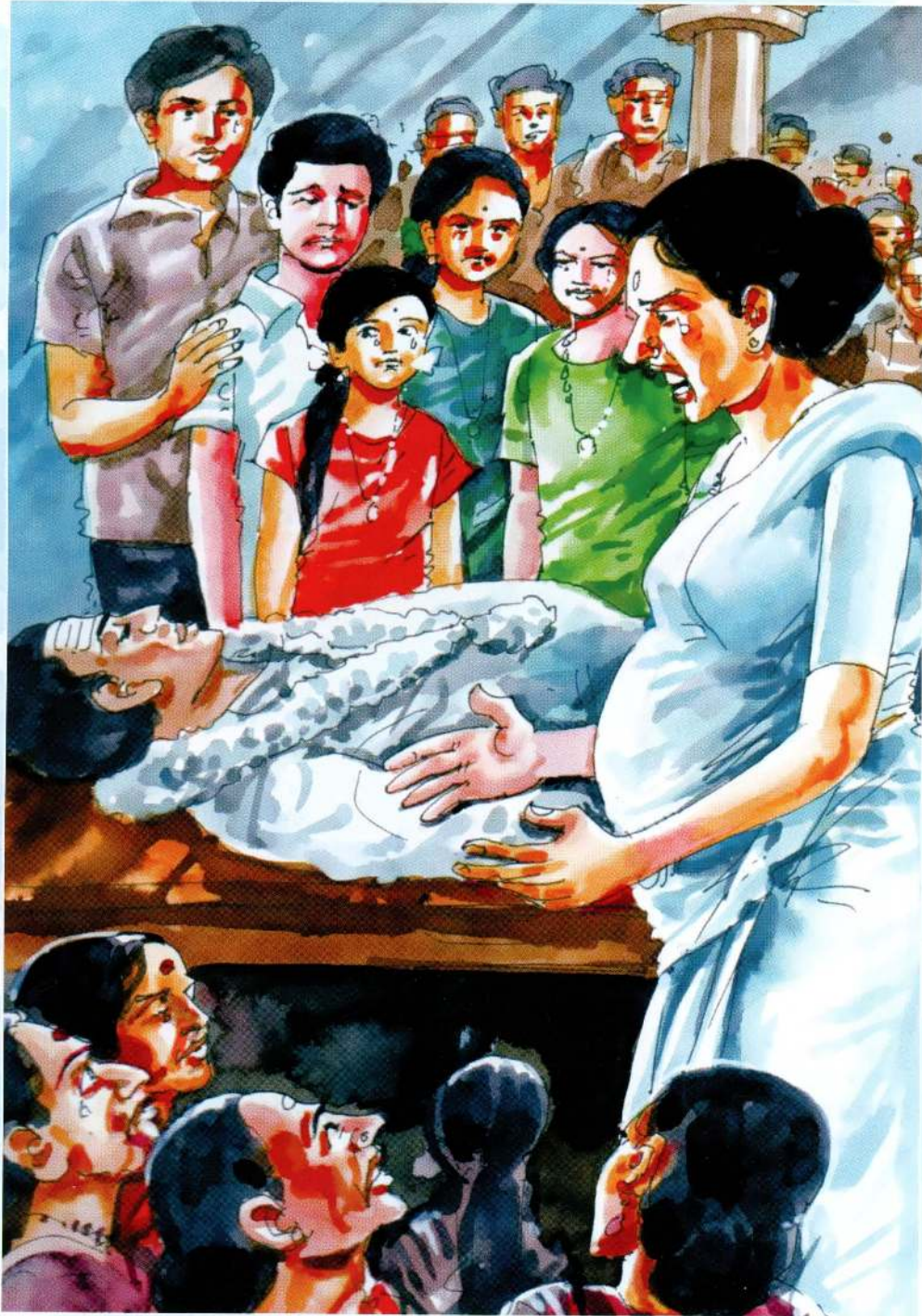
Achimuttu was now led to the hall where her late husband's body was kept. She immediately broke loose from her relatives and dashed to her husband's corpse. She fell on his body, hugged him tight and wept. She would not let go of the corpse. Sure, her husband has been irresponsible ; he never had a job; he did not bring home any income. Yet, he had loved his wife and children. He was faithful to her. He was kind to them; he was proud of them.

She slowly pulled herself away from the corpse. She then knelt in front of his body and wailed "Ennudaiya vaithilla irkum Pillaiyai neengal pakamatingale." (You will not see your child in my womb).

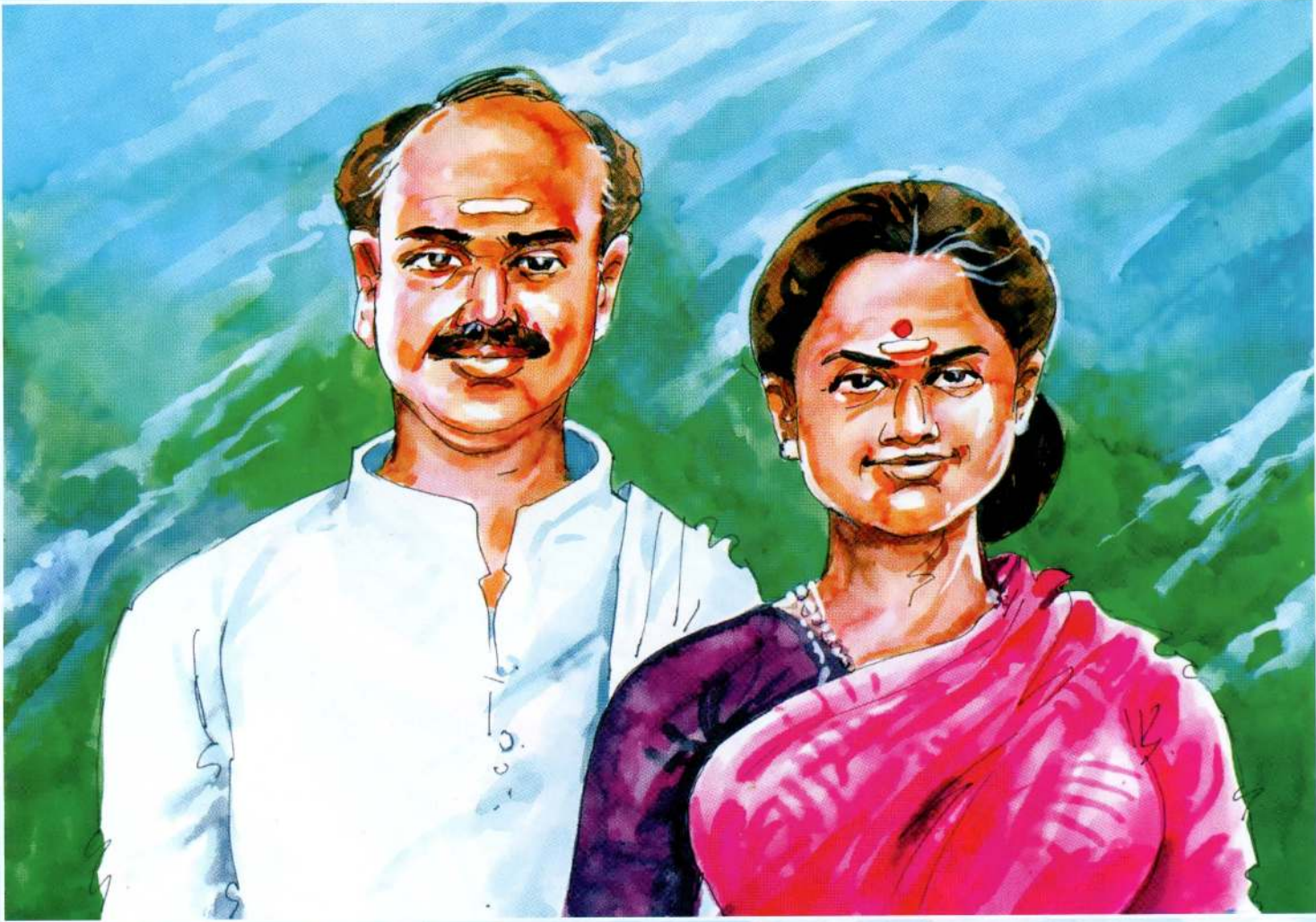
This sent a shock wave throughout the crowd present.

She then started to hit her lower part of the abdomen with her hands wanting to abort the pregnancy right there. In the old days, this was one of the ways to abort the fetus. Achimuttu was immediately escorted to her room by her relatives.

The relatives then carried the body to the cemetery where he was cremated. Ayah, being the only boy, performed the last rites. Women were never allowed to join the funeral procession or inside the cemetery.



Achimuttu, four months pregnant with her children at the funeral of Ponnambalam.



Artist's version of Ponnambalam and Achimuttu. Ponnambalam was around 50 years at the time of his death in 1926 and she a few years younger. He was tall and fair.

Life After PONNAMBALAM

Unfortunately, there are no photographs of Ponnambalam. Ayah had told us that his father was tall, hefty and very fair.

Though Ayah was only 13 years at the time of his father's death, he took over the responsibility of taking care and protecting his family.

Ayah had three young sisters to take care of. His widowed mother was three months pregnant. There was no regular income for the family. The family had some lands in the village. They sold most of the lands to keep feeding the family. Sellama - his eldest sister - had moved to her husband's house.

Seven months later, Achimuttu would deliver a posthumous boy. They named him Nadarasa - after the premier Hindu God, Lord Shiva (fondly called Bala Chinaiah by family members).

Life was very tough for Ayah.

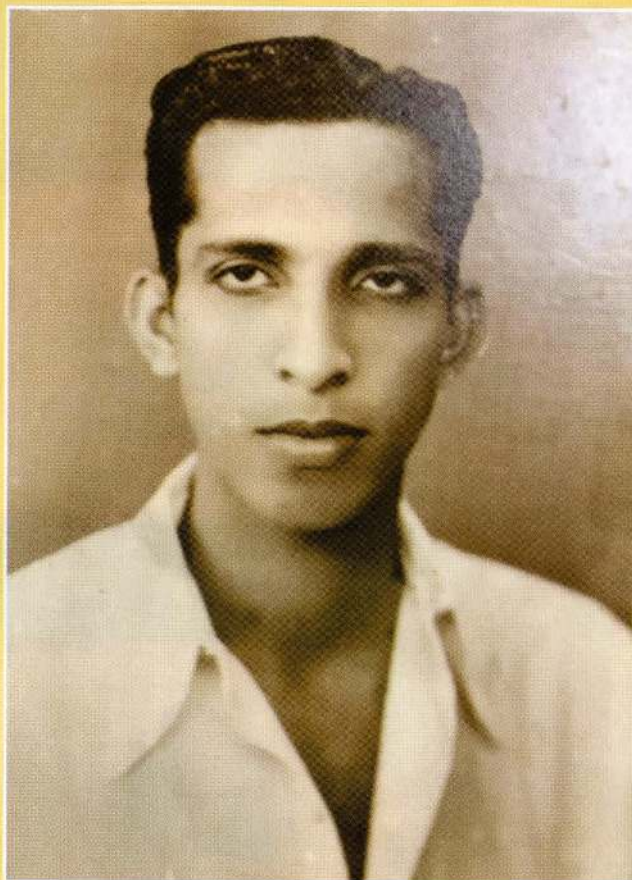
Immediately after the death of his father, the young son had promised his mother that he would bear responsibility for the entire family and that he would do his best to bring the family up economically.

Even at that young age Ayah knew there was only one way out of poverty and the family's miseries - a good education.

Already a very bright student, Ayah now focused even more on his studies. Fortunately he had a photographic memory. He excelled in mathematics and numbers.

By twenty three, he had obtained three degrees Bachelor of Science (BSc) Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Bachelor of Commerce (BCom).

All the three degrees were awarded by the University of London. He passed the first two degrees with honors. For the BCom degree, he majored in Economics which will later become his lifelong passion.



The posthumous child, Nadarasa
(fondly called Bala Chinnaiah), Jaffna, early 1940s.
He was born in 1926.

While at school he excelled in volleyball.

Ayah found employment as an accounts clerk in the Attorney General Office in Colombo. At that time in Sri Lanka, most of the elite jobs were in the Government sector. There was a desire among the Jaffna Tamils to find jobs in the government sector since it afforded stability, a decent paycheck and very generous lifelong retirement benefits.

Holding a "government job" meant respectability and higher status in the caste and economic conscious Jaffna society. The parents of the prospective brides were prepared to give large

amount of dowry if the bridegroom held a Government job.

Ayah's monthly salary at that time was 80 rupees a month (about US 75 cents at today's value).

Of this eighty rupees he would promptly send 50 rupees to his poor family and keep the rest for his personal expenses.

Smoking tobacco leaves (cigars) was a common practice among the Jaffna villagers. The habit

started at a very young age in the villages - both men and women smoked.

Ayah was no exception to this. He started smoking cigars at a very young age. This habit would continue until he moved to the US in 1983.

It was widely believed that the Cigar manufacturers of Jaffna laced their cigars with a small amount of Abin (heroin) for addictive purposes.



கந்தையானாலும்
கசக்கிக் கட்டு.

Must live
within means.



தனக்கு போகத்தான்
தானமும் தர்மமும்.

Charity begins
at home.



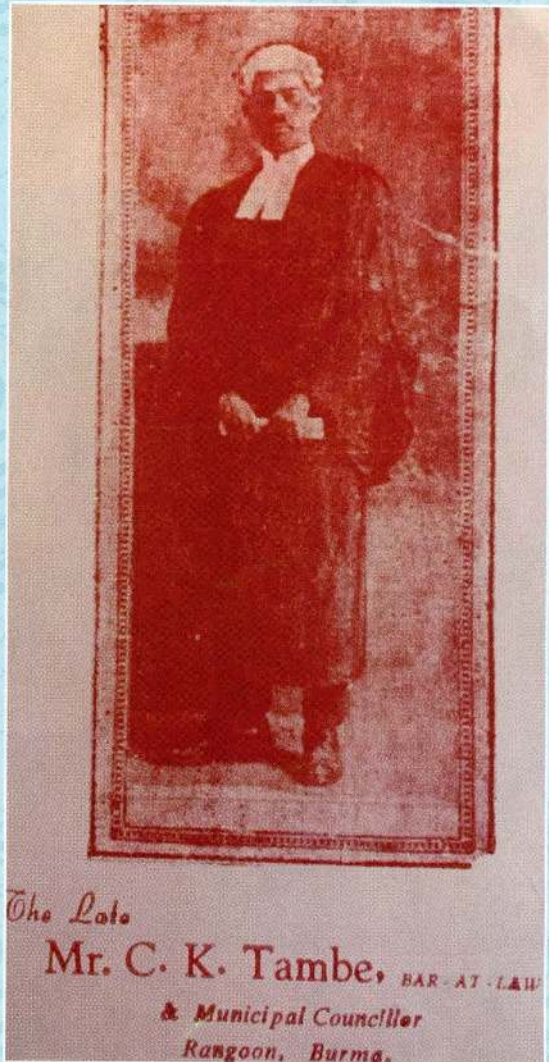
ஆள் பாதி
ஆடை பாதி.

Cleanliness
is next to God.

1925-1928

Tragedy Strikes The Thamby Family

By 1926, Thamby had established himself as one of the leading lawyers in Rangoon. He was popular amongst his colleagues, widely known to the public as a superb orator and an author of leading legal books and journals in Burma.



Kutty Thamby, 1920, Rangoon, Burma

His young and lovely wife, Kanmani had given birth to five beautiful children (one girl and four boys) within 13 years of marriage. She had also aged physically due to the frequent child bearing.

Thamby was a scholar, a brilliant orator, and a philosopher. He loved his children, especially his eldest and only daughter. He was a rising star in the legal circles in Rangoon, appearing in many prominent

cases. Amma would recall later that she vividly remembers father bringing garlands that had been handed to him at different functions where he was invited as the Chief Guest or a speaker.

Thamby was also a prolific writer. He wrote many books which were mostly on law. One of the most famous books that he authored was: Decennial Digest Of Burma Rulings (1932 - 1933). This book is still widely used in Myanmar legal circles and law schools.

A decennial digest of Burma rulings, 1923-32

Author: [C.K Tambe](#), [Burma High Court](#); [Great Britain Privy Council Judicial Committee](#)
Publisher: Rangoon : Rangoon Daily News Press, 1933.
Edition/Format: eBook : Document : English [View all editions and formats](#)
Rating: ☆☆☆☆ (not yet rated) [0](#) with reviews - [Be the first](#)
Subjects: [Indian law reports -- Rangoon series -- Indexes](#)
[Law reports, digests, etc -- Burma](#)
[Law reports, digests, etc](#)
[View all subjects](#)

Even to day - after more than 80 years - if one googles the name of this book, there are many hits for this book on Google and a Facebook Page dedicated to this book.

EXTRACT FROM RANGOON DAILY NEWS

The accuracy and fullness of the answers guaranteed by the author's qualification and long experience..... authoritative guide of this nature is just the thing wanted for the student preparing for the examination..... a suitable and reliable Companion
--- RANGOON DAILY NEWS---

RANGOON GAZETTE

Mr. C. K. Tambe, Bar-at-law has compiled a very useful guide..... full and correct answers to the questions... not only does it indicate the nature of the questions to be anticipated but it also give the answers in model form in the action dealing with Buddhist Law, he has dealt with recent case law and cites the latest rulings this renders this section of the book particularly valuable the book is excellently printed and every student would be well advised to acquire it.

News clippings about Thamby's books in Burmese papers

Newspapers in Rangoon paid glorious tribute to Thamby and gave raving reviews of his books.

Thamby was earning well. Amma would later recall that her father always told "My eldest child and daughter, Manonmani had brought me so much of luck. It was after her birth I had vastly improved financially."

Amma would later recall that they lived on a third floor flat. Both her parents were very religious - especially Thamby who strictly adhered to all the

Hindu religious customs.

Due to his popularity, Thamby was requested by his friends and colleagues to enter the local Municipal politics. Though reluctant at first, he entered the election to contest as a Municipal councillor after much persuasion. There was no doubt in the minds of the people that he would sweep the elections.

Thamby loved his wife, Kanmani ("kanmani" in Tamil meant 'as precious as the eye'). Though she was his wife, Thamby treated her like her own child. There was an 18 year age difference between them as well. Kanmani adored her husband. Though much junior to him, she played the role of a housewife to perfection by taking care of her husband and children.

The crime in Rangoon at that time was pretty high, especially house break ins. There were few thefts in the apartment where the Thamby family lived. Usually, the thieves would barge into the house and threaten the occupants with knives before emptying the house of all valuable things.

As a six or seven year old child, Amma heard about this. This would have a lasting effect on her. She would dream about the break ins even after she got married and then howl (Sooo Sooo Sooo) in her sleep until her death - this happens three to four times a year.

All her children are very familiar with this dream of hers. Someone has to call out her, otherwise the howling would go on and on for many minutes. Generally Ayah would shout at her "Incharum ithai nipatum" (did you hear me? stop this now). It was a common practice of Jaffna men not to address their wives by their name - they call them "Incharum?" (did you hear me?).

It was at the height of his fame and wealth that tragedy struck the Thamby family that would change their lives forever. Life would never be the same for the Thamby family.

In 1928, Kanmani was pregnant with her sixth child. She was only twenty eight years of age. She had married Thamby at the age of fifteen.

Kanmani decided to go to Jaffna for the confinement. Thamby was very busy with his work. Kanmani had all the help in Jaffna. She decided to take Amma and her two younger boys (Thurairatnam and Shanmugarajah) along with her. As usual, they boarded A.M. Pillai's ship to Colombo and then they would take the train to Jaffna.

Kanmani's Sixth Pregnancy

It was at the time when the family was at the height of economic and social prosperity that fate took a different turn in their lives. The zenith of happiness in 1928 came crashing down and the family was in for a tragic loss. The very Gods and Goddesses that Thamby and Kanmani had so much faith in wanted to change the direction of their lives and brought so much sadness and misery to the family.

Perhaps it is wrong to blame the Gods. Maybe it was their karma and fate. Whatever the cause, it is unthinkable that such a tragedy could fall on this young family. Perhaps it was the poor medical facilities at the Jaffna hospital at that time.

Karma: the force generated by a person's actions held in Hinduism and Buddhism to perpetuate transmigration and in its ethical consequences to determine the nature of the person's next existence.



The house where Kanmani lived before she died in Koddady, Jaffna. Amma continued to live in this house until she got married. This picture was taken in 2013. The house is now in a dilapidated condition. The current owners have built a new house just by the side of this old house.

Kanmani had given birth to five children in quick succession - in 12 years. Age began to tell on her appearance and she looked much older than her age. No one knows why Thamby and Kanmani

decided to have the delivery in Jaffna. The most likely answer is that all her five children were small (11, 9, 7, 5 and 2 years of age). Further, she had not been to Jaffna to see her parents for six years. Thamby was also contesting to be a municipal councillor in 1928 and was busy.



Grandmother Kanmani: photo taken in Rangoon, Burma, perhaps in 1925

Kanmani would take Amma (11 years), Shanmugaraja (5 years) and Thurairairatnam (2 years) with her. She left Jayaratnam (9 years) and Rajaratnam (7 years) with Thamby. She boarded the Bibby Shipping Liner (owned by her uncle, A.M. Pillai) to Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The ship took six days to reach Colombo. At the Colombo harbor, her father was there to receive his

daughter and grandchildren. They stayed one day at Pathmini's (Thurai mami) grandfather's house in Maradana. Pathmini was not even born. No one knew at that time that Pathmini would later marry Kanmani's youngest son, Thurai ratnam in 1957.

From Colombo, they boarded the train to Jaffna. Kanmani was in her fifth month of pregnancy and so the ten hour train journey did not tire her very much.

Kanmani was doing fine and had regular check ups at the Jaffna hospital. She was thrilled to be with her parents and sister (Sellachi) who was also pregnant. Kanmani was constantly worried about her husband and her two small children in Rangoon.

Kanmani gave birth to a beautiful girl at the Jaffna Hospital in October 1928. In the old days, pregnant women were admitted to the hospital one month prior to the delivery and they had to stay in small cottages inside the hospital. They prepared their own meals.

At that time, Amma was boarded at the Ramanathan Girls College hostel which was ten miles from Jaffna town. This College had been established by one of the foremost Tamil

philanthropists, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan. Amma came from the school to see her mother and her beautiful little sister. Amma was thrilled to see her little sister.

Immediately after giving birth, it was apparent that the delivery was not a smooth one. Her bleeding did not stop. This went on for a few days. In 1928, the medical facilities at Jaffna were very poor and ancient.

A few days later, she developed a fever. This was not a good sign. The fever was relentless and would not subside with the crude medical facilities at that time. She then went into a semi coma stage.

By this time, the news had spread in the village that Kanmani was dying. Relatives gathered in the house and started wailing - a common practice then, which can be found in Jaffna even today. Generally, Sri Lankan women did not visit hospitals in those days.

Unfortunately, the new born child (a girl) would also die within a few weeks. The reason for the death of the baby is not known. Amma recalls that her newborn sister refused to take fluids and so the baby was breastfed by a few young mothers in the village who had recently given birth.



**மதியார் முத்தம்
மிதியாதே !**

**Do not associate
with those who
do not respect you.**

Death of KANMANI



Jaffna hospital in Jaffna town. Kanmani's house was about a mile from the hospital. It is believed that the outer wall and the entrance have not been modified and they remain the way they were since the time of Kanmani's death.

November 27th was a very auspicious day for Hindus - it was the day of the Karthigai Theepam festival.

Karthika Deepam, Karthikai Vilakkidu or Thrikarthika is a festival of lights that is observed by Hindus. It falls in the month of Kārttikai (mid-November to mid-December) as per the Tamil calendar. This occurs on the day when the moon is in conjunction with the constellation Karthigai (Pleiades) and pournami (full moon day). This constellation appears as a group of six stars in the firmament in the shape of a pendant from the ear.

Many legends abound from this star and it has been the inspiration for many classical lyric poetry. The six stars are considered in Indian mythology as the six celestial nymphs who reared their six babies in the Saravana tank. These six babies were later joined together to form the six faced God, Muruga. He is therefore called Karthikeya, the incarnation of Lord Shiva (whose first son is Lord Ganesha). It is believed that Lord Shiva created Muruga from his third eye. It is believed that the six forms were made into six children and that each of them were brought up by the six Karthigai nymphs. The six children were merged into one child by Shiva's wife, Parvati.

While merging, the child transformed into a six faced (Arumugam) and twelve handed god. Lord Muruga is also portrayed with his six faces and worshiped with six names.

As the six nymphs helped in rearing the child, Lord Shiva blessed immortality to the six nymphs and they became the immortal stars in the sky. Any worship performed to these six stars is considered equal to worshipping Lord Muruga himself. They are worshipped by lighting up rows of oil lamps (Deepam) in the evening of the festival day around the houses and streets. Karthikai Deepam is also known as Kartikeya, or Muruga's birthday.

Houses are lit with small lamps on Karthigai Deepam.



All the houses in Jaffna were beautifully lit with small lamps. The entire Jaffna peninsula was glowing with small lamps. Temple bells were ringing incessantly and Tamil hymns were sung.

However, death and gloom had descended on one house in Jaffna town - the house of Kanmani. That house was dark.

Women started to howl and beat their chests - a common practice at the funerals.

Kanmani had died at the Jaffna hospital on November 27th as the sun was setting. It was a full

November 1928 Vibhava Aippal - Karthikai						
SUN சூரியறு	MON திங்கள்	TUE செவ்வாய்	WED புதன்	THU வியாழன்	FRI வெள்ளி	SAT சனி
				1 17 Thiruvattarai & P.23 Chattampi & 2.36	2 18 Thiruvattarai & 3.33 Pattanam & 12.54	3 19 Thiruvattarai & 4.18 Mappan & 5.51
4 20 Mappan & 3.27 Chattampi & 12.41	5 21 Kallam & 3.11 Mappan & 7.08	6 22 Mappan & 3.34 Mappan & 4.42	7 23 Mappan & 4.22 Chattampi & 8.34	8 24 Mappan & 4.55 Chattampi & 7.38	9 25 Thiruvattarai & 5.44 Mappan & 8.34	10 26 Chattampi & 10.26 Thiruvattarai & 10.34
11 27 Mappan & 5.09 Chattampi & 12.41	12 28 Mappan & 5.56 Mappan & 3.20	13 29 Mappan & 6.18 Mappan & 3.42	14 30 Mappan & 7.11 Mappan & 3.25	KARTHIKAI 15 1 Mappan & 8.08 Chattampi & 11.28	16 2 Mappan & 8.23 Chattampi & 1.42	17 3 Mappan & 9.38 Mappan & 1.56
18 4 Mappan & 10.42 Mappan & 1.11	19 5 Thiruvattarai & 6.42 Mappan & 1.48	20 6 Mappan & 7.08 Mappan & 2.48	21 7 Mappan & 8.23 Mappan & 3.11	22 8 Mappan & 9.38 Mappan & 4.18	23 9 Mappan & 10.53 Mappan & 5.34	24 10 Mappan & 11.58 Mappan & 6.51
25 11 Mappan & 12.12 Mappan & 8.14	26 12 Mappan & 1.27 Mappan & 9.38	27 13 Mappan & 2.42 Mappan & 10.53	28 14 Mappan & 3.57 Mappan & 12.12	29 15 Mappan & 5.12 Mappan & 13.34	30 16 Mappan & 6.27 Mappan & 14.51	

1928 calendar

moon in November and the big moon had just risen over the horizon. She had been ailing for several days. There was no breathing equipment at that time and the doctors had given up hope. She was covered in a light blue hospital gown. It was presumed she was going to die soon. As she started to breathe heavily, all her relatives started gathering around the bed. They started singing hymns to Lord Shiva - Jaffna Tamils are staunch Saivites, worshippers of Lord Shiva. Most of the Hindus either believe in Lord Shiva - shaivites - or Lord Vishnu - Vaishnavites. They are the two of the three Triumvirates of Hinduism.

The Triumvirates consists of three gods who are responsible for the creation, upkeep and destruction of the world. The other two gods are Brahma and Vishnu. Shiva is the third god in the Hindu triumvirate. Brahma is the creator of the universe while Vishnu is the preserver of it. Shiva is the destroyer. While Shiva and Vishnu have temples, Lord Brahma has no temples since he was punished and cursed that he will have neither temples nor be worshipped in this world for lying.

As Kanamni was gasping for breath and inhaling and exhaling her last few breaths, her relatives poured a few spoons of the sacred water of the Ganges into the mouth of Kanmani. Every Jaffna home had a small bottle of sacred water from the river Ganges that originates from the Himalayas and flows more than two thousand miles before merging into the Bay of Bengal on the east coast of India. On its way, it flows by the most ancient city in the world - Varanasi. The water from this place is considered to be the most sacred. (Both Ayah's and Amma's ashes were taken by their children many decades later to Varanasi and immersed in Ganges).

A few drops of milk was fed to Kanmani as well. Hindu mantras (songs) were chanted in to her ears by the elders.

Her last few breaths were somewhat heavy and she then stopped breathing. There was a loud sobbing and wailing from those who had gathered around her body. She was just 28 years old at the time of her death.

Kanmani was a Karma yogi . Karma yoga, or the "Yoga of action" is a form of yoga based on the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita, a sacred Sanskrit scripture of Hinduism. Of the three paths to realization, karma yoga is the process of achieving perfection in selfless action. Karma Yoga is primarily the practice of selfless service to humanity whereby a spiritual seeker attempts to give their actions selflessly without hoping for merit, fame or glory. This tendency for a human being to have attachment to 'reward' from action is termed in the Bhagavad Gita: the 'fruits of action' - meaning whatever one might gain from action, especially from the



Trimurti Hindu Gods - from left to right - Brahma (creator), Vishnu (protector) and Shiva (destroyer)

observation and applause of others.

Amma would later recall that Kanmani was loved by everyone. She had a soft heart for those who were poor and downtrodden. The caste system was strictly adhered to and practised in Jaffna at that time. Kanmani belonged to a high caste known as Vellalar.

Vellalars (also, Velalars, Vellalas) were, originally an elite caste of Tamil agricultural landlords in Tamil Nadu, Kerala states in India and in neighbouring Sri Lanka; they were the aristocracy of the ancient Tamil order (Chera/Chola/Pandya/Sangam era) and had close relations with the different royal dynasties. The Vellalars were, during ancient and medieval period, landlords and part of the elite caste who were major patrons of literature.

It was a common practice at that time that the Vellalar community would never entertain any one from the lower caste into their houses. The lower caste members entered the home of a Vella only for

performing menial jobs such as cleaning the bathrooms - the bathroom was always located outside the house. If the Lower caste members were thirsty, they were asked to drink water in a coconut husk that was thrown away right after that. No Vellalar member would ever choose a girl from a lower caste for marriage. Love marriages were non-existent in the early 1920s in Jaffna. All marriages were proposed by parents.

On the day Kanmani died in Jaffna, her husband C.K.Thamby had won the Rangoon municipal election he had contested. He was then paraded in an open jeep wreathed in garlands and flowers were thrown at him by his well wishers and supporters while his loving and young wife lay dead in her house. There was no social media such as Facebook or Email at that time and it took a few days for the sad news to reach Rangoon. C.K.Thamby and his older children could not attend the funeral. It will be another two years before he returned to Jaffna with his children.



ஆழும் தெரியாமல்
காலை விடாதே !

Before you undertake
any job, analyze it.



ஆத்திரக்காரனுக்கு
புத்தி மட்டு.

A hasty man
never wants woe.

Funeral of Kanmani



The house of Kanmani in Koddady. This house is more than 100 years old. No one lives in this house now. Picture taken in 2014.

Immediately after her death, her body was brought to her house in a car from the hospital. The Tamils in Jaffna usually cremated their dead within a day.

By the time the body reached the house, the village women had gathered at the gate. When the car arrived at the house, they rushed to the car and started beating their breasts, wailing loudly with grief.

By this time, Amma had been summoned from her school hostel. Amma, who was eleven years old at that time, knew that her loving mother was now dead. She was old enough to realize the significance of such information and understand the full impact of it.

The body of Kanmani was then taken to the well at the back of the house. The body was seated on a chair. She was undressed first, and then covered with a silk cloth. She was then bathed from the water taken from the well. Scented water was poured on her body. Holy water from the Ganges was then sprinkled on her.

She was dressed with the Koorai saree (the silk saree which she first wore on her wedding day). She was carried and placed inside the house on a mat that had been laid on the floor.

Kanmani's face was turned to the south; an oil lamp was kept near the head of the body. A brass vessel with water was kept under the bed.

A red Kumkum (red paste) was placed on her forehead.

Since her husband was alive at the time she died, she was known as "Theerka sumangali." In the Hindu custom, the woman was considered blessed if she dies before her husband. Hence, a red kumkum (a red mark) was applied on the middle of her forehead.

All pictures and posters in the house were turned the other way or covered. If the person died at home, a death certificate should be obtained from the Registrar of Births and Deaths and if they had died in a hospital, this would be issued at the hospital.

The priests then started the funeral rites which lasted for about two hours. The temple Brahmin priests never participated in the funeral ceremonies. It was always the non Brahmin priest who performed the funeral ceremony in Jaffna.

At the entrance of the house two plantain trees (cooking variety) with raw fruits are tied to the posts to announce the place of funeral. There are no decorations at a funeral.

By this time the drum beaters had arrived. They belonged to one of the lower castes (Paraiyar). They were never allowed to go inside the house. They were served food in the scooped out skull of a coconut fruit.

The family also had hired professional mourners. It was very important that there was a loud wailing and chest beating at a funeral. The professional mourners also sang improvised songs praising the dead.



Drum-Beaters - Paraiyars - Jaffna

The main performer of the ceremonies (the person from the family who performs the rituals to the body at the instructions of the priest) was the youngest child of Kanmani, Thurairatanam, who was two years old at that time. He sat at the lap of his uncle, Ramiah and was assisted by him. The sight of the small two year old boy performing funeral rites of his loving mother was a sight that ripped the heartstrings of everyone present.

The priest then started the services by performing the Sangkalpam by giving the performer holy ash to apply on his forehead, a Thetpai (made out of dried

coconut leaves) for his ring finger on the right hand, and a Poonool (white string) to wear on the right shoulder.

The priest then performed a fire ritual to bless the nine brass vessels and the clay pot containing water. The performer then scattered puffed rice over the body and performed the Theepa pooja by showing and waving lit camphor.

It was now the turn of the adult close relatives and those friends attached to the dead to apply gingelly oil and Arappu (mixture of spices) to the head of Kanmani. The performer being the last one to do so. This ritual symbolises the severing of their relationship with the dead person and their last loving goodbye to them.

Once the ceremony is over, the body was lifted and kept on a palanquin. It was then slowly carried out of the house by the male relatives. Since the females could never visit the cemetery, this was the last chance for them to see the dead body of Kanmani.

It was at this time that the wailing and sobbing reached a crescendo. Kanmani's mother and family were unconsolable. They fell to the ground and held onto the body. They refused the body to be taken to the cemetery. Such was their grief that they had to be physically separated from her body by the male relatives.

The cemetery was about two miles from the house. Male relatives would carry the body and walk to the cemetery.



The road to Villondi cemetery. Body of Kanmani was carried along this road to her final journey.

Picture taken in 2016. Not much has changed since 1928 .

Once in the cemetery, the body of Kanmani was carried in an anticlockwise direction three times around the funeral pyre, and then the body was placed on the pyre. Men put rice and coins in her mouth. The last person to do this will be the person who is doing

the last rites - the two year old son, her youngest.

If the dead person was a married woman, the husband removes the Thali (gold chain) from her; this was tied by him in the first place at the wedding. Unfortunately her husband was thousands of miles away and did not even know that she was about to be cremated.

Every Tamil woman's wish is that she dies before her husband so she will go with her Koorai sari and Thali as a married woman and not as a widow.

With the clay pot on his left shoulder, Thurai ratnam walked around the pyre while holding the fire brand on his right hand behind him, three times. The barber walked behind him blowing the conch shell. Everytime he passed the head of the body, the barber knocks a hole in the pot with a sharp knife letting water out signifying that the life is leaving its vessel. At the end of three rounds, Thurai ratnam stood at the head of the body facing away from the body, dropped the pot in front of him and then without turning to face the body, he placed the fire brand - Kolli to the head of the body.

He then walked over to the feet of the dead, removed the Poonool and Thetpai (sacred thread that the performer wore at the start of the ceremony) and threw them into the fire and before leaving he bowed his head and performed worship. We have no doubt that the innocent two-year old son was helped by his heartbroken uncles in the final rites of his mother.

Having done his last rites the small boy left the cremation grounds without looking back. Now the body of the deceased was covered with more firewood and the flames take over. Everyone leaves and one of the Paraian - (drum party members) remains at the cemetery to supervise the cremation and to oversee

that things are going well and when it is over, he reports to the family and receives his payment.

While the men were at the cemetery, the whole house had been cleaned and washed with fresh water. The women and those present there had bathed and put on fresh clothes. Thurai ratnam carried an iron knife as he came back to ward off evil spirits following him from the cemetery.

On arrival at home, the performer chews Neem (margosa) leaves and spit them. He then walks over a wooden pestle (Ulakkai). Then the boy's hands and feet are washed before he can proceed for a bath.

A small table was placed where the body had laid in state and a photo of the deceased; a lit oil lamp and a cup of water were kept on the table. A plate of rice and some curry was served in front of the photo. Everyone then joined in a meal which had been prepared by neighbours. Those who eat at the house would be considered impure - Thudakku- for 31 days.

The oil lamp will burn all the time until the 31st day. The water in the pot will be changed daily. This is done with the belief that the spirit of the dead person will come around to visit.

On the 3rd day of the cremation, Kanmani's brothers returned to the cemetery to collect the remains which were placed in a clay pot. At the cemetery, Vairavar Pooja was performed in honour of Vairavar, the deity of cemeteries and seeks permission to perform the rites. Water was then sprinkled on the ashes to put off any existing fire and ashes from five parts of the body collected was placed in the clay pot.

The place where the body was incinerated was cleared and sprinkled with water and milk. People then proceeded to the ocean (about 2 miles) to immerse the pot and to dissolve the ashes.



Typical wooden funeral pyre. Rich people used sandalwood which burn much faster



Town of Villondi with the temple in the background, 2014.

Not much has changed since Kanmani's death.

The body of Kanmani travelled along this road to the cemetery .

Kanmani Kutti Thambi 1899- 1928

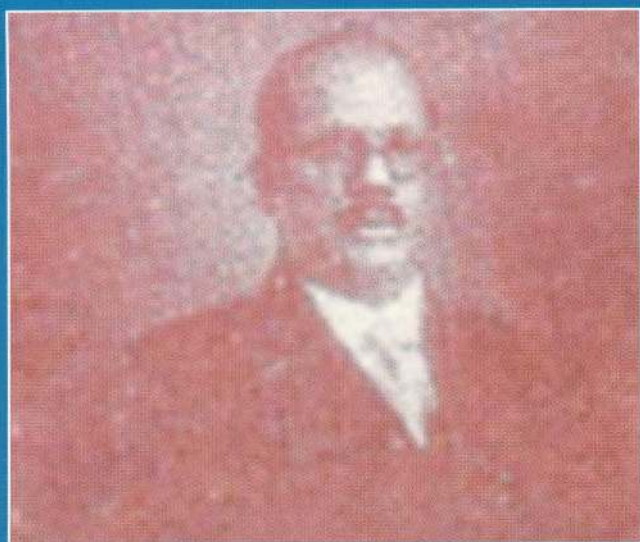


From Amma's diary :

My mother was very much liked by every one in Jaffna. She had a soft corner in her heart for all her poor relatives. She will bring presents for them from Rangoon and distribute. She promised a poor relative of her that one of her sons will marry her daughter - which came to fruition. Tears roll down her cheeks as she prayed at the temple. She adored my father. Later I used to think that I was born to such a good mother but very unlucky to have lost her in my early teens.

The Return of THAMBY

Thamby returned to Jaffna in 1930 - two years after his beloved wife's death. He came alone, leaving his two older sons in Rangoon. The main reason for his return was to take back his loving daughter (Amma) and his two youngest sons. He had not seen them for two years and yearned for them - especially his only daughter.



Kutti Thamby, 1930

He was 47 years old in 1930. The two years since his wife's death had been devastating for him. He had aged badly. He was going bald. He was a successful lawyer and a politician in Rangoon. He was wealthy with many real estate properties in Rangoon. He had all the material comforts of life but nothing would replace his wife whom he dearly loved.

When he stepped in to his mother-in-law's house at Koddady, there was wailing and sobbing. Amma ran to him and he lifted her and tightly hugged her and started weeping uncontrollably. He saw his wife in Amma. Old memories of his wife came vividly in front of his eyes and he was speechless.

Once everything settled, he sat down quietly on a chair in deep thought. He then slowly brought the

topic of taking his children back to Rangoon including Amma.

His wily and intelligent mother in law (Amma's grandmother, Thangamuthu) was prepared for this. She then walked to Amma - who was standing next to her father - hugged her and said "Yes, Mapillai (bridegroom), you can take your children back to Rangoon, but I will never allow this girl (Amma) to be taken back to Rangoon. She will be the only girl in the house in Rangoon. The crime in Rangoon is very high. As a father I understand your concern and love for your daughter. However, as a grandmother I have more serious concerns for her safety and well being."

Grandmother was always worried about a stepmother in her granddaughter's life. Generally step-mothers in Jaffna did not treat their step children - especially stepdaughters - well.

Thamby was a quiet and calm man. He has had the highest regard and respect for his mother in law. It is difficult for a father to leave his only daughter behind when he goes abroad. He then said "Mami (Aunty), I understand your concern. I love my only daughter. She reminds me of my wife. Please let her go with me."

Grandmother would have none of it. She was firm. "Take all your children back to Rangoon. It is over my dead body that you will take my Granddaughter."

Thamby knew that once the old lady had decided something, no one can change her mind. Though he was sad that he was going to miss his daughter, he was also happy that she would be in a house where she was safe and loved.

After the meeting with his children, he left for his native place, Tellipallai which was about 10 miles north of Jaffna.

For the next few weeks, he stayed in his house in Tellipallai, visiting his daughter and sons regularly.

Kuttithamby Marries Again

Jaffna is a very conservative society - then and now. Though there was no social media such as Facebook, Snapchat etc., news and gossip travels fast like wildfire.

Grandmother Thangamuthu was not too surprised by news filtering from her son-in-law's native place Tellipallai that Thamby's relatives were trying to arrange a second marriage for him.

It was the culture in Jaffna among the Tamil society that the men focussed on income and women focussed on the house and children. The demarcation between the sexes was clear cut. Men usually never even went near the kitchen. Their food was always served for them by their duty bound wives. The Jaffna women never sat along with their husband to have their meals. They always ate after their men had finished their meal - some time from their unfinished plate. Amma too followed the same habit in her house after the marriage.

It was obvious that Thamby needed a woman in his life to take care of his children. He had a busy legal practice and had hectic social commitments. It was these circumstances that led him to consent to his second marriage. The relatives were in a hurry to find a suitable match for him before he left for Rangoon.

Amma's grandmother too agreed that her son in law needed a woman in his life. However, she was concerned about the woman being chosen from outside her village. She felt that if her son in law married someone outside her village, her son in law would lose touch with them - and she would lose touch with her grandchildren. She wanted her grandchildren closer to her when they visited Jaffna.

The wily and shrewd, and yet, illiterate Thangamuthu decided to move fast. She decided to find a woman for her son-in-law. She knew what she was looking for; should be someone from her village; should be fair and she should also be kind to her grandchildren.

She chose a girl from her village whose family was living in the adjoining lane. Her name was Thillai amma (fondly called Chinna Amma). Thillai amma was twenty eight years (born in 1902) at that time and unmarried. She was short but fair complexioned. Thamby was 47 years. There was an age difference of nineteen years between them.

In the old days in Jaffna, women who had crossed twenty five had difficulty marrying unless marrying a widower or a disabled person. Divorcees were unheard of in the ultraconservative Jaffna society.

Thillai amma was living with her brother in the Eastern town of Batticaloa.

Grandmother approached her parents who readily agreed. Amma's family was considered very influential and wealthy in the village. So, such a match was warmly welcomed by their family.

Thillai amma was immediately summoned from Batticaloa and told of the proposal. She agreed - perhaps she had no choice.

Grandmother then sent word to her son-in-law. He arrived with his family members. He was then told

about the proposal. It is believed that he initially refused since he was shy and felt very uncomfortable that his own mother-in-law should be proposing his second marriage. After a little persuasion, he agreed.

The family members then visited Thillai amma's house to see the girl. In the conservative Jaffna society, the bridegroom and bride saw and met each other for the first time only at the marriage ceremony.

The marriage was fixed for the following week.



C.K. Thamby's second wife, Thillai amma, 1930, Jaffna.

Thamby marries Thillai Amma



Photograph taken in 1930 in Chennai, India.

Thamby is seen in a suit and with a hat.

It was common for Jaffna men who went to England for higher studies to adopt English clothing and mannerisms. But they never gave up their culture - and ultra social conservatism - especially when it comes to caste, social issues and their deep rooted Hindu religious beliefs.

The second marriage of Thamby to Thillai amma took place at the bride's residence in Koddady in 1930. Amma clearly remembers the marriage. She was thirteen at that time. She was not mature enough to understand the significance of her father's second marriage to Thillai amma.

Typical for a thirteen year old, Amma was more interested in the pomp and celebration that came with the wedding than the significance of the occasion. All relatives assembled in one place as is

the custom. The new clothes, tasty food, presents and the overwhelming love and affection of the relatives overwhelmed the motherless girl.

Thamby looked happy. He was glad that there was now another woman in his life who could now look after his four young boys. He wanted to move on with his life, though the memory of his late wife was constantly on his mind.

Thamby was 47 years of age. Thillai amma was 19 years younger. His first marriage to Kanmani had lasted 13 years. Thamby's both wives were much younger to him.

A few weeks after the marriage, Thamby with his newly wedded wife along with Shanmugarajah (5 years) boarded the ship to Rangoon, Burma. Amma and the youngest son (Thurairatnam, 2 years) stayed back in Koddady.

Grandmother was inconsolable. She could not bear the separation of her grandsons. She had taken a promise from the new bride that she would look after her grandsons with love and affection.

Grandmother knew that most of the stepmothers, after making all the promises, eventually ended up ill treating their step children or did not shower their love and affection on them - especially when they had their own children.

The newly married couple on their way to Burma, stopped in Chennai, India where Thamby took his newly married wife to a famous photo studio. He then published the picture in the widely read English newspaper in Chennai - *The Hindu*. Thamby had a liking for family photographs. Amma would later recall that when her grandparents saw the picture in the paper their feelings were ruffled.

KODDADY

1930 - 1935

In 1931, the doyen of the Suppapillai family, A.M. Pillai died in Rangoon. He was a simple man who has made it big but who still lived a simple life. He helped the relatives back home and the Tamil people from Jaffna who had settled down in Rangoon. He was buried in Rangoon.



At the funeral of A.M. Pillai, Rangoon, 1931

Both the brothers were deeply attached to each other. The younger brother from Burma financially funded the entire Suppa Pillai family for decades.

However the monthly installment that his younger brother was sending stopped once A.M. Pillai passed away. It was strongly rumored that A. M. Pillai's large and extended family members had opposed sending money after his older brother's death. Fortunately, by the time of his brother's death, his children had grown and were economically stable.

Thamby sent money on a monthly basis for Amma - which also subsidized the expenses of the joint family.

In 1932, Suppapillai, Amma's grandfather, passed away due to natural causes.

Suppapillai had developed an aneurysm, mostly likely in the aortic vessel in the middle of his chest. Since it was very visible on his mid chest, he usually had his chest covered with a cloth. There was no cure for such aneurysm in Jaffna.

He was in his mid seventies. His grandchildren were not only amused but also made fun of his aneurysm. If his grandchildren bothered him too much - especially during his mid afternoon naps - he would jokingly threaten to pop open his aneurysm and die.

Most of the people had an afternoon nap in Jaffna due to intense heat, humidity and consumption of sleep - inducing rich carbohydrates such as rice for lunch.

Thamby continued to flourish in Rangoon. He was busy with his legal practice and politics - he was a municipal counselor.

He and Thillai amma had two children in quick



Aung San, the father of the nation (Myanmar)
and the father of the current leader and Nobel laureate,
Aung San Suu Kyi

succession. The first male child was born in 1931 when grandfather was 48 years old. They named him Thiagaraja. The second - a girl - was born when grandfather was 50 years old. Grandfather doted on his young daughter.

In the mid 1930s, World War two had just begun. By this time the expatriate Indian community dominated the economy and the Sri Lankan community held most of the lucrative government jobs.

This led to resentment among the local Burmese. Aung San - founder of the Nation of modern-day Myanmar - and the father of Aung San Suu Kyi, the Burmese Nobel Laureate and the much loved present de facto leader of Myanmar- was whipping up nationalistic feelings against the Indians and Sri Lankans.

There were riots against the Indians and Sri Lankans and their properties were looted and burned. The Indian community was mostly affected since they controlled most of the economy.

By this time the colonial British masters had reverted Burma as one of Indian provinces and made it as a separate country administered by the British. This also emboldened the Burmese nationalists. (It is ironic that Aung was shot dead by

his own Burmese army generals a couple of months after his country was granted freedom by the British).

In 1935, the Japanese who were aligned with the Nazis invaded many countries, including Burma. The Japanese were fast approaching the capital city, Rangoon. People panicked after hearing the horror stories of Japanese occupation.

Life that was once so peaceful and prosperous for many Indians and Sri Lankans in Rangoon was becoming very unsettled - especially for the elites.

It was at this critical juncture that Thamby made the decision to move to Jaffna permanently. His life would change forever after that.

The Thamby family were fortunate enough to catch one of the last ships, owned by the A.M. Pillai family to Sri Lanka as the Japanese were fast approaching Rangoon. There was not much time to sell his possessions in Burma. Perhaps Thamby thought that he would return to Rangoon once the war was over to settle all his properties. Unfortunately, he would never return to Burma. He lost most of the properties he owned. He was fortunate enough to sell his flat to an Indian family just before his departure.



Shipping route from Burma to Sri Lanka

Amma's Life in Jaffna

Amma was devastated by her mother's death. She was big enough (eleven years old) to understand the greatest tragedy in her lifetime. However, some of the sadness was blunted by her grandmother, who rose to the occasion. She took a vow that she will fill the vacuum left by the death of her daughter and that she will be more than a mother to Amma. Thangamuthu certainly did not fail in her vow.

When Amma had arrived from Rangoon in 1928, she was immediately boarded at the Ramanathan Girls school in Chunnakam - about 10 miles from her house. The school was founded by a Tamil philanthropist, Sir Ramanathan and was considered a premier school at that time in Jaffna.



Ramanathan Girls School, Jaffna.

Amma would later recall that she hated her stay at the hostel. She neither liked the food nor the strict discipline at the hostel. She missed her grandmother. She would come home every month and spend a few days. Amma was a studious student and her favourite subject was English.

Amma's aunt (her mother's eldest sister, Sellachi, fondly called Peri Amma) also moved into Thangamuttu's house. Sellachi's husband was an Apothecary (mid level medical provider) and was moving from town to town. Sellachi had 5 children at that time and they were near Amma's age. Amma liked to play and spend time with her cousins.

In 1933, at the age of sixteen, Amma attained puberty - this was considered late in the conservative Jaffna society where girls attained puberty at a much younger age.

In Jaffna, most of the girls attaining puberty were almost kept under house arrest. Parents would stop girls from continuing their

education. Once they attained puberty, the girls were barred from leaving the house. Amma would later recall that she was not even allowed to go to the temple.

Movies had just come to Jaffna, and she never saw a movie until she married. The girls were allowed to come up to the gate of the house in the evening to chat and gossip with other women but always under the watchful eyes of the elders.

Amma was fortunate that her grandparents allowed her to continue her studies until she was eighteen. She was enrolled at Vembadi High School after she attained puberty. At the high school, she played netball.



Vembadi Girls School, Jaffna, Sri Lanka, 2010

Amma would later describe her life in Koddady (from her diary).

“In the morning all the children were woken up at around 5 am. It was usually Uncle Rasiah (Mother's youngest brother) who would come around and give us a warning to get up. He gave us two warnings. My cousins and myself did not want to get up at that early hour. Like other children, we wanted to sleep more. After two warnings, Rasiah Mama would shout. Children were scared of him. All the female cousins would obey him. However, some of the younger male cousins would not get up. He would then take a whip cord and strike mildly on the buttocks of the male cousins.”

After getting up, the children ran to the well to clean and wash. It was now time to go to the bathroom which was located in the back garden. There was only one bathroom. At that time all bathrooms in Jaffna were either septic tank or bucket system. Buckets gets filled up fast. The children dashed to the bathroom before others could beat them to it.

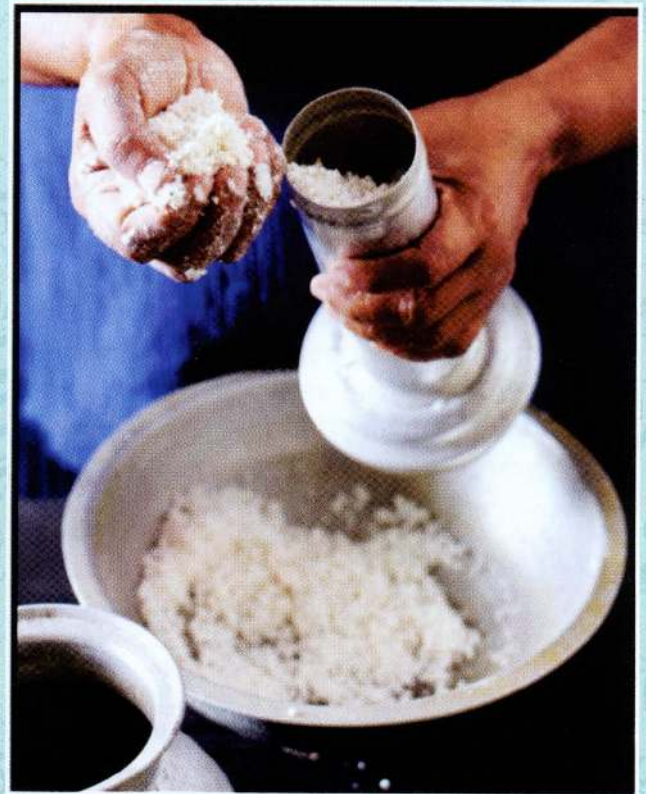
After this, the children went to the shrine room. In the shrine room, they lit the lamp and sang a few

Hindu hymns. After this, the holy ash was applied to their forehead by the elders.

When they came out of the shrine room, those who were attending the schools would sit cross legged on the floor and work on their school homework.

There was neither refrigerators nor microwaves in Jaffna at that time. All food had to be made fresh. For breakfast they cooked either pittu or string hoppers (both made out of flour and then baked).

The flour was mixed with hot water and made into clay. It was then chopped into small granules. These flour granules were then poured into a specially made cone type of vessel with fresh grated coconut added in between. It was then baked using fire.



Pittu - Chopped flour is poured into a cone shaped vessel with fresh grated coconut added in between

Amma came home for lunch during weekdays after school. Lunch was mostly rice, vegetables and meat or fish. Sea food was inexpensive. Everything was cooked fresh.

After Lunch, it was back to school. School was over around 4 pm. Tea was usually taken around 4 pm along with freshly made pastries. It was house work again until 6 pm. As the sun was setting, the ladies gathered on the lawn and exchanged village news



Usually the pittu is eaten with fresh Sambol. Sambol is made with freshly grated coconut with smashed chillies, chopped onions and salt.

and other stories. The older women prepared dinner.

Since there was no electricity at that time, sunset meant lighting the kerosene lamp to illuminate the house. As they lit the lamps, the household people gathered in the shrine room.

By 8 pm, they would have dinner and at 9 pm, the lights were off and everyone went to bed.

On weekends, Amma did the house chores. They had a large house and a big lawn. Lawn had many trees including coconut trees. Since the house was close to the ocean, there was a constant sea breeze. The breeze broke many of the branches of the trees



String hoppers - made out of rice flour.

which fell on the ground. The lawn had to be swept every day.

Amma loved to read English papers and books. Her grandfather subscribed to the only English paper at that time - Daily Mail. She read every page of the English paper. In the early 1930s, the biggest news dominating the papers was the abdication of the British King Edward VIII who had decided to marry Wallis Simpson, an American socialite and a divorcee. The King was succeeded by his niece, Queen Elizabeth. Amma was mesmerized by the Queen's beauty and manners. It was a pleasant



Pannai harbor. Seafood was purchased off the boats

moment when Amma and Ayah were invited to a function where Queen Elizabeth attended when Her Majesty visited Colombo in 1951.

Everything was made fresh. Everyday, in the morning and the evening, Grandfather would go to the harbour (called Pannai - half a mile away) to fetch fresh shrimps and fish from the fishing boats that had just arrived.



கூதும் வாதும்
வேதனை தரும்.

Gambling brings
misery.

Thamby's Life in Jaffna

Following the wishes of Grandmother Thangamuthu, Thamby settled down in the ancestral property of Thillai amma in Koddady. The backyards of both houses faced each other.

Amma was eighteen years old when her father settled down in Jaffna and she stopped her schooling that year. She was a bright student and was very eager to continue her studies. In Jaffna, Amma should count herself lucky to have been allowed to continue her schooling two years after she attained puberty.



The House in which the Thamby family lived in Koddady, from Google Maps, 2016

Immediately after puberty, most girls in Jaffna were married off. That was the norm. Amma's mother had married at fifteen.

Parents feared that if girls were allowed to go to school beyond puberty, they might come into contact with men and perhaps may fall in love with someone or might even elope with their loved one.

The caste conscious Vellala Jaffna society - to which Amma belonged - very much feared their girls falling in love with a man outside their caste, especially a low caste man. Such an alliance would bring shame and agony to the family. It would be considered suicidal in terms of upward social mobility ambitions of the family. Other Vellala caste

members would boycott such families whose children had married into low caste.

Amma was happy that her father had come back to settle down in Jaffna. Though she did not live in her father's house, he would visit her quite often. She was also happy to see her brothers. Grandmother would not permit Amma to go and live with her father and stepmother. She still feared that step mother's house may not be the ideal place for her granddaughter to live.

When Thamby came back to Jaffna he had high hopes as regards to his professional life. He was a British educated Barrister and a successful lawyer in Rangoon; he spoke perfect English; he was rich. He was a Jaffna man, deeply rooted in the Jaffna culture but adopted the British mannerisms and customs. He dressed like the British; he spoke like the British; he was disciplined; he was not corrupt. He had all the necessary qualities of a successful man in that period.

Though he was born and brought up in Jaffna, he had lived most of his adult life in luxury in Rangoon. When he came back, he simply could not adapt to the living conditions in Jaffna - the hot and humid weather. To his horror, he found that legal practice in Jaffna was quite different from Burma. There were many establish lawyers in Jaffna at that time. They guarded their territory fiercely. One such prominent and powerful lawyer was Mr. Sam Sabapathy. It was difficult to break Sabapathy's Legal practice.

Two decades later, Thamby's youngest son, Thurairatnam, will fall in love with Sabapathy's daughter and marry her. The rivalry between the old generation is smoothed away by the loving union of the next generation.

Word got out soon that Thamby was a stern master and would not flip flop and dance to the tune of his clients. Jaffna is a very unforgiving society for those

who wished to change the social fabric. Thamby was trying to introduce his British mannerisms and work ethics into Jaffna - and Jaffna society was not prepared to accept it.

Fortunately for Thamby, he had saved enough money from Rangoon. He also bought real estate in Jaffna, including some land near a beach resort in Keerimalai at the tip of the Jaffna peninsula known as "Lawyer's alley".

Thamby was a strong disciplinarian. He expected his sons to pursue higher studies. Unfortunately with no proper supervision - and their mother not present in the house to supervise - the sons focused more on sports and other extracurricular activities and less on education. Thamby became angry and frustrated.

Thamby also expected his sons to do the house chores and lead a disciplined life. His young sons were not interested. Their interest were movies, sports and spending time with their friends. He became irritated with them and they avoided him.

It was strongly believed that there were marital problems in the house as well. Thilai amma was quite different from his deceased beloved wife. Kanmani was only fifteen when she married Thamby. She revered him. She was a perfect housewife who was very devoted to her husband and children.

Thilai amma's background was quite different. She had married Thamby when she was in her early thirties ; she was independent; she hated discipline ; she loved Tamil movies; she took things easy in life; she believed that family duties should not interfere with fun. She could not sacrifice her fun. Thillai amma was a good woman but her style was quite different from Kanmani.

Thillai amma was kind to her children and step children. She was concerned for her small daughter who was born when her father was almost fifty.

Thamby wanted everything well organized and disciplined. He became frustrated with the situation in the house. He slowly started to withdraw from his wife and children. He became silent.

Thamby's love for his deceased Kanmani was always present. He kept a picture of Kanmani in the shrine room and prayed in front of her picture every day. This might have fueled further marital discord between the two.

Whatever the cause of their marital troubles, it is clear that Thamby's second marriage did not extinguish the love he had for his first wife, Kanmani and he remained devoted to her memory all his life.



ஆவதும் பெண்ணாலே!
அழிவதும் பெண்ணாலே!

Woman creates
and destroys.

Typhoid Strikes MAVIDDAPURAM

In 1936, Ayah was working in Colombo. Typhoid (a gastrointestinal disease that manifests as severe vomiting and diarrhea) was spreading fast in the districts of Jaffna.

Maviddapuram was a remote village without any proper medical facilities.

Typhoid struck Maviddapuram with all its ferocity. The entire village was quarantined. Ayah's whole family fell sick, including his mother.

However, it was Ayah's three teenage sisters (aged 17, 15 and 13) who were most affected. They were severely dehydrated. Ayah's family was so poor that they did not have the economic means to move them to the Jaffna Hospital.

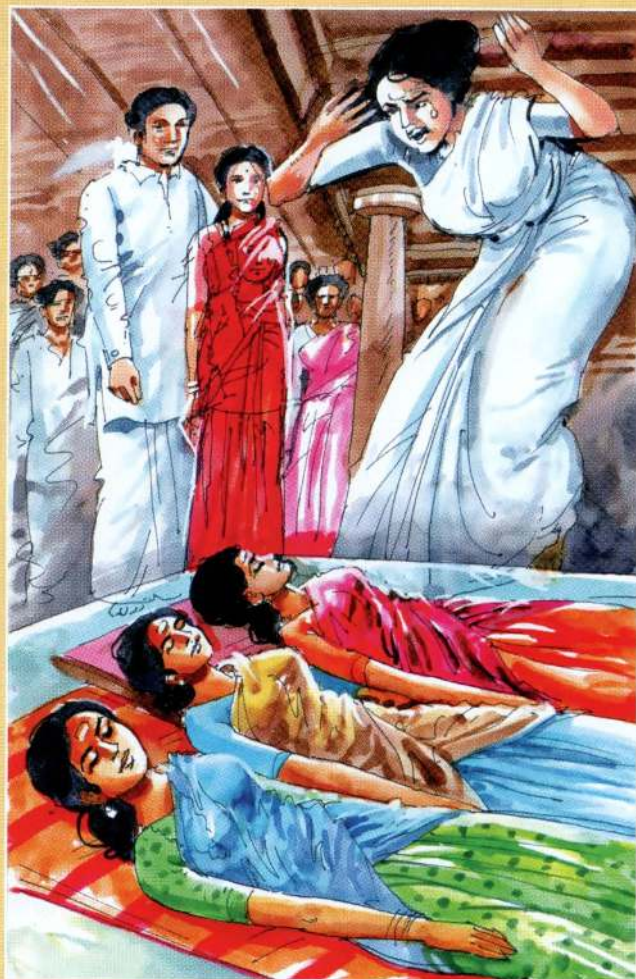
All the three young sisters would die within a few days in their home. Ayah's younger brother (Bala - 10 years) too was on his deathbed and the family had given up hope. After the tragedy of the three deaths, the family had given up all hopes and were in deep despair. Bala miraculously survived.

The loss of the three young girls made it to the newspapers. Papers in Jaffna carried the tragic news prominently. Amma who was a voracious reader, read the news in the paper and truly felt sorry for the family - she did not know at that time that she would marry the brother of the sisters, two years later.

Ayah, who was working in Colombo, went to Jaffna for the funeral. The family was very poor. They did not have money to give a decent burial for the three teenage sisters.

Ayah would later recall that he went from house to house in Maviddapuram, knocking on the doors, begging for money as a loan for conducting their last rites.

He was turned down in every house where he sought help. Not knowing what to do, they lifted the bodies of the three sisters to the cemetery where they were given a simple cremation.



Artist's version of Achimutu at the funeral of her three teenage daughters.

When Ayah became the director of the Ceylon Transport Board in late 1960s, he gave job opportunities even to those families that had spurned him at the time of crisis. He never carried a grudge against those families.

Ayah's mother was inconsolable having lost three of her teenage daughters. Unfortunately, we do not know the names of the three sisters.

This had a major impact on Ayah's life. Later in life, Ayah was deeply attached to his daughters. He would say that his sisters closely resembled his own daughters.

Search for the Bridegroom for Amma

Amma was 21 years old in 1938. She was a beautiful teenager. She was fair and tall. She had her mother's features. She had a long and sharp nose. Her arms and legs were long and well-proportioned. She was mostly dressed in half saree-skirt and blouse with the chest covered by a cloth.

It was a common custom that the girls in Jaffna were married off when they attained puberty - generally before they were sixteen. Amma was already 21 years in 1938.

The chances of getting married for a Jaffna girl dramatically decreased as they grew older. It was widely believed that older women were less fertile and would not give birth to many children.

It was a common custom in Jaffna to give birth to as many children as possible. Most of the families had an average of 6-7 children. Since the infant mortality was pretty high then, the families did not want to take any chances with their posterity.

The economy at that time was mostly agricultural. This meant that the families needed more bodies - especially men. Hence, families preferred many children.

Thamby was being very choosy. He had given clear instructions to the marriage brokers that he wanted a tall handsome man who was not only wealthy but also educated. It is difficult to find a man with all the three characteristics then and even now.

Thangamuthu was getting frustrated with Thamby over the marriage issue. She felt Thamby was too choosy and was delaying the marriage.

Thangamuthu with no formal education was very smart and savvy. She decided to take charge of the situation. She sent messages to her trusted marriage brokers that she was looking for a boy for her loving granddaughter. She laid down two conditions. The boy should be tall and he should be of good character. She always emphasized on good character as the sole factor in such alliance. She would always say that if someone has a good character, wealth will follow.

She received many proposals from her brokers. She rejected many of them. One wealthy and educated boy she rejected would later become a popular government agent of Jaffna - the highest government position in Jaffna.

Thangamuthu was particularly interested in one proposal. The boy came from a remote and poor village. She was told the boy was fair and tall. She had some inkling that the boy would be a perfect match for Amma.

She then sent her son, Ramiah, to personally check out the boy. Photographs were not widely prevalent at that time.

At the request of his mother, Ramiah travelled to Colombo where Ayah was living in a chummary (a house where bachelors reside). Ayah was twenty five years in 1938.

Ramiah would later recall "When I went to the chummary, he was seated on an easy- chair. He talked to me politely and inquired about the girl. He also told me about the desperate financial situation his family was going through."



Artist's version of Ramiah talking to Ayah about the marriage proposal

Ramiah brought up the dowry issue. Ayah cut him off, saying that his uncles would discuss about dowry when they visited their house.

Dowry was deeply entrenched and inseparable in the Jaffna society. The bride's family always gave - depending how wealthy the bride was - money, real estate and jewellery for the bridegroom.

Dowry is one of the most ancient practices and defined as 'an amount of property or money brought by a bride to her husband on their marriage'. But the

origins of dowry are far nobler than we imagine. Dowry was started by Kings, wealthy businessmen, and other influential people of the society as a means to give girls their due in the ancestral property as in those times, even till recent times, all the money and property went to the sons only.

When it was started in the ancient times, the dowry provided to the bride by her parents gave the new couple a good financial start. It was done with a good motive.

However, over the centuries the system was abused and the bridegroom's family demanded dowry based on the bridegroom's educational qualifications and how much the parents had spent on their son's education. In Jaffna Society, Doctors received the highest dowry followed by Engineers and Government servants.

Ayah's family was in dire financial circumstances. Amma's father was a wealthy man. He was prepared to give a considerable amount of wealth as dowry but only to a suitable match.

It was the custom for the bridegroom's family to visit the bride's family after the initial discussion has taken place.

Generally, the parents of the bridegroom would visit the bride's house with their relatives to see the bride and conduct the final round of negotiations on dowry. The bridegroom will see the girl only on the day of the wedding.

The situation in Ayah's family was quite pathetic and desperate. His father was dead; his mother was bedridden with a suspected cancer of the womb; his eldest sister had marital troubles with her husband, Veerasingham. Veerasingham had demanded that Ayah marry his own sister and when Ayah declined, he had threatened to shoot dead Ayah with his rifle.

Finally, a couple of Ayah's uncles visited the Amma's house. Thamby was shocked by the mannerisms and dress of these poor villagers.

Discussion on Dowry was intense with no end to it.

Thamby's patience was thinning when Thangamuthu took control of the situation. The wily old lady calmed down everyone with her jovial talk. She then made sure everyone was served with homemade sweets. After serving sweets to the guests, she called out for Amma to bring coffee for the visitors.

Amma emerged from the kitchen, draped in a beautiful red silk saree with a tray full of earthen

mugs with hot coffee. She did not look at the men. She walked straight up to them and held the tray in front of them.

The visitors took time to take the mugs off the tray. This gave ample time for these older men to look at the "would be" bride closely. They were mostly interested in the color and physique of the bride. They were satisfied that the girl would be a suitable match for their nephew.

After much discussion it was agreed that Amma would receive Kanmani's diamond necklace in addition to the many pieces of gold jewelries, a large piece of prime land in Jaffna town and cash of fifty thousand - a very large amount in 1938 - as part of the dowry. Thamby was indeed generous with money for his loving daughter.

It was widely believed that the step mother, Thillaiamma was not too pleased with this, especially parting with the diamond necklace. It was natural for her to look after the interests of her own small daughter. Thamby dismissed her concerns.

Ayah's uncles were pleased with the size of the dowry. Ayah was neither part of the discussion nor did he know the size of the dowry. Generally, it was the elders from both sides who decide on such matters.

It was after the agreement on the matter of dowry that Ayah's uncles dropped the bombshell.

They demanded cash of fifty thousand as "donation" to the bridegroom's family in addition to the dowry.

Donation is different from dowry. Dowry was always written in the name of the bride and always stayed within the newly married couple. Donation was an outright cash gift to the Bridegroom's family. Once given, it never came back to the would-be couple.

The cash donation went mostly to help the sister(s) of the bridegroom. The bride (or the bridegroom) had no control over the donation.

Donation was rarely asked - and given - in those days and those families that asked for such donation were looked down upon.

Ayah's uncles informed Thamby that the Sangrapillai family situation was desperate and that donation was needed to take back the large swaths of lands that had been mortgaged by the family. They were on the verge of losing them.

The bridegroom's mother was very worried about losing her ancestral lands that had been with them for generations.

When Thamby heard this, he became angry and started to raise his voice. He was on the verge of breaking the alliance.

It was at this moment, the brilliance of Thangamuttu's wisdom came into play.

Grandmother was calm and she overruled Thamby. She said she understood the sad plight of the Ayah's family. They were prepared to give the donation as long as the Ayah's family wrote all other remaining properties (that had not been mortgaged) in Amma's name.

Ayah's uncles did not expect this. They were in desperate need of cash. They whispered amongst them for a couple of minutes - there were no phones to contact Maviddapuram. They finally relented and agreed.

Immediately, Thamby summoned the lawyers and a formal agreement was written. Ayah's house and a large piece of land close by were written in Amma's name.

The piece of land in Maviddapuram always remained in Amma's name. She wrote part of the land as a dowry for her eldest daughter - Jayanthi. After Ayah's death, she wrote the remaining half of the land to Ayah's niece (Ranee) at the request of Ayah before his death.

The house was a different story. Almost a decade after the marriage, Ayah's sister, Sellama (who was living in the house) wrote to Ayah that her little daughter (Ranee) was bitten by a snake and her husband, Veerasingham, was prepared to renovate the house only if the entire house was written to them (by this time they had settled their differences and were living together). The letter was sent to Ayah and he did not show it to Amma. Perhaps, Ayah was embarrassed to ask Amma.

It was Amma's custom to wash all the clothes on weekends. While going through the clothes, she found the letter in Ayah's shirt pocket. When she read the letter, she was sad about the snake bite.

She then asked Ayah why he did not discuss the letter. Ayah said that he was embarrassed to ask her.

Amma told Ayah she was more than glad to write the house back to his sister. When Ayah heard this, he was more than pleased. He took the train to Jaffna the same night and the house was transferred to his sister in a couple of days. It was only after the transfer, the house was renovated and expanded by Veerasingham.

Wedding July 7th, 1938

The year was 1938 and electricity had just come to Jaffna. Thamby was very keen to put on a grand show for his eldest daughter. He had the power and the financial means.

Thillai amma was apprehensive that her husband was going to spend a large sum of money on his eldest daughter. She was concerned. Thamby had no legal practice in Jaffna. He was spending the money he had saved in Burma. Thillai amma had two young children, and her daughter was only three years old at that time. She was concerned for her daughter who will need large sums of money when she comes of age and is ready to be married off. This is understandable as it is only natural for a mother to be concerned for the welfare of the child.

It was believed that Thamby spent about five thousand rupees for the wedding expenses - quite a large sum of money at that time. In 1936, a family of four could easily exist with twenty five rupees a month in Jaffna. So, the lavish pomp with which the wedding was organized could easily be imagined.



Banana tree with fruits.
Decorations made out of coconut leaves

The entire house and the outer compound were illuminated with colored lights. Hundreds of villagers had gathered outside the house to witness the blinking lights for the first time in their life. Two massive banana trees with fruits hanging on them were erected outside the house. This was a traditional decoration among the Jaffna Tamils. Decorations made out of coconut leaves were strung all over the house. The outer compound of the house was cleaned with cow dung water - considered to be a potent antiseptic.

At the front entrance of the house on a table, two brass lamps with cloth wicks soaked with oil was burnt. The table also had a bunch of banana fruits.



Lamps with cloth wicks are burnt. A couple of bunches of banana fruits and joss sticks laid on the table. An aluminum vase with water adorned with a coconut on top. All these are considered necessary for a wedding as they are believed to chase away evil spirits.

Inside the house, the ladies were busy with hectic activities. Everything was well organized and several groups of ladies were assigned for different tasks.

The dominating figure in the house was none other than Thangamuthu. Though aged, she made sure

that everything was going as planned for her granddaughter.



Jaffna sweets are mostly made out of rice flour, spices and sugar and are deep fried.

Thangamuthu had chosen a rich red Kanchipuram silk as the wedding saree.



Kanchipuram saree the bride wore for the wedding



Jaffna sweets

Sandalwood paste was rubbed all over the bride's body. Amma was then dressed with the beautiful red gold Kanchipuram wedding saree - considered to be the purest and most expensive among the sarees. Amma's mother's diamond gold necklace adored her neck.

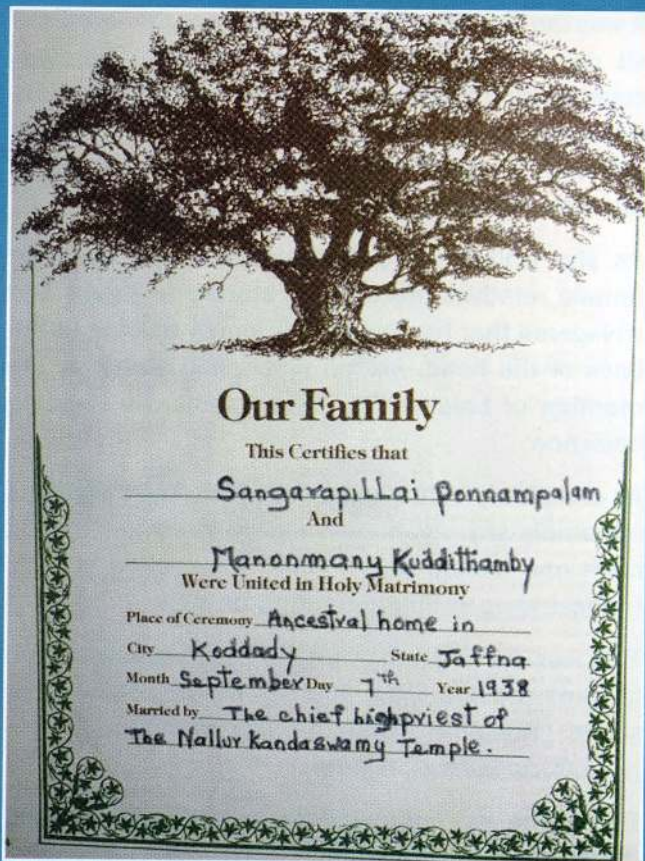


காதலுக்குக்
கண் இல்லை.

Love
has no eyes.

WEDDING

Part Two



From Amma's diary

While Amma's house was a hive of activity, Ayah's house was sombre and quiet. His mother, Achimuttu was very sick and bed ridden. She was depressed. She had lost three of her young daughters a few years back. Her husband had died mysteriously. She had a huge amount of debt.

Achimuttu did not attend the wedding. It was decided that Ayah would be accompanied by one of his uncles and his sister (Sellama). Her husband, Veerasingham, refused to attend, still angry that Ayah did not marry his sister. He was threatening to show up at the wedding with his rifle to shoot dead Ayah.

Ayah told us later he had placed a few young able

bodied men from Maviddapuram outside the wedding house in case his brother-in-law showed up with his rifle.

Ayah's only loving brother Bala , who was 12 years old, attended the wedding and was by the side of Ayah throughout the wedding. He was seen clinging to Ayah.

Ayah did not have proper clothes to wear for the wedding. He was dressed in a freshly pressed starched verti and a white shirt. They all got in to a couple of rented Austin cars and drove to Koddady.



Amma's house where the wedding took place. Picture taken in 2014. The house still exists but is not in use. This house is more than a century old.

Koddady was anxiously waiting for the bridegroom. They were surprised to see only a few people in the bridegroom's party.

Ayah was warmly welcomed at the entrance of the house by two older women who circled small fires around him. The fire was meant to chase evil spirits keeping an eye on the new bridegroom.

Thamby welcomed Ayah by hugging and garlanding him. Ammah's brother - Rasaratnam - was the bridegroom's man (Mappillai tholan). He washed Ayah's feet with sanctified water. As per Jaffna tradition, Ayah slipped a golden ring into the ring

finger of Rasaratnam. Rasaratnam was thrilled. Ayah was then slowly led into the house.



Small fire on top of lemons that was circled around the bridegroom on arrival

Amma was seated inside her room. News reached her that the bridegroom had arrived. Her heart started to beat fast. Her face became flushed and she was seen perspiring.

Until this moment she has not seen Ayah. Neither had Ayah seen Amma. She hoped that her Man was tall, fair and handsome. She was very anxious. She has never sat next to a stranger in her life. She was about to do that.

Ammah was dressed in a golden red color saree. The saree was heavy and weighed at least 20 pounds and the borders of the saree were laced with gold. She had a thin physique and found it uncomfortable to wear such a heavy dress.

Ammah had her wedding saree with her for many decades. Only when the saree had started to decay, did she consent to part with it. In the early 1970s, she sold the saree for a hefty sum to a goldsmith, who took the gold out of the saree using a chemical process.

Amma was decked with gold jewelries all over her body - gold chain with emerald stones hanging in the mid forehead, diamond necklace around her neck, a diamond nose ring, five to six pairs of golden bangles, and a golden belt with diamonds around the waist.

Amma's friends who had seen Ayah arriving, dashed into the room where Amma was seated and described Ayah - tall, fair and handsome. Amma had her head down and felt extremely shy. She simply blushed.

Ayah was led into the house by Thamby and made to sit at the wedding altar (panthal). The wedding altar was decorated with fresh flowers.

The Tamil Priests now started the rites. These rites were complex and recited in ancient Sanskrit hymns which nobody at the wedding understood. This recitation will go on for about two hours. Most of the ritual included invocation of fire.

It was the turn of Amma to come out of the room and sit down next to the bridegroom. Her face was covered with a thin see-through white muslin cloth. With her head bowed down, with a very slow step and with a heart beating very fast, she walked in. She was perspiring profusely.

As she walked in, surrounded and led by close female relatives, her friends started to giggle and whispered that her husband is slowly balding at the back of the head. Amma was taken aback at the mention of balding. She had no chance of going back now.

As she slowly came and sat next to Ayah, she was extremely shy. Ayah then slowly lifted her muslin cloth and looked at her face; she looked at him. Glances were exchanged - that was all.

That was the very first time they both saw each other. In tamil proverb there is a saying describing such scene "Annalum nokinan Avalum nokinall" (He glanced and She glanced).

This will be very surprising for the grandchildren and the modern day generation. Here was a proposed marriage where both the bride and the bridegroom see each other for the first time only on the day of the wedding. Yet, they would go on to live together happily for 51 years and successfully raising seven children.

It was time now for the most important part of the wedding - tying the thali (22 carat heavy golden chain with gold pendants hanging from the bottom). This gold chain is the symbol of the marriage and would stay around Amma's neck until she became a widow.

Amma let go of her thali only after Ayah passed away in 1990. On a trip to Singapore and India in 1990, she exchanged the gold chain for another piece of jewellery at a goldsmith shop in Singapore. She deposited the gold pendant in the offering box at the



Artist's version of Amma and Ayah's wedding ceremony , Koddady, 1938

famous Meenakshi Amman temple in Madurai in southern Tamil Nadu, a state of India.

After the wedding ceremony was over, both the Bridegroom and Bride were led to a table where breakfast was served. That was the first time they ever spoke to each other. Many decades later Amma said she vaguely remembers Ayah asking her how she was doing.

Immediately after the breakfast, Ayah and Amma left for Maviddapuram. Ayah's mother was bedridden and was very weak.

When Ayah and Ammah reached Ayah's home, his mother could not come to the door to welcome them. She received the newly married couple in her bedroom. Tears were rolling down her cheeks and she was uncontrollably weeping with tears of happiness. She profusely thanked Amma for the financial help. She then hugged her son and said "I am very proud of you. You did your duty to your family. You are a blessed soul. I shower my blessings on both of you. I pray that your family will be prosperous and all your children will do well in life." Ayah and Amma were very lucky to have received such blessings.

After a few hours of stay in Maviddapuram, they left back to Amma's house - the thought of his brother in law, Veerasingham, with his rifle constantly worried Ayah.

That evening, there was a big reception in Amma's house. Thamby spent lavishly for his daughter. Thamby again had the entire house lit with electric lights and the compound was dazzling with colored lights. People watching from outside the house were mesmerized by the lights.

FIRST NIGHT

Spending the honeymoon outside the house was unheard of in the conservative society of Jaffna.

Generally the newlywed couple would spend the first night in the bridegroom's house. Since Ayah's house was in a poor condition, the couple spent the night at Amma's house.

It was the custom to decorate the bed room with fragrant jasmine flowers. Joss sticks were placed in the room ; a tray with fruits was placed next to the bed.

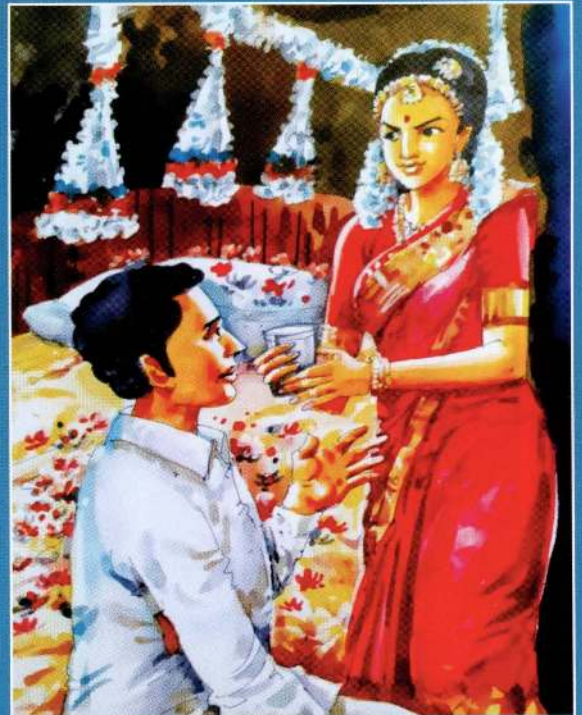
AYah would enter the bed room first and wait for his bride. Outside, the bride was surrounded by her friends; there was laughter and giggles among the

girls. Amma was very shy and apprehensive. This is the first time she would spend the night with a stranger. She was carrying a silver tumbler with hot milk for Ayah.

Amma's friends slowly pushed her into the room and latched it from outside.

As she slowly walked towards the bed where Ayah was seated, the lights went off.

Many decades later when asked about her honeymoon, Ammah blushed with shyness.



Amma and Ayah's first night. Amma handing a silver tumbler of hot milk to Ayah

Next morning, the relatives will be anxiously waiting for the bride to open the door.

It was always the Tamil custom that the woman got up before their husband - Amma continued doing this until Ayah died.

The house people will be keenly observing the facial expressions and body language of the bride to know how good the first night was. If the bride was smiling and happy, it was presumed everything went well.

Amma would go straight to the kitchen to fetch a cup of tea for her Ayah - another habit Amma followed until Ayah died in 1990.

After spending a week in Jaffna, the newly married couple left for Colombo where Ayah worked.

Starting a New Life

The Journey

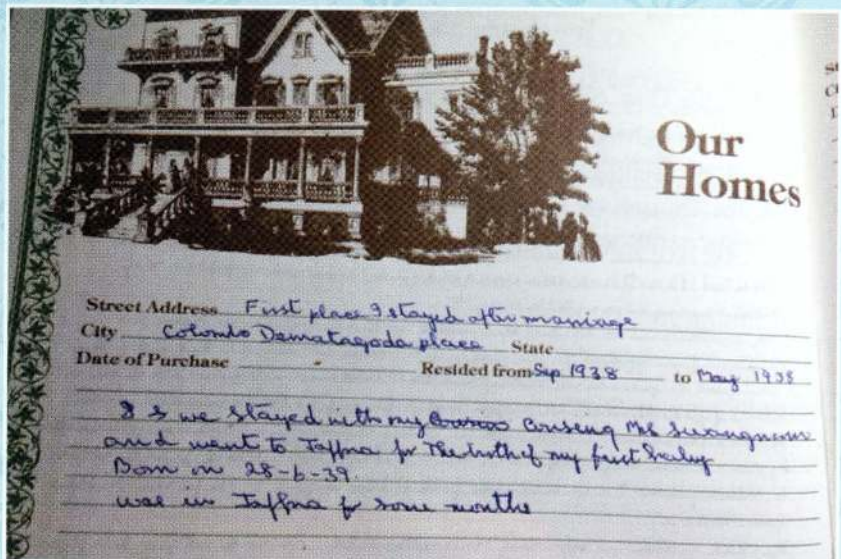
After the wedding, both Ayah and Ammah would spend a few days in Jaffna. They would then depart for Colombo by train. Though Amma was happy that she was stepping in to a new life with Ayah, she was also sad to leave her home, especially her grandmother. Grandmother had been everything to her; she was more than a mother and a guide. She had taught, guided and shaped Amma. Before Amma left, grandmother advised her, "You are going to live with your husband. Both of you should understand and love each other. Give and take, compromise and enjoy your married life." What words of wisdom from a woman with no formal education.

Amma would move to Colombo permanently after her marriage. She had been in Colombo on a few occasions before when she landed at the Colombo port from Burma. Her stays in Colombo were brief.

In 1938, she moved permanently to Colombo and will remain there until 1983 when she migrated to the United States.

When they went to Colombo after their marriage, they stayed with her Cousin - Mrs. Sivagnanam - at Dematagoda - a small suburb of Colombo - from Sept 1938 to May 1939.

Mrs. Sivagnanam was Amma's mother's sister's eldest daughter.



Ayah was interested in volleyball. After work, he would get together with his friends and play volleyball.

Ayah was diagnosed with Diabetes at the very early age of twenty one. He did not take any medications for a couple of years after he was diagnosed. His diabetes was not revealed to Amma's family prior



Amma - early 1940s

There was a special saucepan in the house in which Amma would boil the needle and glass syringe every morning. Once the water had cooled down, insulin would be loaded into the syringe. It was Amma who gave insulin to Ayah, mostly in the thighs. Since the needle and syringes were expensive, the same needle was used for at least a year before it was changed. By the time the needle was changed it had become so blunted, it hardly got in to Ayah's muscles.

It was only after the children moved to the USA that Ayah was provided with disposable syringes and needles.

Ayah was very fond of sweets. Amma made sure he ate no sweets in the house. Later in his life, he was desperate to have sweets at any cost. There were no sugar free sweets in Sri Lanka at that time. He would go to restaurants secretly in the evenings to have his favourite sweets - his favourite sweet was jilabey, which oozes sugar from the inside.

Next morning when his urine was checked, it would turn dark red indicating consumption of high sugars the previous night. When questioned, he would meekly smile.

Ayah worked at the Attorney General's office. By this time, he had obtained three degrees granted by the University of London :

BA -honors

BSc - honors

MSc- Economics -honors

His major focus was on transportation economics.

However, the pinnacle of his educational success would come a few years later.

Very soon Amma would become pregnant with her first child. It was the custom for the mother to return to her parent's house for the confinement.



Not much has changed to the Dematagoda train station

to marriage - Jaffna people kept their illnesses very secret.

His Type One diabetes which required insulin will come to light only after a few years of marriage. Medical facilities were very poor in Sri Lanka in 1938. Though insulin was on the market, only rich people could afford it. Amma did her best trying to control it with food and local remedies such as drinking vegetable juice - bitter gourd juice.

It was only in the early 1950s , Ayah started to take daily insulin. By then the price of Insulin had come down. Injecting insulin for Ayah became a process.



நாடகமே
உலகம் !

World is a
Drama.

The Birth of the First Child

Sitharthan - 28.06.1939

Very soon, Amma would become pregnant with her first child. It was the custom for the girls to return to their parents' house for the confinement. She left for Jaffna in January of 1939. Her first child - a son - was born at the Jaffna hospital on 28. 6.1939.

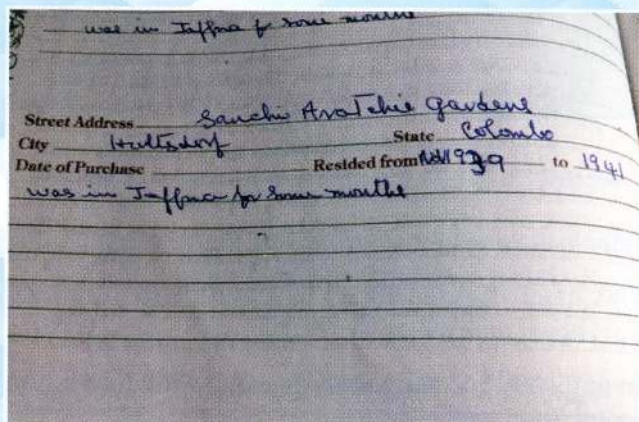
Ayah had gone to Jaffna a few days before the birth and was present at the time of the birth of his first child. There were no ultrasound or other sophisticated diagnostic tool to identify the sex of the baby. It was only at the time of the birth that both the parents would know whether it was a boy or girl.

The boy was fair and had sharp features. Ayah named the boy Sitharthan. Lord Buddha, who was born as a Hindu, was also named as Siddhartha by his parents. Ayah left week later to Colombo. Amma returned to Colombo after a couple of months of stay in Jaffna.

In the meantime, Ayah had found an apartment, Sanchi arachi Gardens, in Hultsdorf. They stayed at this place from November 1939 until 1941.



Row of houses in Sanchi arachi gardens, picture taken in early 1900.
Amma and Ayah lived in a similar house.



Town hall, Colombo, 1936



Chandramohan, mid 1940s.



Amma with Chandramohan, mid 1940s.

Ayah named his second son, Chandramohan. It is a Sanskrit name meaning 'as attractive as the moon'. Ayah took Sanskrit as a subject for his BA degree.

The boy was fair and looked beautiful. After a few months of stay in Jaffna, Amma returned to Colombo.

The rented house at Sanchi Aratachi gardens was leaky and the children became sick quite often. They moved to the adjoining suburb, Dematgoda, in 1942 and stayed there until 1944.



Chandramohan with a rifle, Rudramawatte

The Death of Thamby

Amma's father, C.K.Thamby, died in Jaffna on Sept 1, 1943. He had been ill for a couple of months before he passed away. He had an estate about forty miles away from Jaffna and it is believed he contracted a water borne illness at the estate that led to hepatitis which then led to cirrhosis of the liver. He was sixty years old at the time of his death.

He was an illuminary and was highly qualified. He was wealthy and had many ambitions. He married his first wife - Kanmani - at the age of 33 years. Kanmani was 15 years. They had six children in quick succession - the sixth child, a girl, died after birth. Kanmani died at the age of 28 years. His marriage with Kanmani lasted thirteen years.



C.K.Thamby (1883 - 1943).
Photo taken in England, 1925

He married again when he was 47 years. The second marriage was somewhat forced upon himself. He had no choice. He had a boy and a girl from his second marriage.

His second marriage to Thillai amma was somewhat rocky. She was a great lady. She was fun loving. Thamby was strict, rigid and



Saraswathy (Thamby's daughter through his second marriage) at the time of her marriage, mid 1950s, Jaffna. Mahendran is seen behind.



Saraswathy, picture taken in 1982, Colombo. Saraswathy died in the mid 1990s due to cancer of the throat. She was a kind hearted and loving person.



Thamby's son through Thillaiamma, Thiyagaraja (in brown suit), London, 2018. Others in the picture (left to right) : Manoharan (author), Malathi, Chandramohan, Ranjana and Padmini



Thillai amma with granddaughter, early 1970s, Jaffna

her to Yogar Swami (the same Saint who had predicted A.M. Pillai's future).

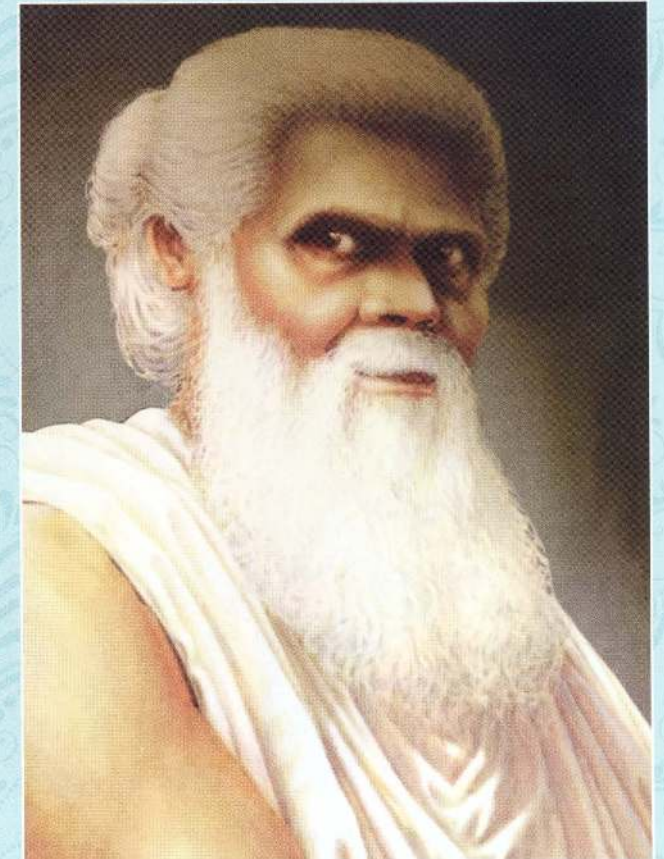
Yogar Swami told Thamby to change the girl's name to Saraswathy (Tamil goddess of literacy). Within a few months, the girl started to talk.

He was an ardent follower of Mahatma Gandhi. He travelled to India and met Gandhi. He observed silence once a month. He became a vegetarian.

He spent most of his time prior to his death deeply immersed in prayers and books.

Amma had mentioned that her father never discussed his marital discords with her. Perhaps, Thamby thought Amma was too young to understand and discuss his difficulties with him.

Thillai amma spent time with the Sangarapillai family in Colombo in the latter part of her life. She was a kind hearted lady and was fun to be with. She loved good food and movies. She did not have a chance to enjoy life at a young age. She always treated us with love and affection when we visited her in Jaffna. She wore only a white saree with no jewels after her husband's death.



The great Saint of Jaffna - Yogar Swami. Thamby was deeply devoted to him.

disciplined whereas she loved good things in life including Tamil movies. He was immersed in his law and religious books, she was carefree. Thamby was methodical. She did not pay much attention to the education of her step-sons; he was worried that they were not excelling in their studies. There was marital discord between the two.

After he moved to Jaffna, his legal practice did not flourish as much as he had hoped. He was disappointed and frustrated.

Thamby became very quiet and withdrew from social life. He became irritated with his young sons. He would berate them if they did not keep the house clean or study. The young sons kept away from him. They nicknamed him "Taskmaster."

Thamby was disappointed that his sons did not pursue higher studies like him - except his last son, Thurairatnam. He was not alive to see Thurairatnam becoming a doctor.

He was seen regularly shedding tears in front of the Kanmani's portrait in the shrine room.

His young daughter (through his second marriage) was not talking even at the age of five. He, then, took



Ratnasabapathy and Saraswathy

THE REMAINS
OF
C. K. TAMBE
(Barrister at law)
will be removed for cremation
TO THE
Villundi Crematorium
at 5 p. m. to-morrow
(Thursday, 2-9-43)
T. S. Jolly,
Tamil. 1-9-43
T.P.I.

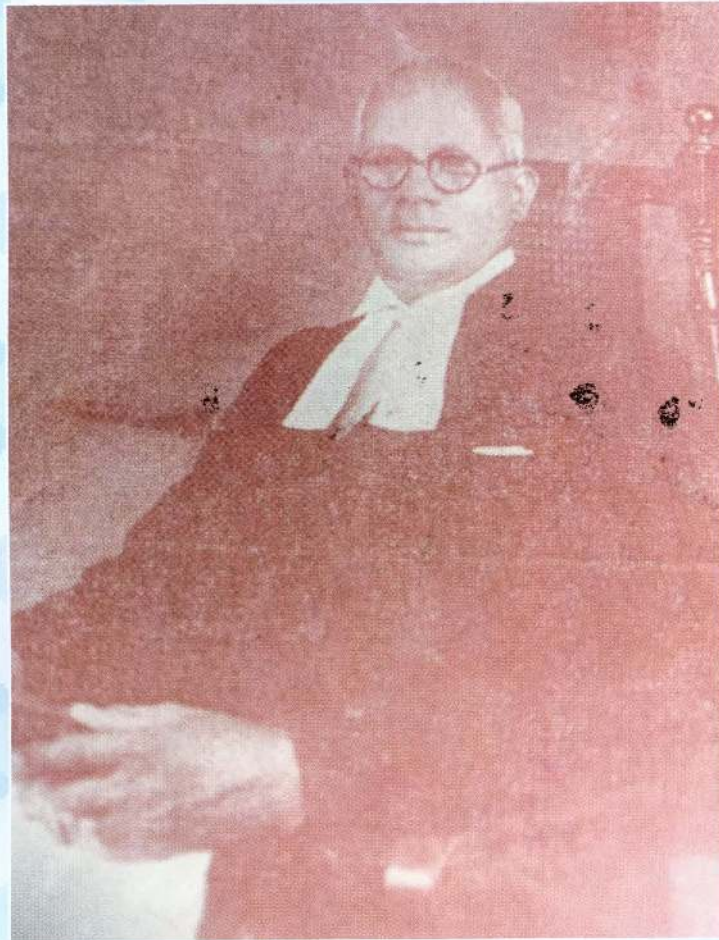
Obituary notice of Thamby

சார்லி
சார்லி சார்லி சார்லி
1902 1915

Thillai Amma Obituary Notice

Casinathar Kuti Thamby (C.K.Thamby)

1883- 1943



Karmayogi - his married life lasted only 26 years. The first thirteen years with his beloved first wife, Kanmani, and the remaining thirteen years with Thillai amma. He had seven children.

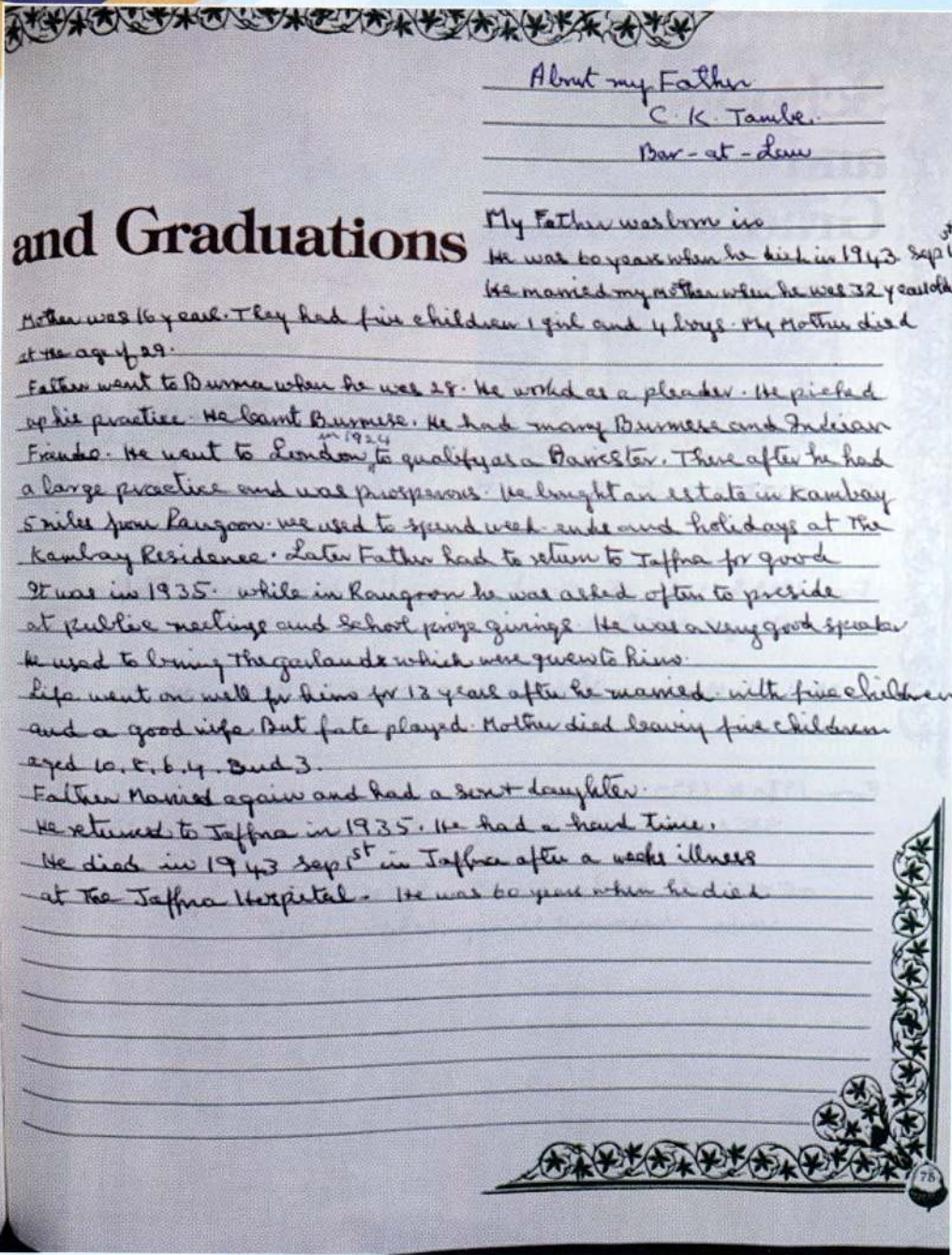
Notes about her father in Amma's diary.

My father was born in 1883. He was 60, when he died in 1943, September 1.

He married my mother when he was 32 years old. Mother was 16 years. They had five children, one girl and for boys. My mother died at the age of 29.

Father went to Burma when he was 28. He worked as a pleader. He learnt Burmese. He had many Burmese and Indian friends.

He went to London in 1924 to qualify as a barrister. There after he had a large practice and was prosperous. He bought an estate in Kambay, 5 miles from Rangoon. We used to spend weekends and holidays at the Kambay residence.



From Amma's diary

Later father had to return to Jaffna for good. It was in 1935. While in Rangoon, he was asked often to preside at public meetings and school prize givings. He was a very good speaker. He used to bring the garlands which were given to him.

Life went on well for him for 13 years after he married with five children and a good wife. But fate

played. Mother died leaving five children ages 10, 8, 6, 4, and 3.

Father married again and had a son and a daughter. He returned to Jaffna in 1935. He had a hard time. He died in 1943, September 1st in Jaffna after a week of illness at the Jaffna hospital. He was 60 years old when he died.

Thangamuthu (May 1944)

The year 1944 was a very sad and important year in Amma's life. She lost a soul she dearly loved and cherished - her grandmother Thangamuthu.

Here is what Amma wrote about her Grandmother in her diary.

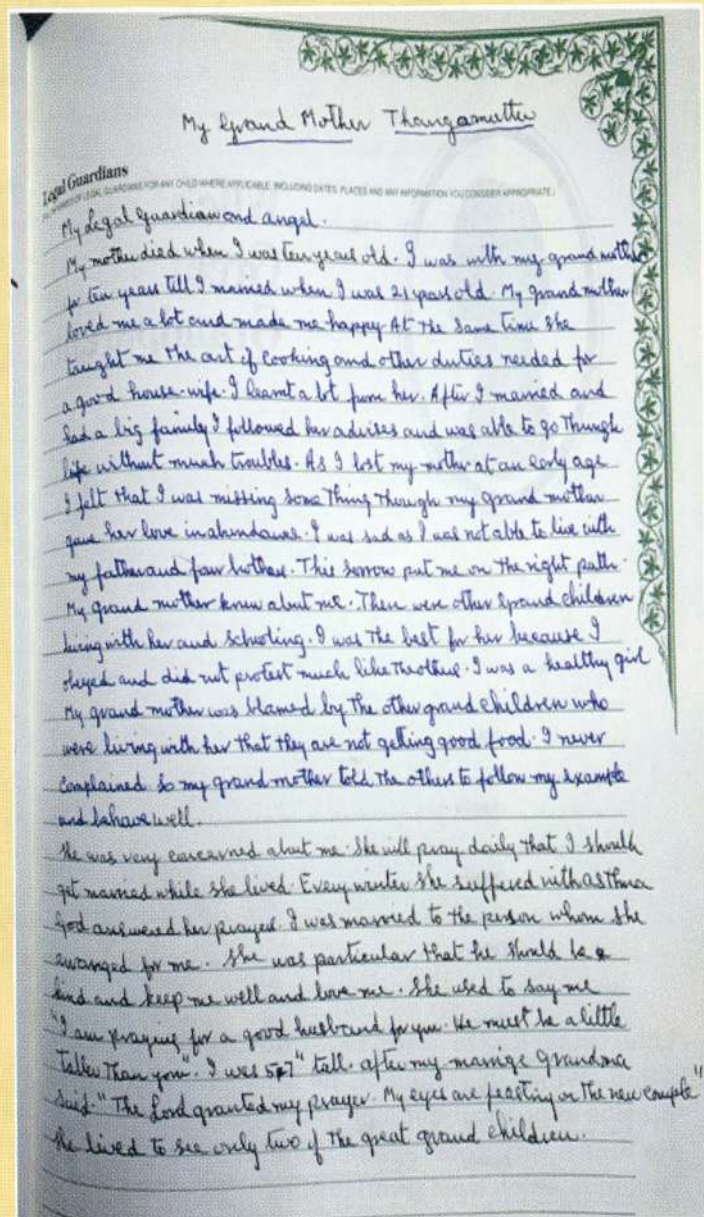
My Legal Guardian and My Guardian Angel.

"My mother died when I was 11 years old. I was with my grandmother (GM) from eleven years until I got married at the age of 21. My GM loved me a lot and made me happy. She taught me the art of cooking and the other duties needed for a good housewife. I learnt a lot from her. After I married and had a big family, I followed her advice and was able to go through life without much trouble. As I lost my mother at an early age, I felt I was missing something but my GM gave her love in abundance. I was sad since I was not able to live with my father and four brothers. This sorrow put me on the right path. My GM knew everything about me. There were other grandchildren living with her who were also of school-going age but I was her favourite since I obeyed her and did not protest like the others. I was a healthy girl. My GM was blamed by other grandchildren that they were not getting good food. I never complained. So, my GM told other grandchildren to follow me and behave like me.

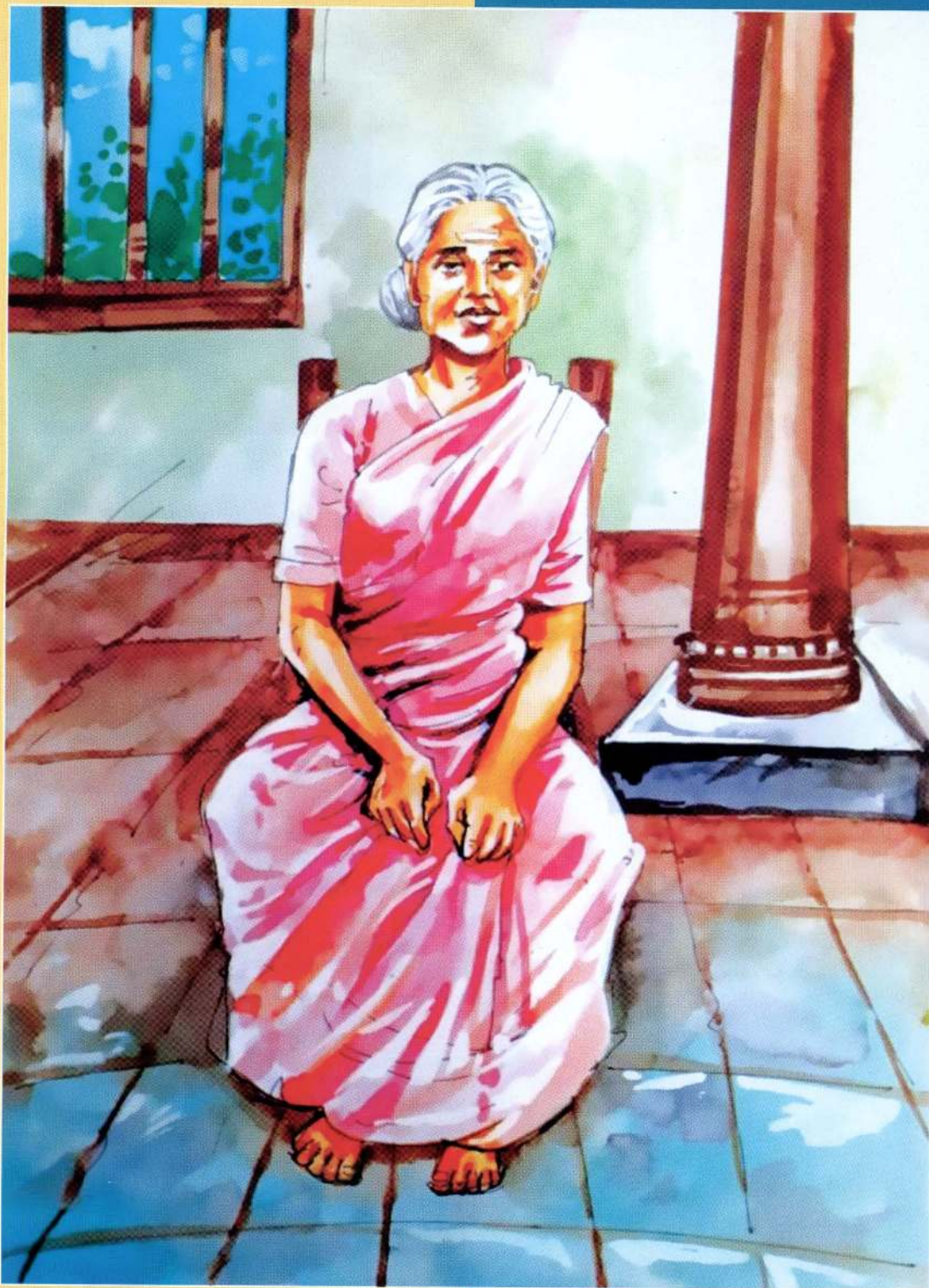
She was very concerned about me. She will pray every day that I should get married while she lived. God answered her prayers. I got married in 1938 and she passed away in May, 1944. I married the person she arranged for me. She was very particular that my husband should be kind and keep me well and love me. She will always say "I am praying for a good husband for you. He must be a little taller than you." I was 5 feet and 7 inches. After the marriage she said, "The Lord has granted my prayers. My eyes are feasting on the new couple." She lived to see two of her great grandchildren.

It is believed that Thangamuttu was in her early seventies at the time of her death.

Unfortunately, there are no photos of Thangamuthu.



From Amma's Diary



THANGAMUTTU - Loving Grand Mother of Amma. She sacrificed her life for Amma.

The Birth of Asokan (28.6.1944)



Asokan, mid 1940s

Asokan was born on 28.6.1944. Amma went to Jaffna for the confinement. Her Grandmother had passed away by the time Asokan was born. Amma was sad.

Ayah was present when the child was born at the Jaffna hospital.

Ayah named the new born son as Asokan - after the great Indian king, Ashoka.

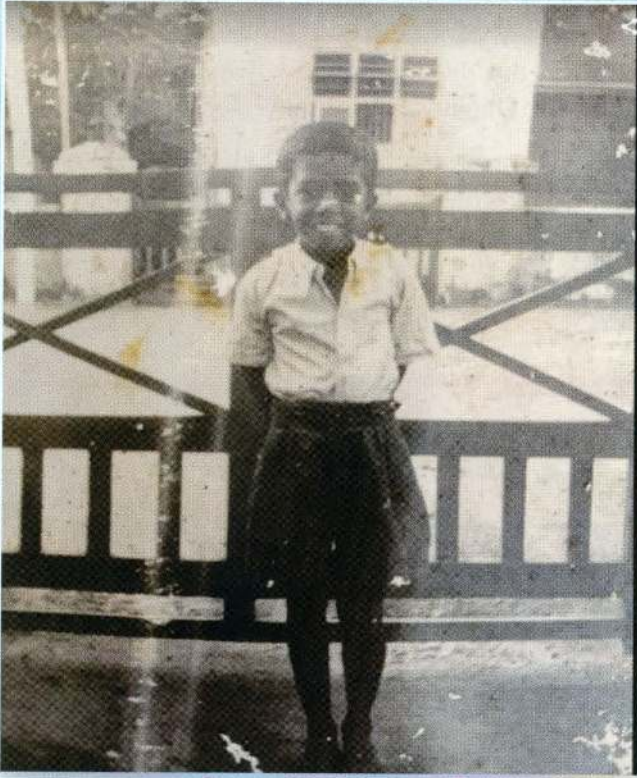
Birth place 28th June 1944
Jaffna 3.30 A.M. Laque Tamias Asokan
28-6-44

	12	Taurus	1	2		
11		Axe	Sat Sun Venus Mercur		Mercury on back	
10		Rabi Kingo Taurus (Lag)	Mar Rabi	3		
9	Ketu	Moon in Kingo Mar 28 22 10	Jup	4		
			Moon Neptun	5		
	8	7	6	Pisces		
4+8+10	- Maharaja yoga		Axe	Jup	3 4	
4+5	- Raja yoga		Ketu	Moon	Navambr	5
1+9	- Lakshmi yoga		Sun	Venus	Risces Laque	Rabi
1+2+5	- Dhanya yoga		Mar	Sat	9 8	7
7+4	- Raja yoga					
Buddha Aditya yoga Sun + Mercury together in Gemini sublimation for efficiency expert knowledge wealth name + fame						

Asokan's horoscope by Amma



Asokan with Ayah, early 1940s



Asokan, Colombo, early 1950s

The rented house at Dematagoda was leaky and was quite some distance from Ayah's office. By this time, Ayah had joined the Motor Commission Office and was a rising star. The Motor Commission oversaw all transportation issues.

One day Amma visited Sellathurai who was her first cousin from her father's side. At his house, she met his newly married sister-in-law Rasamani (Baby Aunty). Rasamani was young and stunningly beautiful. She had married an Apothecary (mid level medical providers who were mostly posted in rural areas).

Amma quickly struck up a friendship with Rasamani. This strong friendship would last until



Sellathurai in white shirt and pants, 1982.



Sellathurai's wife, 1982

Rasamani passed away in the late nineteen nineties. Both families have maintained strong relationship to this date.



Rasamani in pink color saree, seated next to Amma ,1982

Rasamani felt sorry for Amma with three young sons. She then suggested that Amma should move closer to her house. She started looking for a house

and found a suitable house in Borella. The house at 4, Rodney Street will be their residence until 1950 when they moved to their permanent residence at Rudramawatte in Wellawatte.

Rasamani was very helpful. Amma would later recall the immense help Rasamani provided and requested that her children keep in touch with her family.

Rasamani also had a son, who was a classmate of Chandra Mohan. His name was Sivananthan. He married his cousin and now lives in Colombo. Pathma was the second child. She married her high school sweetheart, Sunny, and they also live in Colombo. Third was a boy, Rajan, who has settled down in the UK. The last boy was Gajendran who married a Filipino and has settled down in Dubai.

Both Amma and Rasamani had wished a matrimonial alliance between the two families but it never materialized.



Rodney Street, Borella, from Google Maps, 2019

Ayah's Academic Achievements

P. SANGARAPILLAI

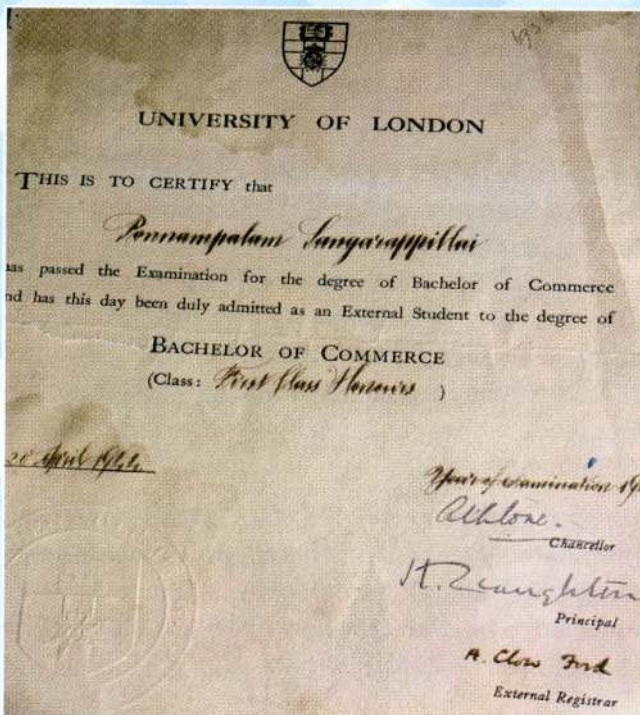
**B.A. (Lond.), B.Sc. (Econ.) (Hons) (Lond.),
B.Com. (Hons.) (Lond.), M.Sc (Econ.) (Lond).**

Ayah was a child prodigy. He possessed an amazing photographic memory. He was extremely good in mathematics. It is unfortunate that none of his sons or daughters would pursue a career in mathematics - though his fifth son, Mahendran, would qualify as a certified Accountant after Emigrating to the United States.

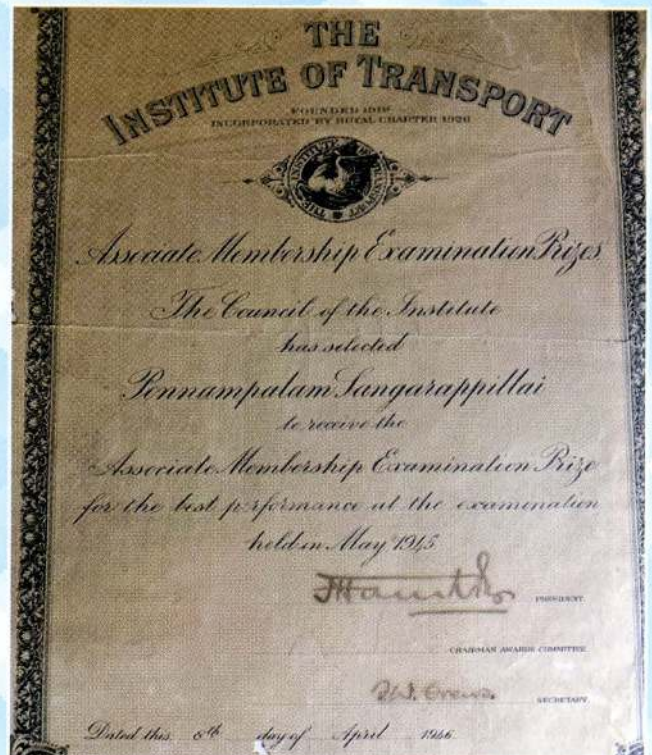
By 1943, Ayah had obtained Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Science (B.Sc Economics), Bachelor of Commerce (B. Com) and Master of Science in Economics (M.Sc).

All these degrees were awarded by the University of London. He passed all the degrees with honors.

However, the pinnacle of his success came when he was placed **FIRST** in the Commonwealth (there were more than 70 countries in the Commonwealth which were ruled by the British) in the London Institute of Transport examination. He brought honor not only to Sri Lanka but also for the Sri Lankan Tamil community. He was also awarded a cash prize.



BCom Degree Certificate, awarded by the University of London



Certificate of the London Transportation Exam where Ayah was placed first in the Commonwealth

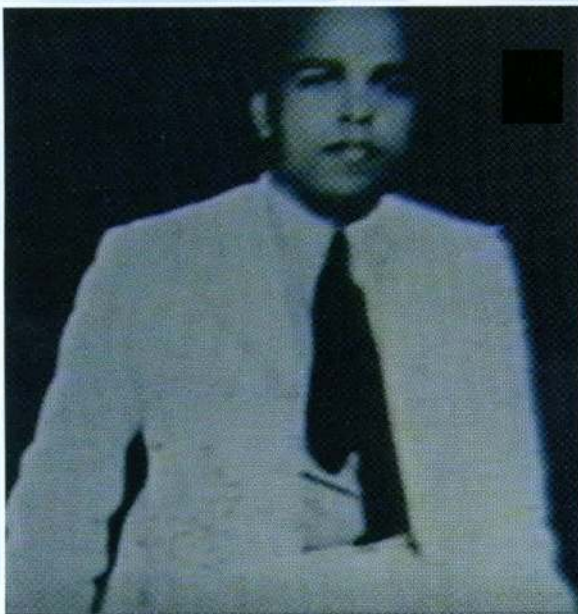
He was the first Transportation Economist in Sri Lanka - a career that he would pursue to the end.

There were many offers for Ayah, including scholarship to England to pursue further studies. However, Ayah rejected all scholarships- including the prestigious Jeffree Ree scholarship. He did not want to be away from his young family.

By this time, he had started to take insulin for his diabetes. He depended on Amma to take care of his medical needs - food and health. It was also believed that coming from a village, he was not comfortable adapting and living in the western world. He was still too much attached to his roots and did not want any change on his cultural landscape.

Three to four decades later, all his children would leave for the US and Australia and both he and Amma would also move permanently to the USA in 1983.

It was in 1944 that Ayah was fully diagnosed as an insulin dependent diabetic. There is no doubt that he had developed diabetes earlier but the full blown symptoms manifested only around 1944 when he was asked to take Insulin. This will continue until he died in 1990.



Ayah, mid 1940s.

There were many complications due to his diabetes such as diabetic neuropathy - severe pain in extremities - and many bouts of kidney infections and ultimately losing his right leg below the knee in 1983. Ayah would scream in his sleep with pain in extremities.

Ayah was also a heavy cigar smoker. It was a common practice in the villages to smoke locally wrapped cigars. Maviddapuram was famous for its locally grown tobacco leaves. Both men and women smoked cigars at a very young age. Ayah's sister smoked too. It was widely believed that the cigar leaves were traced with abin (cocaine). This led to some sort of addiction for those who smoked those cigars.

Ayah smoke a branded cigar known as "Kanagalingam", named after the person who manufactured the cigars.

The cigars were pitch dark and they had a terrible odor. Each bundle had about 10 cigars. In 1935, it cost about 25 cents. As he grew older, Ayah got addicted to the cigar and could not survive without it.

His sons clearly remember Ayah summoning them to buy cigars at odd times of the day. Only a few shops in Wellawatte sold these cigars. In the late nineteen seventies a bundle of this brand was sold for 10 rupees. Ayah would finish one bundle each day.

Ayah would light the cigar with matchsticks. Since the cigar was very moist, he needed more fire - some time more than twenty matchsticks to light a cigar. He also had the habit of throwing the match sticks onto the floor. He was indeed very messy when he smoked. He smoked the cigars inside the bathroom to have an easy bowel movement as well. The house was indeed messy and smelly when he smoked. The children hated it.

He gave up his cigars only in 1983 when his leg was amputated. After quitting his cigars, he would crave for a good smoke occasionally. Without Amma's knowledge - and with the help of his son, Mahendran - he satisfied his craving.

Death of Sitharthan

28.6.1939 - 9.7.1946

Sitharthan was turning out to be a very bright boy. He had just started going to a nursery. Everybody at his school were impressed with his intellect. He was loved by his teachers. His uncles, too, loved him. He was a lively boy and was friendly with everyone. He was very fond of his two younger brothers.



Street near the house where Sitharthan lived - early 1940s

One day after returning from school, he complained of a stomach ache. In those days, it was usual in Sri Lanka to prescribe a liquid diet for any small ailments and Amma did the same. However, his stomach ache did not show any signs of subsiding. Amma took him to a nearby clinic. The doctors at the clinic provided him with some medicines and advised Amma to put him on a strict liquid diet.

Next day, Sitharthan developed fever and started to vomit. Naturally, both Ayah and Amma were worried. They rushed him to the Government Children's Hospital in Colombo.

He was seen by an eminent pediatric surgeon. The doctor was called Paul and he was considered to be a talented doctor. Even though his medical abilities were considered superior to the other doctors in Colombo, he was not considered lucky.

Dr. Paul diagnosed Sitharthan with having a ruptured appendix. By this time, the boy had high fever and was going in and out of consciousness.



Amma and Ayah - mid nineteen forties, Colombo.

The doctors were of the opinion that he had to be operated upon immediately. He was prepared for the operation. Amma was inconsolable. Sitharthan, though a young boy, was mature and assured Amma that he will be alright and wiped her tears with his innocent hands.

As he was wheeled hurriedly into the operating theatre, he kept looking at her. He kept calling for her. Even though he was brave, the sight of the operating theatre and the strange men and women in oversized gowns must have frightened the seven year old boy.

Amma prayed to her village Deity, Meenakshi Amman. Tears were rolling down her cheeks. She was helpless. She prayed to her grandmother. It was agonizing for a mother to see her seven year old son taken into the operating theatre.

It was very difficult to keep superstitious thoughts away in moments of panic and fear. Dr. Paul's reputation of being unlucky at the operating theatre added to Amma's apprehension. Dr. Paul was a kind hearted doctor and an excellent clinician. However, he was not considered as an ideal doctor as he is known for not having "good hands" for surgery.

After a couple of hours, the boy was wheeled out of the theatre. Dr. Paul came out with a beaming smile

on his face proclaiming that everything went well.

Sitharthan, woke up from his sleep after a couple of hours. He was still in pain. He smiled at Amma who had been beside him ever since he had come back from surgery. That night Amma slept peacefully. She was happy that her son was safe at last. The joy of a mother who finds that her son has been cured was visible on her face.

Next day Sitharthan developed a high fever and was slipping in and out of consciousness again. He had gone into a septic shock. He then started hallucinating. When he was in his senses, he kept on asking for Amma.

He was on antibiotics but the fever did not subside. This was 1943 and there were not too many antibiotics.

By this time Amma knew that her eldest son was on his deathbed. The sound of Innocence crying out in pain was too much for the young mother to bear. She could not bear to look at the suffering of her young son. She would have given anything for her son to be completely cured. The sight of her son suffering and in pain was a torture for her.

She refused to go to the hospital. Sitharthan kept asking for her piteously when he was conscious.

On the fourth day after the operation, around dusk, Sitharthan quietly passed away.

Only Ayah and his brother, Bala, were at the bedside. Ayah did not show any emotions even though he was heartbroken. He was a traditional, quiet man. However, it was too much for Bala. He could not control the tears that welled up in him. The tears which Ayah controlled in his throat came gushing out in Bala. Bala had been very much attached to the boy. Sitharthan was like a younger brother to him.

Amma would later recall it was Bala who cried the most. Amma was too numb to show her emotions at the funeral. She was still in shock.

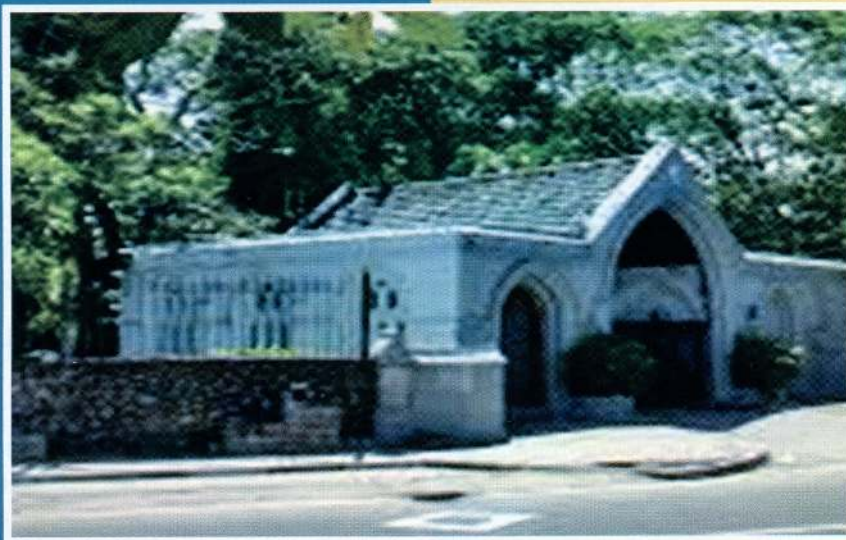
Hindu customs called for young boys to be buried - instead of being cremated as per Hindu customs.

Sitharthan was buried in a small plot at the main cemetery in Borrela in Colombo. Amma had the title of the burial plot with her for a long time.

Both Chandramohan and Asokan cannot recall or remember Sitharthan. In later years, Amma would occasionally talk about Sitharthan. She had five more children after Sitharthan's death and the task of bringing them up kept her from grieving too much. Life had become very busy for her.

It is a pity that Sitharthan died at such an early age. He was an extremely intelligent boy and had he lived, there is no doubt that he also would have turned out to be a successful doctor like all his brothers.

Sitharthan was seven years at the time of death .



Kanatte cemetery in Colombo where Sitharthan was buried

SITHARTHAN



WE MISS YOU ANNA (BROTHER)

The Birth of Nagendran

16.06.1947

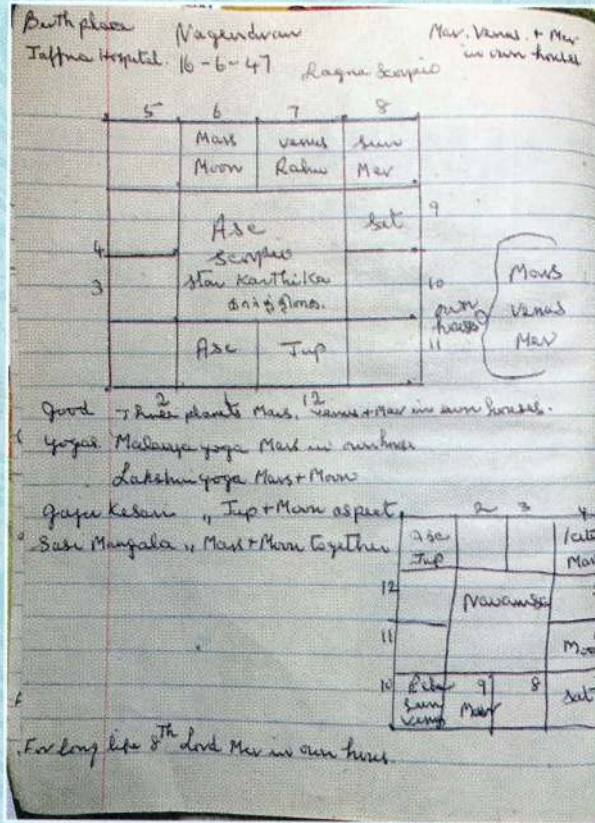
Nagendran was born on June 16, 1947 at the Jaffna Hospital. Ayah was not present when Nagendran was born. Ayah gave him the name Nagendran.

Nagendran was more fair complexioned than Asokan.

After a few months of stay in Jaffna, Amma would return to Colombo. That was the last time she went to Jaffna for her confinement.



Nagendran, Colombo, 1948



Astrological chart of Nagendran, prepared by Amma



Nagendran, Colombo, early 1950s



Nagendran, Rudramawatte, late 1940s

The Birth of Mahendran (25.2.1949)

Mahendran was born in Colombo at the Ratnam Nursing Home on February 25, 1949 at 1205 pm.

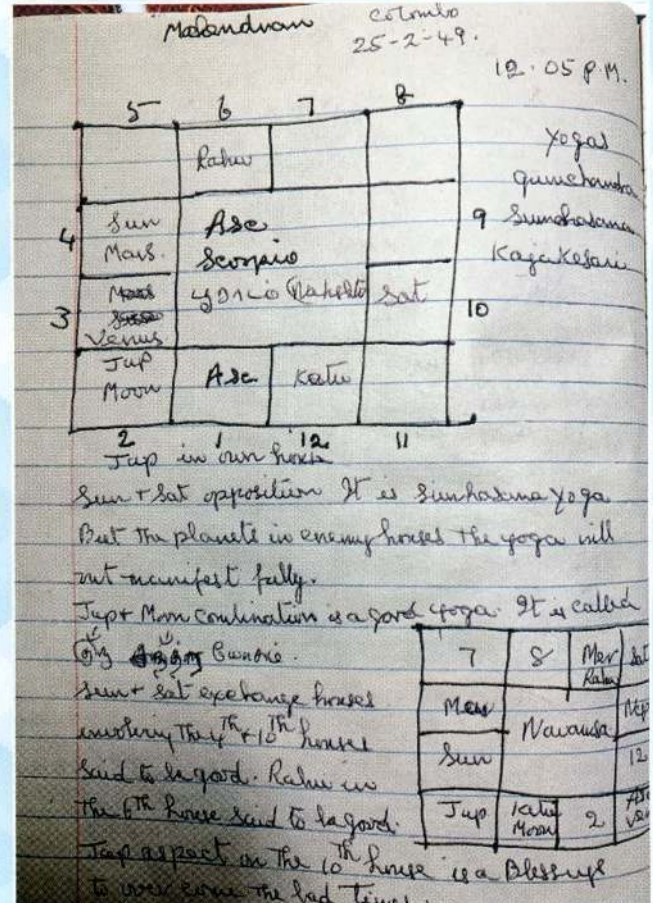


Mahendran, 1949, Colombo

Amma did not go to Jaffna since she had three young boys to look after. Her loving Grandmother and her father had passed away. So, she had no yearning to go to Jaffna anymore. And also, Colombo had much better medical facilities. Amma had become very experienced giving birth and wished to stay and deliver in Colombo.

It was in 1949 that Ayah, at the urging of his Brother in law (Veerasingham), decided to buy a plot of land in Wellawatte to build a house. By this time, Veerasingham had made up with Ayah and respected him very much.

Wellawatte was an empty suburb in Colombo in 1949. Jaffna Tamils were flocking to Wellawatte in the late nineteen forties and were calling it their home.



Mahendran's Horoscope prepared by Amma

Ceylon obtained independence from the British in 1949. Thousands of educated Jaffna men moved to Colombo in search of government jobs which were considered very lucrative and had rich retirement benefits.

Ayah bought 16 perch (4350 square feet) in a road called 34th lane which will later be renamed as Rudramawatte. He paid 6000 Sri Lankan Rupees (\$35 at today's rate) for the land. The house was about 2500 square feet with 5 bedrooms and two bathrooms. It also had a spacious verandah, a living room and family room. It had a spacious kitchen, dining area and a store room.



Mahendran, early 1950s, Colombo.



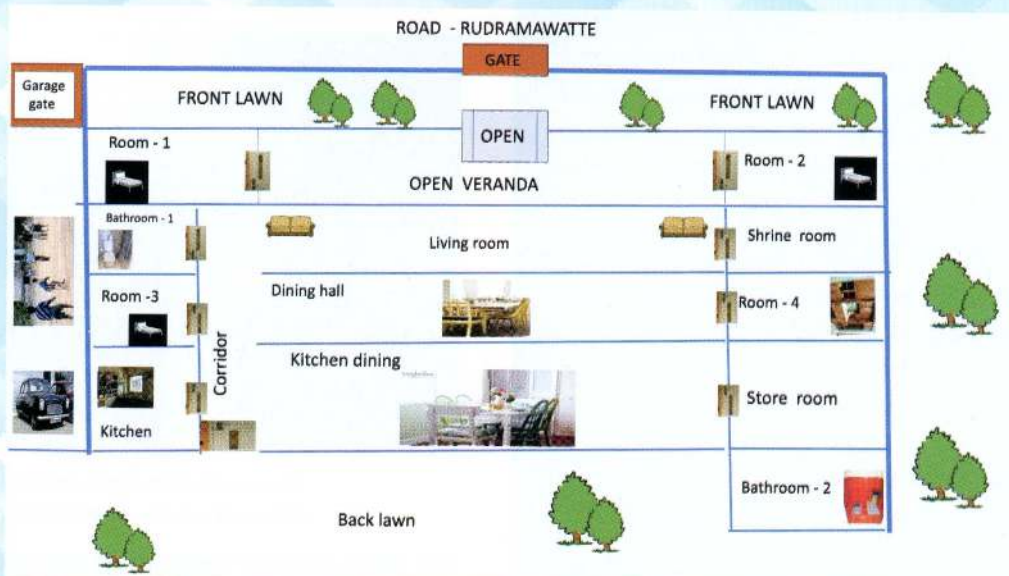
Mahendran Rudramawatte, early 1950s

The house also had an open terrace on top.

Ayah was the architect - in fact he drew the plans for all the houses he built (four in total).

Veerasingham, who had prodded Ayah to purchase the land, also purchased a land of a similar size behind Ayah's land. He was also building a house.

Unfortunately, Veerasingham had got into a bad debt and had to sell the land and the half completed house before it was finished.

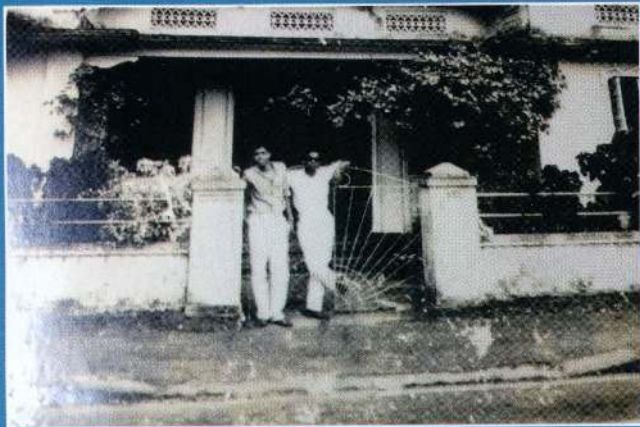


Rudramawatte house schematic diagram

Rudramawatte

Our Sweet Home - 1950

Amma and Ayah moved in to the house on June 1st, 1950. Ayah had taken a 30 year fixed mortgage for the house loan. Ayah would pay mortgage on this loan until 1975, just before Jayanthi's wedding.



33, Rudramawatte, 1960s.

In the picture are Asokan and Nagendran

The house was named Manoharai even before the twins were born. Amma would later recall that it was her cousin, Mahesan, who had given the name for the house.

It was in this big house in Rudramawatte, that the Sangarapillai family grew. Many of the most memorable and cherished events of the family took place in this house. The family lived there for 33 years and when they moved, it was because Amma and Ayah had to, and they moved to the US permanently.

All the sons and daughters grew up in this house. They made their friends here, they went to schools and universities from here. And it was this house in which they lived before they left abroad. Sri Lanka was cherished from this house. All that the children experienced in their native country were experienced when they were living in this house.

Some of the weddings took place in this house. This was a memorable house for the Sangarapillais. In our hearts and minds, the house is filled with pleasant memories and there is no doubt that the

house is a very lucky house indeed.

Many of the relatives who came from Jaffna stayed here.

The address of the house was 33, Rudramawatte, Wellawatte.

Everyone admired the house. Some were jealous - not an uncommon occurrence in the Jaffna society when others moved up both socially and financially.

Once, Amma found a parcel on the lawn which was filled with some hairs and human bones. This was done out of envy and was, no doubt, given by some black magic practitioner, to cast evil spirits on the Sangarapillai family and to bring them bad luck. But nothing worked against the family due to Amma's deep devotion to her Guru, Ramakrishna.

It was due to Ayah's astute financial management that the house was built and the mortgage was paid off.

The house had an open verandah. At night, all the wooden chairs from the open veranda were taken inside the house and the front doors were closed.



Photo taken from the verandah, one could see the opposite house.

The open balcony upstairs gave a great panoramic view of the surroundings. Amma always had a young servant to help her. These poor servants came from

the upcountry Indian Tamil community (they were quite distinct from Jaffna Tamils and had migrated from South India in the late eighteen hundreds to work in the tea estates).

They spoke the same language as the Jaffna Tamils. The Jaffna Tamils who were caste conscious did not mix freely with the Indian Tamils.



Living room, Rudramawatte, Cousin Mahesan (who gave the name for the house) on the left, 1970s. The floor had very intricate red tiles.

The house was square shaped. It had two rooms in front which were usually occupied by the older children. For a couple of years, one of the front rooms was rented out.



Outside the Rudramawatte house, Manohari in the middle, 1970s.

By the 1980s, all the children had left and it was Amma and Ayah along with their youngest daughter, Manohari, who lived in the house.

Jayanthi's family moved from London and settled in Colombo in 1981. They had the house renovated and built an upstairs apartment.

Unfortunately, the 1983 ethnic riots would change the destiny of our beloved house in Rudramawatte.



Family Deity, Goddess Shakthi. This picture always remained in the shrine room. This picture was presented by Mahesan, Amma's cousin



Shrine room, Rudramawatte, 1982. Taken during Manohari's wedding. Amma is seen with Nage, his wife, Gigi, and Jayanthy's eldest daughter, Kavitha. There were many pictures of Gods and Goddess and Amma spent much time in the room meditating in her later years. Sai Baba, Ramakrishna and Kanmani's pictures are also seen.

The beautiful house was given as part of dowry to Jayanthy when she married in 1975.

Amma and Ayah lived in the house until July 1983 when they emigrated to the USA.

Ayah thought they would return back to Sri Lanka after a couple of months in the US. But they never returned to Sri Lanka.



Living room, Rudramawatte, early 1980s .
Amma and Manohari are seen serving guests.

Amma visited Sri Lanka twice after she came to the US - in 1990 and 1994.

Jayanthi later sold the house in 1986 - by this time they had moved to Australia. She did not inform Ayah about selling the house and he was very much hurt over this.



Open terrace on top of the house, the picture was taken in 1965. Jayanthi in the middle and Manoharan and Manohari are beside her.



Rudramawatte, the living area. Picture taken in 1975 at Jayanthi's registration. Amma is seen with a neighbour.



Entrance to the kitchen area, 1975



Manohari outside the open verandah



Jayanthi in the open veranda of the house. Picture taken in 1975 just before she went to see her future husband, Raj



Shrine room, 1970s. Left to right : Jayanthi, Mahendran, Manohari and Manoharan



Garage; Amma with Manohari



Dining hall, Rudramawatte. Ayah's friend gifted the refrigerator for the work he had done for his friend to establish a bank in Jaffna (Tamil bank) in 1976



Outside the house, 1981. Rudramawatte had broad with pavement on both sides - the only road in Wellawatte to have had a pavement at that time. Amma with a friend of Manoharan from his medical school.



Opposite our house (Livera's house), taken in mid 1970s. Manohari and Asokan are seen. Asokan is seen shooting with his camcorder



Entrance to Rudramawatte, early 1990s.

Rudramawatte was one of the most beautiful streets in Colombo. It had many spacious and open houses on both sides of the road. After the racial riots of 1983, most of the Tamils left the country in a hurry, selling their homes cheap, mostly to rich Muslims. The Muslims then sold them to developers who built multi story apartment complexes.

When Ayah gave the house to Jayanthi as a part of her dowry, it was valued at 75,000 Sri Lankan rupees (about \$450 at today's rate). Jayanthi sold the house in the late 1980s for a few lakh Sri Lankan rupees. Today, the property is worth several million.



When Jayanthi and Raj moved from the UK to Sri Lanka in 1981, they remodeled the house and built a separate unit on the top of the house, Rudramawatte, 1993



Rudramawatte, 2010. The Tamil school Saiva Mangaiyar Kalagam is on the left side. Our house was two houses away. Our house was demolished in 1995 and a 7 story apartment complex was built.



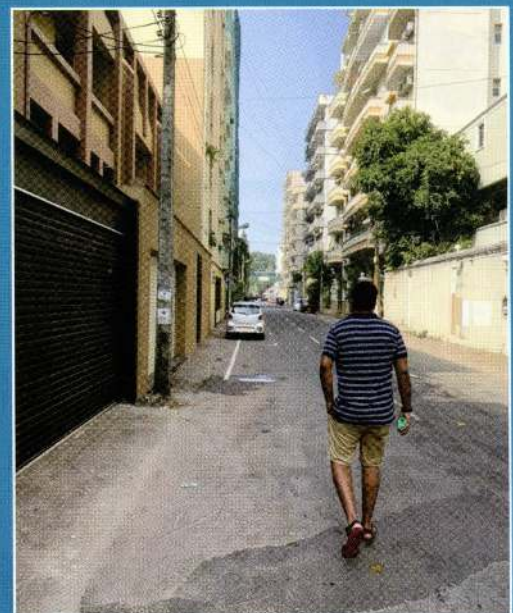
Rudramawatte, 2018. The road has the most number of flats in Wellawatte.



The new apartment building which had come up replacing our house.



The beloved house the Sangapillai family lived has been demolished and a seven story apartment has come up - 2018



Rudramawatte - 2018. The once broad road with pavement has been encroached by development. High rise flats line both sides of the road.

A Daughter is Born

Jayanthi 25.5.1952

Jayanthi (the first daughter) was born on May 25, 1952 in Colombo at the Ratnam's Nursing Home at 1 am. It was a normal delivery. Like Asokan, she was dark and had sharp features. Both Amma and Ayah were fair and it was surprising that they had a son and daughter who were dark.

The conservative Jaffna society was very allergic to girls who were dark. Tamil fathers were always worried when they had daughters who were dark skinned. The cruel Jaffna society demanded more dowry for dark skinned girls even if they had sharp features and were beautiful.

Monday 26/5/1952 at 1 A.M. Colombo
 ආර්යය මවු වස මරණ 12 ඉදි 09 1 00 am
 Jayanthy -

Jup 13-13		Venus 48-29	Moon 10-33	Yogas
Mer 25-29		Sun 11-25	Uranus	Anapha yoga
Asc 2039				Vasumati yoga
Rahu 2-39		6 th Anis	Kethu	Vasi yoga
				Malarya yoga
				Lakshmi yoga
	Mars 9-40	Sat 2-19		Jup Friendly (3) Axis
				Axis (3) own-enemy (Mer)
				Tame own - Enemy
				Sun (4) Taurus
				Jupiter - Friendly
				Ketu (6) dev - enemy
				(2) Rahu Apsu (Enemy)
				(8) Sat Virgo Friendly
				(9) Mars Libra 11

Asc	Sun	Sat
Rahu		
Venus	Mer	Jup
	Rahu	
Mars	Moon	

Maha dasha (Sat)
 6/8/1987 to 6/8/2006
 Mer 6/8/2006 to 6/8/2023
 Ketu 6/8/2023 to 6/8/2030
 Sun 6/8/2030 to 6/8/2036
 Mer 6/8/2036 to 6/8/2046

Jayanthi's horoscope prepared by Amma



Jayanthi with Ayah's Austin car, 1950s.
First car owned by Ayah .



Jayanthi, 1950s, Rudramawatte



Jayanthi, mid 1950s

Ayah had very much wanted a girl. He had lost three of his teenage sisters in 1936. He was deeply affected by their deaths. He was thrilled when he had a girl.

Though it was a joyous occasion for the family, for the father, the birth of a girl in the ultra conservative

Jaffna family also meant more economic hardship.

The day Jayanthi was born, Ayah started to save for her Dowry. This meant tightening of the budget at home - it was Amma who bore the brunt of this budget tightening.

When Amma ran out of money in the middle of the month and requested Ayah for more money for the household expenses, he would grumble that she was not concerned about her daughter's marriage.

Ayah loved and cared for all his children. However, he had a special bonding with Jayanthi. This bonding will last until he died. He would say that Jayanthi resembled one of his loving sisters who had died.

Jayanthi was the only one who had a magic spell over Ayah. He would do anything for her - she also knew this and got her things done in a very clever way.

Jayanthi had a mesmerizing magic spell on Ayah. She would request him to take her shopping and buy the things which she wanted. She would take him to jewellery shops and buy the jewellery she wanted.

Ayah never went for shopping, yet he would do it when Jayanthi asked him. Though sometimes, he also got irritated with her if she demanded more.

Once inside a jewellery shop, Jayanthi was asking for more jewellery and he raised his voice and scolded her "Do you want to bedeck yourself with jewelry from head to toe?" This brought laughter from those in the shop and subdued her.

Ayah loved both Jayanthi and Manohari, his other daughter. Manohari was quiet and introverted. She never asked for anything and was satisfied with whatever she had. Jayanthi was open and extroverted. She was quite bold and outspoken.



Jayanthi, 1950s, Rudramawatte



பூவும் மணமும்
போல.

Husband and wife
should be like a
flower and smell.



கழுதைக்குத் தெரியுமா
கற்பூர வாசனை.

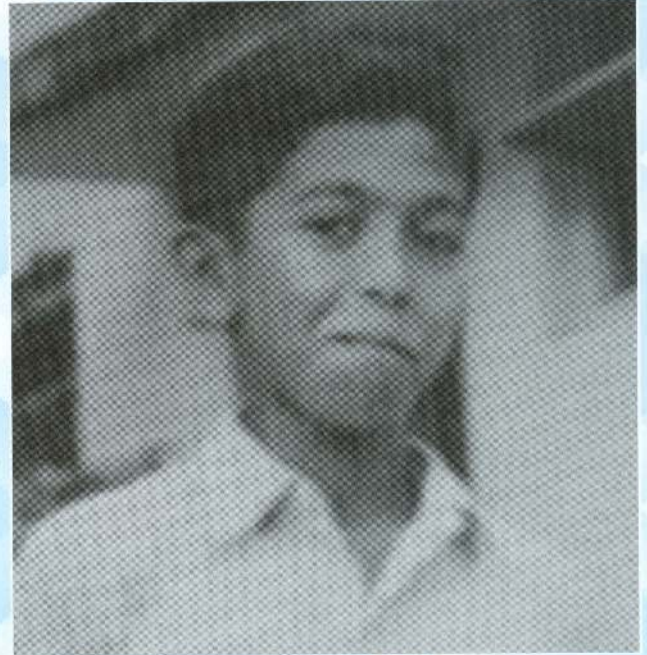
Castings pearls
before swine.

Life at Rudramawatte (1955-1960)

Ayah had risen to be the Assistant Motor Commissioner in the Motor Commission. The Motor Commission managed all road transportation in Sri Lanka.

He was known for his honesty, hard work and intelligence. Even though he was a high ranking official, he treated everyone with the utmost respect. Amma managed the house .

All the boys were enrolled at St. Joseph College, a premier Catholic school. Jayanthi was enrolled at Saiva Mangaiyar Kalagam, a Tamil school, a few houses away.



Nagendran - late 1950s



Asokan, 1950s



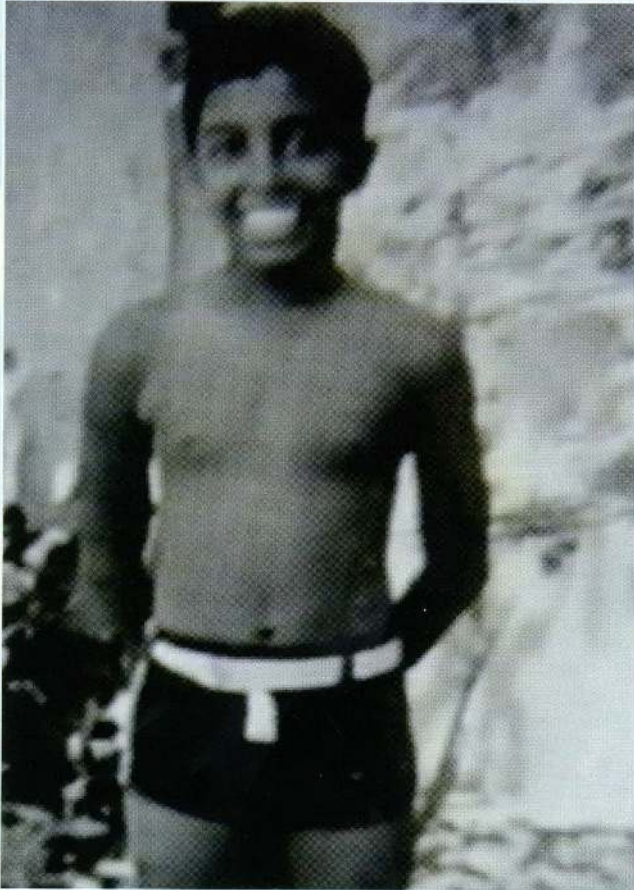
Rudramawatte, late 1950s - left to right,
Nagendran, Asokan, and Mahendran

Life was difficult for Amma. Ayah was always focussed only on his work and on bringing a hard earned paycheck home. He never did any house chores. It was Amma who did all the necessary shopping.

Amma got up around 4 AM to prepare breakfast. Breakfast was prepared fresh in Sri Lanka those days since there was no microwave or refrigerators.

Breakfast was mostly freshly baked bread - purchased from the nearby shop - butter and jam or coconut sambol.

The boys were picked up by the school van. Once the boys were gone, Amma quickly ran to the Wellawatte market to buy fresh vegetables, fish or meat.



Asokan, 1950s



Wellawatte Market

tightly tied with a cotton cloth and the name of the student tagged to the cloth. Lunch was always rice with two or three vegetables and fish or meat. She had to pack five lunches, including one for Ayah.

The boys would return home by 3 PM. They were hungry. Tea had to be prepared (coffee was rarely consumed in the house). There was some short eats like biscuits.

The boys would then work on their home work. By 5 PM, it was play time. Cricket was the most popular sport and they played on the streets.



Wellawatte market

After her daily morning shopping, she started cooking lunch. Lunch had to be ready by 11 am. They were picked up by men in cycles who delivered them to schools. Lunch was served in plates and then



Wellawatte, late 1960s. Royal Bakery was landmark shop. It exists even today and is extremely popular. Gandhi lodge, seen in the picture, was a popular vegetarian restaurant.

Amma would be back again in the kitchen cooking dinner around 6 pm. Dinner was either Pittu or String Hoppers (made out of baked rice flour) with a meat curry and vegetables. The four growing boys were fond of meat.

books. She usually slept around midnight. She worked tirelessly for the family.

There was no TV at that time in Sri Lanka. Radio was the most popular form of entertainment.

Ayah would drop the boys at school in the morning and would pick them up in the evening. He was a strict father, and mostly focussed on their studies. Amma was more relaxed and gave in to the demands of the children. When the sons brought their school report card, he looked at only one thing—marks obtained for Mathematics. If they had scored less, he occasionally whipped them with a rattan cane. Money was very tight with Ayah's government salary.



Pittu - made out of rice flour and baked.



String Hoppers



St. Joseph's College, Colombo.



Ayah's Driver's License

Except for Manoharan, all the sons had their education at St. Joseph's College. Manoharan went to Royal College in Colombo, a premier public school that had produced most of the Prime Ministers and Presidents of Sri Lanka.

Ayah applied for the Ceylon Civil Service - the top most and the most desired government job. The interview was conducted by British educated, well dressed men coming from aristocratic Ceylonese families.

Ayah was a village boy. He was not used to wearing suits and British manners were unfamiliar to him. He would later recall that he did not have a proper suit for the interview and had to borrow one from his friend.

She also cleaned all the utensils after cooking. The boys hardly helped with the house chores or in the kitchen. It was only after dinner that Amma had some time for herself. She mostly read religious



Motor Commission Office, Colombo

As expected, the interview was more about mannerism and style. Ayah did not qualify for the Ceylonese civil services.

It was ironic that at the same interview, there was another Tamil candidate. His name was Murgesar Murgesapillai. He came from an elite Jaffna family and was impeccably dressed. He was selected and he would later rise to be the Government Agent for Jaffna - the top most post in the Ceylon government. Decades later his youngest daughter (Mahaluckshmy) would marry Ayah's youngest son, Manoharan.

Many people at the Motor Commission made money by selling licenses for private buses even when the buses were not up to the proper standards to ply on the roads.

Ayah also could have made millions of rupees but he was a man of integrity. He was incorruptible. People were terrified of taking bribes when Ayah was present in the office. Ayah had a friend named Piyadasa. He was a friendly man. He would later recall that he had made thousands of rupees by merely staying outside the Motor commission and just mentioning Ayah's name (Ayah never knew this until later).

Once a member of Parliament walked in to Ayah's office. It was later alleged that Ayah did not stand up and pay due respect when the member came in. Ayah also did not oblige with the request made by the parliamentarian.

A few weeks later Ayah was transferred to a town 60 miles from Colombo for 2 years - this was considered a punishment transfer. Ayah had to stay in Galle during the week and would come home during the weekend.



கடவுளை நம்பினோர்
கைவிடப்படார் !

Those who have
faith in God are
not abandoned.

Amma Loses her Child at the Fifth Month of Pregnancy

Many do not know that Amma had a spontaneous abortion in the 5th month of her pregnancy. It was a girl. Even some of us, her children, were unaware of this as she did not talk much about this later in her life.

In 1956, her brother, Rasaratnam got married to his first cousin, Pavalam. It was a busy time for Amma since both the bridegroom and bride stayed in Amma's house. Perhaps the heavy work contributed to the abortion.

Pavalam was her uncle's (Ramaiah) daughter. When Pavalam was born, Amma was a young teenager (19 years) and they all stayed together with Grandmother Thangamuthu in Jaffna. Amma had nurtured Pavalam as a small baby.

Pavalam was very beautiful and many of her male relatives wanted to marry her. In later years, it was rumored that one of Amma's brother, Shanmugaraja, was also interested in Pavalam. In those days love marriages were rare.

Shanmugarajah did not express his wish openly - and Pavalam was also unaware of this. One of Shanmugaraja's older brothers, Rasaratnam, was proposed to Pavalam. There was a gap of 15 years of age difference between them. Shanmugaraja never married. He remained a bachelor throughout his life.

Amma would later recall a terrible incident during the marriage. She had arranged all the necessary items including the Thali (wedding chain) on a silver plate the previous night and had kept it in the shrine room covered with a silk cloth.

Next morning, when she went to the temple she took the silver tray thinking that everything was in place as she had arranged the previous night.

After reaching the temple, she took the silk cloth off the tray and to her horror and shock, the Thali (wedding chain) was missing. She did not know what to do. Fortunately, the bridegroom had not yet come to the temple.

She rushed back home - a good 30 minutes drive. She searched in desperation all over the house for the Thali. She could not find it. Sobbing, tears rolling down her cheeks, she prayed to God.

At that very moment, she thought she should look under the bed in the room. To her astonishment and surprise, the Thali was found under the bed.

She grabbed the Thali quickly and rushed to the temple in time for the groom, Rasaratnam, to tie the Thali around the neck of Pavalam at the auspicious time.

This was a deliberate and heinous act by one of the relatives who did not like the marriage alliance. This was purely due to jealousy and to cause embarrassment for Amma.



Ayah in the middle with this office mates, Galle, 1950s

Amma later told us she suspected a relative of us - and mentioned the name as well. That family would go through serious and irreparable damage later in their life. Perhaps it was Karma.

1956 was also a watershed year in Sri Lankan politics. Sri Lanka gained independence from the British in 1949. At that time, the Sinhalese (mostly Buddhists) constituted 75 % of the population, the Tamils (mostly Hindus) about 15 % and the rest were Muslims, Catholics and Burgers (descendants of Portuguese and Dutch who had ruled Sri Lanka before the British).

Before Independence, some sections of the Tamil community demanded complete separation from the Sinhalese and wanted to form their own Tamil country in the north and east of Sri Lanka (considered traditional homelands of the Tamils).

Tamil politicians who were mostly British educated - like the Sinhala politicians - advocated for a more softer approach, unlike the Muslim leader of India, Jinnah, who demanded independence, and separated from India, creating a new Muslim country called Pakistan.

Tamil Congress was the dominant party at that time. It was led by a fiery orator named G. G. Ponnambalam. He demanded 50-50 solution - meaning that the political power be shared equally amongst the Tamil and Sinhalese.

Sinhalese would have none of this. They wanted to be in charge in the independent Sri Lanka. The British were in a hurry to leave. With their economy in shambles - post Second World War - they wanted



Tamil politician and a fiery orator, G.G. Ponnambalam

to get rid of the responsibility of the small countries which they had ruled for more than a century.

Tamil Politicians finally agreed to give up the 50-50 demand on the promise that they would be given a berth in the new cabinet.

This colossal mistake would come to reverberate a few decades later with the culmination in 1983 - the historic ethnic riots against the Tamils that uprooted millions of Tamils from their country, including Amma and Ayah.

70% of the Sinhala population lived in the villages - peasants and landless. Sri Lanka, at the time of Independence, was ruled by the United National Party (UNP). UNP consisted mostly of Sinhalese, who were British educated elites. They did not understand the mindset of the Sinhala peasants.

S. W. R. D Bandaranaike (SWRD) was a minister in the UNP. He came from a very aristocratic family in Sri Lanka. His father was knighted by the Queen and was a staunch Catholic.

SWRD saw political opportunity amongst the Sinhala masses. He wanted to appeal to their sentiments and win power. He broke away from UNP and formed his own party based on Sinhala Buddhist nationalism - Sri Lanka freedom party - SLFP.

Overnight, he threw away his British mannerisms and clothes. He espoused "Sinhala only" and demanded that Buddhism be given the preeminent place in the constitution.

His policies would permanently ruin the great nation of Sri Lanka for ever.

Elections were called in 1956 and SWRD formed a front that consisted of parties that espoused Sinhala nationalism.

He promised the Sinhala people that Buddhism will be the supreme religion if he was elected. The Buddhist monks were looking for such an opportunity. They, too, whipped up Buddhist chauvinism.

SWRD promised that he would make the Sinhala language the state language within 24 hours of being elected. When the Tamils protested, goons were set up against them. The goons showed no hesitation in beating and even murdering the protesting Tamils.

1956 CEYLON ELECTION RESULTS

Leader	S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike	N. M. Perera	John Kotelawala
Party	Mahajana Eksath Peramuna	Lanka Sama Samaja Party	United National Party
Leader since	1956	1945	1953
Leader's seat	Attanagalla	Ruwanwella	Dodangaslanda
Last election	9 Seats, 15.52%	9 Seats, 13.11%	54 Seats, 44.08%
Seats won	51	14	8
Seat change	42	5	46
Popular vote	1,046,277	274,204	738,810
Percentage	39.52%	10.36%	27.91%



S.W.R.D. Bandaranayake - his policies would cause permanent destruction of the nation.

He was shot to death by a Buddhist monk the year he came to power. He was succeeded by his housewife, Srimavo, the first woman Prime Minister of the world.



SWRD with his family. His wife, Srimavo became the Prime Minister after his death. Two decades later, his eldest Daughter (seated next to her mother), Chandrika, would become the President of Sri Lanka.



ஐந்தில் வளையாதது
ஐம்பதில் வளையாது !

Try to be
flexible in life.

The Birth of Twins

Manoharan and Manohari

Amma was 40 years and Ayah was 43 when Amma became pregnant again. Amma told us later that she had not expected this. She was embarrassed being pregnant when she was forty years old.

Her eldest son, Chandramohan, was 16 years old when she became pregnant in her forties.

Life was very difficult for Amma with her older sons in the high school.

Ayah was working in Galle and would come home only during weekends. When he came home, Ayah was immersed in his studies and reading. On weekends, he played bridge with his friends.

Amma did not know that she was pregnant until she was in her fourth month of pregnancy. She had gone for a routine checkup. She thought she was going through her menopause. Her doctor told her to get X rays of the abdomen. There were no ultrasound at that time. To her utter surprise, the X-ray technician came in and showed the X rays with the shadows of twin babies.

Amma was speechless - and surprised. There were no modern techniques to find out the sex of the babies at that time.

Twin pregnancies ran in her family. Her uncle, Ramiah, had one set of identical twin girls.

Amma was concerned about the health of the babies. She had heard that the chances of Down syndrome babies are higher as the mother ages.

Ayah had no worries. He wanted to have more children. His focus was to work hard and feed the family. It was Amma who took care of all the children and house chores.

Amma had faith in God. She was healthy and had a sturdy physique. She continued with her pregnancy without any complications.

The Twins were born in Colombo at the Ratnam's Nursing home on March 13th, 1957.



Twins - Manohari with Amma and Manoharan with Pavalam.
Rudramawatte, Colombo, 1957

The first twin was a girl. Amma was thrilled. Ten minutes later, the second twin was born - it was a boy. The twins were not identical. The boy weighed 7 pounds and the girl, 9 pounds (total 16 pounds).

Amma would later recall she was terribly scared and worried how she was going to raise the twins at her age. She prayed to Gods and wept in silence.

The brothers were thrilled to have two lovely babies. They adored the new arrivals.

Ayah's brother, Bala, who had no children wanted to adopt the twin boy, Manoharan. Amma was prepared, however, Ayah did not agree to it. Bala would later adopt his wife's nephew.



Manohari, Rudramawatte, 1958



Manoharan, Rudramawatte, 1958



Manoharan and Manohari, Rudramawatte, 1960



Manohari (left) and Manoharan (right).
Rudramawatte, 1958.

The First Racial Riots in Sri Lanka

The new Prime Minister, SWRD Banadrnayake, after whipping up racial nationalism found it difficult to contain its aftermath.

Sinhalese wanted everyone to learn the Sinhala language. All the street name plates that were in Tamil were erased with tar and Sinhala names written over them. When the Tamil Members of Parliament protested in the Parliament, goons were set upon them. Tamil parliamentarians were beaten mercilessly and their skulls were broken even inside the Parliament. It was horrific to witness such racial hatred in our beloved country.

SWRD realized that things were getting out of control and quickly entered into a pact promising more autonomy for the Tamil areas with the Tamil leader S. J. V. Chelvanayakam (SVJ).



SWRD and SJV after signing the pact

SJV, who broke away from GG Ponnambalam, had formed his own party (Federal Party) that would come to dominate the Tamil Politics for more than three decades until the armed struggle by the Tamil militants in 1983.

Sinhala chauvinists opposed the pact SWRD had with SJV. They marched to his house along with the militant Buddhist monks and demanded that the pact be shredded. They called SWRD a traitor.



SWRD outside his house listening to Buddhist monks asking him to shred the pact that gave more rights to the Tamils

Fearing them - and the votes - SWRD tore the pact in front of the monks.

Sinhala chauvinists and militant monks were not satisfied. Sinhala thugs started to attack the Tamils and their homes.



S.J.V. Chelvanayagam, Tamil leader, 1958

It is believed that more than 1500 Tamils were murdered and more than 3000 Tamil properties were set on fire or looted. Some of the Tamils were put into tar barrels and burnt alive.

Wellawatte was affected and some houses were burnt down in Rudramawatte. Ayah was in Galle and Amma and children were all by themselves. It was a scary time for the family.

Thousands of Tamils became refugees and were sent to Jaffna by ship.

It was after 1958 that most of the Tamils felt there was no future for them in Sri Lanka and started to migrate abroad - mostly to the United Kingdom.

Murder of SWRD

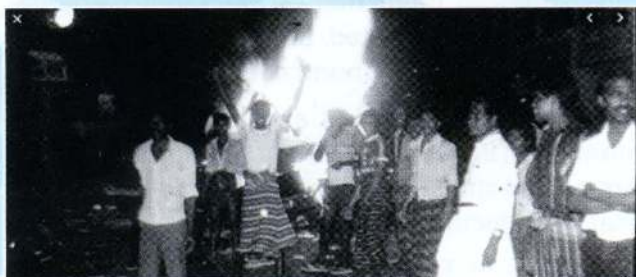
A few months later, Bandaranaike was seated on the front verandah of his house, meeting the public who had come to see him. There were about 20 people in the verandah and another 40 were queued outside. Around 9 AM, a Buddhist priest Talduwe Somarama Thero who had been waiting to see the Prime



Mobs burning cars and houses, 1958, Colombo



Sinhala hooligans beating a Tamil, Colombo, 1958



Sinhala hooligans looting and burning Tamil properties

Minister took a seat in a chair on the verandah and kept a file on a short stool next to his chair.

He was a lecturer at the Government College of Ayurveda and had stated that he wanted to meet the Prime Minister on requirements for the Ayurveda college.

As each person was announced, the person announced stood up and approached the Prime Minister to discuss on the matters relating to them. Somarama Thero was announced and he stood up from the chair and approached the Prime Minister who, in turn, also stood up and came forward, showing respect to the priest in the customary form.

The Prime Minister asked what he can do for him. Somarama Thero, who was tensed, told the Prime Minister that certain improvements were needed at the Ayurveda College.

The Prime Minister responded that he would get the Health Minister to attend to it if he were to submit the requirement in writing.

Around 9.45 AM, Somarama Thero sat down again fumbled with the file on the stool he had left as if to pull out a memorandum and as the Prime Minister got ready to receive it, Somarama Thero instead pulled out a .45 Webley Mark VI revolver concealed in his robes and fired twice at point blank range hitting Bandaranaike in the chest and abdomen.

Bandaranaike made a loud sound and fell down, but got up and with difficulty, tried to stagger back inside the house. He was rushed to the hospital and died two days later. His house wife - Srimavo - would succeed him as the First woman Prime Minister of the country - and the world.

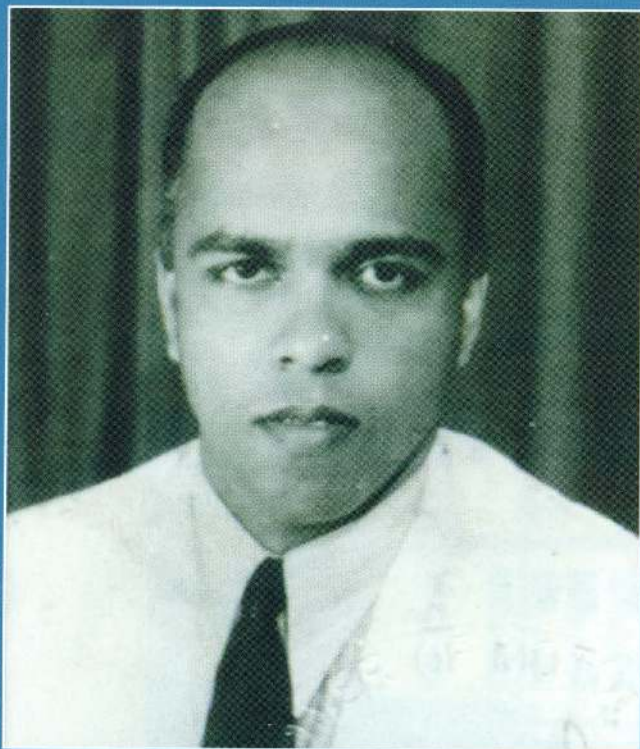


Srimavo Bandaranaike, the first woman Prime Minister of Sri Lanka - and the world.

Ayah Retires Over the Sinhala Only Act

After the 1958 race riots against the Tamils, many Tamils were deeply worried - and mentally wounded - about their future in Sri Lanka. The elite who were well educated started to migrate to the west, mostly to England.

It was at this time that the Sri Lankan government - the new government headed by the widow of SWRD, Srimavo - started implementing the "Sinhala only language" at government offices. Tamils were forced to learn Sinhala if they were to be promoted. This was another ploy by the Sinhala government to force the Tamils to leave their government jobs.



Ayah, Galle, Sri Lanka, 1959

Ayah was deeply concerned.

He was proud of his Tamil heritage and its culture. For someone who had five British degrees behind his name, learning and passing 8th level Sinhala

language would have been a cakewalk. He had studied and learned much harder ancient languages such as Sanskrit and Latin. He did not tolerate any one forcing another language on him. He was a Tamil nationalist. He never thrust his language and beliefs on others and he refused to let others thrust it on him.

He then made a decision that would shock the entire family. At that time, he had risen to one of the highest positions at the Motor Commission - Additional Motor Commissioner. He was going to be promoted as the Commissioner of Motor Traffic - and perhaps even as the Secretary of the Transport Ministry (the highest position he could have held in the Sri Lankan Government).

Ayah decided to resign from his government job in protest against the Sinhala only act. Like him, hundreds of Tamils resigned and walked away from their government jobs.



Jayanthi, 1959, Rudramawatte, Colombo

Ayah did not tell Amma or his children about his resignation. He knew that they would be worried as they were quite young. After handing over the resignation papers he came home in the evening and dropped the bomb shell. He told Amma "I quit my government job."

Amma was speechless. She was deeply worried.

There were seven young children to feed. The twins were only three years old. They lived on a month to month basis on his salary. They had no additional source of income or family wealth. They had two girls who will require large amounts of dowry at the time of their marriage.

For a month, Ayah had no work. After that, he found a job in a big private transportation company. He worked hard and would come home late in the evening, tired with dirt and oil all over his body. Amma was worried and felt sorry for Ayah. She told him to quit the job.

LIFE AT CEYLON NATIONAL CHAMBER OF INDUSTRIES (CNCI)

The Ceylon National Chamber of Industries (CNCI) was formed in 1960 and established by a special act

of Parliament and it is the pioneering Chamber for Industries in Sri Lanka (Ceylon) established after the Independence. The CNCI initiated its function as the foremost service facilitator as well as the voice of the Industry.

Ayah joined as an executive officer in 1960. His immediate boss - a Tamil named Alagaratnam - died of a heart attack after a heated exchange at one of the chamber meetings. Ayah was asked to take over his place as the Chief Executive of CNCI. Ayah would remain at CNCI until he retired in 1982. He worked there for 22 years. He liked the job and earned a modest monthly salary.

This was the most important phase of his life for him and his family. It was during this period that all his sons would enter Medical school (except for Mahendran, who entered the Peradeniya University to pursue a career in Agricultural engineering), all his children would marry (except his youngest son, Manoharan who married in 1989). Ayah became more stable financially during the latter part of his career at CNIC. He was also well known as the foremost Economist and a corporate executive.



CNCI was located at the Galle face court in Colombo

Rudramawatte

1965 - 1970



Ayah and Amma, Rudramawatte, Colombo, 1966

The period 1960-1965 was a proud period for Ayah and Amma.

It was during this time that all the three sons (Chandra Mohan, Asokan and Nagendran) entered the Medical College in Colombo. In Sri Lanka, it was very rare for three family members to enter Medical College. It was, indeed, a rare feat.

Sri Lanka had only two medical colleges and took one hundred students every year. Hence, the competition was stiff and brutal. All



Nagendran, first picture in front of garage and the last picture at the balcony room on top of the garage

Account January

Particulars	Recd.		Paid	
	Rs.	Cts.	Rs.	Cts.
Make	1000			
Jayanthi	1000		400	
Mansoori Manoharan	100		320	
Ray Kumar	50		20	
Gaitri	50		920	
Amma	500		1500	
		350	500	
	900		370	
		500	180	
150	500		130	
	400		920	
ayah			1000	
Insulin 15/1	500		50	
Bills 15/11			25	
			25	
Bass 17/11			150	
" 20/11 Kay			10	
" 17/11 Karlight			10	
Bugha			30	
Bombay sweets			20	
J. M. M. Ticket			50	
ayah 15				

From Amma's diary



Wellawatte market. Amma visited this market every morning to buy fresh vegetables and fish



Ceylon Medical College - one of the two medical colleges at that time. One hundred students were taken each year and competition was fierce

Asokan and Nagendran entered the Medical College only in their second attempt.

DECEMBER 1970

From Asoka	23 Wednesday	450 Rs.
5 Dollars		
Mahendi's Birth Day (Feb 26)	10 Dollars	
Manoharan + Manohari	10 Dollars	
Jayanthi Birthday	100 Rs.	} 600
Amma	300 Rs.	
For Asokan's Things	150 "	} 600
Gaitri B'day Present	50	
Manoharan Manohari (72)	5 Dollars	
Jayanthi	10 "	
Mahendi	10 "	
Amma	400 Rs.	} 600
Mahendi	100	
Nagendran's account	24 Thursday	100
11-1-72		2478 Rs.
		(400 for all)

ase loka wathu sun
 " " of Navamha Venus is
 " " of Venus
 " " of Venus occupied by the three
 " " of Venus

1200
 2500
 1740
 400

Asokan, who left Sri Lanka for US in 1970, started sending money home. Amma kept details of the money sent by Asokan.



Ayah in the living room, Rudramawatte, 1967. In the background, the green telephone is seen (number : 85094)

When Asokan failed in his first attempt to enter the Medical College, Ayah was not too happy. Ayah had a very short temper. Ayah scolded Asokan accusing him of eating too much and not focusing on his studies. Asokan took this to his heart. He made sure that he entered in the second attempt.

Both Asokan and Nagendran - especially the latter - were very hardworking.

Mahendran, too, entered the university of Peradeniya (about 70 miles from Colombo and in the hill country).

He decided to do Agricultural engineering. Mahendran was a brilliant student but very playful. He got admission to the dental faculty. However, in the early nineteen seventies, Sri Lanka was going through a severe food crisis due to the socialist policies of the Sri Lankan government.

The government gave top priority for agriculture and encouraged the University entrants to do any course associated with Agriculture.

Mahendran (and Ayah) thought Agricultural engineering offered more prospects than dental studies.

Both realized later that it was the wrong choice. Mahendran would later become a Chartered account when he came to the US.

Jayanthi and Manohari enrolled at the Saiva Mangayar Kalagam which was a few houses away at Rudramawatte. Both were bright students. Jayanthi

would later study at the prestigious St. Bridget convent, a catholic school, specializing in environmental science.

The youngest son, Manoharan, was enrolled at Royal College - a premier government school. All the other sons had gone to St. Joseph College which was a catholic school. When Manoharan was ready to enter elementary school, St. Joseph College was mostly enrolling Catholics only.

Manoharan also entered medical college - in India.



Manohari, Colombo, 1967



Jayanthi, Colombo, 1967



Manohari



Saiva Mangaiyar Kalagam (Hindu ladies school), 2014

He gave employment to those families that had spurned and kicked him out when he went begging for financial help to bury his three young sisters who had died of typhoid in 1936. He never kept any old grudges. He did his best to be of service to the economically disadvantaged and to lift them up.

In 1969, Ayah went on his first overseas trip to Chennai, India for a conference. Since Ayah was taking Insulin for his diabetes, Asokan, who was a medical student accompanied Ayah to give insulin. It was Asokan's first overseas trip as well.



Manoharan attended Royal College, Colombo.
A prestigious government school



Manoharan with Amma - Rudramawatte, 1967

All the Sangarapillai sons had a University education- a proud achievement for Amma and Ayah.

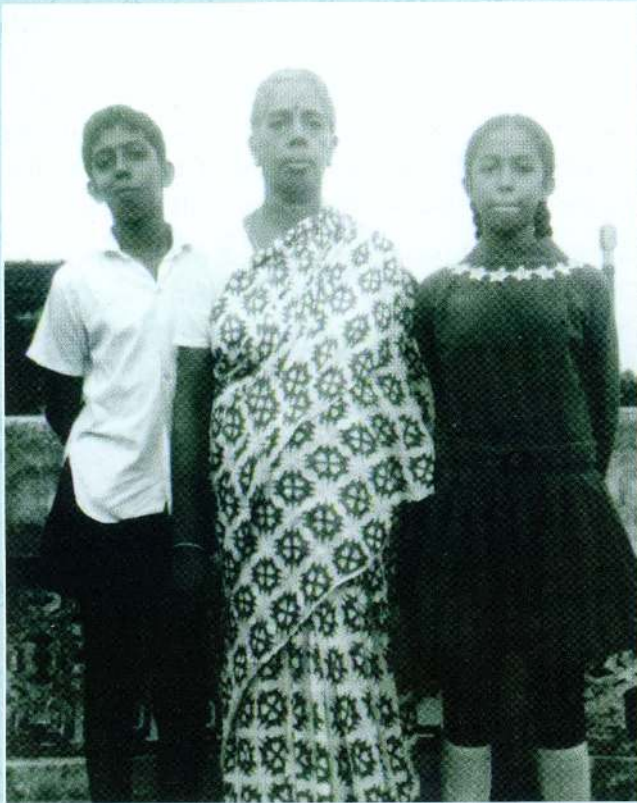
This is not written to blow the trumpet about the intelligence of the family but due credit and praise should be heaped when a family achieves such a distinction. The credit should go to both Amma and Ayah.

In 1967, Ayah was appointed as one of the directors of the Ceylon Transport Board (CTB) - a political appointment and a prestigious one. Sri Lankan papers hailed Ayah's appointment as a wise choice since he was the foremost transportation economist in Sri Lanka.

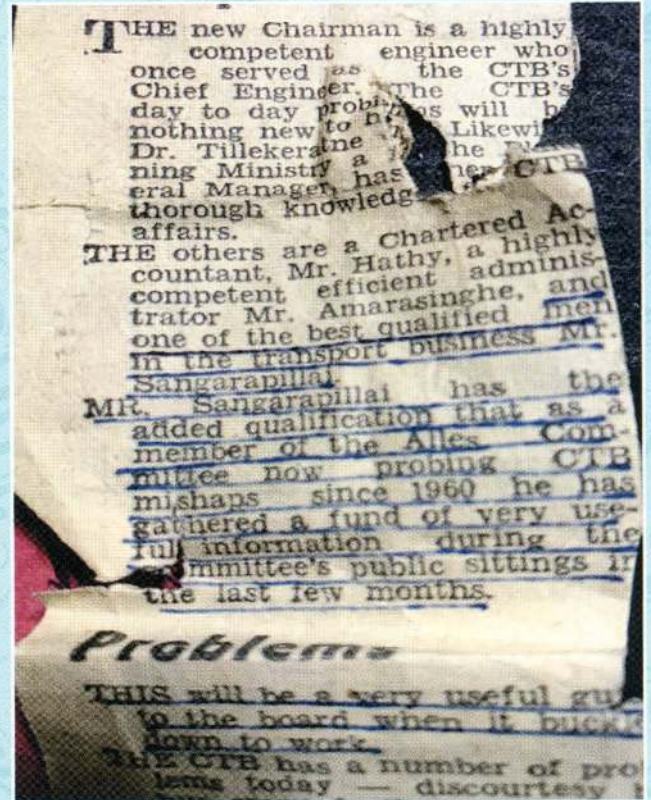
When Ayah was in the CTB, he gave employment to hundreds of young people from the Tamil areas, especially from Maviddapuram. Most of the people that Ayah provided employment would rise to the very top in CTB and were ever grateful to him.



Ayah with Manohari and Manoharan
at the dining table, Rudramawatte, 1970



Manoharan, Amma and Manohari - open balcony, Rudramawatte, 1970



News clip about Ayah's appointment as the Director of Ceylon Transport board - 1967.



DELEGATION from the Ceylon National Chamber of Industries left on Saturday for the Indian International Trade and Industries Fair. The delegation is led by Mr. H. E. P. de Mel, (Chairman of the Chamber and the Secretary to Mr. P. Sangarapillai. (L to R) M. Kumarasamy, D. C. Mody, P. S. Kannangara, Mrs. Balasubramaniam, V. S. Sangarapillai, H. E. P. de Mel and Mr. A. J. C. Perera.

Ayah's first trip outside Sri Lanka to Chennai, India. Ayah is third from left.

Turning to spirituality New Birth for Amma



Swami Rama Krishna, Spiritual Guide and Guru of Amma.
She had the utmost faith in him.
This picture always remained in her room.

Amma was a spiritual person from an early age. Her parents were deeply devoted to their faith - Hinduism. They taught and brought up all their children to adhere to truth and honesty.

Amma lost her mother at the age of eleven. This might have contributed towards her spiritual path. She stayed with her Grandmother in Jaffna who showered her with love and affection. Even though she was well taken care of, she deeply missed her mother.

She got married at the age of twenty one in 1938. She had 7 children - including a set of twins. Her husband was a long standing diabetic and the sole breadwinner in the family.

Finances were very tight at home. Ayah's salary was

barely enough to feed the seven children. By the twentieth of each month, money would run out and she ran to her brother's house (Rasaratnam) to borrow money - they, too, would sometimes run out of money, and when that happens, would rush to Amma for help.

The writer vividly remembers a few occasions when Amma had no money even to buy a loaf of bread for dinner.

Amma's main objective was to keep her diabetic husband in good health - perhaps she must have thought that without him, the family will be ruined and destroyed. She sought divine help for this.

She was always very religious but never had time to put it into practice.



Passport photo of Amma - late 1960s

By 1966, things were slowly getting better in the house. The three eldest sons had entered Medical College and the fourth son - who would enter the University thereafter - were doing well at school. She had time to do what she liked the most - spiritualism.

Amma never had any hobby. Her hobby was to take care of the house and children. She also did not have any time. She never listened to the radio and there was no TV at that time (TV came to Sri Lanka only in 1981).

Her English was excellent but she never had time to read the newspapers. She used to read books on spiritualism. She did not attend any social gatherings except to visit her close relatives. One of the greatest qualities she had was to treat her guests with the utmost respect and affection - a quality that she had picked up from her Grandmother.

She was the first to wake up and the last to sleep. She cooked three hot meals a day for the family for decades. She never complained.

God was showering mercy on her to seek her spiritual path.

It was during this time, she became a devotee of Swami Ramakrishna. Her faith in Ramakrishna was unshakable.



Swami Ramakrishna in the middle, his highly spiritual wife, Sarada Devi, to the right and his principal disciple, Swami Vivekananda, on the left.

Vivekananda was the first to spread Hinduism in the west.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa, born on 18th February 1836 - (died 16 August 1886), is a Indian Hindu mystic and saint who lived during the 19th century. Ramakrishna experienced spiritual

ecstasies from a young age, and was influenced by several religious traditions, including devotion towards the goddess Kali, Tantra (shakta) and Vaishnava (bhakti).

Reverence and admiration for him among Indian elites led to the formation of the Ramakrishna Mission by his chief disciple Swami Vivekananda.



Ramakrishna Mission, Wellawatte



Sanctum sanctorum, Ramakrishna Mission, Wellawatte, Colombo



Inner courtyard, Ramakrishna Mission

There was the Colombo Branch of the Ramakrishna Mission in Wellawatte - a twenty minutes brisk walk from our house.

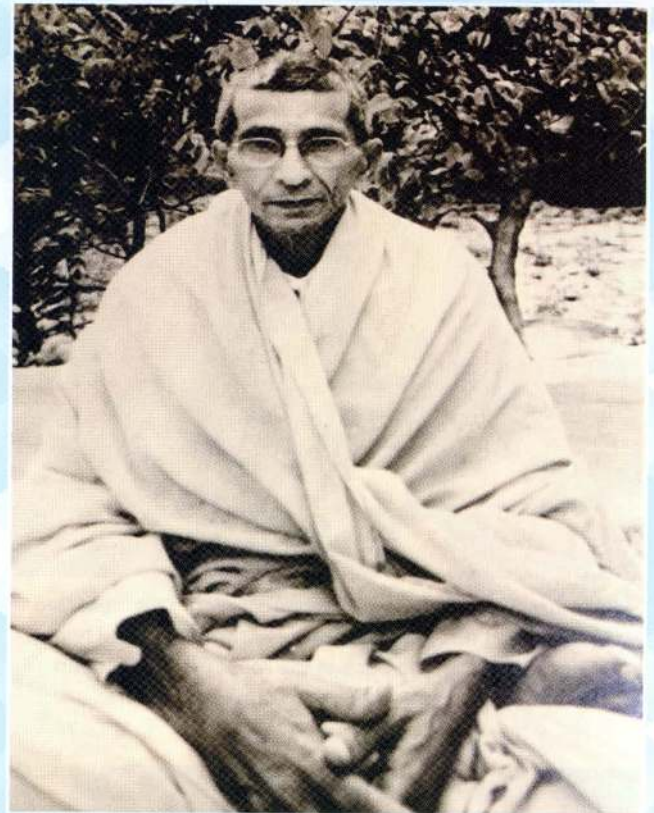
From 1965 until she left Sri Lanka in 1983, she practically went there every day during the week. She usually went in the evenings. After making dinner for Ayah and keeping it on the table, she would leave the house around 5:30 in the evening. She would walk 20 minutes, picking up her friends on the way. She would stay there until 8 pm and return straight home after that. She did this without fail every day.

In May of 1968, on a full moon day (it was also the birthday of Lord Buddha) she personally got her initiation from the 10th President of Ramakrishna Mission, Swami Vireswarnanda (their headquarters is located in Kolkata, India) who was visiting Colombo.

This is what Amma wrote in her diary :

“The mantra was given to me in the shrine room. I was fifty years old. At the beginning, I was very busy with the family and household works. I missed the prayers and mantra often.

During the initiation, the Swami (Guru) would whisper a special mantra (a few words of spiritual stanza) in my ear. Once this is done, I should keep



Head of the Mission who initiated Amma - May, 1968

the mantra to myself and recite it every day. The spiritual power of the seed (mantra) planted in the heart by the Guru started to grow. I started to go to the mission five times a week and started doing daily meditation twice a day, morning and night.

The walk, the sea breeze, the evening puja and the holy company gave me much joy and inward happiness. The seed planted in me was growing."

Amma writes further in her diary:

“In the early seventies, a young and dynamic Swami Virupakshananda was posted to the Colombo Mission. It was under him I learnt Sanskrit and other teachings. He was my educational guide - I always respected him and had a great admiration for him.”

Amma writes further:

“ My husband did Sanskrit as a language for his B.A degree. So, I approached him to get him to help me with my homework. He said to me “ Why do you want to learn a dead language. “ (By that time, Sanskrit



Sanctum Sanctorum, Ramakrishna Mission, Colombo. One could say that this shrine room was Amma's second home. She would sit at the back of the room and be in deep meditation for hours, sometimes with tears flowing down her eyes.



Picture taken in 1976 at the Ramakrishna mission. Amma standing in the first row in the middle. Swami Virupakshananda in the middle, seated

was considered by the Tamils as an alien language and the upper caste Brahmins were considered to be promoting it for their selfish purposes).

With a heavy heart, I went to a neighbour who had learnt the language at school. But, she, too, had forgotten everything. Yet, this kind hearted Monk taught me everything. “

Even after migrating to the US, she continued to be associated with Ramakrishna Mission in Colombo. She kept in touch with them. She visited Swami



Amma in Kauai, Hawaii - early 1990s

Virupakshananda in 1990 in India. She was deeply moved when she saw him.

After moving to the US, Amma also got involved with the Hindu temple in Kauai, Hawaii. She visited the temple three times. She was very much attached to the founder of the temple, Siva Subramanya Swami, who was a ballet dancer in San Francisco who became a spiritual monk. The Swami had gone to Sri Lanka in the early fifties and met Yogar Swami. It is the same Yogar Swami who had told A.M. Pillai about his bright future abroad. It was this very same Yogar Swami who had miraculously cured Amma's step sister when she could not speak until she was 5 years.

Yogar Swami gave a hard tap on the back of Siva Subramanya Swami and told him to spread Hinduism in the west.

Until a few years before her death, Amma would religiously send a monthly donation of \$100 to the temple.

In the US, she was involved with the Ramakrishna Mission in Hollywood. She attended all the main functions at the Mission with her friend, Kokila and her husband, Thappan.



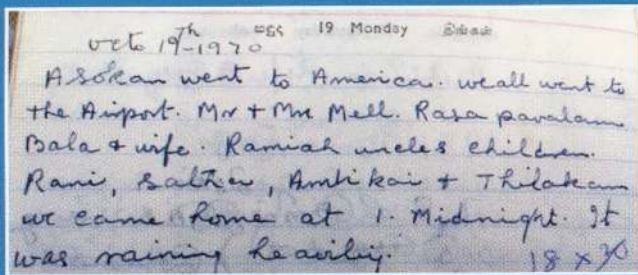
Amma with the late Subramanya Swami, head of the Hawaii Hindu temple. Picture taken in Kauai, 1994



At Ramakrishna Mission, Los Angeles, 1992

Asokan, The First in the Family to Emigrate to USA

Asokan was the first to leave the shores of Sri Lanka. Situation in Sri Lanka was going from bad to worse.



Notes from Amma's diary.

In 1970, S.W.R.D's widow, Srimavo, was elected on a landslide victory with a manifesto promising the promotion of Socialism. She nationalized the banks and made the country a Republic. She made Buddhism as the official religion of Sri Lanka.

She banned the import of most of the foreign goods and foolishly thought that she could promote the growth of the local economy through socialism.

Educated people started leaving Sri Lanka. Brain drain started to happen. Many of the Doctors left Sri Lanka for the UK and the US. In 1970, the United States was desperately in need of doctors. The US Government at that time decided to invite qualified doctors after they had passed an exam known as ECFMG.

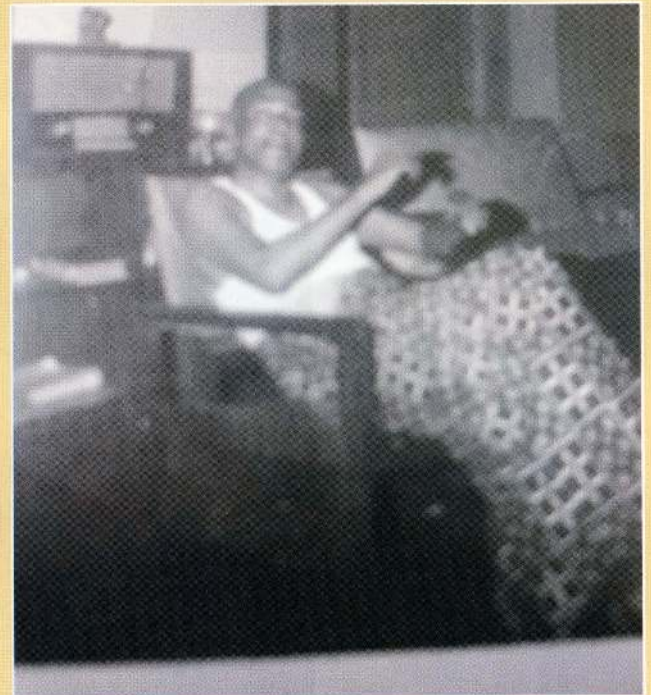
This was the first time that educated Tamils were heading to the USA - prior to that most of the migration had been to the UK. In 1970, the US economy was far superior to the UK and it was the dream of every Sri Lankan, especially that of doctors - to go to the US.

Cook County Hospital in Chicago offered Asokan a job and a ticket to the US.

Ayah and Amma were apprehensive. This was the first time one of their children was going out of the country. Tamil parents feared their unmarried sons going abroad. Many of them who had migrated had

married foreigners. Both Ayah and Amma had the same worries.

October 19th, 1970 was an important day for the Sangarapillai family. This was the day Asokan left for the US. Over the next decade, all the children would migrate to the US and Australia. Finally, both Ayah and Amma would also migrate to the US in August of 1983 - thus completing the migration of the Sangarapillai family.



Ayah in the family room, listening to the Radio.
He loved to listen to the cricket commentaries on the radio.

The second generation of the Sangarapillai family will never go back to Sri Lanka. However, they and their children should humbly remember their roots in Sri Lanka. They should remember the life of both Ayah and Amma. Their struggles, their sacrifices for their children, their honesty and hard work. If not for their sacrifices, none of us would be where we are today.

Amma's spirituality and blessings will continue to

Asokan Room No. 312-633-6944
(Telephone) (312) is the area code for
chicago
county Hospital No 633 312, 633, 6000
easy to phone the hospital task extension 6944
Dr. S. Asokan
Room 1011, Karl Meyer Hall
Cook County Hospital
720 S Wolcott Ave
Chicago Illinois 60612
U.S.A.

Asokan's first address in the US

protect all family members for years to come. The coming generation should visit Sri Lanka, at least once, to trace their roots.

Nagendran was the second to leave in 1971. Sri Lankan government realized that doctors were leaving the country after having obtained a free medical education. It banned all doctors from leaving the country.

Nagendran was the smartest among all the Children when it came to such obstacles. He knew a friend of his who was a police inspector. He asked the inspector to smuggle him into the plane through the airport kitchen - by passing Immigration and Customs. He kept it so secret that none of his friends knew about his departure from the country.

However, there was a mishap a few days before he left the country - and put his emigration plan in jeopardy.

Nagendran had purchased a motorbike after he passed the medical school. A few days before he left, he met with an accident with the bullock cart at night. Fortunately no one was injured but the bullock cart was badly damaged and the bull was hurt. The owner of the bullock cart demanded full payment or he was going to file a police case. Nagendran, known for his negotiation skills and entrepreneurship - settled the matter a few hours before he left the country.



அளவுக்கு மிஞ்சினால்
அமிர்தமும் நஞ்சு !

Going beyond limits
is poisonous.



வரவுக்குத் தகுந்த
செலவு !

Cut your coat
according to your cloth.

Amma's First Trip Abroad

To India

Amma's first trip outside Sri Lanka was to India in 1970 at the age of 53. Until then, the only place that she had travelled out of Colombo was to Jaffna - mostly to attend weddings and funerals.

Taking a holiday or going to holiday resort with the family was unheard of in those days among the middle class Tamil families. This was mostly due to the tight financial situation the families faced.

Ayah was the only person earning and that was also a modest income. He had seven children to take care of. All the sons entered universities (colleges). Fortunately in Sri Lanka, education was free from kindergarten through university. Even Medical College provided education free of cost. Ayah had to save money for dowry for two of his daughters as well. All unnecessary expenses were cut out from the house budget.

We have never been to a restaurant as a family (all nine members). It would have posed transportation and financial nightmare for all family members to go as a group.

Amma had some Indian friends at the Colombo Ramakrishna Mission. They asked her to accompany them to India on a pilgrimage to visit the holy temples in South India.

Amma was not sure how to approach Ayah. She was hesitant to ask him, especially for money. She prayed to her Guru, Ramakrishna.

On a Friday night after coming from Ramakrishna mission - when Ayah was in a good mood - she approached him and requested him to allow her to go to India. To her utter surprise, Ayah not only gave her permission but also told that he will take care of all the expenses. Tears rolled down Amma's cheeks. She thanked her Guru.

By this time, Asokan had gone to the US and was sending money home. His timely financial contribution eased some of the burden on Ayah.

She left Sri Lanka for India on April 5th, 1970. She took a short flight to India. She was mesmerized with the flight and the clouds as she flew. She would later describe the clouds as "white cotton balls hanging in the air."

Amma thoroughly enjoyed her trip to India. She visited many holy places. It gave her spiritual happiness. Amma's stepmother (Thillai amma) stayed with the family while she was away in India.

Notes from Amma's diary ;

April ,5th , 1970

Went to Mission and prayed before going to the airport. Ayah, Manohari, Manoharan and stepmother came to the airport. The plane was gliding through the clouds. Saw the land outlines of India from the air. Beautiful sight.

April 6th ; Bought sarees and some things for 225 rupees.

April 8th : Posted letters to home. In the evening went to saree palace and bought sarees for the children and relatives.

April 11th : Went to the famous Kanyakumari temple. Also saw Vivekananda memorial hall in the midst of the ocean. The goddess of the temple is very beautiful. She had a nose ring that is made out of diamonds. Gave my diamond nose ring and bangles for repair.

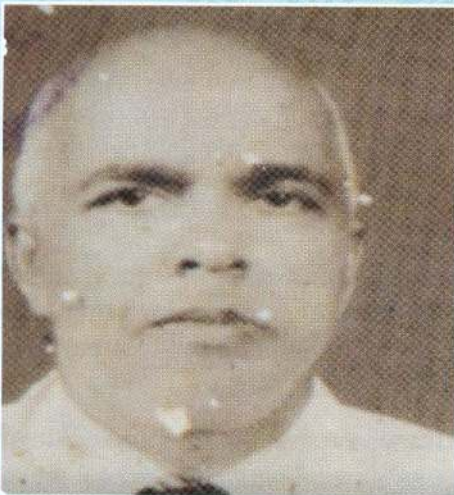
April 15th : Today visited the famous Lord Murugan Temple, Thiruchendur . Lord Murugan was beautiful.

April 29th : Again did shopping for Rs.600. Bought sarees. Bought jewels at the Burmabazaar in Chennai. On the way to Marina Beach and saw all the statues along the beach.

May 2nd : Arrived in Bangalore. I purchased slippers and toys. Later we traveled to Mysore.

May 9th: I packed all my bags for the flight back to Ceylon.

May 10th : Took the flight from Trivandrum and landed at Ratmalana airport. Ayah, Jayanthi and Manohari came to receive me. Dr. Alles cleared all bags.



Ayah, Colombo, early 1970s

ජනවාරි		JANUARY 1970		ආරම්භය	
අප්‍රේල් 05		Thursday		බදාදා	
2 Longyari	Gold Pink Blue			32	06
2 Anisala	White & Orange Border			27	00
2 Anisala	White & Orange Border (23-34)			46	68
"	White & Orange Border			12	00
1 Anisala	White & Orange Border			17	00
1 Anisala	White & Orange Border floral design			37	00
1 Half Voile				29	38
1 Anisala	White & Orange Border Mustard			27	00
1 Gan	White & Orange Border Mustard Blue Border			30	37
1 Anisala	White & Orange Border Mustard			98	00
1 Anisala	White & Orange Border Light green Brown Border			27	00
"	White & Orange Border Purple Purple Border			27	00
2 Longyari	Dark check	2 Friday		23	00
1 Anisala	White & Orange Border coffee Border			26	16
"	White & Orange Border Light Pink Strawberry			26	16
"	White & Orange Border check light Blue ash			28	90
1 Gan	White & Orange Border White Brown gold Border			37	00
1 Half Voile	White & Orange Border Dark green multi			33	75
1 cream	White & Orange Border gran dots			20	00
1 magal	White & Orange Border white check			19	00
1 cream	White & Orange Border Brown + Red dots			29	33
1 Anisala	White & Orange Border (Blue + red)			141	50
1 Anisala	White & Orange Border Green			11	00
				806.24	

Cost of 20 sarees which Amma bought in India in 1970 - in today's value it is \$5. Sarees were the most popular item of shopping for those visiting India at that time.

ජනවාරි		JANUARY 1970		ආරම්භය	
අප්‍රේල් 03		Saturday		බදාදා	
<u>Sarees</u>					
Mr Navanathan					
Mrs C.K. Tanka					
Mr Ramiah	Kanchipuram				
Mr Sellathurai	Conservation				
Mrs Alles	Kashmir				
Mr Karadasary	cotton saree				
Mr Veerabharanam	Mrs Namalwayant				
Jayanthi	Saree Border				
Kashmir	(white with Red or Blue)				
Itacoba	Light mauve or Sangray				
4 mampun	Mustard				
Mr Sangarajayar	Georgette (Mysore)				
Jenier	Kashmir				
Gan	White & Orange Border Anisala				
Mrs Subramaniam	Full Voile				
Jayanthi	Hydrabad Cotton				
Blouse pieces. Itacoba choli with Border. Voile (Fancy)					

List of sarees purchased for relatives and friends .

Asokan Marries Chitramali

Asokan came back to Sri Lanka from the US after two years. Asokan was considered the best behaved son in the family and he was also extremely responsible. He was soft spoken and friendly. He was also a good conversationalist. All the relatives loved him. No wonder, they called him the “righteous” son.

He was a young, handsome twenty eight year old bachelor and a doctor settled in the US. Tamil families - especially our relatives - were eyeing him for their daughters. Amma and Ayah, too, had high expectations, thinking that he would marry a Tamil girl from Sri Lanka.



Rudramawatte, 1973

Seated from left to right : Amma, Jayanthi, Ayah, Asokan and Manohari.

Seated on the floor: Manoharan and Mahendran

Love marriages were unheard of in Sri Lanka at that time - especially in the conservative Jaffna society. Families, whose children fell in love and married their sweethearts, were publicly humiliated and considered an outcaste in the ultra conservative Tamil Society.

The humiliation and public outcry was more intense if their children married someone from a different caste, religion or ethnicity - especially Sinhalese. Children were expected to obey their parents and

marry the girl their parents had chosen for them. Most of the Tamil families tried their best to extract the maximum dowry which they could for their sons.

Many demanded “donation” for the sister(s) of the bridegroom arguing that parents had spent vast sums of money on the bridegroom's education (this was mostly not true since all education, including university, was free of charge in Sri Lanka).

Ayah and Amma neither had this mentality nor demanded dowry. They wanted their children to marry into a respectable family and be happy.

Even before Asokan arrived in Sri Lanka, he was a hot commodity in the Tamil marriage circle. Tamil marriage brokers who had heard about the arrival of Asokan had visited Ayah with a thick album which contained photos of the Tamil girls in the marriage market - they were all good looking and with a heavy make up.

It was a custom among the Jaffna families to marry their first cousins. By marrying among relatives, families kept their hard earned wealth within the closely knit families. Asokan, too, had a few female first cousins who were on the marriage market. One of Asokan's uncle was very interested that Asokan marry one of his daughters.

Asokan was the most sought after bachelor in our family due to his good manners, soft spokenness and kindness.

On the second day of arrival in Sri Lanka, Asokan was invited for dinner at his uncle's house. Asokan thought that it was a regular visit to one of his favorite uncle's house.

However, there was much more going on behind the scenes. Both families had decided that Asokan and his female cousin would make a perfect match - without Asokan's knowledge.

Poor and innocent Asokan did not know anything

about this. Though the female cousin was aware of this, she had no choice - she simply obeyed her father's request.

When Asokan, along with Ayah and Amma, reached the uncle's house, the family ceremoniously welcomed them. As they sat down, pleasantries were exchanged and savouries were served.

It was at this point that the female cousin entered the family room where everyone was seated. She was dressed like a bride - she had worn a bright red silk saree and was adorned with jewels. She was carrying a plate with soft drinks. She served the drinks to all those who were present. When she came to Asokan, she looked at him and smiled and quickly left the room.

This was followed by a sumptuous dinner. The female cousin was not seated at the table but was serving the dishes to the guests.

After the dinner, Asokan returned home along with his parents. Since it was already late, they all went to sleep.

Next morning, during breakfast, Ayah asked Asokan what he thought about his female cousin and told him his favourite uncle was proposing his daughter to him.

Asokan was stunned and shocked. It now dawned on him what the reason for the elegant ceremony and the sumptuous dinner was. He felt very sad about the way things had turned out. He wished someone had informed him about the reason for the visit - and the dinner. He felt extremely sorry for his cousin whom he liked as he had known her since her childhood.

Asokan thought it was the right time to open his mind and reveal the reason for his visit home.

He said that he had come to Sri Lanka to inform them that he had fallen in love with a girl in America and he was keen to marry her.

Ayah was speechless for several minutes. Amma

thinking that the "third world war" was about to start, quickly disappeared into the kitchen.

After a few minutes, Ayah came to his senses. His next question was "Is she an American girl?" Asokan replied no. Hearing this, Ayah was slightly relieved. He, then, anxiously asked whether the girl was a Tamil. When Asokan said no, he fell silent again. He was worried.

Asokan informed Ayah that he had fallen in love with a young Sinhala girl from Sri Lanka who was a montessori teacher in the US. He was determined to marry her.

Ayah was silent again. All his sons had grown and he had no control over them. He wanted the best for all his children. He never expected such a shock from his "righteous son" for whom he always had the highest regard.

Ayah was old-fashioned and conservative. Unlike most Tamil fathers, he was neither interested in extracting dowry for his sons nor understood the concept of love marriages.

In the ultra conservative Tamil families, both the boys and girls were married off early. Tamil girls were mostly not allowed to pursue higher education to avoid girls falling in love - and making run away marriages.

Ayah was very much concerned that the girl was a Sinhalese. Tamils in Sri Lanka considered marrying into a Sinhala family a social malady at that time. The relationship between the Tamil and Sinhala societies in Sri Lanka were far apart. Sure, they spoke to each other but culturally they were wide apart.

Tamils were mostly Hindus. Sinhalese were mostly Buddhists. Neither spoke their languages though they lived in the same neighborhoods.

Sinhalese love to spend and enjoy; Tamils hardly spent money and were glued to their books. Sinhalese were joyful and jovial. Tamils were boring and serious. Sinhalese had sharp features and light skinned; Tamils were mostly dark and with dravidian features.

There was no chemistry or match both culturally and socially at that time between the two ethnic races - things have changed over the years.

Due to the political situation in the country, the Tamils in Sri Lanka considered Sinhalese their enemies.

Ayah also remembered the difficulty he and his family went through when his younger brother, Bala, eloped with a Sinhala girl and secretly married her. Bala, fearing abduction and harassment from his own family, was hiding with his wife in the port city of Trincomalee - about 180 miles from Colombo. For weeks, no one knew the whereabouts of them or heard from them. Ayah was worried for their safety.

Finally, Ayah who loved his brother, had to calm down his family members and traced his brother. After reassuring Bala that nothing would happen to them, he brought them in his own car to Colombo and made arrangements for them to settle down. He did not want to go through this mental trauma again with his son.

Ayah's utmost worry was about his own eldest daughter - Jayanthi. Jayanthi was 20 years old at that time - and in the marriage market. Ayah had requested a few marriage brokers to fetch a good boy for his daughter. He feared that it was going to be difficult to find a suitable match for his loving daughter if Asokan married a Sinhalese. He thought respectable and conservative Tamil families would boycott his family.

As regards to uncle's family, they were quite upset and angry about the whole issue. No one could blame them and it is natural for the parents to be upset over such an incident. Sangarapillai children loved their uncle who was kind to them.

Even prior to this incident, uncle had problems with Amma over some land matters in Jaffna. This incident only made it worse. They stopped talking to the Sangarapillai family. They, too, lived in the same

neighborhood and if they saw Amma or other family members on the road, they ignored and turned their faces away - Amma was deeply hurt.

The female cousin - a beautiful and very humble girl - had nothing to do with this. She simply obeyed her parents as a dutiful daughter.

(A decade later both families patched their differences and became friendly again).

After a few weeks of stay in Colombo, Asokan left for the US. He married Chitramali (Mali) a few weeks later. Ayah and Amma did not attend the wedding. Nagendran, who by then had settled down in Chicago, was the only one from the family to attend the wedding.



Chitramali De Alvis

Chitramali De Alvis :

Mali, as she was fondly called, was born and raised in a middle class family in Colombo. Her father was a government railway employee and her mother was a



At the reception , Chicago, 1973

time and Mali took care of them like her own parents. Ayah and Amma would say that they have to take several births to pay back their debts to Mali for the love and affection she showered on them.

Both had expressed that Mali should be born as their daughter in the next birth so that they can pay back their debts. Sure, their daughters and other daughters in laws, too, were loving and caring. However, it was Mali who took care of both Ayah and Amma the most in their old age.

When Ayah's leg was amputated in 1983 in Chicago, it was Mali who kept Ayah and Amma in her house and nurtured and cared for him. The Sangarapillai family should never forget this. Mali is a noble soul. God bless her!



ஆனைக்கு ஒரு காலம் !
பூனைக்கு ஒரு காலம் !

Power does not
last forever.

Rudramawatte

1970 - 1975

In 1973, Chandramohan left Sri Lanka for the UK. He lived in the UK for two years before migrating to the US. He specialized in Psychiatry in the US.

Chandramohan left Sri Lanka three years after his immediate two younger siblings. Mohan, as he was fondly called by his friends, was the brightest of the family. But at the medical school, he had become more interested in bridge and billiards and consequently, he had lost his focus on studies. He picked unnecessary quarrels with his surgery professor who was well known for his hatred for the Tamils. The professor repeatedly failed Chandramohan in the finals.

With the three older children out of the house and Mahendran at the university, the economic situation was getting better at home. Both Asokan and



Amma with a neighbour



Peradeniya University, Sri Lanka where Mahendran attended College.

Nagendran contributed liberally for the household expenses.

Jayanthi finished her high school. Ayah was never keen for his daughters to pursue higher studies even though both were very bright and Jayanthy had a knack to get things done and was very ambitious.

Ayah wanted both his daughters to marry early and have children. He had worked hard and saved money for their dowries. He was apprehensive to let his daughters pursue higher studies. He was worried that the daughters may fall in love with someone and bring a scandal on the family.

He did not want to take any chances. He was very keen that Jayanthy marry his nephew, Jayarajasingham (Jaya) - his sister's only son. Ayah loved his nephew. Jaya was also very interested in Jayanthy. Marriages among the cousins were very common in Jaffna Tamil society.

Jayanthy, who was bold and an extrovert, told Ayah that she will not marry Jaya. She had respect and love for Jaya but she wanted to marry someone from outside the family.

Ayah was deeply disappointed. He tried to change her mind for months but Jayanthy would have none of it. One day, he locked her up in her room and did not allow her to go outside. Still, Jayanthy would not budge.



Left to right : Manoharan, Jayanthi and Manohari in the open balcony, Rudramawatte. Early 1970s



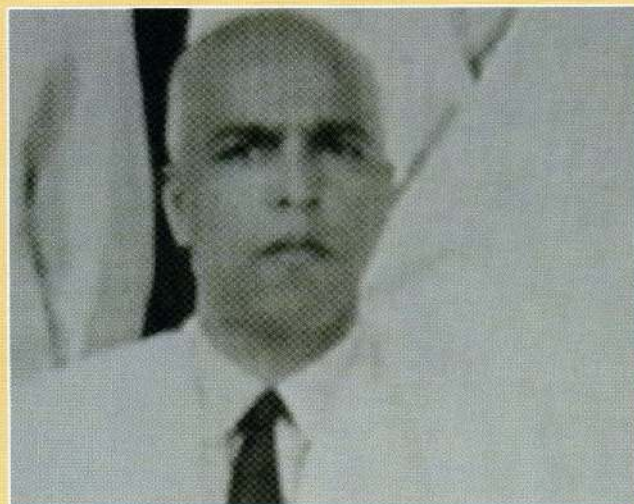
Amma with Manohari

Knowing Jayanthi's stubbornness, he finally relented and sent word to the marriage brokers to look for a suitable boy.



Amma, mid 1970s

Ayah worked hard as he was the sole breadwinner of the family. In addition to working at the Ceylon National Chamber of Industries, he gave lectures in economics to university students at three universities (Aquinas, Vidyodaya and Colombo University).



Ayah



Aquinas College, Colombo



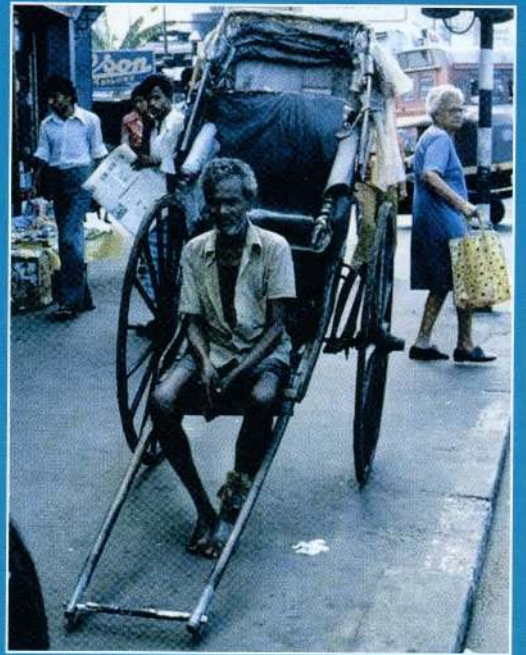
Vidyodaya University, Colombo



Nagendran, flanked by Ayah and Amma, Rudramawatte, mid 1970s.



Ayah at the dining table, 1970s



Rickshaws, common mode of transport until mid 1970s. People sat on the back and they were pulled by men



Sapphire theater, Wellawatte. Tamil Movies were shown here. Burnt down in the 1983 riots



Opposite Wellawatte Post office. A cobbler repairing shoes.



Common mode of selling Kerosene. Most of the houses used ovens that worked on Kerosene.



Open fish market, Wellawatte. Amma would go to the market every day. There was no refrigerator in the house until the early 1980s.

Amma Meets Sathya Sai Baba

Sathya Sai Baba was a spiritual master and a holy man from the Southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. From a very young age, Sai Baba had accumulated not only yogic powers but millions of followers all over the world.

Amma had a good friend by the name Padmavathy Alles at the Ramakrishna mission. She had heard about Sai Baba and had taken a keen interest in Sai Baba and became a staunch devotee of him. Alles was wealthy. Alles wanted to go and meet Baba personally.



Sathya Sai Baba



Alles family, London, 1975. Padmavathy, seated to the left

whom they can relate to and associate. Sai Baba was a living Guru. Swami Ramakrishna died in the early nineteenth century.

Since Amma was very religious and spiritual, she liked to meet all holy men. She had heard about the reputation of Sai Baba as a healer who performs miracles.

When Alles gave the opportunity to go and meet Sai Baba, Amma readily agreed. She had to get permission from Ayah - who controlled the purse. By this time, the financial situation was much better at home with the sons sending money from the United States.

Amma was always suspicious and apprehensive of any spiritual person who claims to have miraculous powers. Sai Baba was well known for such miraculous powers. She not only wanted to see him

Alles wanted Amma to accompany her. Amma was deeply devoted to Swami Ramakrishna, her spiritual Guru. Once you have a guru, Hindus do not change their Guru.

Many Hindus always preferred a living Guru with

but also to test him.

A month prior to going to meet Sai Baba, Ayah had fallen and broken his wrist. He was placed on a cast. A few days before Amma left to see Sai Baba, Ayah had gone to see the Orthopedic Surgeon who had assured Ayah that the fracture had healed and the cast was taken off. It was Ayah who then drove Amma to the airport to see her off.

When Amma arrived at Sai Baba's ashram, she was very secretive about Ayah's fracture. She did not tell anyone or discuss about the fracture at the ashram. She wanted to see whether Sai Baba would know and mention anything about Ayah's fracture. She wanted to test Sai Baba.

Notes from Amma's diary:

"Prasanthi Nilayam and Puttaparthi are very beautiful places. To reach, you have to go through undeveloped villages. Once you reach, it is a wonderful and peaceful place.

Prasanthi Nilayam has a big hall, they have all the pictures of Gods on the walls. There is a full-size photo of Shirdi Baba and Sai Baba. In the middle there is a Lord Krishna statue in blue.

There are beautiful trees which give plenty of shade for the pilgrims to rest. There are round cemented circles under the trees. It resembles a park. The place is very neat and tidy. All speak in whispers.

The ladies take eekel broom and sweep the garden in the morning and evening. Rich ladies do all the cooley (menial) work. There are no servants to be seen. Everywhere beautiful Kolams (colored design made out of flour) to be seen. This is done daily in the morning and evening. Water is sprinkled all over and kolams are put.

Baba comes out daily in the morning and evenings. It is a wonderful sight to see him among the crowds. He walks gracefully like a peacock. He carefully looks at everyone and gives vibuthi (holy ash) only to few. He talks to a few. No one accompanies him. He smiles at everyone. He blesses the crowd. In the evenings people gather outside to watch the elephant Sai Geetha put the garland for Baba in

front of the Krishna statue in the open garden. All over there are beautiful gardens.

Baba pats Geetha and takes the garland and then gets the plantains from the devotees and gives it to Geeta.

The elephant worships Baba with its raised trunk. Then Baba sees Geetha go. All the crowd then go to the hall and join in the prayers.

Baba comes and sits on the throne and blesses the crowd. He goes out when the arati (showing fire) is performed."

Amma got an interview with Sai Baba the same day she arrived - she was very lucky since thousands wait for months to get an interview with Sai Baba.



Puttaparthi

Sai Baba took Alles and Amma to his room. He spoke to them in Tamil - he was a polyglot. After discussing spiritual matters for some time, he came slowly walking towards Amma, smiling at her.

Amma was anxious and her heart was palpitating fast. She had heard about Sai Baba and seen his pictures. The Sai Baba center in Colombo was located a few houses away from our house. She never attended any of the functions there, yet she had a deep respect for him. Millions adored him. Thousands waited at his ashram every day to have darshan (to see him).

Sai Baba was right in front of her. Yet, Amma wanted to test him. She wanted to see whether Sai Baba would mention about Aya's fracture. Sai Baba was known for predicting the past and future of any one.

Sai Baba stood in front of her - Amma was seated on the floor - and then lifted his right forearm and said, "the fracture is not healed."

Amma was shocked - and pleasantly surprised - that Sai Baba mentioned about Ayah's fracture. However, she was confused about Sai Baba mentioning that Ayah's fracture has not healed. Only a few days back the orthopedic surgeon had mentioned that the fracture had healed and the cast was taken out.

Sai Baba then materialized holy ash from thin air and dropped it onto her palms. He asked her to apply the ash on Ayah's forearm and that everything will be alright. Amma was mesmerized.

From Amma's diary about the meeting with Sai baba.

"My second pilgrimage to India - in February 1972 to Puttarpurthy and Bangalore.

My good friend Mrs. Padma Alles went to London in 1970 and lived there with the family. She was a great devotee of Saibaba. She came from London to Colombo in 1972 and took me with her to Puttarpurthy to visit Sai Baba in February 1972.

The very day we arrived at Puttarpurthy we were called for an interview. Baba told about Ayah's fracture of the arm and manifested vibuthi for Ayah and myself. It was divine grace that I got vibhuti from his hand. Also lucky to have talked with BABA the very day I went there. Rare grace of Baba. He talked to me in Tamil for five minutes. Later in my



Super speciality hospital

life I realized the divinity of Baba and the vibuthi he gave Ayah and myself."

When that interview came to an end, Amma would regret that she never asked Sai Baba about her children and family. At that moment, her pressing worry was about Ayah's arm - the breadwinner of the family.

After a few days, they left Sai Baba ashram and returned to Colombo.

When they landed at the airport, she was shocked to see Ayah back in a cast in his forearm. She was surprised and immediately recalled Sai Baba's words "the fracture has not healed." She asked Ayah why the cast had to be reapplied.

Ayah said that after the cast was taken out, he noticed pain in his right forearm and had visited the orthopedic surgeon again. A repeat X ray was taken and this time the head of the orthopedic department had looked at the X ray and felt that the fracture had not healed and his intern surgeon had taken out the cast prematurely. The surgeon reapplied the cast.

From that moment, her faith in Sai Baba deepened.

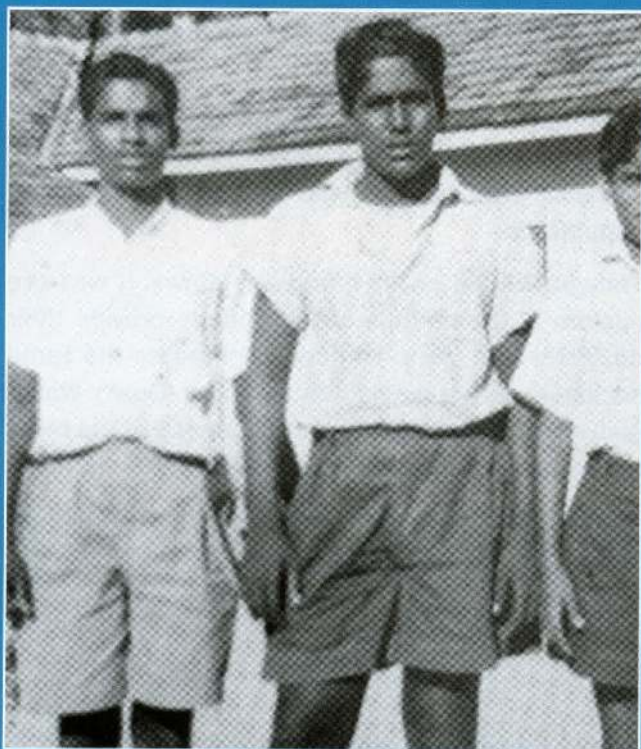
Amma would visit Sai Baba in the nineteen nineties with Asokan's family. Asokan also became a staunch Sai Baba devotee and had personal interviews on two different occasions. He volunteers at the Super speciality hospital in Puttarpurthy yearly for two weeks. In the 90s, it was almost impossible to get a personal interview with Sai Baba since thousands upon thousands waited at his Ashram for his darshan every day.



Prayer hall, Puttarpurthy

Jayanthi Marries Suthanthira Raj

Jayanthi was 23 years old in 1975. Ayah had asked a few marriage brokers to start looking for a suitable partner when she had turned twenty. Ayah did his best to convince Jayanthi to marry his nephew, Jaya, but she had politely declined.



Jeya in the middle, Jaffna, early nineteen sixties.
He was tall and heavily built.
He was a good sportsman at high school.

Finding a match through arranged marriage was a difficult task for any Tamil father. It was even more difficult if the daughter was dark complexioned - Jayanthi was very dark. The prospective Bridegroom's family demanded more dowry if the girl was dark skinned.

The dowry consisted of cash, real estate and gold. If the bridegroom was educated and settled in a foreign country, the dowry would be much higher. Many prospective bride grooms demanded a house in Colombo. If there was no house in Colombo, they demanded a house in Jaffna.

Many proposals were brought to Ayah's attention.

Ayah's search finally led to a Tamil boy who had migrated to the UK after high school and had qualified as an electronic engineer. The boy came from a middle class family. They lived in the suburbs of Colombo, Kotehena. Ayah had informed the bridegroom's family about Asokan marrying a Sinhalese - they had no concerns about it. Ayah did not hide anything.

Suthanthira Raj:

Suthanthira Raj was the only son and the youngest in the family - he had two older sisters. He was the darling of the family. He went to the UK as a teenager to study engineering. He was born on February 5, 1949.

Most of the prospective Bridegrooms and brides met



Sunthithira Raj (Raj)

and saw each other for the first time at a public place such as temples or movie theatres. Generally, they did not speak to each other. Many times, the girl was not even aware that there was a prospective bride

Jayanthi's dowry:

Rudramawatte house - 75,000 rupees.

Maviddapuram land - 400 rupees

Cash - 79,000 rupees.

Jewels - including a diamond necklace that belonged to grandmother Kanmani. The total amount of dowry was quite large in 1975.

After all the formalities were settled between both parties, the registration took place at Rudramawatte. That morning, there was a small function (samathiya sadangu) at home. It is the custom when a Tamil girl attains puberty that certain rituals had to be done. It is a costly affair. Since the money situation was tight with Ayah when Jayanthi had attained puberty, it had not been done - neither had it been done for Manohari. Families that did not do this ritual at the time of puberty, did it a few days before the girl got married.



Samathiya Sadangu, Rudramawatte, 1975



Ayah kissing Jayanthi at the Samathiya Sadangu.



Amma kissing Jayanthi - picture taken in the shrine room, Rudramawatte

The registration took place at Rudramawatte. Jayanthi's family took their car, a Ford Prefect, (1 SRI 9604) to bring Raj home.

When he arrived at the house he was ceremoniously welcomed by Ayah and taken inside the house.



Raj arriving at Rudramawatte in the Family car (Ford Prefect). His two sisters are in the background. Mahendran, Ayah and Amma are on the left side of the picture



Registration, Rudramawatte, 1975



Ayah and Amma signing the dowry deeds.

Amma had made sure all relatives were invited. The house was decorated.

The wedding took place the next day at one of the newly opened marriage halls in Colombo - the new Kathiresan hall. Mahendran was the Best Man (Mappillai Tholan).

Generally, it is the custom for someone younger to be the best man. Jayanthi who was close to Mahendran wanted him to be the Best Man. Mahendran, who was thrilled, paid for their honeymoon at the beautiful Peradeniya - a mountainous town where his university was located.



Raj and Jayanthi at the registration. The jewelry that Jayanthi is wearing was gifted as part of her dowry. The inner necklace that she is wearing came from her grandmother, Kanmani

About 500 people were invited. Chandramohan, Asokan and Nagendran did not attend the wedding since they were in the US. They helped with the expenses. After the wedding, there was a feast at the house.



New Kathiresan hall, Bambalapitiya, Colombo



Ayah handing over Jayanthi to Raj. Mahendran who was the Best Man (Mappillai Tholan) seated next to Raj.



Jayanthi garlanding Raj, Ayah is seen next to her. Two of Jayanthi's cousins (Gaihari and Udishra) were the flower girls, seen in pink dress.

On the wedding night, Jayanthi would leave her house for the very first time with a man she had known only recently. She spent her first night at the



Amma blessing the couple.



Walking around the sacred fire

Bridegroom's house. Spending the first night in a hotel was unheard of in those days.

As she left the house she wept, and Ayah - whom the children had never seen crying - also wept. His loving daughter now permanently belonged to another Man. Ayah assured her that he will always be with her.

After a few weeks, Jayanthi left for the UK with Raj.



Jayanthi and Raj, London, 1975



பொறுத்தார் அரசாள்வார் !
பொங்கினோர் காடாள்வார் !

Those who have
patience are rewarded.

Mahendran is Registered to Amirthavathy

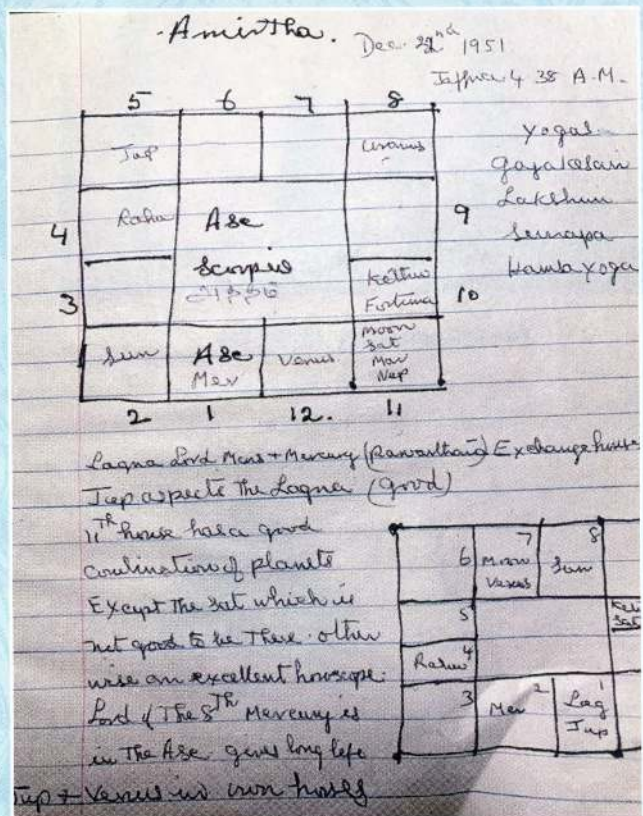
Mahendran was a bundle of fun and was carefree and easygoing. He was a great sportsman (played Rugby and Cricket for the university). He was also very bright.

After high school, he entered the University of Ceylon at Peradeniya. He pursued a career in Agricultural engineering.

Being away from home - especially from Ayah - gave great freedom to do the things he liked. He was not being watched by Amma or Ayah while he was at the university. Mahendran enjoyed this new freedom very much and used it to the maximum.

Mahendran was born and raised in Colombo. He attended an elite Catholic school - St. Joseph's College.

When he was in the second year of a four year degree at the university, he fell in love with a very quiet and extremely shy and introverted girl who came from a very orthodox middle class Jaffna Tamil family. She was two years his junior at the university, pursuing the same course.



Amirthavathy Thirunavukarasu, horoscope by Amma



Mahendran, Amirtha exchanging gifts. Ayah see on left.



Mahendran and Amirtha at registration



Registration at Rudramawatte



Ayah at the registration

No one expected Mahendran to fall in love with a girl with such a background. Many hoped that he would go after a modern girl from Colombo. However, Mahendran was smitten with Amirtha. It was love at first sight for Mahendran. He kept on going behind her and she - coming from a deeply orthodox family - resisted him.

Mahendran was spending many weekends going to see her in Jaffna - about 150 miles from the university and it was quite a tedious journey. The love he had for this girl drove him wherever she went.

The intense persuasion by Mahendran was overwhelming for the girl and finally she relented.

Amirthavathy Thirunavukarasu (12.22.1952).

She was born in Jaffna to a large middle class orthodox vegetarian Tamil family. There were five girls and three boys - an arduous task for any Tamil father to find suitable matches for five girls.

Amirthwathy was a petite, fair girl with sharp features.

In 1976, Mahendran got a scholarship to go to the University of Davis in California to continue his higher education. Both the families were very keen to have the engagement before Mahendran left abroad.

The registration took place at Rudramawatte - and was a quiet one. Only close relatives were invited.

After the registration, Mahendran left for the United States. Amritha stayed back to work on her visa.

First Trip to the USA and England

The only trip both Amma and Ayah took out side Sri Lanka was to India. Amma had been to India twice - once in 1972 and then in 1976. Ayah went to India on a trade mission in 1969.

In 1976, they would travel beyond India - to the UK and the USA. Jayanthi was living in the UK and the older four sons were living in the US. Amirtha also travelled with them to join Mahendran in the USA.



Picture taken prior to leaving to the airport.

Left to right : Manoharan, Amma, Manohari and Ayah

Amma and Ayah stopped in the UK for a week. Both were happy to see Jayanthi. She had no children at that time. They also met many relatives who had settled down in the UK many years ago.

From the UK, they flew to Chicago where they stayed with Asokan and Mali. Their first grandchild - Anjali - was a year old at that time. They were happy to spend time with their grandchild. Chandra Mohan flew in from New York to see them. He was still a bachelor. Mahendran also joined them in Chicago.

Prior to departure to the US and the UK, Ayah's biggest concern was his cigars. As mentioned earlier, he was addicted to his Jaffna cigars. Before he left Sri Lanka, he had packed enough cigars to last for three months.



Ayah, Chicago, 1976 with his cigar

Both Ayah and Amma were very proud of their four sons. Ayah, who grew up in abject poverty was overwhelmingly joyed to see his sons economic successes. America was the top country to emigrate to in the nineteen seventies. All his four sons had migrated to the US and were doing well.

Ayah was fascinated by the wealth of America. Everything was big - houses, cars, people and the food was rich and in large portions.

He and Amma thoroughly enjoyed their stay in the US. They were thrilled to play with their grandchild, Anjali.

Seven years later, they will move to the US permanently and spend the rest of their lives in the US.



Proud father in front of Asokan's car



With Anjali and Mahendran , Chicago, 1976



Chicago, 1976.

Seated: Amma and Ayah with Anjali.
Standing: left to right - Chandramohan, Mali, Amirtha,
Mahendran, Asokan and Nagendran



Chicago, 1976: left to right:
Chandramohan, Mahendran, Nagendran and Asokan



தாயிற் சிறந்ததொரு
கோவில் இல்லை !

The best temple
is your Mother.

Chandramohan Marries Ranjana

11.07.1977

Chandramohan returned from the US in 1977 on a short holiday.

Ayah had already alerted his marriage brokers to look for a suitable bride for him.

Everything had to be done secretly. There were a few relatives and a neighbour who were very jealous of the Sangarapillai family. The family through hard work and dedication had risen to be the top, both academically and financially, which had made many people jealous. Some of them were already saying bad things about the family for making an alliance with a Sinhala family. Some of them had taken their swords out.

No one knew about the marriage proposals for Chandramohan except Ayah - he kept it very secret.

Some of the poor relatives were sending feelers to Ayah for their daughters to marry Chandramohan - their motive was purely financial. Amma flatly rejected such proposals from her relatives.

There were many proposals from Jaffna. One proposal looked very promising. The girl was a graduate. Both Chandramohan and the girl met at a movie theatre and they liked each other.

Unfortunately, the gossipy Jaffna society got to know of the possible alliance and went to work. They started to spread false rumors. They created fear. It was too much for the girl's family. They sent a message that they were dropping the alliance. In a final desperate move, the girl wrote a personal and moving letter to Amma that she liked Chandramohan very much and wanted to proceed with the marriage. Chandramohan was stunningly handsome. It was too late. Amma had this letter in her possession for a long time.

Chandramohan had only two weeks before getting back to the US. Time was running out. There was still one proposal to look in to. By this time, Chandramohan was disheartened and had returned to Colombo from Jaffna.

Ayah was getting frustrated. It was at this time, his youngest teenage son - Manoharan - took matters into his hand.

Ayah wanted Chandramohan to marry before he left for the US.

Manoharan planned everything in absolute secrecy. Instead of taking the train, he left with his brother in a car to Jaffna. The trains to Jaffna is usually packed with Tamils. Tamils used the trains to gather information and gossip.

Manoharan avoided staying with the relatives. Instead they stayed with a friend in his farm house - even the friend did not know the reason for the trip.

Manoharan met the marriage broker in a grocery shop. Broker had one proposal with him. The girl was in her early thirties and a doctor. They came from a very respectable family from a village called Urumpirai.

Broker suggested that Chandrmohan see the girl at the girl's house the same evening.

Manoharan, by nature, is very careful in such matters. He checks a few times before he moves on such matters.

Manoharan wondered why a beautiful doctor from a conservative respectable Jaffna family wanted to marry his brother . The broker said that the girl was very keen to marry a doctor and go abroad.

Still not convinced, Manoharan shyly and reluctantly asked the broker whether the girl had any physical impairments. The broker was shaken by this question and raised his voice and said that he should trust him.

Manoharan inquired about the girl's family. He wanted to make sure that the girl's family was not in any financial difficulties. He also made sure that the girl's family was not large. Manoharan wanted to make sure his brother was not financially saddled



Ranjana and Chandramohan at the registration



Chandramohan and Ranjana

She was tall, fair and very beautiful. She was a perfect match for Chandramohan. She was also very broad minded - unusual for someone coming from a conservative Jaffna society.

The wedding was a quiet one. It took place in the early morning at the Bride's house. After the wedding, both left for Colombo. Within a week, Chandramohan flew back to the US and Ranjana would join him a few months later.



Left to right: Manohari, Chandramohan, Ranjana and Malathi (cousin)

Chandramohan was very fortunate to have found Ranjana as his partner. She was a perfect match for him. She loved him and took care of his needs. Chandramohan is an easy-going Gentleman. The Sangarapillai family is always grateful to Ranjana.



Chandramohan being welcomed at Bride's house



Ranjana being led to the marriage hall



Left to right : Seenivasagam Mami,
Thilagam, Punitham and Sinnamami



Close relatives at the marriage - left to right : Kanageswari mami,
Rathi, Peria mami, Ambikai, Thial mami,
Seenivasagam mami and Thilagam



Ranjana and Chandramohan - Jaffna, 1977



தந்தை சொல் மிக்க
மந்திரம் இல்லை !

Father's words
are divine.

Rudramawatte

1975 - 1980



Amma, Ayah, Manohari and Kavitha, Rudramawatte, 1977.

The period from 1975 to 1980 can be described as a quiet period for both Ayah and Amma.

By 1976, four sons had migrated to the US and Jayanthi, to the UK.

During this time, only Manoharai and Manoharan stayed in the house with Ayah and Amma. The house that was once crowded and a hive of activity was now quiet and sparse.



Amma bathing one of her grandchildren, Colombo, 1979

Jayanthi gave birth to her first child, a daughter named Kavitha, in 1977. Jayanthi found it very difficult to work and take care of the child. Child care was very expensive in the UK.

Like many other Sri Lankan families in the UK at that time, she sent Kavitha to Sri Lanka to be taken care of by Amma and Manohari. Kavitha was one year old at that time.

By sending Kavitha away, Raj and Jayanthi could save money and make a downpayment for a house in the UK.

It was Manohari who took care of Kavitha like her own child for more than one year.

Ayah was still working at the Ceylon National Chamber of Industries. Financial situation at home had become much better now. Ayah who had never gone shopping for groceries in his entire life would now occasionally go and buy meat and other food items - thanks to the money sent by his sons. He increased the monthly allowance for Amma and so, Amma was thrilled.

Ayah was never careful about his health. None of us have ever seen him exercising. It was Amma who took care of his health. Ayah spent his whole life studying and working. Occasionally, he would go to play bridge. He listened to the cricket commentaries on the radio. He loved his cigars - and children hated it for its odor and messiness. Cigars were his passion.



Amma with Suganya, left (Mahendran's daughter) and Kavitha, right (Jayanthi's daughter), Colombo, 1979

Being a diabetic, Ayah was not allowed to eat sweets but Ayah simply yearned for them. He loved sweets. He would frequent Tamil restaurants near the house after coming home from work and satisfy his craving for sweets.



With Nagendran, Colombo, 1979

He would get caught next morning when Amma checked his urine for sugar. It will turn dark red indicating a very high sugar level. Amma then would show him the urine test tube. He would simply smile and keep quiet.

Since he had more time now, he spent most of the evening, after he returned from work, at the Colombo Tamil Sangam (CTS). CTS was a premier institution in Colombo promoting Tamil culture. Ayah was a scholar in Tamil and enjoyed spending time there.



Colombo, 1979.

Front row : Anjali, Ayah and Manohari

Back row : Mahendran, Nagendran, Asokan and Manoharan

Ayah became the President of CTS from 1980 to 1983 - this was a very prestigious position. It was in the same CTS premises, his children would build a library and hall in memory of their father in 2000. It was indeed a great tribute to the memory of their beloved father.



"பெயர், கிறெடிந்" என்ற பதங்களுக்குப் பொருத்தமான தமிழ்ச் சொற்களைச் சிபார்சு செய்வதற்காக தபால், மற்றும் தொலைபேசித் தொடர்புகள் அமைச்சரின் நியமிக்கப்பட்ட தமிழ்ச் சொற்களை அதன் மூலமாகத் திரு. ஏ. ரி. பொன்னையன் (பட்டயக் கணக்கறிஞர், பட்டயக் கணக்கறிஞர் நிலையத்தில் கல்விப் பணிப்பாளர்) மகேசன் திரு. குமாரதூய கையளிக்கிறார்.

பட்டயக் கணக்கறிஞர் தலைவர் திரு. ரி. இரத்தினசபாபதி (பட்டயக் கணக்கறிஞர், பட்டயக் கணக்கறிஞர் நிலையத்தில் தமிழ் மொழி மருமூலினர் தலைவர்), திரு. சங்கரப்பிள்ளை (விடுவனாள், நூல் ஆசிரியர், பல்பு நூல்களின் மொழி பெயர்ப்பாளர்) ஆகியோர் காண்பிக்கின்றனர். (மேலும்: மேலும்)

With the Sri Lankan minister of Telecommunication, 1975. Ayah is in the extreme left

Manohari was pursuing a course in office management. She also had to look after Jayanthi's daughter, Kavitha. She was busy.

Ayah was worried about Manohari. He called his favourite marriage broker and asked to look for a partner for Manohari.

Manohari was tall, slim, fair and pretty. There were many proposals for Manohari (more than Jayanthi). Tamil families demanded more dowry since they knew that her brothers were all doctors and doing well.



Ayah visiting his land in Tharnapuram, Killinochi, Sri Lanka, 1977

Once a prospective bridegroom came to see Manohari. He then rejected her saying that she was slightly obese. That was an absolute lie since Manohari was pretty slim.

When Ayah heard this, he was irritated and took his anger on Manohari. He scolded Manohari to lose weight. Manohari was very much hurt over this incident and lost more weight.

In the late nineteen seventies, Ayah built a house in Amma's ancestral land in Koddady, Jaffna. Ayah donated this house to Manohari as part of her dowry. Ayah drew the plans for the house - like all the other houses which he built. The house had only a single story and resembled the Rudramawatte house.

Manohari, later, sold this house in the late nineteen eighties after she migrated to Australia.

Both the houses that Ayah built and gave as part of dowry to his daughters were sold while he was alive. He was not too thrilled about it. Perhaps the situation in Sri Lanka had forced both Jayanthi and Manohari to sell their beloved houses.



அரசன் அன்று அறுப்பான் !
தெய்வம் நின்று அறுக்கும் !

King punishes right away,
God executes
punishment timely.

Nagendran Marries Gigi

Nagendran was a hot commodity among the Colombo Tamil families looking for a prospective bridegroom. He was tall, fair, a doctor and very ambitious. Nagendran had adopted western habits even as a small boy. Family members would vouch that he was the only one in the house who slept with his socks on. No one in Sri Lanka went to bed with their socks on since it was humid and sweaty. From an early age, he was mesmerized with the western world and its culture.

Ayah and Amma were surprised that Nagendran had not found any suitable girls in the USA. Among all the children, they hoped that Nagendran will be the one to find a western girl as his partner.

Ayah, as usual, sent word to his brokers that Nagendran was on a short holiday in Colombo. Ayah was very clear about one thing - he wanted to get a modern girl with a western out look from Colombo.

There were a few proposals from Colombo but Nagendran rejected all of them.

An amusing incident took place while Nagendran was holidaying in Colombo.

Nagendran had gone for a party and met some Tamil girls casually at the party. Next morning, the mother of one of the girls barged in to our house and demanded from Ayah that her daughter marry Nagendran. Ayah was clueless and gently asked her to leave the house.

Nothing worked out for Nagendran and he went back to the US.

Nagendran made things easy for Ayah and Amma by finding his own partner.

Nagendran met Gwen (Gigi) De Silva through a friend of his who lived in Chicago.

On the recommendation of his friend, he flew to see Gigi who was living in London. They both liked each other.

Gigi De Silva.

Gigi was born in Tanzania where her father was working. She had never lived in Sri Lanka. Her father is a Sri Lankan Sinhalese.

Her father and the current ruler (Sultan) of Oman studied together at Sandhurst military academy in England. They were friends. When the Sultan overthrew his father in a bloodless coup, he made his friend the Inspector General of Police of Oman. Gigi was a modern girl. She is a dietician by profession.

The wedding took place in London at a posh hotel. Both Ayah and Amma did not attend due to pressing needs at home. Chandramohan, Asokan and Jayanthi, along with their families, attended the wedding.



Left to right : Chandramohan, Nagendran, Gigi and Ranjana, London, 1980



Gigi and Nagendran, London, 1980



Raj, Nagendran, Gigi, Jayanthi and Kavitha.



Nagendran and Gigi with family, London, 1980

Empty Nest Syndrome



Koddady, Jaffna

Ayah and Amma were going through an empty nest syndrome at home. All, their children had gone abroad - Manoharan was pursuing his medical studies in India. It was only Manoharai who was at home with them.

Ayah was very keen to have Manohari married off soon. As usual, he was having discussions with the marriage brokers of Jaffna. There were many proposals for Manohari but nothing was working out as he desired.

Manohari was very fair and beautiful. She was slim and tall.

Ayah was getting old. His chronic diabetes was catching up with him. He had lost weight and looked very skinny. He wanted to retire and settle in Jaffna. He loved the land and the people there.

Amma had a problem with this idea. Though she was born and raised in Jaffna, she had spent more than four decades in Colombo and had got used to the "Colombo" lifestyle. She wanted to be closer to the Ramakrishna Mission - her spiritual abode. There was no Mission branch in Jaffna.



The house which Ayah built in Koddady - this was built on Amma's ancestral land. This house was given to Manohari as a dowry. Manohari later sold this house in 1986. Today, this house is being used as a library. Picture taken in 2014.



Ayah at the Colombo Tamil Sangam, 1980

She protested the move to Jaffna. Ayah was helpless since he could not manage without Amma - he was totally dependant on Amma. The only time he ever stepped into the kitchen was to light his cigars when he ran out of box of matches.



Ayah In the front seat of his car with the driver, Toyota Corolla station wagon, Colombo, 1980 .



Ayah at a meeting. In late 1970s he fell down and broke his hip. Since then, he had to use a cane

Sinhala		English		
අයහුරු වැටුප්පත්		SALARY		
2455	132850	502440	2512200	283770
17. අනෙකුත් වැටුප්පත්		OTHER INCOME		
200	100			10250
18. අනෙකුත් වැටුප්පත්		OTHER INCOME		
19. අනෙකුත් වැටුප්පත්		OTHER INCOME		
20. අනෙකුත් වැටුප්පත්		OTHER INCOME		4200
21. අනෙකුත් වැටුප්පත්		OTHER INCOME		3000
22. අනෙකුත් වැටුප්පත්		OTHER INCOME		1813970
අනෙකුත් වැටුප්පත්		OTHER INCOME		38109
අනෙකුත් වැටුප්පත්		OTHER INCOME		5142
අනෙකුත් වැටුප්පත්		OTHER INCOME		45257
අනෙකුත් වැටුප්පත්		OTHER INCOME		1113970
අනෙකුත් වැටුප්පත්		OTHER INCOME		113970
අනෙකුත් වැටුප්පත්		OTHER INCOME		3211150

Taxes filed by Ayah in 1982. Taxable income 32,111 rupees (\$172 in today's rates).

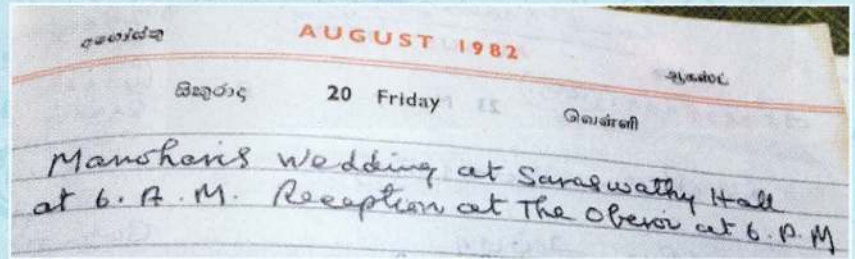


யானைக்கும்
அடி சறுக்கும் !

Even elephant
slip and fall.

Manohari marries Jeyandran

August 20, 1982



Manohari was turning 25 and Ayah was worried. In the conservative Jaffna Tamil Society, as the age advances, the chances of a woman getting married becomes bleak.

One day, a marriage broker brought a proposal for Manohari that looked promising.

The same marriage proposal had been brought to Ayah's attention the previous year as well and before things could be finalized then, the family had left for Nigeria where they were employed.



Jeyandran, Colombo, 1982



Manohari, Ayah and Amma in the shrine room during the Samathiya sadangu (delayed puberty ritual)



Ayah with his sisters-in-law, left to right: Saras, Padmini, Pavalam, and Manoharan

The family was from Manipai in Jaffna. People from Manipai were fair complexioned and well educated. Some of them considered themselves to be an elite class among the Tamils.



Signing the registration papers. Ayah seated to the left



The Jaffna house that Ayah had built in 1980 was given as part of the dowry- Manohari later sold the house in 1986



Ayah's nephew, Jeya (in the middle in a batik shirt). Ayah had wanted Jeya to marry Jayanthi. Jeya would later marry a doctor from Jaffna. Jeya died at a young age in the mid 1990s.



Asokan, Jey, Manohari, Nagendran and Manoharan - at the registration, Rudramawatte, 1982

The family had migrated to Nigeria and the father was working as an engineer. His second son, Jeyandran had his early education in Sri Lanka but had obtained his engineering degree in the UK and

was working with his father in Nigeria. They were holidaying in Sri Lanka.

The marriage was quickly arranged. Jeyandran's family had five good looking boys - one of the boys will marry our cousin, Logi, a few years later.



Manohari with relatives



The gentleman on the left is Mahes mama, Amma's first cousin



Left to right: Gigi, Nagendran, Amma, Ayah and Asokan (behind) welcoming the guests

A few days before the marriage, the registration was held at Rudramawatte. Asokan and Nagendran came from the US to attend the event. Jayanthi, by this time, had permanently moved to Colombo, Sri Lanka. Her husband, Raj was doing business in Sri Lanka with his friend.

Though the family did not demand any dowry, Ayah wanted to do his duty. The house in Jaffna along with cash and jewels were given as a part of her dowry.

The marriage took place on August 20th in 1982. Ayah had chosen a very auspicious time - early in the morning. Manoharan was the Mappillai tholan (Best Man). There were more than 300 guests at the wedding.

After the marriage, they left for Nigeria.



Manoharan (right) was the Best Man (Mappillai Tholan)



Manohari



Kavitha, Jeyanthi's eldest daughter, is seen next to Manohari in a pink dress.



Ayah and Amma on the left and Jayanthi on the right



Left to right : Manohari, Jey, Manoharan and Kavitha



படும் நழுவிப் பாலுக்குள்
விழுந்தது போல,

Opportunities are not
to be missed.

The Calm Before Destruction

1983 was turning out to be a good year for both Ayah and Amma. All their children - except Jayanthi and her family - were out of Sri Lanka and well settled. Both Ayah and Amma were looking forward to a quiet life in Sri Lanka.

Ayah was still hoping to go to Jaffna and settle down there. Amma was mostly spending her time in her spiritual endeavours.

In 1982, Jayanthi's family had returned back to Sri Lanka from the UK. Raj was interested in doing business (electronics). United National Party (UNP) that espoused open economy had come to power and the economy was looking bright. Many of the expatriate Tamils were returning back, mostly from Europe.

Pension	513.08
Consolidated Allow	163.50
Special Allowance	332.66
Harmed Allow	42.50
Compensation Allowance	140.00
C.L.A.	50.00
	<hr/>
	1241.74

Ayha's pension in 1982 (about \$6 in to day's rate)

Tamil issues still lingered on. Tamil Federal party had won a large number of seats in the Tamil areas and its leader had become the opposition leader causing much irritation and anger to the Sinhala nationalists.

Sticking to his election manifesto of his party, the Tamill opposition leader openly called for an independent Tamil nation in the traditional home lands of Tamils, the north and east of the country. This added fuel to the fire.

Raj had constructed an apartment complex above the Rudramawatte house. Jayanthi's last child, a girl, Abarna was born in June, 1983 in Colombo.



Raj built an annexe on top of the house. Trees were felled for the construction and the open space (which gave beauty to the original house) was gone. By 1983, most of the houses had started to raise the outer walls due to security reasons.

“My dear Thamby,

Hope you would have received my two letters. Jayanthi gave birth to a baby girl (8lb and 12 oz) on the 20th at 1:02 in the afternoon. She went to the Mc Carthy nursing home at about 11 AM with slight pain. After she had been there, they told her to stay as there was some blood discharge. As the doctor was coming to the labor room the child was born . They have not yet decided on the name. The baby is like Raj now. Kavitha is very happy that she got a sister. None of us were there when the baby was born.

I am looking after the children and Ayah. Everything is going on smoothly. Janakan is very quiet and obedient without the mother. He sleeps with Raj. There is another small girl like Vellai.

Ayah's bowel movements are very poor. Only for senokot it opens.”

One thing that did not change was Ayah's diabetes. It

My Dear Thambiy, 30 27/6/83
 Hope you would have received my
 two letters. Jayanthi gave birth to a baby girl
 (8 lb 12 oz) on the 20th at 1.02 in the afternoon.
 She went to the McCreath nursing home at about 11 A.M.
 with a slight pain. After she went there they told her to
 stay as there was some blood discharge. Dr. Kumbura
 Sanyal saw her and he replaced the water bag and went
 for lunch. as he was coming in to the labour room the
 child was born. They have not yet decided on the name
 of the baby as like Raj now. Kartha is very happy
 that she got a sister. None of us were there when the
 baby was born. I was very surprised when I heard
 the news because the delivery was very quick. Raj was
 on his way to the nursing home taking Jayanthi
 things. we have engaged a night & day attendant.
 Jayanthi is coming home today (Thursday) she
 stayed for four days there.
 I am looking after the
 children & ayah. Every thing is going on smoothly.
 Raj travels up & down twice a day we go in the
 evenings. Janaka is very quiet & obedient without the
 mother. He sleeps with Raj. There is another small
 girl like vellai. so there is help. I do the cooking as
 usual. Today I went to panambade & told the
 dispensary lady to come. She will come in the evening
 & go the following morning. She will look after the
 mother & baby's needs in the night. ayah's bowel movements are
 very poor only for Senakel it opens. Baby came with
 a varicella. He examined the leg. ayah as usual

Amma's letter to Manoharan
 (who was at a Medical school in India)

was getting worse. He was afflicted with diabetes for more than four decades now and was completely reliant on insulin.

Ayah was never careful with his health or diabetes. He loved sweets; he never exercised regularly. As he aged, he lost more weight. If not for Amma's tender loving care, he would have not survived and would have died much earlier.

In March 1983, Ayah had developed a small wound on his right foot. Unfortunately, it was not healing fast. He was getting treatment at one of the local nursing homes. Yet, the wound was very slow to heal.



Few months before the ethnic riots, Colombo, 1983. With Jayanthi's family and Manoharan who had come on a vacation from India where he was studying.



Long standing midwife (sinhalese) who helped Amma in the house after her children were born and then did the same for Jayanthi

අප්‍රේල් 14 Thursday		වටිනාකම
Ampicillin		38.40
ඖෂධ 2 ඉරි ඖෂධ		5.00
Dressing	14 th	10.00
Medicine aspirin		100.00
15 th Spray		122.00
17 th Dressing		10.00
11 th ඖෂධ 12 th ඖෂධ		5.00
16 th Dressing		10.00
17 th "		301.40
		10.00
Birthday Janakan		50.00
		<u>361.40</u>

Amma kept meticulous accounts(cigars and box of matches - 5 rupees)

- 2 -

Statement of Wealth

1. Immovable property -

Mathady Housing Scheme - Lot 52 - 4 lechchena	10,000.00
Lot 21 - Kandawala Stage 11 - 10 acres leased land, money paid for outright grant but deed not yet received.	5,000.00
P.O. Savings Bank	48.40
Motor vehicle 7 Sri 277 (1988 1961 model worth about Rs. 20,000/-)	75,000.00
Investment in Hatton National Bank Ltd. Wellawatte Branch.	90,042.40
Total wealth	90,042.40

No Gifts.

No dependents.

I declare that the above particulars are in every respect fully and truly stated according to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Full Name of Declarant (In Block Letters): **PONNAMPALAN SANGARAPILLAI**

Occupation: **Nil.**

16/11/83

... RS ...
Signature.

Ayah's tax statement, 1983. Total assets about 90,000 rupees (about \$500 in today's exchange rate)

July 1983

Racial Riots in Sri Lanka

During the colonial period, many Sri Lankan Tamils, particularly those from the Jaffna peninsula, had taken advantage of the educational facilities established by Christian missionaries and became well educated. They also benefited from the British policy of divide and rule, which placed minorities in positions of power in the colonies and soon dominated the Civil Service and other professions.

Sri Lanka gained independence from the British in 1949.

When Sri Lanka became independent (Dominion status) in 1949, a majority of government jobs were held by Tamils, who were a minority of the country's population. Tamils constituted no more than 20% of the population. Yet, more than 50 % of those entering the medical and engineering colleges were Tamils. Tamil students worked hard and the competition to enter the university among the Tamils was fierce and brutal.

Sinhalese were very much upset over this and blamed the Christian missionary schools in Jaffna for providing far superior education to the Tamils than the schools in the Sinhala areas.



D.S. Senanayake, in black suit, the first Prime Minister of Sri Lanka (all Prime Ministers since 1949 have been Sinhalese).

Sinhalese also had the opportunity to invite the Christian missionaries to their areas in the eighteenth century when the missionaries arrived in Sri Lanka. Unfortunately, there was fierce opposition from the Buddhist monks. They were concerned that the Christian missionaries were in Sri Lanka for proselytisation purposes.

In 1956, the Official Language Act, commonly known as the Sinhala Only Act was introduced. Up until that time, English was the country's official language, despite it being spoken by only five percent of the population. The use of Sinhala, spoken by 75 percent, and Tamil, spoken by 25 percent, had been severely restricted during British colonial times. This policy was reversed by the new Sinhala government, which replaced English with Sinhala as the nation's official language.



SJV meeting with Tamil Nadu Chief minister, Karunanidhi, 1970.

Protests against the Sinhala Only policy by Tamils were met with mob violence that eventually snowballed into the riots of 1958.

Political parties and groups representing Tamils felt that the implementation of the Sinhala Only Act deprived the Tamil populations in the north and east of the country of their right to fully integrate into government institutions. The policy was viewed as an injustice brought upon the ethnic minority.



SJV addressing a meeting, 1960s

Throughout the 1960s, protests and state repression against these protests created further animosity.

In 1972, Sri Lanka became a republic and gave foremost position to Buddhism. The policy of standardisation (affirmative action) was the foundation for the armed struggle by the Tamils.

Under standardization, Tamil students were forced to get more marks to gain entry to universities, including medical and engineering faculties. A good education and entering university was the dream of all Tamil students. Tamil areas - especially Jaffna - were dry and the only way to move up economically was through a good education. This has been drilled into the heads of Tamil students by their parents.

After standardization was introduced, all Tamil students had to work even harder. However, they were disappointed and frustrated to see Sinhala students entering the medical and engineering faculties with less marks. The percentage of Tamil students entering universities dropped to 20 % after the implementation of standardization. It had originally been around 50%.

Most of the Tamil students called for an armed struggle to form an independent Tamil Nation (called Eelam) in the north and east of the country where they mostly resided. Students felt that the peaceful way of protesting since 1956 had run out of its course.

There was also a series of ethnic riots in 1977 following the United National Party's (UNP) coming to power.

In 1981, the renowned public library in Jaffna was burnt down by a Sinhala violent mob, led by a Minister of the ruling party.

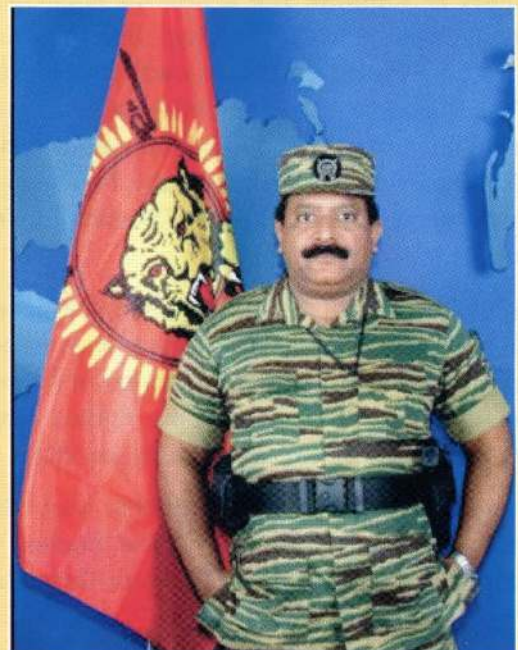
The burning of the library in Jaffna - considered a cultural treasure by the Tamils - left deep wounds among the Tamils. It housed thousands of ancient and priceless manuscripts.

Until 1983, there were similar incidents of low level violence between the government and the mushrooming Tamil militant groups. There were many murders, disappearances, and cases of torture attributed to both sides.



The burnt Jaffna library, 1981. The attack on the library was led by a Minister of the ruling part, UNP.

On 23 July 1983 at around 11:30 pm, the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (the Tamil Tigers or LTTE), foremost militant Tamil group ambushed the Four Bravo military patrol in Thinnaveli near Jaffna in northern Sri Lanka.



Leader of the LTTE, Pirabakaran with the cyanide capsule around his neck

A road-side bomb was detonated beneath the jeep that was leading the convoy, injuring at least two soldiers on board. Soldiers traveling in a truck behind the jeep dismounted to help their colleagues. They were ambushed by a group of Tamil Tiger fighters who fired at them with automatic weapons and hurled grenades at them. In the ensuing clashes, one officer and twelve soldiers were killed immediately, and two more were fatally wounded.

The total death toll was fifteen. A number of the rebels were also killed. This attack has been described as a retaliation for the killing of one of the LTTE's founding members, Charles Anthony, by Sri Lankan forces and as a retaliation for the abduction and rape of some Tamil school girls by the government forces.

Note : LTTE fought the Sri Lankan government for 25 years. At one point they ruled most of the north and east of the country. In 2008, with the help of India and western governments, Sri Lankan government annihilated LTTE and killed their leader, Pirabakaran.

The Army didn't want the soldiers' funerals to be held in Jaffna. And because of possible disturbances at multiple locations, they didn't want to hand the bodies over to their families. So the decision was made at the highest level to hold the funeral, with full military honours, at Colombo's General Cemetery at Kanatte. The Prime Minister, fearing violence, was against holding the funeral in Colombo, but President J. R. Jayewardene overruled him. The President, the Prime Minister, and the rest of the Cabinet were to attend the funeral, which was to take place at 5 pm on 24 July. This plan was against the standard procedure of burying the fallen soldiers in their home villages.

Preparations were made for the funeral, and the riot squad at Borella Police Station was put on stand-by. But by 5 pm the bodies hadn't arrived in Colombo. The soldiers' families wanted the bodies handed over to them to be buried according to tradition.

Due to procedural issues, the bodies were still at Palali Army Camp near Jaffna. The bodies were eventually moved from Palali Air Force Base shortly after 6pm.

Back at Colombo General Cemetery, tensions were growing because of the delay, and a large crowd,

including around 3,000 people from the slum, started gathering at the cemetery, angered by the news of the ambush, which was magnified by wild rumours.



Tamil shops and houses burnt and destroyed

The Avro plane which was carrying the bodies arrived at Ratmalana Airport at 7:20 pm, by which time the crowd at the cemetery had swollen to more than 8,000. The crowd wanted the bodies to be handed over to the families rather than to be buried at the cemetery.



Dead bodies of Sinhala soldiers, July 1983



Tamil properties being destroyed

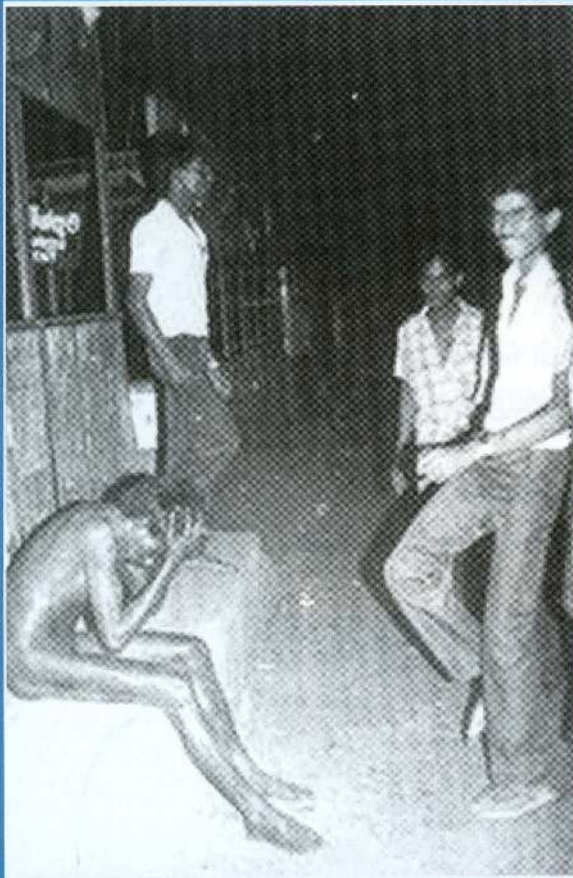


Tamil shops and vehicles being burnt in Colombo, July 1983

The President then decided to cancel the military funeral and hand the bodies over to the families. The vehicles carrying the bodies had been driven away from Ratmalana at 8:30 p.m. and the drivers were heading to the cemetery. But they were diverted to Army Headquarters so that they could be handed over to the families. The crowd at the cemetery was informed of the President's decision at around 10pm.

The crowd left the cemetery in a festive mood.

A section of the crowd marched up to nearby Borella, where they destroyed Tamil-owned stores and houses.



Tamil man beaten to death by Sinhala mob

The mob, which by that time numbered around 10,000, attacked, looted, and set fire to any building near Borella junction that had a Tamil connection, including Borella Flats, the Tamil Union Cricket and Athletic Club.

Then houses belonging to the Tamils in the neighbourhood were targeted. The police fired tear gas at the crowd, but after exhausting all of their stock, they were forced to fire rifles into the air.

Quickly the riots spread to other parts of Colombo where the Tamils lived.

This was a well planned riot organized by the government to teach the Tamils a lesson and also the Tigers, a lesson. Similar riots against the Tamils were perpetrated in 1959 and 1977. On both occasions, the Tamils ran away to find refuge in their traditional homeland - Jaffna.

This time, the government and the Sinhalese wanted a fierce reaction against the Tamils - and to teach them a final lesson.

Thugs were brought to Colombo in trains with voter registration and address of the Tamils. Many of the hooligans were from other districts brought in to Colombo for the sole purpose of destroying the lives of Tamils.



Kuttimani, Jegan and Thangathurai

Thousands of Tamil homes were looted and burnt. Many Tamils were burnt alive by pouring diesel on them. Hundreds of Tamil women were brutally raped.

Colombo looked like a bombed city. It was indeed a sad chapter in the Sri Lankan history.



Jegan, Colombo 1983

The worst riots took place on July 29th (friday) when there was a rumor that the Tigers had arrived in Colombo. Panic and chaos settled in Colombo. Sinhalese came out of the houses and offices and went after any Tamils they came across.

The worst massacre took place inside Colombo's most guarded prison. There were about thirty five

high profile Tamil political prisoners who were lodged there. Among them were Kuttimany and Jegan. They were indicted by the Sri Lankan courts and had been sentenced to death.

Both had wanted their eyes donated after their death to Tamils so that they could see their dream - an independent Tamil nation.

On July 29th, Sinhala prisoners lodged next to Tamil cells entered and murdered most of the thirty five Tamil political prisoners.

Kuttimany and Jegan were brought to the middle of the prison and hot oil was poured into their eyes and then their eyes gouged with iron rods - for having expressed their wish to donate their eyes after their death. The viciousness with which Tamils were targeted shows the hatred and the vindictive spirit of the Sinhala mobs and even, the Government of Sri Lanka.

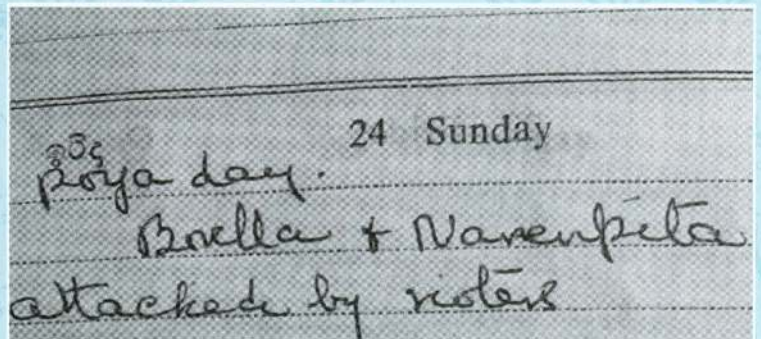


இடம் கொடுத்தால்
மடம் பிடுங்குவான் !

Give an inch
and he will take a mile.

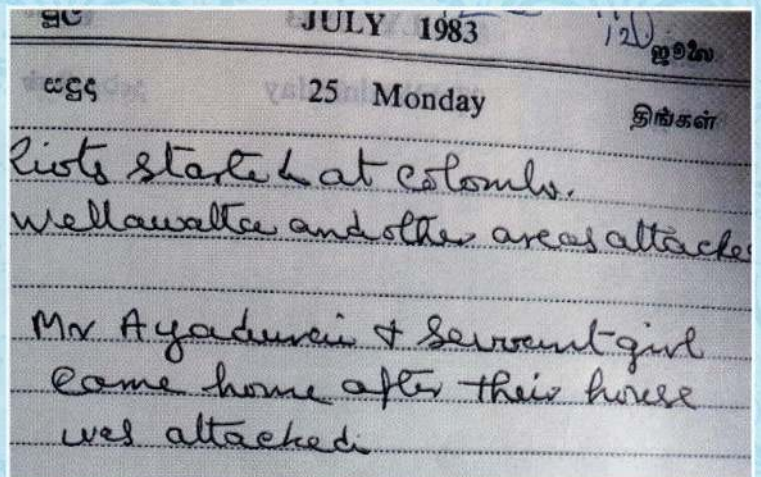
The Aftermath of the Riots

Wellawatte was predominantly a Tamil area. Sinhala mobs came in hundreds, armed with diesel, to loot and burn the homes of the peaceful Tamils. The first mob arrived on July 24, 1983 at Rudramawatte. They came from the back end of the road and burnt all the Tamil houses one by one.



Amma's notes in her diary

Most of the mobs had been transported by buses and trains by the ruling party. The mobs had the voting list of all Tamils in that area.



Diary notes

By the time the mobs came to the middle of the road, they ran out of diesel. Our house was located in the middle of the road.

As they were passing our house with empty diesel cans, the mob shouted that they will come back the next day with enough diesel to burn all the houses.

Fortunately, there was construction work going on at the house. Construction workers were Sinhalese. These Sinhala workers stood



Sinhala mobs looting Tamil shops

outside and told the hooligans (not from the same areas) that the house belonged to a Sinhalese. We are grateful to these Sinhalese construction workers for their kind act of humanity which saved the house from being invaded by the mob.

Fortunately, the mob never returned there after. Our house was very fortunate to have escaped being burnt down both in 1959 and 1983 racial riots.

The 1983 racial riots in Sri Lanka would permanently change Ayah and Amma's plans forever. The ethnic riots brought a seismic shift not just for Ayah and Amma but for all Tamils in Sri Lanka.



Sinhalese mobs looting Tamil shops



Attacking Tamil vehicles



Burnt Tamil buildings, July 1983



Fort - commercial hub of Colombo - July 1983. Many shops owned by the Tamils were looted and burnt.



Pettah - the main market hub - July 1983

On July 29th, with the Sinhala mobs went berserk after falsely believing that the Tigers had arrived in Colombo, it was not too safe to stay in the house. Jayanthi had a newborn baby with her along with her two other young children.

They all moved to Nagendran in-law's house in an upscale part of Colombo - since some of the Sinhala



Aftermath of the July '83 anti-Tamil riots (Bettman/Corbis)

politicians also lived in that neighbourhood, it was considered safe.

By this time, Ayah was not able to get proper treatment for his diabetic wound ulcer. Gangrene was setting in. A few days earlier, he had a minor surgery to remove the dead tissue around the wound. He could not get proper treatment since all medical clinics were closed. It was a desperate situation.



Sinhala mobs looting

In the meantime, both Asokan and Nagendran were desperately trying to get them out of Sri Lanka.

They were able to get a visa to the UK for both of them.

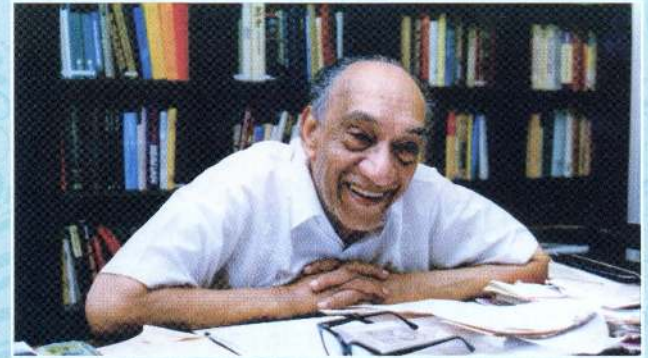
Most of the Tamils were deeply attached to their heritage. Those living in the Tamil areas, supported and voted for the Tamil parties.

Those Tamils living in Colombo voted for United National Party (UNP). They felt that UNP was the lesser evil party than SLFP (head by SWRD's widow, Srimavo) which adopted a pro Sinhala policy.



A Tamil set on fire, July 1983

Ayah personally knew all the Prime Ministers of Sri Lanka due to his work at the Motor Commission. He would always tell us that SWRD was a perfect gentleman but had to adopt a pro sinhala views due to political reasons.



The master behind the carnage, President J.R. Jayawardene. He refused to impose curfew for several days while the Sinhala mobs went on a rampage. He wanted to appease them while the Tamil population died in thousands.

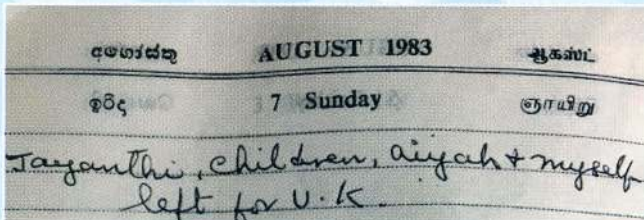
Ayah was close to UNP leadership, and worked on their party manifesto in 1977 when UNP won a landslide victory. He never sought out any political favours from UNP.



A burnt Tamil home

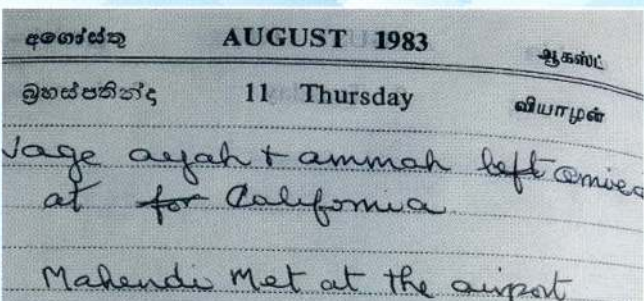
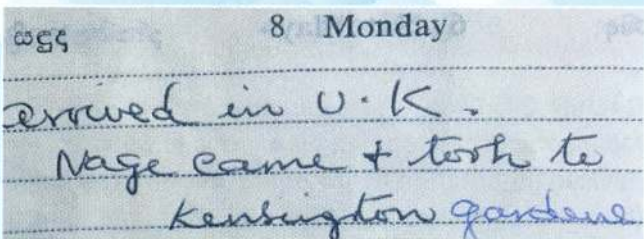
The Flight to the USA

Amma and Ayah boarded a flight to London on Sunday, August 7th, 1983. They would spend a few days in London. Nagendran had flown in from Los Angeles to meet them. Nagendran wanted Ayah to be taken as soon as possible to Los Angeles where his diabetic wound could be looked at and treated.

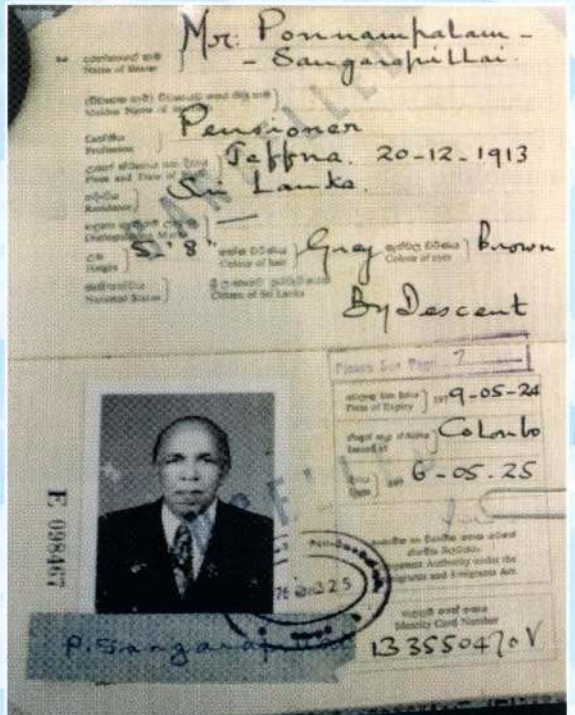


August 7th, 1983 was a sad day for Ayah and Amma. Ayah would never return to Sri Lanka. Amma also never returned to Sri Lanka permanently (she briefly visited Sri Lanka twice).

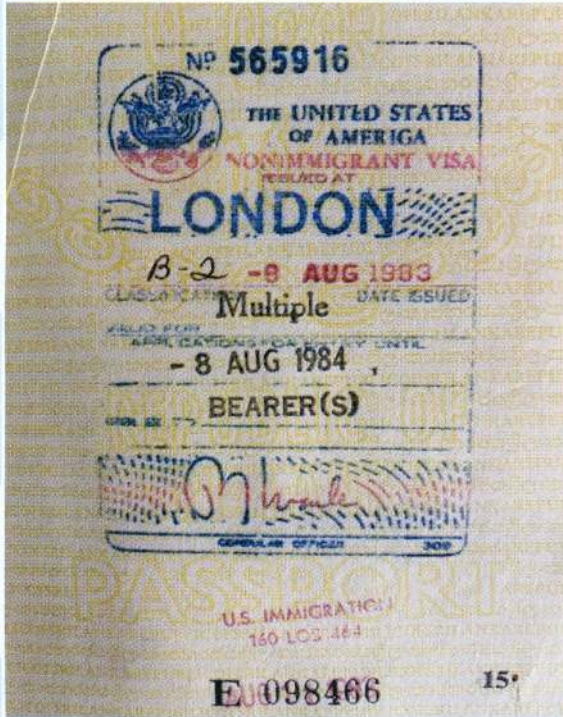
Number 33 has a big significance for the Sangarapillai family. The house address in Rudramawatte was 33. The family lived in that house for 33 years before migrating in 1983. Amma would live another 33 years in the US before her death in 2016.



Amma's Sri Lankan passport when she left Sri Lanka, 1983

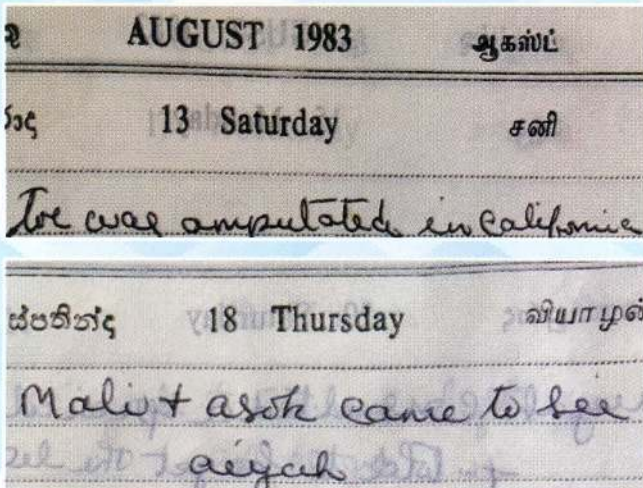


Ayah's Sri Lankan passport



US Visa obtained in London, valid for one year - Both Ayah and Amma would never return to Sri Lanka.

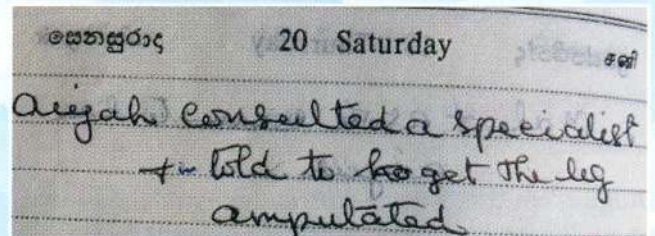
When they arrived in Los Angeles on 11 August 1983, Ayah was immediately taken to an Orthopedic surgeon to evaluate his wound. After evaluating the wound, the surgeon informed Ayah that the wound is not healing well and advised to amputate the right big toe. This recommendation was made initially since the wound was on the toe.



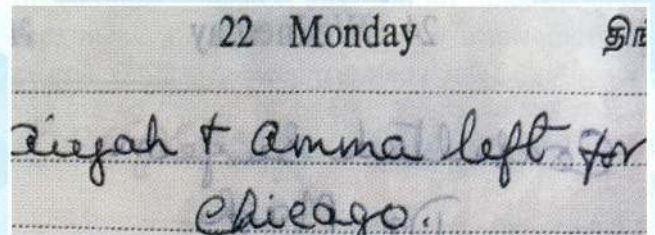
The surgeon also informed Ayah that if the wound did not heal after the toe amputation, an amputation below the knee would be required.

Ayah was shocked to hear about the toe imputation. After a long thought, he agreed to the amputation.

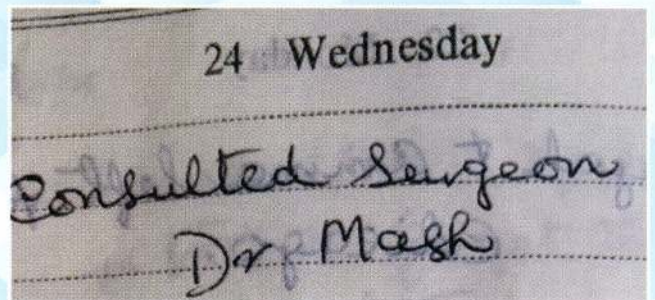
Unfortunately, the wound did not heal even after the toe amputation. Nage and Asok took him to another orthopedic surgeon in Los Angeles who also advised him to undergo amputation.



It was decided that Asokan and Mali would take Ayah to Chicago and consult another surgeon. They flew to Chicago on July 22, 1983.



On July 24, Ayah was seen and evaluated by Dr. Mash, one of the top most surgeons in Chicago. He advised amputation below knee immediately since there was poor circulation in the legs which prevented the wound from healing well.



Ayah froze; tears welled up in Amma's eyes. It looked like there was no choice left for him. They had consulted all the top specialists and an amputation was inevitable. Ayah had been a strong man all his life. He had faced more severe hardships in his life - born poor, having an alcoholic father, losing his father at the age of thirteen, losing his three teenage sisters, spending most of his teenage life in poverty, losing his mother due to cancer, resigning his government job over the Sinhala only act, his long standing diabetes with dependence on insulin, etc. Life has been full of struggles for Ayah. While all his struggles had been emotional and mental struggles, this new one was a physical one.

අගෝස්තු AUGUST 1983 ජූනාඩ්
 මුහුදුපිටිද 25 Thursday වියාදුන්
 ayah's leg amputation at Hinsdale
 below the knee at 3 p.m. Hospital
 Brought to his room at 7 p.m. Chicago

Ayah's leg amputated at Hinsdale hospital, Chicago, below the knee at 3 pm . Brought to his room at 7 P.M

On August 25th, 1983 Ayah underwent amputation below his right knee.

The operation was performed at Hinsdale hospital. It took no more than 45 minutes. Post operative physical therapy was started within a couple of days. Ayah returned home in a few days.

It was going to be a new life for Ayah. He faced the new challenge with his characteristic boldness and courage.



Hinsdale Hospital, Chicago

අගෝස්තු AUGUST 1983 ජූනාඩ්
 සෙනසුදා 27 Saturday අනි
 no sleep in the nights
 Having jerks, tantrums + nightmares

No sleep in the nights. Having jerks, tantrums and nightmares

මුහුදුපිටිද 8 Thursday වියාදුන්
 discharged from hospital today + went
 home at 11:30 a.m. a girl from the therapy
 clinic comes to give exercise

Discharged from the hospital and went home at 11.30 a.m. A girl from the therapy clinic comes to give exercise.

සැප්තැම්බර් SEPTEMBER 1983 සෙර්දම්පර්
 පද්ද 19 Monday ටිඞ්කර්
 Asokan took ayah to the clinic
 ayah's leg cast was taken out
 and a socke was put
 Lal & Manel came in the night

Asokan took Ayah to the clinic. Ayah's leg cast was taken out and a socks was put.

මුහුදුපිටිද 20 Thursday වියාදුන්
 ayah went to the clinic with
 Asok + Mali. Very cold today

Ayah went to the clinic with Asok and Mali. Very cold today.

Ayah's letter to Manoharan on 29/7/1983 : " When I came to know that I had to undergo an amputation and for some time I was depressed. I was determined to make the best of the situation. Regrets and depression will not solve problems. I am now walking 15 minutes a day with the prosthesis. Progress is slow. I intend to return to Ceylon in April or May, 1984. I have sent Asokan's horoscope to Pundit Navaratnam. Shanthys (appeasement to Gods) should be done by Asokan and Mali to have a son."

This attitude of Ayah shows his mental calibre and his sense of determination to face life against all odds, as he had done all his life. This is something we should learn from Ayah.



California, 1989



Ayah, California 1984



California, 1988



California, 1985



California, 1985

Life in America



Oak Brook, 1984. The room on the right side of the picture was built for Ayah and Amma by Asokan and Mali

1984-1990 can be described as the golden years for Ayah. He never dreamt that he will spend his final years of his life in the US. He had never wanted to leave Sri Lanka. He had wanted to go back to his birthplace - Jaffna - and spend the last years of his retirement there. He wanted to serve and give back to the place and people where he came from. Before he left Sri Lanka, he was helping to set up a bank called Tamil Bank in Jaffna.



Amma

However, fate had a different path for Amma and Ayah. Both of them never wanted to be a burden on their children. Ayah would spend seven years in the US until his death in 1990. Amma spent thirty three years in the US until her death in 2016 at the age of ninety nine.

After moving to the US and recovering from his leg amputation, Ayah quickly got adapted to life in the US. He immersed himself in US politics and sports.



Ayah and Amma, 1989

He loved the TV in America - especially the sports channels. He enjoyed basketball and tennis very much. While watching the games on TV, he would get upset if the team he likes did not do well. He was a good armchair critic.

He loved American politics. Ronald Reagan, who was the President at that time, was his favourite. He would watch C-Span - which broadcasted politics - for hours.

It was only after he came to the US that he started to watch Tamil films on TV. Ayah seldom watched Tamil films when he was in Sri Lanka. There were occasions when he accompanied his daughter, Jayanthi, for Tamil movies.

He chronicled all the Tamil movies he watched on his diary. His son, Mahendran, supplied him with the Tamil movies. He had watched more than 300 Tamil movies.

தேதி/நாள்	NOVEMBER 1983	நாள்/புதன்
பிழைப்பு	25 Friday	வெள்ளி
1	April 9 - Tokyo finals - 8-12 PM - V. CA Network 1	
	5-14 P.M.	
2	April 10 - N.B.C - 10AM - 1PM	
	April 15 - N.B.C - 10:30 - 12:30	
3	April 21 - N.B.C - 10:30 - 12:30	
	22 - N.B.C - 11:30 - 1:30	
	சுமது சாஹித்யம் - சூலை லீக்	
	April 28 - 9:05 - 25 PM	
	Match - C.B.S. Chicago C.B.	
	29 - W.C.T Finals - ESPN - 12-3	
தேதி/நாள்	26 Saturday	சனி
1	June 3 - N.B.C - 9:30 - 11:30 AM	
	Jan 9 - N.B.C - 10 - 12 - AM	
	10 - N.B.C - 6 - 11 - AM	

Details in Ayah's diary about TV programs



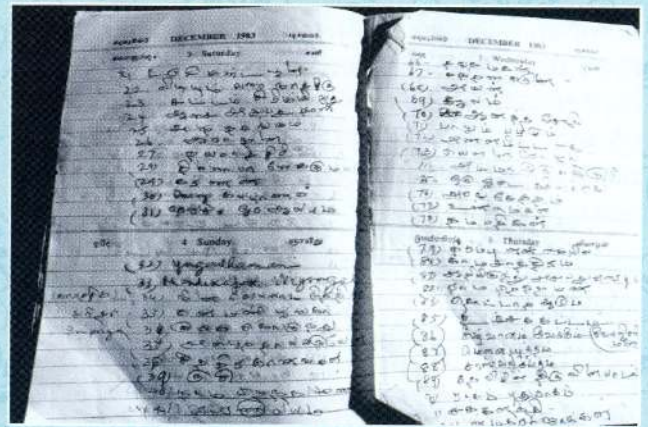
Ayah, 1989

While they were living in the US, they travelled to Australia twice to meet their daughters, Jayanthi and Manohari. They spent a few months with their daughters before returning back to the US.

Ayah had a passion for building houses. He built four houses in Sri Lanka (one in Colombo and three in Jaffna). Unfortunately he never lived in any of the houses he built in Jaffna.



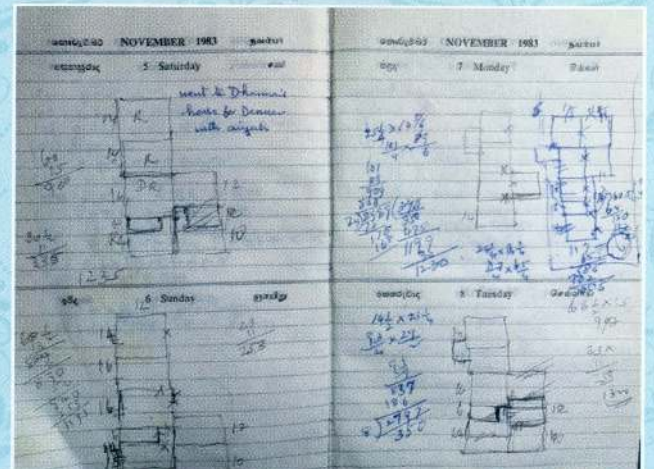
Amma and Ayah, San Jose, California, 1986



Ayah documented all the Tamil movies he watched in his diary



California, 1985



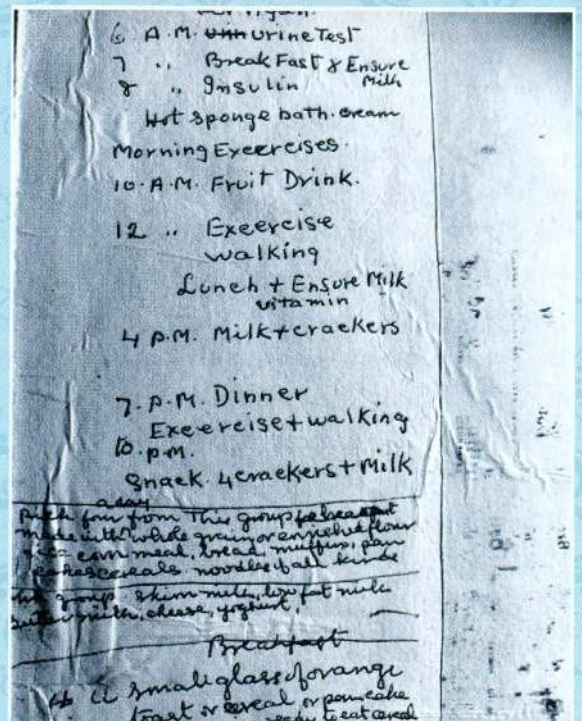
Ayah's plan for the house he was hoping to build in Jaffna

Ayah was the architect for all the houses and drew up plans.

While he was in the US, he was still hoping to go to Jaffna and live there. He was planning to build another house for himself and Amma.

Unfortunately, his dreams never came to fruition

In the US, Ayah was totally dependant on Amma for everything from his breakfast to dinner. Amma strictly controlled everything for him; the number of hours he was allowed to watch TV and play bridge; his exercises and even his hours of sleep. She was



Amma planned everything for Ayah - notes from her diary



Chicago, 1988



Amma, Glendale, California, 1986

not only an excellent life partner for him but also a good guide and governess.

Amma took care of him like a small child - she had always done this. She always remembered her Grandmother's wisdom in such matters. She revered Ayah.

Though Ayah never showed his love openly - most of



Ayah making a point - Chicago, 1985

the Jaffna men never did - he deeply loved her inside. He knew that without her, he could not survive. She had total control of him after moving to the US - quite different from the Sri Lanka days where he had been in command.

They spent the summer months in Chicago and for winter, they returned to Los Angeles to be with Nagendran, Mahendran and Manoharan.

Ayah gained significant weight after he came to the US. He ate well and enjoyed his food. There were plenty of food that catered to diabetics and so he was happy.

One could say that Ayah and Amma spent their best part of their lives in the US with their children and grandchildren. They longed to get back to Sri Lanka - especially Ayah. However, their desire never came to fruition due to the persistent ethnic troubles in Sri Lanka.

As regards to the situation in Sri Lanka, it only got worse after they left the country. The once peaceful movement of the Tamil struggle turned into an armed struggle after the 1983 racial riots.

Thousands of young Tamils joined various armed groups to take on the Sinhala army. Eventually, the Liberation of Tamil Tigers of Eelam (LTTE) will eliminate all other Tamil armed groups to become the sole militant group, led by its charismatic leader, Pirabakaran.

Tamil areas in the north and east became a military garrison. There were constant bombing and murders that left thousands of innocent people on both sides dead.

Most of the Tamils left the country and sought refuge

in western countries, especially Canada. In the mid nineteen nineties, Canada opened its doors for the Sri Lankan Tamils.

Today, there are more Jaffna Tamils in Toronto than in Jaffna. Likewise, many Sri Lankan Tamils have settled in America, Australia and Europe.

In 1986, the wily and shrewd (also known as fox) President of Sri Lanka, J. R. Jayawardene (JR) tricked and duped the new and inexperienced Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi to send Indian troops to fight LTTE in the guise of Indian Peace Keeping Force. In the battle that ensued between LTTE and the Indian forces, thousands of Tamils were killed and hundreds of Tamil women were raped by the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF).

Eventually, the Indian army was asked to leave the country by JR's successor, Premadasa. Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated by a suicide bomber. It was widely speculated that LTTE was responsible for this.

At one point, LTTE ran a parallel state in the Tamil areas with their own administration that included banks, its own army and navy. They also had a small airforce that kept bombing Colombo.

The post 9/11 (the plane attack on the world trade center in New York) changed everything. LTTE was adamant on insisting on an independent state for Tamils known as Eelam. They continued their armed struggle.

They fought the Sri Lankan government in conventional warfare as opposed to guerilla warfare which they had employed before. By this time, India and the West had turned against LTTE. LTTE was annihilated by the Sri Lankan government in 2009. Prabakaran also died in the last days of the war.

Note: Ayah had known JR for a long time, though their relationship was not at the best. in 1958, JR contested from the Buddhist temple town of Kelaniya. His opponent came from a prominent Buddhist family. There was fierce competition and his opponents accused JR of having a Muslim heritage.

JR, the ever cunning man, decided to add bogus votes on election day. He brought in hundreds of people from out station to cast votes.

Ayah was the Chief Polling Officer. He caught most of the bogus voters and chased them out of the polling booth.

A few minutes later, JR came in and accused Ayah of intimidating his supporters. Ayah explained the situation and told JR to leave the polling booth. As a result of Ayah's straightforwardness and honesty, JR lost the election.

Though both made it up later, the relationship was never quite the same.



Amma, California, 1986



California, 1986.

Seated (left to right) : Janakan, Ayah, Jayanthi and Abarna
Standing (left to right): Mahendran,
Raj, Nagendran, Amma and Manoharan



Amma, California, 1986



Amma, California, 1988



One of the checks Ayah wrote in the US



Ayah and Amma with family

One year prior to Ayah's death, he started to receive social security benefits in the form of monthly checks. Ayah was thrilled to receive it even though he wondered why the US Government should send him the checks since he had neither worked nor contributed to the social security. Ayah was extremely good with financial matters.



On a visit to Sydney, Australia, 1985 with Shivani (standing) and Ashvini



Ayah's 75th birthday, California, 1988. Mahendran seen extreme right



Ayah, Shankar, Asokan and Amma,



Ayah, Shankar, Amma and Pravin, Chicago, 1987



Amma, Los Angeles, 1987

Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary (1988)

Amma and Ayah celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary in 1988, both in Sydney, Australia and in Los Angeles.

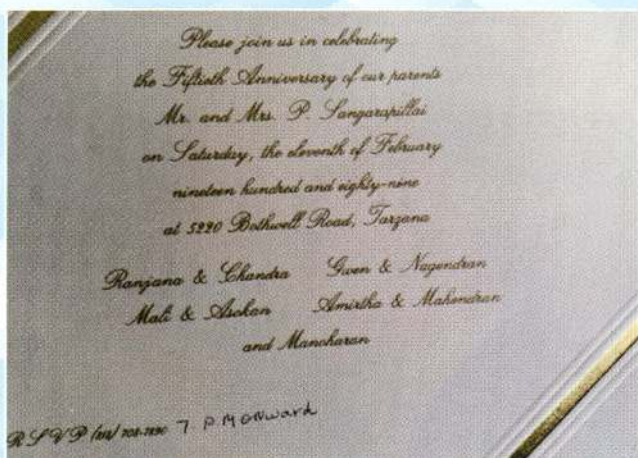
Both Jayanthi and Manohari had organized a gala celebration in Sydney.

The one in Los Angeles was organized by Nagendran and Gigi and was held at their house in Tarzana, California.

Many of the friends and relatives were invited. It was a memorable occasion for the family.



Sydney, Australia, 1988



Invitation for the function in California 02.11.1989



Sydney, Australia 1988.

Seated (left to right) : Manohari, Amma, Ayah and Jayanthi
Standing (left to right): Jey and Raj



50th Wedding anniversary, Tarzana, California, 1988



With all the sons, Tarzana, California, 1988
Left to right : Dr.Chandra Mohan, Mahendran,
Dr.Nagendran, Dr.Asokan and Dr.Manoharan



With family, Tarzana, California, 1988



Tarzana, California, 1986



Amma and Ayah



With family, Tarzana, California, 1989



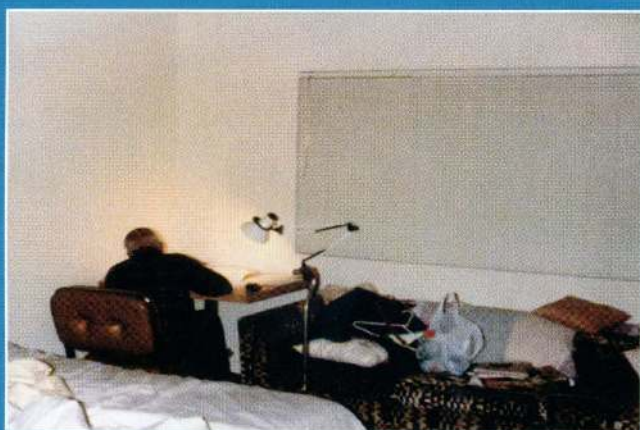
Tarzana, California, 1989



Playing Bridge at the anniversary. Chandra Mohan seated to the right of Ayah

Ayah, the Author

Ayah was a prolific writer. Even before moving to the US, he was the author of many books on many subjects. At the urging of the Sri Lankan government, he had translated the book on economics by world famous economist, Keynes into Tamil. This book is used even today in economics classrooms in Sri Lankan Universities.



Ayah spent most of the time writing books when he moved to the US - California, 1986

He also authored another economics book called Perumathi Kolkai in Tamil. He did not have much time to write while he was working. At the Ceylon National Chamber of Industries, he was the editor of Industrial Ceylon magazine for many years.

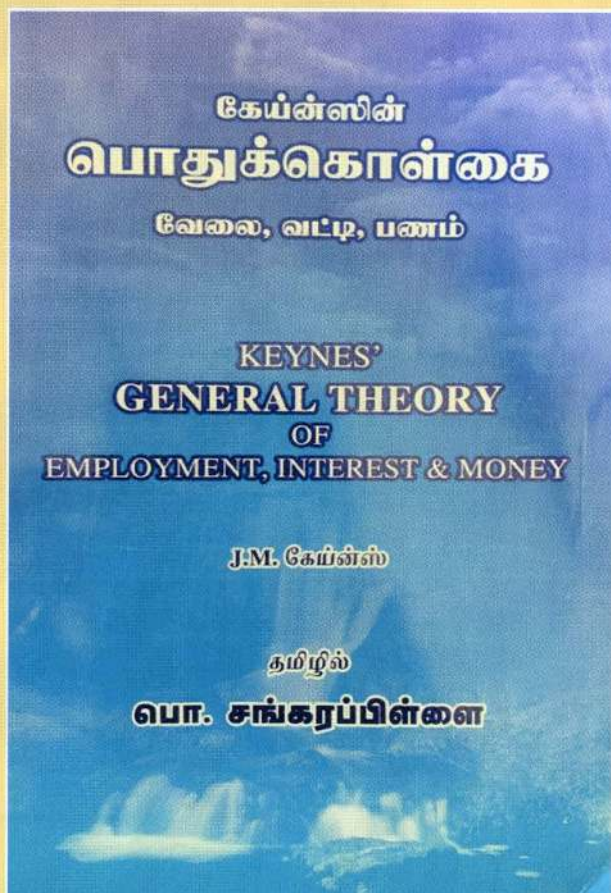
In the late nineteen seventies with all the children gone, he had more time to write. He had a passion for Tamil language.

He authored a book in Tamil called "Naam Thamilar" (We Tamils) which was popular and widely read.

Ayah was versatile in any topic. He wrote a book in Tamil called "Maranathirku pinn" (Life After Death). The book deals with what happens to the soul after death and is a philosophical-religious treatise.

He had a passion for astrology and prepared horoscopes freely for hundreds of people.

His next book was "Saiva Sinthantham" (Hindu

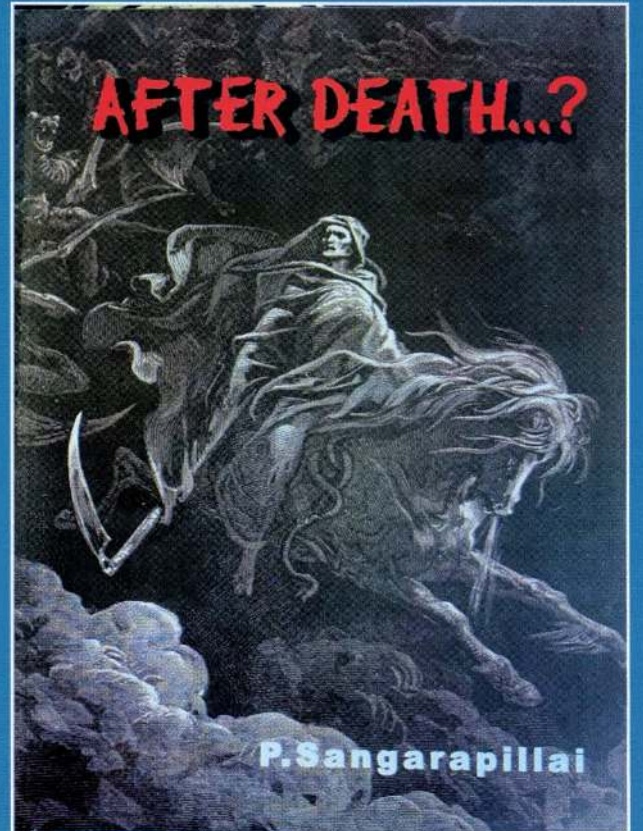
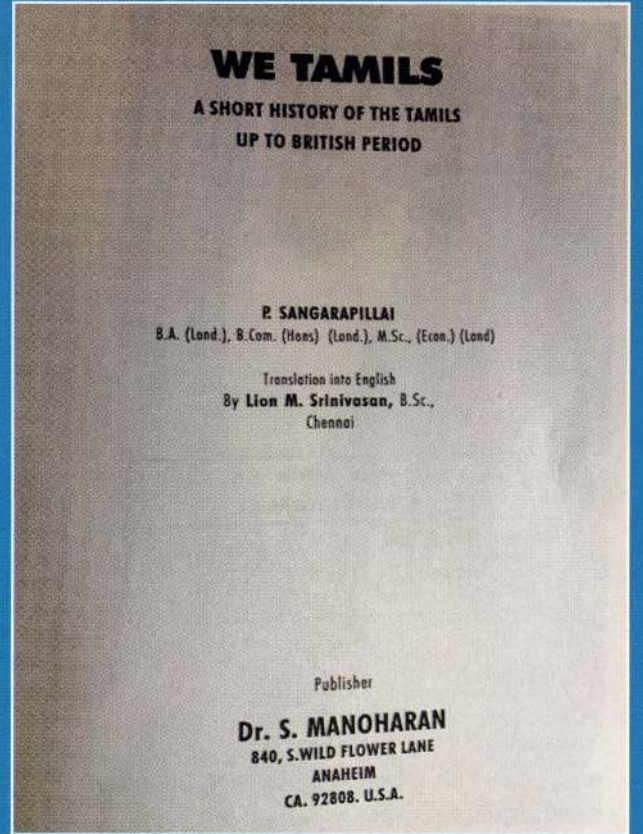
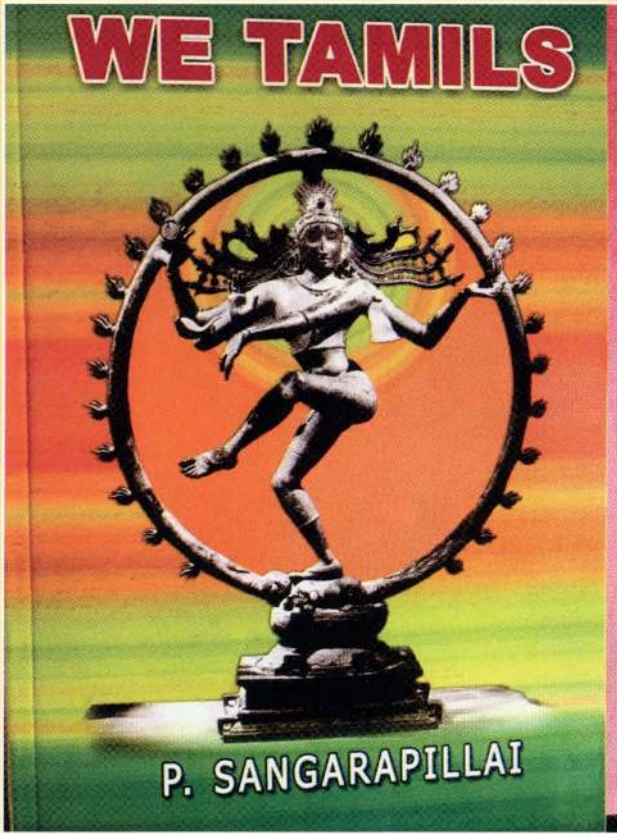


Ayah translated the english book of the noted economist Keynes into Tamil. It is widely used in Sri Lanka.

philosophy). Ayah was a staunch Saivite, though he never went to any Hindu temples. He hardly stepped in to the shrine in the house. No one had seen him praying in front of the Gods. He was not an atheist though. He was an agnostic.

At the time of his death in 1990, he was working on a book titled "The United States of America, the Impressions of a Recent Immigrant."

Ayah wrote most of his books in Tamil. After his death, his youngest son, Manoharan, got the Tamils books translated into English and had them published. These books are widely read in Sri Lanka and India.



Life After Death in Tamil

Life after death in English

INTRODUCTION

"Is there life after death?"

"Who am I?"

Since long, the inquisitive people have been trying to find answers to these questions.

Whatever we see and enjoy are impermanent. They are not going to last for ever. The appearances and changes are by themselves perishables.

People are eager to know whether there is anything more permanent existing beyond these things. From time to time, sages, mystics and seers have tried to answer these questions.

Common people can never understand the answers given by the seers. Most of the answers appear contradictory and against the common sense.

There are many religions practised in the world. These religions also have taken up the same questions and tried to answer.

And those answers given by the religions also appear to be mutually contradictory. It is no doubt the answers are quite so important. That is because, our life and prosperity, worth and greatness, outlook and ideals, thought and action, culture and civilisation, righteousness and unlawfulness – all these – are dependant upon the nature of the answers we get.

Schopenhauer, the German philosopher, was wandering like a wagabond in a park.

From a page in the book Life After Death

பொ. சங்கரப்பிள்ளை

7

பின்னரே கல்யாண ஒழுங்குகள் செய்ய வேண்டும். இருவரின் மன இணக்கத்துக்கும் இடமளிக்க வேண்டும். இது போதுமா? மன இணக்கத்துடன் கல்யாணப் பொருத்தங்களையும் பார்ப்பது நன்றெனவாதிக்கலாம்.

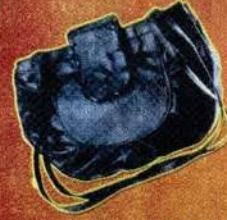
(ஆ) சாதகங்கள் பார்த்தல்:

பலர் இன்று சாதகங்களைப் பார்ப்பதில்லை. இராசிக் குறிப்புக்களிலிருந்து நட்சத்திரங்களின் அடிப்படையிற் பஞ்சாங்கப் பொருத்தங்களைப் பார்த்து முடிவு செய்கின்றனர். ஏதோ மனத்திருப்திக்காகவோ சாக்குப் போக்காகவோ பார்க்கின்றனர் போலத் தோன்றுகிறது. வாழ்க்கையில் எல்லாக் காரியங்களையும் சாதகங்களிற் பார்க்கும் விதிமுறைகளை எழுது சோதிட நூல்கள் நுணுக்கமாகக் கூறுகின்றன.

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 1ம் வீடு | - உயிர் உடம்பு ஆரோக்கியம், குணம், வாழ்க்கையின் அத்திவாரம். |
| 2ம் வீடு | - குடும்பம், தனம், வாக்கு. |
| 3ம் வீடு | - சகோதரர், துணியு, வீரம், ஆபரணம். |
| 4ம் வீடு | - மாதா, கல்வி ககம், காணி, வீடு, வாகனம். |
| 5ம் வீடு | - புத்திரர், புத்தி, புண்ணியம். |
| 6ம் வீடு | - நோய் பகைவர். |
| 7ம் வீடு | - களத்திரம், திருமணம், பங்குடைமை. |
| 8ம் வீடு | - ஆயுள், பெண்களுக்கு மாங்கல்ய ஸ்தானம். |
| 9ம் வீடு | - பிதா புண்ணியம், பாக்கியம். |
| 10ம் வீடு | - தொழில், பதவி, சம்பாத்தியம். |
| 11ம் வீடு | - மூத்த சகோதரர், இலாபம். |
| 12ம் வீடு | - சயனககம், கீர்த்தி, செலவு. |

A page from his book on astrology: 1st house - Life and health; 2nd house - Family; 3rd house - Brothers; 4th house- Mother and real estate; 5th house - Children and intelligence; 6th house - Enemies; 7th house - Marriage; 8th house- Life expectancy; 9th house- Father's good deeds; 10th house- Employment and earnings; 11th house- Elder brothers; 12th house - Expenses

திருமணப் பொருத்தம் பார்ப்பது எப்படி?



பொ. சங்கரப்பிள்ளை

Book on astrology. How to look for astrological match up prior to marriage .

Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy of Saivism



P.Sangarapillai

A Plan for Industrial Ceylon

An article written by P. Sangarapillai (Ayah), Published in Industrial Ceylon, November , 1988. Ayah was the Editor of this magazine until he retired in 1983.

Why Ceylon should be Industrialized?

Four important reasons

1. It is not possible to effect an increase in the number of persons engaged in agriculture devoted to exports. Expansion in the production of other agricultural goods is limited by requirements of the domestic market, and availability of cultivable land. Surplus population could be found employment in industries. Full employment therefore requires industrialization.

2. Agriculture incomes by their very nature lower than industrial incomes. High living standards are not possible without industrialization.

3. Establishment of industries could result in an expansion of other branches of agriculture, producing raw materials for the industry, e.g, Textile industry and cotton.

4. Agriculturists are usually conservative and backward (relatively speaking) in economic and social matters and an enlightened industrial working class could resolve any progress on all fronts.

Industries depend on 1) Power ii) Raw materials iii) Trained personal and iv) markets.

All these problems require an in-depth study, investigation and research. It was then suggested that these matters could be studied by industrial commission assisted by several Technical Experts. The matters they could consider are :-

- a) Survey of country's resources in power, minerals, other raw materials and labor.
- b) Formulation and execution of a plan of industrial production ; and assessment of its requirements in power, minerals and other raw materials and labor.
- c) Determination of the structure and location of the industries.
- d) selection, organization and training of workers.
- e) Organization of facilities for the marketing of finished products.
- f) Conduct and organization of research for the efficient utilization of raw materials and other resources.
- g) Issue of licenses for the establishment of various industries.
- h) Bulk purchase of machinery , stores and raw materials for the industries.

The proposed function and structure of the commission were proposed.

The suggestion was made that the state should prevent establishment of industries without adequate research and investigation. Industries should be commenced only after obtaining a license from the industrial commission.

A proposal has been made that NASCENT industries should be protected . Duplication and expansion of industries beyond the limits set by the internal market would involve wasteful competition and unnecessary loss of capital resources. Such wasteful competition would lead to exploitation of labor through low wages and long hours of work. These concepts were suggested before the export markets developed.

Industrial location should also be according to plan depending on....

Factors which determine for low cost of production.

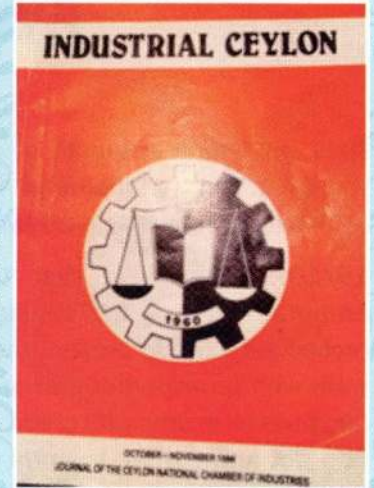
Factors which will make transport costs minimum.

Industries were to be divided into basic and consumption goods industries. The basic industries are those producing investment goods and would be more often state controlled.

It was also suggested that a Tariff board should form an integrated part of the scheme for protection. Presidential Tariff commission was a successor of this Tariff board proposals. The objective of a protective tariff was to benefit the country and the nationals and help in national development.

Whether foreign companies could be permitted to start industries in Sri Lanka was then raised as an important issue. It was suggested that in the national interest that foreign firms should not be allowed to establish industries without government control .

A need to deposit and industrial banks to provide easy working capital to industrialists was also raised. The industrial banks should be able to utilize savings for the provision of easy working capital to Industrialists.



Ayah's letters to Manoharan

Here are some snippets of Ayah's letters to his youngest son , Manoharan from 1983 to 1988. Ayah wrote many letters to Manoharan. “

19/10/1983 : “ At first the very thought of amputation was frightening but now I am reconciled to it . At present they are teaching me to walk with an experimental prosthesis . Study hard and pass all exams with credit . The Colombo house - i do not know what Jayanthi is going to do. If the things come to normal and if I get well , my intention is to return to Ceylon and live in Koddady house in Jaffna . “

23/12/1983: “ Let us forget about the Colombo house . All of us have left the country .Why think of our house when not one child is going to live in Ceylon . “

21/8/1984: “ We are thinking of returning to Ceylon by Feb, 1985 if conditions in Ceylon are normal . Manohari is in London . My idea was to bring her with us to Ceylon . We will not return to Ceylon unless conditions are normal. “

8/1/84: “ A few years for me . I do not like foregin countries . I am never comfortable or happy . I would like to go back and live in my own country . If things come to normal and if I am alright my intention is to return to Ceylon by September , 1984. ”

30/1/1984: “ I am now walking with the artificial leg. But living is going to be a problem. I am 70 years now and only a few more years more. I cannot bother my head about house or future . We will be returning to Ceylon by about Sept if situation is normal . If there is no place for Goofy (our dog) take him to Bala's house at Wattala and leaver it with Bernice if possible. “

9/10/ 84: “ I can walk comfortably with the prosthesis . Time is hanging heavily . I cannot do things that I normally do. I do not think because if I think about my condition , about the fate of the Tamils etc , I will feel sorry. I do not feel sorry for anything . Thus life passes in a daze. “

25/2/1985 : “ Did you meet and speak to Jaya before he died . What did he say ? What was his trouble and what did he die of ? I am very sorry to hear of his death .

America is not a country flowing with milk and honey. Things are becoming very difficult even for doctors . The climate is horrible and undesirable in all parts of America other than California for 8 months in the year .

You'll be surprised to hear that Jayanthi works 3 days a week - 5 hours a day - part time as a waitress because she can earn 50-60 dollars a day with tips . ”

25/2/88: For the harm done to the Tamils by Jayawardene and Gandhi (Rajiv), they will suffer.They cannot escape their karma. The J.V.P will win if there is an election . If they win the Tamils will have a separate state if the Tigers have any wisdom. They are fools and they are destroying themselves . ”

17/7/88: " I do not advise you to learn flying . It is not only expensive but also very risky . It is a hobby for the bored and rich . You are not bored , you are not rich . Your time is still bad for the next few years. ”

28/7/88: “ I was a fool living in my dreams . It took me 75 years to realize the truth . They have advertised Colombo house for sale. Manohari wants sell the Jaffna house. These were all my savings in my life. We have 7 larchems at Maviddapuram, 4 larchems at kaithady and 15 perches at Koddady . Who is going to Jaffna to take charge of the house lands ? We have about 270,000 rupees in cash , about 9000 dollars. This is for our use.

When I die , let Amma have it . Let her do anything she likes with it.

On our death , let the boys who are looking after us have it . Why talk about it ? By American standards , it is a pretty sum of about 9000 dollars. You be sharp . Do not be made a fool by anyone. “

Manoharan Marries Mahaluckshmy (9.03.1989)



Toronto, 1989

Manoharan, the youngest son, married Mahalukshmy on Sept 3rd, 1989 in Toronto, Canada.

Dr. Mahaluckshmy was born in Jaffna and went to Medical school in Colombo. She migrated to Canada in 1986. Her father was Murgesapillai, who was a popular Government agent of Jaffna. It was a proposed marriage.

Both Amma and Ayah were present at the wedding. They have successfully fulfilled their role in bringing up their children as with this marriage, all their sons and daughters had married and were well settled in life.

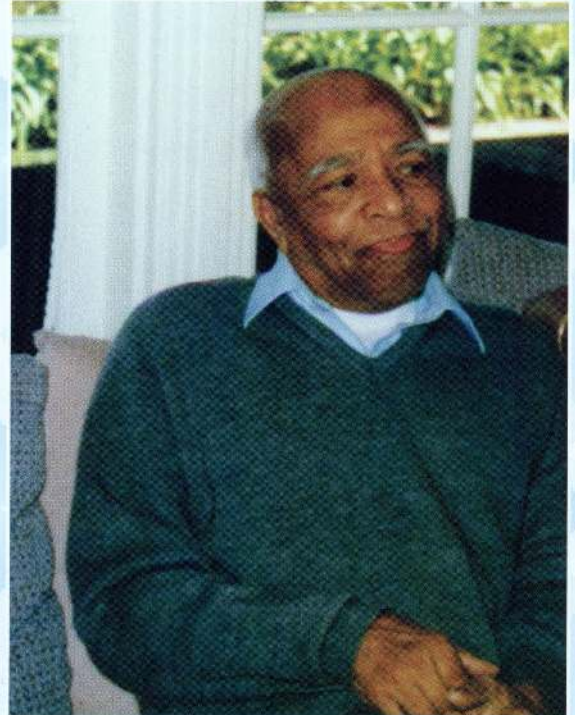
Death of Ayah

February 18, 1990

Ayah's death came all of a sudden - and it was completely unexpected. He was doing well until one morning when he complained of weakness and some difficulty in breathing.



Ayah, California, 1989



Ayah, California, 1986

When Nagendran returned home after work, he took Ayah to the hospital where he worked. Blood tests done in the Emergency room showed that he had a heart attack.

Since he was a diabetic, the heart attack did not present in the usual way - chest pain. He was admitted to the hospital and he had a restful day.

Next day, his condition worsened and he had more difficulty in breathing. His heart was further damaged and he went into congestive heart failure. The doctors decided to intubate and put him on a ventilator.

His condition further deteriorated and his blood pressure dropped further. His situation was becoming critical.

By this time, both his daughters (Jayanthi and Manohari) had flown in from Sydney, Australia and were by his bedside.

It was late evening and his condition dramatically

worsened. He was gasping for breath in spite of being on a ventilator. All his children had gathered by the bedside singing Hindu hymns - except for one person.

Amma could not bear to be by the side of her husband of fifty one years. She refused to come inside the room where Ayah's life was slowly ebbing away. She had faced a similar situation when her eldest son, Sitharthan, passed away.

With one large huge breath, Ayah's body shuddered and came to an end. Tears were rolling down the cheeks of all the children.

Ayah had become very quiet a couple of months before he died. He was a very good astrologer and knew that his time was coming to an end. He had predicted a few months prior to his death "I am going through marana thisai (death period). It is going to be very difficult for me to escape this period."

Ayah died around 8 pm on the 18th of February. He



Ayah, California, 1986



Ayah, California, 1986



Funeral and cremation at the Forest Lawn Memorial Park, Glendale, California



Last picture of Ayah taken a few days before his death in Manoharan's apartment in Torrance

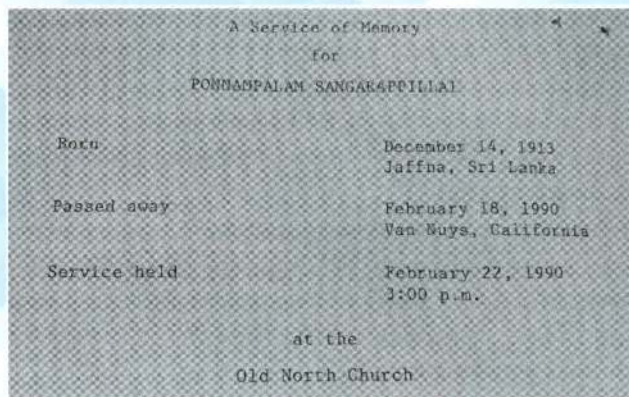
Seated (left to right) : Amma, Sri Vidya, Ayah, Suganya, Lavanya
 Standing (left to right) : Mahendran, Amirtha and Manoharan

was cremated a few days later at the Forest Lawn cemetery in Glendale, California as per the Hindu customs.

Ayah was seventy seven years at that time. If not for the long standing diabetes, he would have lived much longer.

Amma was seventy three years. She would go on to live for another twenty six years.

A few months later, Amma and Manoharan travelled to Varanasi in Northern India to immerse his ashes in the sacred river Ganges. Ganges is considered extremely holy for the Hindus. Both Amma and Manoharan travelled in a boat to the middle of Ganges where the ceremony took place. After the



Funeral and cremation at the Forest Lawn Memorial Park, Glendale, California

SANGARAPILLAI — Mr. P. Former Chief Executive Ceylon National Chamber of Industries, Director CTB, Deputy Commissioner of Motor Traffic. Beloved husband of Manonmani, loving father of Dr. Chandramohan, Dr. Asokan, Dr. Nagendran, Mahendran and Dr. Manoharan (All USA), Jayanthi and Manohari (Aust.), father-in-law of Dr. Ranjani, Chitramali, Gwen, Amirtha, Dr. Mahalaxmi (All USA), Suthanthiraraj and Jeyenthiran (Aust), loving brother of Mrs. Veerasingham (Maviddapuram) and Dr. Nadarajah (Ghana), Bro-in-law of Jayaratnam, Rassaratnam, Shanmugarah, Dr. Thurairatnam, Thiagarajah, Saraswathy and Giria, Expired. Funeral Wednesday 21st in Los Angeles, 5220 Bothwell Road Tarzana, Calif 91356, U.S.A.

ISLAND - 21 FEB

Obituary notice in a Sri Lankan newspaper

A meeting will be held
on Monday the 19th March, 1990
from 5.30 p. m.
at the Colombo Tamil Sangam Hall,
 7, 57th Lane, Off Rudra Mavathe, Wellawatte, Colombo 6.
 to Remember the passing away
 (in the USA on 18. 02. 90)
 of
P. SANGARAPILLAI,
 former Commissioner of Motor Transport,
 Executive Secretary of the Ceylon National Chamber of Industries
 and former President of Colombo Tamil Sangam.
 All friends, relatives and sympathisers are invited.

Secretary,
 Colombo Tamil Sangam,
 7, 57th Lane,
 Wellawatte.

Ayah's death notice and commemoration, Colombo Tamil sangam

ceremony, the ashes were immersed in the river. Amma and Manoharan then travelled to Belur Math in Calcutta, the spiritual abode of the Ramakrishna movement. Amma prayed at the famous Kali temple where Saint Ramakrishna lived and worked as a priest. Amma also immersed Ayah's ashes in the Ganges that ran by the temple - also considered to be very sacred.

On the way to India, Amma and Manoharan spent a few days in Singapore. In Singapore, she exchanged the gold chain of her Thali (the chain the bridegroom ties round the neck at the time of wedding) for another piece of gold chain.

She deposited the gold pendant of the Thali at the famous Madurai Meenakshi Amman temple, Tamil Nadu, India as an offering.

THE CEYLON NATIONAL CHAMBER OF INDUSTRIES
 INCORPORATED BY ACT NO. 19 OF 1958
 FLAT NO. 20, FIRST FLOOR, GALLE FACE COURT 2
 P.O. BOX 1775
 COLOMBO - 3, SRI LANKA
 TELEPHONE 29038
 TELEX 21245 TRADE-INT.
 CE-ATTN-CNCL

21st March, 1990.

Mrs. Manonmani Sangarapillai
 5220, Bothwell Road,
 Tarzana, Calif 91356,
 U.S.A.

HON'Y PATRONS
 Dear Madam,

My Chairman has directed me to send you an extract of the Minutes of the 509th Executive Council Meeting held on 22nd February, 1990 when a Vote of Condolence was passed following the demise of Mr P. Sangarapillai the former Chief Executive.

The undersigned had the privilege of representing the Chamber at the Commemorative Meeting held at the Colombo Tamil Sangam on Monday the 19th March 1990.

Yours sincerely
CEYLON NATIONAL CHAMBER OF INDUSTRIES
 Joe Sothirathan
 Chief Executive

CHAIRMAN
 MR. C. KARUNARATNE

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN
 MR. K. C. VIGNARAJAH

VICE CHAIRMAN
 MR. N. RAMAKRISHNAN
 MR. I. DE MEL
 MR. N. ARISEKERA
 MR. C. RAJAPAGE

TREASURER
 MR. M. P. SAMPANAWAN

CHIEF EXECUTIVE
 Mr. Joe Sothirathan

SECRETARY

Letter from the organization in which Ayah worked for more than a quarter of a century

H. G. P. De Mel

Your Ref.
 My Ref.
 Telephone : 505443

Dear Mrs. Sangarapillai,

We were pained and shocked to hear of the passing away of Mr. Sangarapillai who has been a very illustrious and dear friend of ours.

He lived a life helping those who sought his assistance and advice. We shall never forget his help he gave us in our law matters and even a few days ago, we spoke of it.

He has been a true patriot who loved his motherland and his people. People of his calibre, integrity and integrity are rare. He cannot be replaced by anyone.

We have lost our friend but his memory will live on. The close and warm association with you and your family and continued with the same love and affection.

He once wrote to me that should we come to Sri Lanka, he would call on me. We were not aware of his passing away, till a friend of ours brought it to our notice.

We pray that God will grant his Eternal Rest in His Heavenly Home and give all Strength and Courage to bear this irreparable loss.

The Ceylon National Chamber of Industries which he nurtured with a handful of members is now a lasting monument to the industrialists of this country.

We had a letter from London about Ramakrishna's welfare and the heavy line you all stood together. Although we were not present in person, we were there in spirit. Our kindness reaches our souls.

Please convey our love and regards to Chandrasekara, Ischan, Megs, Subraman, Jayanthi, Anthonys and Manohari and their families.

Yours affectionately,
H. G. P. De Mel

P. S. Mrs. De Mel is well and although she is mainly ill. She has unfortunately and unwillingly and ignominiously been taken to hospital a few. She went to India for laser treatment (the necessary medicine provided by Dr. Jeyanthiraman, the laser was not successful and her vision is not clear. The wound on her leg affected the knee and the whole knee fell out. The wound is now better and it she would be well, she has to be kept in hospital. She has a letter from her doctor. She is presently in hospital. She has a letter from her doctor. She will never be able to walk. She has undergone an operation and Dr. George Mahipala is treating.

Letter from De Mel, family friend of Ayah



Ettu selvu (7th day after death). Food that the departed soul liked is cooked. He was reading Nancy Regan's (President Regan's wife) book at the time of death.



Amma with family after the death of Ayah - 1990



Seated down(left to right) : Manohari and Jayanthi
 Seated (left to right) : Manoharan, Mahendran, Asokan, Chandramohan and Nagendran



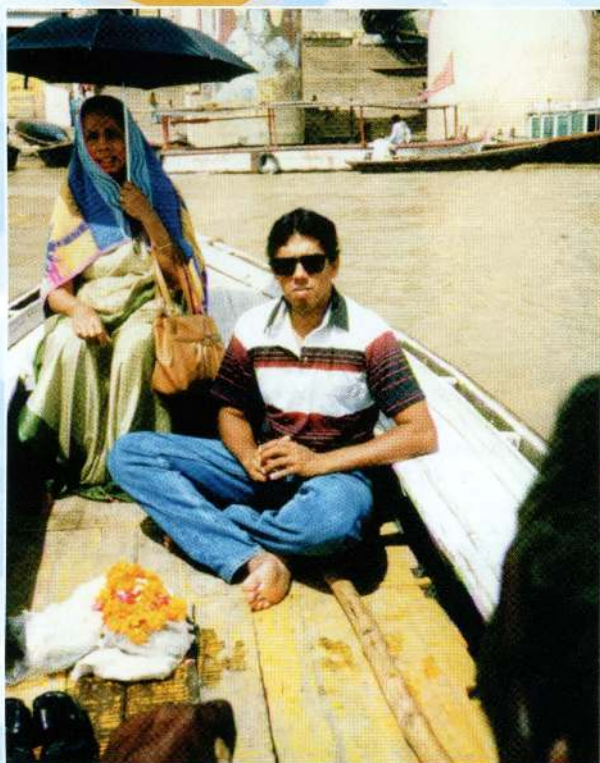
Amma with daughters and daughters-in-law.
 Seated (left to right) : Dr.Ranjana, Amma, Amirtha, Mali
 Standing (left to right) : Gigi, Manohari, Dr.Mahaluxmi and Jayanthi



Amma with daughters, Jayanthi and Manohari



All the children with Amma
 Seated (left to right) : Jayanthi, Amma and Manohari
 Standing(left to right) : Mahendran, Dr.Chandra Mohan, Dr.Asokan, Dr.Nagendran and Dr.Manoharan



Amma and Manoharan, travelling in a boat in the Ganges river to immerse Ayah's ashes



Belur Math, Calcutta, India. Spiritual abode of Ramakrishna Mission



Immersing ashes in Ganges, Calcutta



Manoharan immersing Ayah's ashes in the sacred Ganges



Room where Swami Ramakrishna lived at the famous Kali temple, Kaligutt

PONNAMBALAM SANGARAPILLAI
"KARMA YOGI"
13.12.1913 - 18.02.1990



Motor Commissioner of Sri Lanka
Chief Executive, Ceylon National Chamber of Industries
Director of Ceylon Transport Board (CTB)
Eminent Transportation Economist
Honorary Lecturer, Aquinas College,
Vidyodaya and Vidyalandara Universities
Editor, Industrial Ceylon
President, Colombo Tamil Sangam
Eminent Astrologer
Author of numerous books

Below is a passage Amma wrote about Ayah, her husband of fifty one years. She wrote this note in her diary, September 1994 in Chicago.

“My husband was a great man. Honesty was his best policy. Exceptional intellect, extraordinary love for his children. He will not show outwardly love to his wife but deep down in his heart he dearly loved me. For me he was my God. I have loved him more than my children. I do not know why.

I heaved a sigh when he passed to the care of the other world. In spite of his health, he did his very best for his wife, children, relations, friends and to his community. He was my great teacher. He had a quick hot temper. He will not spare me with his temper when I was wrong. His temper cools down and he is as loving as before and his pure love engulfed me.”



ஒரு பொய்யை மறைக்க
ஆயிரம் பொய் சொல்ல
வேண்டும் !

Have to tell thousands
of lies to hide one lie.

Life after Ayah

1990 - 2000

Amma and Ayah's marriage partnership lasted fifty one years. Ayah was very typical of Jaffna men. He never openly showed his love for Amma. However, he deeply loved her inside. He worked hard and kept the economy going in the house. Ayah knew that without Amma, life for him and his children would collapse.

Amma was deeply attached to Ayah. It was the result of her upbringing by her grandmother. Amma viewed that it was her karma to take care of Ayah. The children had never seen Amma raising her voice at Ayah. Even when Amma was frustrated with Ayah, she did not display her emotions. Amma knew how to get around Ayah.



Amma, at Manoharan's house, Anaheim, 1996

When they moved to the US, Amma took full charge of Ayah's life. Ayah had no control over his daily activities. Amma controlled everything - his food, his sleep hours, the number of hours he could play bridge, his exercises and his TV time etc. Ayah was totally dependant on her.

Amma did everything for Ayah since she did not want him to be a burden on the children. Ayah had a bad temper - though it would quickly subside. She was the most perfect traditional Jaffna house wife.

AYah was indeed very lucky to have had Amma as his partner.

Amma quickly realized that her life had changed forever without Ayah. Amma was very adaptable and quickly got adjusted to a life without Ayah.



With grandson, Sathya, Anaheim, 1997

Amma spent more time on spiritual matters. She meditated more. She helped Mali and her other daughters-in-law with cooking. She travelled to Sri Lanka and Australia twice. She taught herself astrology even though it was Ayah who had laid the foundation in astrology for her. Amma loved spending more time with her grandchildren.

FROM AMMA'S DIARY (Chicago, Sept, 1994)

Deep in heart, I thank God to have given me a beautiful family with loving, children and grandchildren. God blessed me with very good health up to an old age. He will take care of me in my next incarnation. I am happy that I have done good work in this life. I have given love to everyone and to my family. My request to my children is to remember and thank God morning and night."



Shankar, Amma, Nina (on Amma's lap) and Pravin, Anaheim, 1997

From Amma's diary (Chicago, 22.9.1994)

" Now, after more than 75 years of sojourn in this world as a human being, I look back and recall how the love and grace of God has helped me. It is only

after reaching Sri Ramakrishna that I was able to grasp the real meaning of life.

I have read Ramana, Yogananda Paramahansa, Sai Baba, Vivekananda, Ramakrishna and his sixteen disciples, who tells us that we are not the body. We are Atman. Atma is eternal, indestructible in all animate and inanimate beings.

For me the real Avatars, Sages, Saints and Seers were like doctors and physicians of spiritual life. I started reading about them from the age of fifteen and continuing. I cannot compare that knowledge and happiness."



With Manohari and Manoharan, Anaheim 1994



Mali, Sathya, Pravin, Amma and Asokan, Anaheim, 1996



With Shivami and Ashvini, Sydney, 2000



With Grandchildren, California, 1992
Left to right : Ashvini, Julian, Shivani and Sri Vidya



With her favorite dog, California, 1998



With Manoharan, Anaheim, 1998



Amma in Singapore



Amma's 80th birthday, Chicago, 1997
Manoharan, Nagendran, Chandramohan and Asokan

Opening of Colombo Tamil Sangam Hall in Memory of Ayah - 2000

Colombo Tamil Sangam is a premier Tamil Organization that helps to promote Tamil causes and Tamil literary studies. It was established in the 1950s. Tamil sangam was located at the end of the road where we lived.

Ayah had become a life member of the Sangam in his early days. He became closely associated with it in the late 1960s.

In 1980, he became the President of the Colombo Tamil Sangam and remained its President until 1983 when he voluntarily resigned just before the racial riots.

While he was the President, he was instrumental in bringing major changes to the organization in terms of its finances and structure. Even after he moved to the US, he was in close touch with them.

After Ayah's death, Amma had wanted something built in Ayah's memory. She felt that constructing a building in memory of Ayah at the Colombo Tamil Sangam would be the most appropriate.

She then approached her sons and they all readily agreed to contribute equally. Nagendran took the lead to organize the effort. The family decided to construct a hall and a library in memory of Ayah.



Foundation stone laid by Nagendran



Invitation for the opening of the hall



Colombo Tamil Sangam - outside view



Entrance of the Sangarapillai hall



Ayah's brother, Bala, garlands Ayah's photo, Colombo, 2000



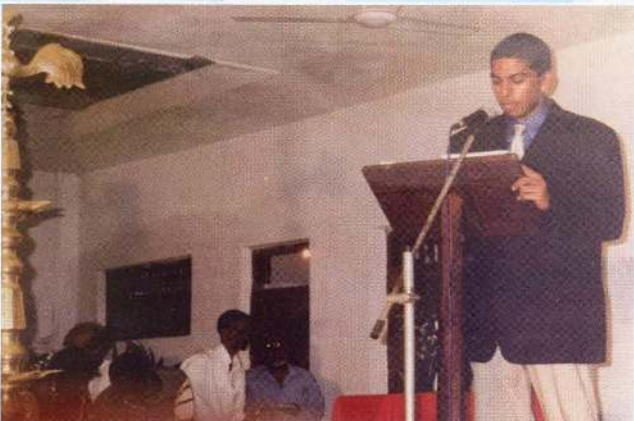
Sangarapillai Hall . Manoharan addressing the gathering during Ayah's centenary celebration in 2014.



Sri Lankan Minister, Thondaman, opening the library, Colmbo, 2000.



Section of the hall



Shankar (Chandra mohan's son) addressing the crowd, January, 2000



Library



Sangarapillai Library, Colombo Tamil Sangam

Nagendran laid the stone for the building in 1997. Both the hall and library were completed in early 2000. Both the hall and the library are named Sangarapillai hall and library respectively.


Both buildings were ceremoniously opened in January, 2000. All the sons and daughters attended the opening ceremony. Amma could not attend as she was not up to such a long distance travel.

Today, the Sangarapillai hall at the Colombo Tamil Sangam is the premier hall for all Tamil literary functions in Colombo.

The Sangarapillai family has instituted an annual memorial speech in Ayah's name. The memorial speech is usually held every January in the hall named after him.



Manoharan, Bala, Manohari and Jayanthi at the function - during Ayah's centenary celebration in Sangam, Colombo 2014.



கொழும்புத் தமிழ்ச் சங்கம்
முன்னாட் தமிழ்ச் சங்கத் தலைவர்
பொ.சங்கரப்பிள்ளை
நினைவுப் பேருரையும்
We Tamils நூல் வெளியீடும்

இடம்
கொழும்புத் தமிழ்ச் சங்கம்
(சங்கரப்பிள்ளை மண்டபம்)

காலம் *Jan 11 2015*
12.11.2005

சனிக்கிழமை பி.ப. 5.30 மணிக்கு

தலைமை
கலாநிதி குமாரசாமி சோமசுந்தரம்
(தலைவர், கொழும்புத் தமிழ்ச் சங்கம்)

ஆசியுரை
தவத்திரு சுவாமி ஆத்மகனானந்தா
(தலைவர், கிராமநுண்ணி மிஷன் - கொழும்பு)

நினைவுப் பேருரை
பேராசிரியர் க.கிரஃஜன்
(தலைவர், கல்வெட்டியல்புறை,
தமிழ்ப் பல்கலைக்கழகம் - தஞ்சாவூர்)

நூல் அறிமுக உரையும் வெளியீடும்
உயர்திரு சி.வி.விக்னேஸ்வரன்
(ஓய்வுநிலை உயர்நீதிமன்ற நீதிபதி)

முதற்பிரதி பெறுநர்
உயர்திரு எஸ்.பி.சாமி
(தனக்குரல் நறுவன அதிபர்)

அனைவரையும் அன்புடன் அழைக்கின்றோம்.

தமிழவேள் இ.க.கந்தசுவாமி
பொதுச் செயலாளர்
7, 57வது பூங்கா, கொழும்பு - 06.
கொ.இல: 2363759.

Amma - Life After Ayah (2000 - 2010)

Good dream - 5.30 am , 9.10.2006

“Two boys come as servants to my house. One boy sings beautifully. I was upstairs. I open the almira. Money and sarees fall out. People are picking. I call on God and woke.”



Chicago, 2002

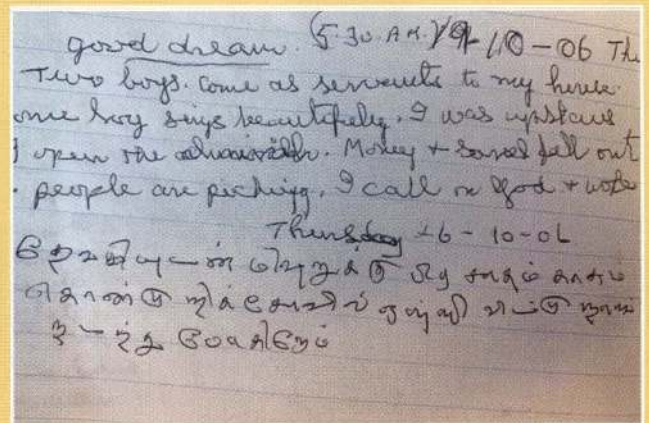
“At my house in Rudramawatte, Ayah has gone to a spiritual lecture at a house in our lane leaving me behind. A beautiful young lady comes and peeps in. I call her inside. She says she is going to the lecture. She sits in front of our shrine room where Sri Ramakrishna’s picture is kept. I said I will also come and got dressed pulling out a saree. I was very happy and I woke up.”

From Amma's diary :

“Spiritual life is second birth. For me it started in 1968. Sri Ramakrishna became my Guru. For fifteen years I walked to Ramakrishna mission to learn and



Chicago, 2001



Dreams documented by Amma

practice in the spiritual way. I was so eager to learn Sanskrit at the age of 53. To know about the Creator and his creations through the scriptures because of longing for God was great.

After leaving Sri Lanka in 1983, most of my time was spent to know about God and His creations. I started late to practice meditation. Now, I regret that I should have done this long ago. Each one of us is on

the path to God. He is happiness within us. But we are trying to get that from outside. Outside happiness is impermanent. Inside it is everlasting. It is called Love. God is Love. He is the source of Love. We fail to love God."

A ~~dream~~ dream on 13-10-06
 At my home in Rudra mawatta
 Ayala has gone to a spiritual lecture
 at a house in my lane leaving me behind
 A beautiful young lady comes + peeps in
 I call her name. She says she is going
 to the lecture. She sits in front of
 my shrine room where Sri Ramakrishna
 picture is kept. I said I will also come
 and get dressed pulling out a saree.
 I was very happy + I woke up

A dream on 13.6.2006



Amma, Sydney, 2002



Toronto, 2004 with cousins and Asokan (extreme left)



With Children, Chicago



With Mali's nephew, Prashanth



Manoharan, Nagendran and Mahendran, California, 2004



Mahendran, Manoharan and Amma, Chicago, 2008.



Chicago, 2004 with family



Amma with Sathya and Prashanthi, Chicago, 2005



Shankar, Manoharan and Julian, Chicago, 2006



Asokan and Chandramohan seated.
Manoharan, standing. Chicago, 2008.



With sisters-in-law (Pavalam and Kamala), Chicago, 2008



With Manoharan's family, Chicago, 2005



Asokan, Nagendran, Chandramohan,
Manoharan and Mahendran, California, 2005



Jayanthi, Manoharan, Asokan, Manohari,
Nagendran and Chandramohan, Sydney, 2004



குனியக் குனிய
குனியவனும் மடையன் !

He is a fool to take
beating all time.

Amma Celebrates 90th Birthday - 2007



Amma- 90 years .



Chicago, 2007



Amma with family: Seated (left to right): Amma, Manohari
 Standing (left to right): Maha, Mali, Jayanthi and Ranjana



At Nina's Arangetram. With all her sons.
 Left to right : Nagendran, Asokan, Mahendran,
 Manoharan and Chandra Mohan

Amma celebrated her 90th birthday in Chicago. The entire family was present for the occasion. By this time, Amma's pace had slowed, her energy was also not as it used to be and she was walking with a cane. She spent most of her time reading and meditating. Occasionally, she would watch television.

A few weeks prior to her 90th Birthday, one of her grand daughters - Nina Mohan - performed her Arangetram (Indian classical dance debut) in Chicago.



With the twins, Manoharan, and Manohari, Chicago, 2007



Amma with family , Chicago, 2007 :
 Seated (left to right) : Anjali, Amma, Nina
 Standing (left to right) : Pravin, Sathya, Prashanthi, Kavitha



With family: (left to right): Manohari, Chandramohan,
 Manoharan, Asokan and Jayanthi, Chicago, 2007

Granddaughter's Wedding - 2008

Anjali's wedding (Asokan and Mali's daughter) took place in Tanzania in 2008. Her husband, Jalin, is an Indian. He was born in Tanzania and had come to the US for his higher studies. It was a love marriage.

There was a grand reception in Chicago. All the family members were present.

Amma had to use her wheelchair to move about in 2008 but she was as alert and sharp as she was mentally.



Amma with her sons (left to right): Dr. Manoharan, Dr. Chandramohan, Dr. Asokan, Dr. Nagendran and Mahendran (CPA)



Amma with family members



Amma with grandchildren (left to right): Devin, Julian and Pravin

Amma's 94th Birthday, 2011

Amma would celebrate her 94th birthday in 2011. By this time, she was mostly wheelchair-bound but she was still as mentally alert and sound as she always had been.

This was the last time her eldest daughter, Jayanthi, would meet Amma. Jayanthi at this time was quite sick with cancer of the lungs. Jayanthi in spite of her sickness had flown in from Sydney, Australia to be with Amma. Amma was not told about Jayanthi's cancer and its poor prognosis.



Manohari and Jayanthi with Amma

Amma was mostly bed bound the last four years of her life. The family engaged a 24/7 caretaker from Lithuania. To the credit of the caretaker, Amma never developed any bed sores in spite of lying on the bed most of the day.



Gina, long term caretaker of Amma from Lithuania, 2014

Through Medicare, another Indian lady gave Amma a sponge bath every day and also cooked Indian meals for lunch. She spent a few hours in the morning with her.



Jayanthi, Mali, Manohari and Ranjana, Chicago, 2011



Indian caretaker Mini, from Kerala, India who came in the morning for a few hours, arranged through Medicare. She gave Amma sponge bath every day and cooked her Indian lunch.

Her appetite had decreased but she ate without assistance most of the time. During this period, her memory started fading but she could still remember people.

Since she was not moving well, some of her joints in hands were becoming stiff and contracted. She was also gaining weight. Amma never had any medical

illness until the last few years of her life - she developed mild high blood pressure and early stages of diabetes.

From a very early age, she worked hard, became a strict vegetarian in the 1960s - a diet which even excluded eggs - and performed daily yoga exercises

and yogic breathing techniques. She had a very sturdy body. We have not seen her falling sick even with minor ailments such as flu, etc. Not one day had she ever complained about her health or body.

It was sad to see her confined to her bed for the last four years of her life.



Standing (left to right): Manoharan, Jayanthi, Chandramohan and Manohari



With family members

Life after Ayah

2010 - 2014



The house in Burrige, Chicago where Amma spent her last decade with Asokan's family. Amma had a room downstairs with all the necessary comforts.

Amma was three years younger to Ayah. She lived for twenty six years after Ayah's death.

Amma spent the winter months in California with her three sons (Nagendran, Mahendran and Manoharan) and summer in Chicago with her other two sons (Chandramohan and Asokan).

In 2008, she permanently settled down in Chicago with Asokan. In 2010, Asokan's family moved to another house in Burrige, a suburb of Chicago. Both Mali and Asokan purchased a house that had a room downstairs which had all the facilities for Amma. The room was fitted with a special bathroom for Amma's use.

Amma never had any preventive care such as mammogram or PAP smear - she was indeed very lucky. She had no medical issues such as hypertension or diabetes. She was rarely sick. Children could never recall a time when Amma had been sick - both in Sri Lanka and in the US.

When she went to the Indian holy city of Gaya, it was the custom to give up something the person desired most. She loved the eggplant. After her trip to Gaya, she gave up egg plants, once her favourite food.

Her only interest was spirituality and her Guru Sri Ramakrishna. She loved to visit the Ramakrishna Center in Hollywood.

Amma never lost her temper. Children had never seen her angry. We marvelled at her calm serenity. She was always happy and smiling and engaged in her house work.

As she became older, she was slowing down. When she was about 93 years old, she had considerably slowed down but she was still mentally alert. She was forced to use a cane as a walker. Amma never liked using assistive devices but she had no choice. She could not sit and do her yoga exercises. Her short term memory was slowing down. It was difficult for the children to see Amma, who was once so energetic, slowing down.

She was forced to wear diapers - she was dripping urine. She hated this. She was a very proud lady. For more than nine decades, she took care of herself. Now, she was forced to be taken care of by caretakers round the clock. For a lady who did her exercises every day, she was becoming too lazy to do the morning exercises.

She had total control over her desires. She was careful with sweets. As she was getting older, she was eating too much sweets - and gaining weight. She would wait until everyone left the house and satisfied her appetite for sweets.

She was again turning into a small baby. Her second childhood had begun.

Amma never wanted to go to a nursing home. She hated it. She wanted to be with her children and grandchildren. Her desire was fulfilled- she was never put in to a nursing home or an assisted care facility.

For the last six years of her life, her sons made arrangements to have a round-the-clock caretaker at home.

The caretakers did an excellent job of bathing and taking care of her. The caretakers remained with her until her death.



Caretaker at weekends.



With sons, Chicago, 2010. Left to right: Asokan, Manoharan and Chandramohan



Amma's room



With sons in Chicago, 2010. Left to right: Nagendran, Chandramohan, Asokan, and Manoharan



Manoharan with Amma, Chicago, 2014

One day, she fell sick and had difficulty getting up from her bed. It was later found out that she had an infection (most probably urinary tract) that was not diagnosed on time. Unfortunately, older people do not present with the regular symptoms when there is an infection - such as fever.

Immediately after this, her condition deteriorated. It was suspected that she may have had a mild stroke as well.

Very soon, she was mostly confined to the bed for the last four years of her life. Since she could not get up on her own, she would be hoisted on a lift machine twice a day and be seated on a chair for a few hours.

Amma did not like being hoisted on the machine. She protested - perhaps the machine was hurting her.



Amma, 2014



நாளை நடப்பதை
யார் அறிவார்?

No one knows what
happens tomorrow.

Amma's Last Couple of Years 2014 - 2016

Amma was totally confined to her bed. It was difficult to hoist her from the bed to the chair with the machine. She was not comfortable.



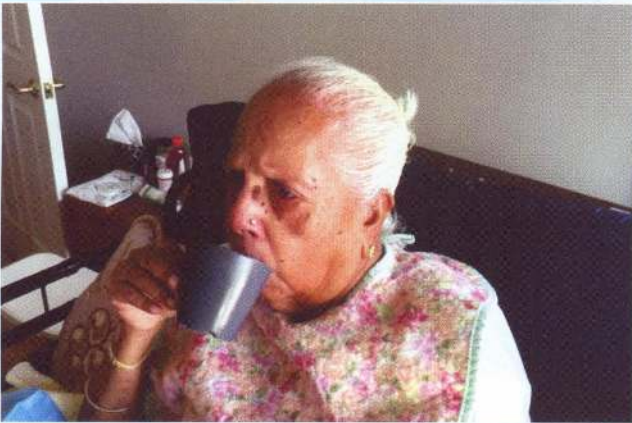
Amma with Manoharan 2014, Chicago



Amma with Manoharan, Chicago, 2015

It was difficult to see Amma in this state. She was given nutritious liquids since she was not taking too much solids. She recognized most of the people who visited her.

The question arises why Amma, who was deeply devoted to Gods and her Guru, had to go through this in the last four years of her life. Never in her life had Amma spoken ill about others or harmed any one. She deeply believed in her duties - for Ayah and children. She deeply believed in karma.



Amma having tea, Chicago, 2015

She mostly slept throughout the day. She used to read voraciously but now, she had stopped reading at all. She would just flip the papers when they were handed over to her.

Since she was not moving well, her joints in the hand started to contract. Tears were constantly coming from her eyes due to dryness.

Yet, not once she complained about her condition. She ate little. Fortunately, she had no major medical illness.



Amma, 2014



With children, Chicago, 2015. Seated, Asokan and Nagendran. Standing (left to right) , Manohari, Manoharan, Mahendran and Chandra Mohan

One could say that she had to go through her karma in this birth. Hindus believe in re-births and at some point after all their karma are over, they merge with God. Perhaps this was Amma's last birth and she had to complete her karma before merging with the Almighty.



With Sathya and Prashanthi, 2014

Amma was very religious person, not in a temple going ordinary way, but she was seeking a very seriously mystical and philosophical spiritual path. She was very genuine about her seeking, she was kind, compassionate and truthful. Even though all this is true, yet, she became bedridden in the last five years or so of her life. The question may be asked by the religious-minded as to “why?”



With Thappan and Kokila - loving friends from Ramakrishna Mission

Why should not God intervene and free such a soul from this kind of health-based suffering? The answer is in religion itself, mainly within the Hindu system. Life is Karma based and what is termed the “already taken root” Karma cannot be avoided. It must be borne with patience and understanding by the truly religious. The Karma that has still not taken root and is waiting to manifest, either later in this life or in another birth, such Karma will be burnt to ashes by the genuine spiritual practices of any individual.



Left to right : Caretaker Gina, Anjali, Manohari, Ranjan and Mali

That is guaranteed by the scriptures. However, for the truly spiritual, God will grant the proper mindset to bear the Karma that cannot be avoided, and such spiritual people will bear such Karma based conditions patiently and philosophically. They too will have to face it, but the effect of such Karma based

diseases, health conditions or even insults, setbacks in life, etc. will be borne by the truly spiritual person, philosophically and with understanding.

We can even say that they do not feel the pain or sorrow or anguish, hurt feelings, etc. which ordinary people will feel when faced with similar situations. Therefore, Amma's last years, being bedridden, we can confidently say, did not make her depressed. She most probably was always in a tranquil mood and never lost her contemplation on her spiritual goal. Swami Ramakrishna, who she worshipped as her Guru, got cancer in the throat and was bedridden and unable to speak or eat during his last days, but

he was always in a blissful mood. Eyewitnesses vouch for this. The same is true of Ramana Maharshi, the famous saint who lived in the holy mountain of Tiruvannamalai. He got cancer in his knee and during his last days, became bedridden, but he was always in a blissful mood.

Such a mindset should not be taken to be something achieved through great effort by such individuals. Such bliss (even under what we might consider painful situations) comes to them naturally, because they have risen above the physical and therefore, they truly do not feel the pain and suffering, which ordinary humans experience. They have separated their inner-self from the body, even while still living in that body. Such a state of mind is literally guaranteed to all genuine spiritual seekers in the scriptures.



The house in which Amma lived in Burrigde.



View from the house. It was a beautiful scene with small lakes, massive trees and ducks in the water.

Jayanthi's Untimely Death - 2015



Jayanthi Suthanthira Raj (1952-2015)

Jayanthi's untimely death came as a big shock to the family in 2015.

She had developed a mild hacking cough which she ignored for the first couple of months. This was 4-5 years before she passed away.

திருமதி ஜெயந்தி சுதந்திரராஜ்
அவர்கள்



தேற்றம்: 26-05-1952

மறைவு: 09-01-2015



Amma and Ayah with Jayanthi's family - San Jose, California - 1986. Jayanthi carrying Abarna. Kavitha and Janakan are standing.

Finally, when she went to a doctor in Sydney, the doctor dismissed it off as an ordinary cough by prescribing a cough syrup - no X-rays were done.

She kept on coughing and by the time she went to the doctor again (a full one year after she had developed the initial symptoms) an X-ray was performed which showed growth at the bifurcation of



Jayanthi with Amma, Chicago 2011



Son, Janakan, performing the last rites



Jayanthi, Colombo, 1957

the lung tube (trachea). A biopsy confirmed that it was malignant - but growing slowly. She had lung cancer.

Since cancer was close to the lungs, surgery was not considered. She was started on Chemotherapy.

She did well after the chemotherapy but lost her hair and weight. She looked like a skeleton.

Sadly, the cancer returned a year later with metastasis to other body organs.

She put on a heroic fight. She told others, "Do not feel sympathy for me. I will fight this myself." She did not even tell most of her family members about her cancer because she did not want them to worry.

Finally, she lost her battle to cancer and died in Sydney. It was a sad end. She had so much energy and would have achieved a lot had she lived longer. By the time she died, her two daughters had married and her son was also engaged. She was a grandmother of two.



Jayanthi, Colombo 1955

Amma was still alive at the time of Jayanthi's death. Amma was not told about the death.

The article below was written by her youngest brother, Dr. Manoharan, for publication. "Death is not a deplorable event; it is merely the end of this journey, the owner getting out of the car when the time is up and the goal is reached; It is a consummation, a happy conclusion, or at least it ought to be, if only all are wise enough to treat it as such and be prepared for it."

(Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba)

May 25th, 1952, Colombo, Sri Lanka:

The sun had just risen, displaying its dazzling and brightly lit rays, as though it was anxiously waiting to welcome someone on this day. Inside the small Ratnam's nursing home in Colombo, tall and lean Sangarapillai, with a cigar between his lips was anxiously pacing the corridor outside the labor room.

Inside the Labor room, a heavy set and tall Manonmani was at the peak of her labor pains. Having gone through similar experience five times prior to this, she was handling the situation courageously.

Sangarapillai could faintly hear his wife's labor cries, and then the door opened suddenly. Even before the nurse - white frock clad with the blue cap on her head - could break the news to the father, he had run to the bedside of his wife.



Jayanthi's children, Abrana, Janakan and Kavitha, Sydney, 2015

The new born lay next to her mother. The baby was dark, with short and curly hairs. Her eyes were like that of black cuckoo. The baby displayed a stunning dimple on her right cheek. She had long arms, pointed fingers and toes. Sangarapillai was stunned and thrilled. The baby girl was darker than his immediate family members. The baby was the first girl for the couple after five boys. He thought of his three teenage sisters whom he had lost to typhoid in a span of ten days in 1936 and he was glad to have a girl child. He had waited for this day for many years and considered one of his deceased teenage sisters had taken rebirth as his own daughter.

At 33, Rudra Mawatte, Wellawatte, Colombo - a mansion Sangarapillai had built 2 years prior to Jayanthi's birth - four young boys, aged eleven to three were anxiously waiting for their new sister to arrive.

When they saw their little sister, they were overwhelmed with joy and pride. To celebrate this joyous victory, the family would name the precious girl, Jayanthi (victory in Tamil).

Jayanthi grew among her four brothers during her early years. She behaved like her brothers - tough and courageous. Few years later, she was overjoyed with the arrival of twins in the family - a girl and a boy.

Jayanthi had her initial elementary schooling at Saiva Mangaiyar Kalagam, which was just a few houses away. She hated the strict discipline at school. Though the school was a few houses away, she was always late to school. The principal liked Jayanthi and never berated her for being late. When the staff complained about Jayanthi's late arrival, the Principal would say "Poor Jayanthi! She has to take a plane first, then she has to hop in to a bus and then she walks to school. That is the reason why she is late for school every day."



A few months prior to her death, Jayanthi travelled to Sri Lanka to participate in Ayah's centenary celebrations at the Colombo Tamil Sangam, 2015



Colombo, late 1960s

At school, she was a studious student who excelled in studies. Like all Tamil parents, her parents were keen that she learn and excel in Carnatic music and Indian classical dance.

Jayanthi excelled in Carnatic music. She had a melodious voice. For many years, she was the lead

singer at the Ramakrishna Mission in Colombo, mesmerizing many with her golden voice. If not for the financial situation of the family, Jayanthi would have certainly matured into a professional Carnatic singer.

After completing schooling at Saiva Mangaiyar Kalagam, Jayanthi continued her high schooling at St. Bridget's Convent – one of the most prestigious Catholic schools in Colombo.

Jayanthi was her father's pet. Sangarapillai loved all his children, but Jayanthi had a special place in his heart. Even after Jayanthi had grown, he would show his affection for her openly.

As Jayanthi grew, she had an enormous influence on her father. Sangarapillai was considered a tough and a brisk no-nonsense man. People were scared to stand up and talk to him – including his own children. He had a temper that would rise quickly and just as quickly disappear. Children knew to move away from him during the rising phase of his temper.

The only person who could stand up to him was Jayanthi. In front of Jayanthi, he was a mellow man. Jayanthi could command and demand anything from him – he would give it to her without even a whisper.

Jayanthi was a strong-willed and determined soul. She spoke what she had in her mind. She did not know how to deceive people with her talk – a trait that she had picked up from her father.



Family at the funeral of Jayanthi, Sydney, 2015.

Left to right : Manoharan, Asokan, Nagendran, Mahendran, Manohari and Chandramohan

Until her marriage, Jayanthi lived a protected and guarded life, surrounded by parents and siblings. However, she faced many challenges and difficulties after she married - not unusual for young families. She was kind and loving to all. However, if any one crossed her path in detrimental way, she had no sympathy for them and dealt with them sternly.

Jayanthi loved her family. She doted on her children. She was blessed with a husband who understood her well. She was a proud grandmother of two beautiful girls.

When she was afflicted with cancer, she fought the battle with courage and determination. She kept her illness to herself. She did not want sympathy from others based on her illness. She wanted others to treat her normally.

She was determined to travel to Sri Lanka to celebrate her father's centenary celebration held at

the Sangarapillai Memorial Hall (named after him) at the Colombo Tamil Sangam. It was a fitting tribute to a man she dearly loved and respected.

Pomegranate fruit is tough outside. Inside, it is sweet and soft. Likewise, Jayanthi was tough externally - strong willed. Internally she was kind, loving and soft as butter.

Only those who knew her intimately understood this. She wept for the poor and downtrodden. She yearned to help those who were not fortunate in this world. Her work with the Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka in Sydney is legendary. Those very people she helped, wept for her at the funeral.

Today, we see Jayanthi's reflection in her beautiful three children. In Kavitha, we see Jayanthi's physical reflection; in Janakan, we see the reflection of her heart - kind and loving; In Abarna, we see Jayanthi's mental reflection - strong will and determination.



With her sister, Manohari, Colombo, 2015

Amma's Death

01.08.2016



LOVING AMMA: 1917- 2016 (99 years)

Amma was her usual self until a week before she died. She was irritable a few days before her death and informed Mali that many people - people who were deceased - were visiting her and talking with her. This included Ayah, Jayanthi, her parents and Sai Baba. She mentioned that her late daughter Jayanthi was seated at her bedside.

She told Mali that Ayah was there and asked Mali to make fish curry for Ayah. She mentioned to Mali a few times to pack her bags as she wanted to leave.

This incident is proof that at the moment of human death, the world of the dead (seems to) open up for the dying. Then people who are in their deathbed see their dead relatives, parents, etc., not in a dream when sleeping, but when awake.

This is a very common happening, which we hear about in regard to the last days of human beings. The dying (in their waking state) will say "I can see my father or mother, etc. They are here and they are coming to take me away," etc.

We can confidently (then) say that when such a thing happens death is very close to that person. It seems that the world of the dead, the so-called "ancestral world" opens up when a person is about to die and that person's departed relatives, etc. are able to visit the dying person and the dying person is able to see them.

Of course, this does not happen to everyone, but such a happening is very common and well recorded and most probably this is true regarding humans all over the world, no matter what their race or religious faith is.

According to Hinduism, when a person dies the soul moves away to another birth. However, that person's individuality goes to an ancestral world, where that individuality survives for ten generations, in relation to the family to which that person belongs.

After that, the individuality disintegrates and is no more. The death ceremony known as "Thithi", which is performed by the relatives of the dead to the departed person's salvation, is directed towards this individuality, which exists in the ancestral world for ten generations.

However, these ceremonies also benefit the soul of that person, which has by now gone on to another birth. Whatever the conditions that the soul's new birth brings, these rituals will be beneficial to that soul in its new birth. That is the Hindu belief system.

A few days before her death, she was becoming more irritated. On the advice of her doctor, a sedative was prescribed to her. For the next two days, she was in deep sleep. Though breathing normally, she couldn't be woken up.

A few minutes before she died, when Mali went to her room and called for her, she opened her eyes suddenly. She kept on looking at Mali for a few minutes and then closed her eyes slowly. That was the end of this great soul.

Her end came very peacefully and she did not suffer. Paramedics were called and she was pronounced



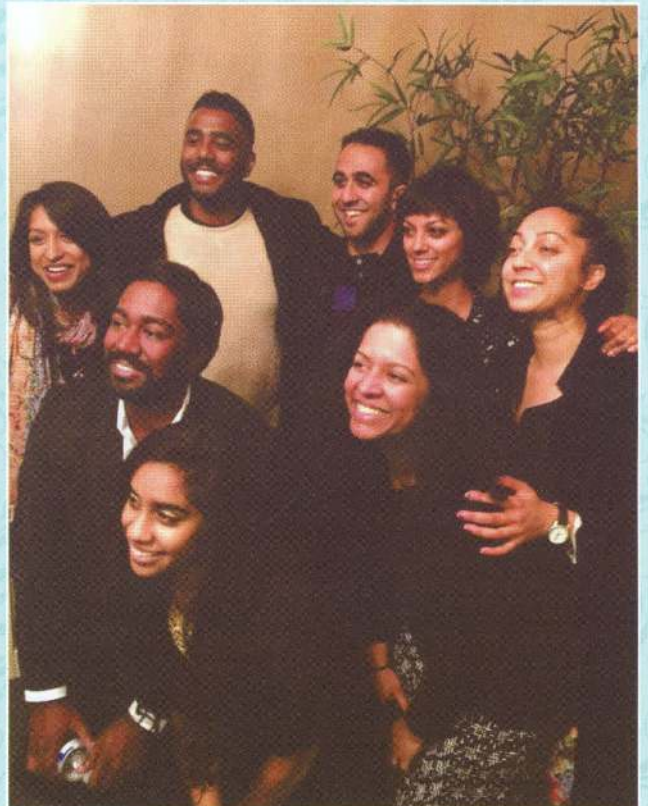
Amma, Chicago, 2016



Ettu Selavu, the 7 day post death ceremony.
Kiwi fruit was one of her favorites.



Gina, long term caretaker. Amma had requested Gina wear a traditional Indian sari for her funeral



Most of the grandchildren attended the funeral



Manoharan carrying the pot containing Amma's ashes - Keerimalai, Sri Lanka, 2016

dead at the scene. As per wished, no extreme measures like intubation or shocking the heart took place.

Jayanthi had died exactly one year before Amma died. On the day Amma died, Jayanthi's family were performing the first year rites at Jaffna, Sri Lanka.

While performing rites by the ocean, Amma's soul was departing in the USA. An eagle appeared all of a sudden before Jayanthi's family at the site where the ceremony was taking place. It is very rare to spot an eagle in Jaffna.



Manoharan immersing the ashes at Keerimalai, Sri Lanka 2016.

Jayanthi's family did not know about Amma's death. Only a few minutes later did they receive the information about her death.

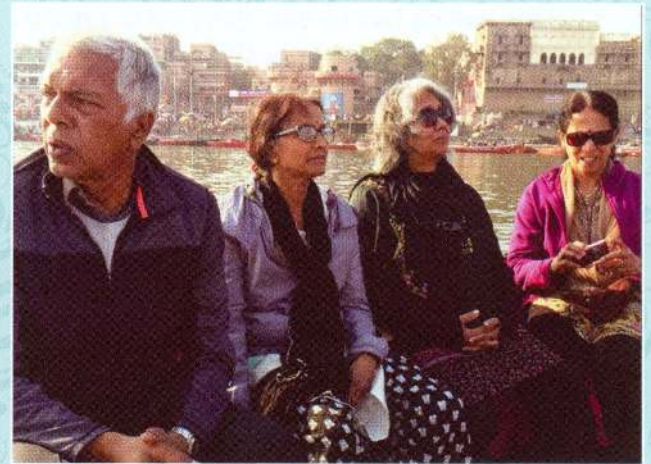
The viewing took place a day prior to the funeral. There were hundreds of people at her funeral. The funeral was conducted according to Hindu rites.

As per the Hindu custom, her youngest son, Manoharan, performed the funeral rites (for Hindus, the eldest son performs for the late father and youngest son performs the mother's funeral rites).

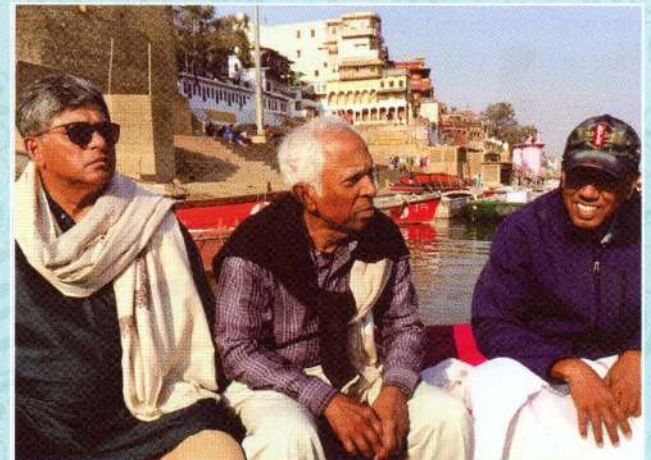
She was cremated (electric burner) after the funeral rites inside the funeral parlor.

Her ashes were taken to Keerimalai in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. Religious rites were performed as per the Hindu customs and her ashes were immersed in the Indian ocean adjoining the temple where the rites took place.

In 2017, all the family members travelled to Varanasi, India, which is considered to be one of the holiest places for Hindus. After performing the religious ceremonies, her ashes were immersed in the holy Ganges river.



Ganges, Varnasi, (left to right); Mahendran, Amirtha, Mali, Manoharai



Ganges, Varnasi, (left to right); Jeyendran, Asokan, Manoharan

AMMA, WE LOVE YOU



AMMA 06.30.1917 - 01.08.2016

She was the source of life for her husband and children. She was strong in mind, and body, steeped in culture and good character, sanctified by holy thoughts and full of love and dedication. She was the repository of Thyaga, Yoga and Bhakti (detachment, devotion and discipline). Every activity of hers was prompted by these three cardinals. May her Atma (soul) attain moksha (liberation).

“Everyone has to make an exit some day; that moment should not be a moment of anguish. One should depart with a smile and a bow. To live in the body, with the body, for the body, is the life of a worm; to live in the body with the God, for God is the life of Man. Be prepared for it now by discarding attachment to one thing after another from now on.”

Chandramohan's Family

Chandramohan was the eldest in the family. He was a very bright student and made the family very proud by directly entering Medical College in Sri Lanka - in those days one has to do an additional 1-2 years of pre medical curriculum before entering medical school.

He had his primary and higher education at St. Joseph's College in Maradana, Colombo.

St. Joseph's college was a premier Catholic private school in Colombo. Chandramohan excelled at the school by winning many prizes.



Shankar with Ayah, Chicago, 1987



Ayah, Amma and Chandramohan, 1989, Chicago

He worked as an intern at the Batticaloa hospital. After completing his internship, he migrated to the UK for further training in 1973.

In 1975, he migrated to Chicago, US where he was trained as a Psychiatrist.

Chandramohan's hobbies are bridge and poker. He is keenly interested in American football as well.

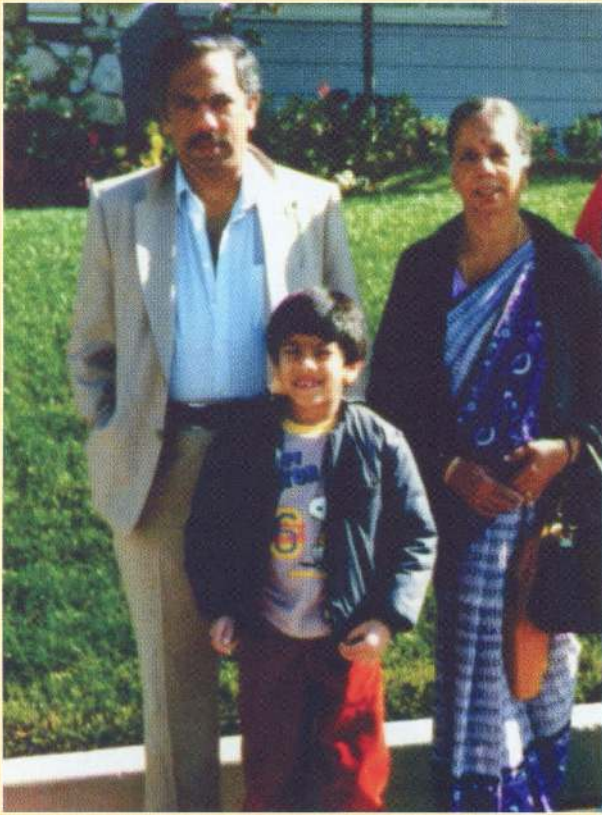
Chandramohan married Ranjana Sinathurai in 1977. Ranjana graduated from Mysore Medical College in India. She qualified as a family medicine physician.

They have two children, a boy (Shankar) and a girl (Nina).

Shankar Mohan was born in Chicago on February 5th, 1982. Shankar graduated from the University of Michigan and later joined the US Army as an Officer. He served in Iraq twice. The family is very proud of him for his service to the US.

Presently, he is an American diplomat with the state department.

Nina was born on January 2nd, 1990. She went to Carnegie Mellon for college where she studied English literature and computer science. Presently, she works for Buzz feed (E-journal). She got engaged to her fiancé, Mark in 2019.



Shankar, Chandramohan and Amma, Tarzana, CA, 1990



Chandramohan with Amma, Chicago, 1993



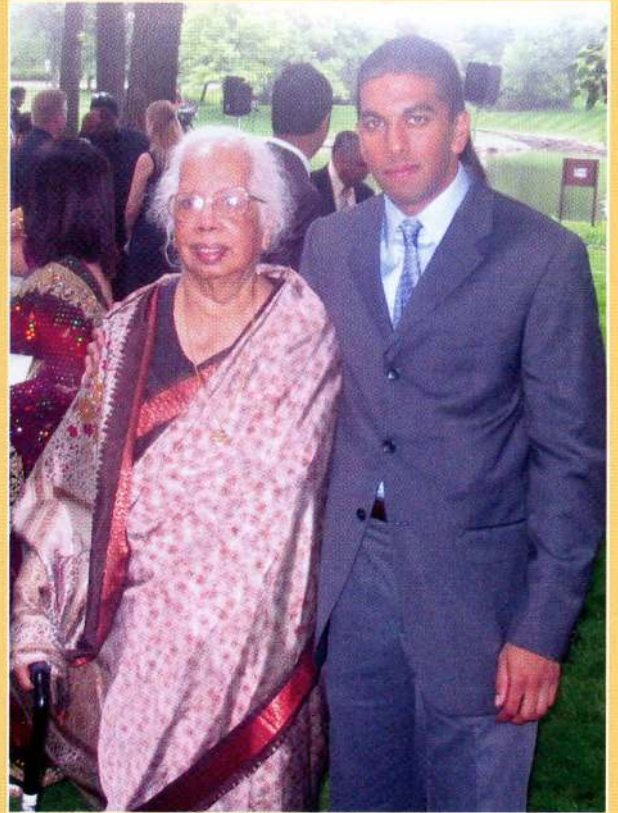
Nina with Amma, Chicago, 1990



Chandramohan, Ranjana and Nina with Amma, Chicago, 2007



Nina with Amma, Chicago, 2007



Shankar with Amma, Chicago, 2009

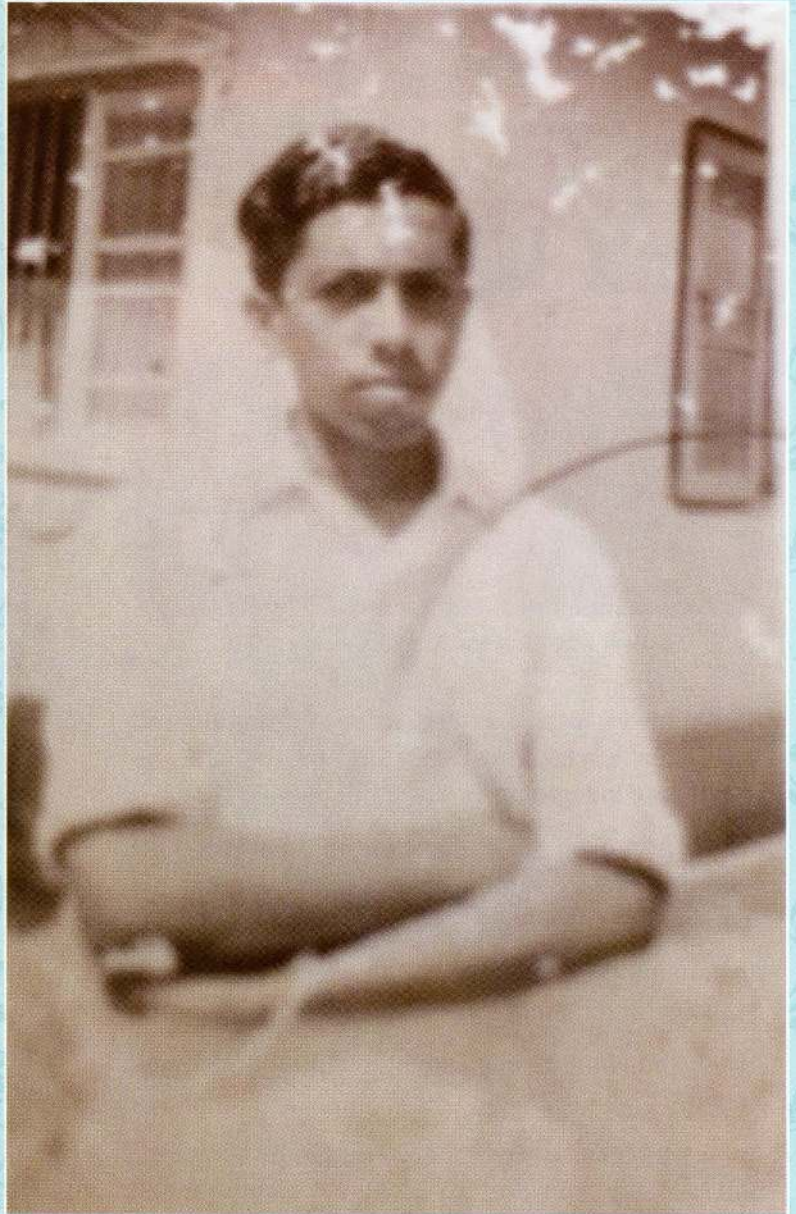


Nina with her fiance, Chris, Chicago, 2019

Asokan's Family

Asokan, by nature, is loving and deeply cares for the people in his life. He is also very religious and very much devoted to Sathya Sai Baba. He was the first in the family to travel abroad.

He had his early education at St. Joseph's College. Asokan entered the Colombo Medical faculty. He was a good student at the medical school.



Asokan, Colombo, mid 1960s



Asokan with Ayah, Rudramawatte,
Colombo, Sri Lanka, 1972



Asokan with Amma and Ayah, Chicago, 1985



Asokan with Ayah and Amma, Chicago, 1976



Asokan with Amma and Ayah, 1989, Chicago

He did his internship in pediatrics in Colombo and thereafter migrated to the US. In the US, he specialized in radiology.

Amma and Ayah spent most of the time in the US with him and his family. Amma spent her last ten years at his house.

Asokan and Mali took care of Amma and Ayah with deep love and affection.

Asokan and Mali have a daughter - Anjali - and a son - Pravin.

Anjali was born on November 27th, 1975 in Chicago. She was the first grandchild of the Sangarapillai family. Everyone adored her.

She was a bright student but her passion was music. She received a scholarship to study music - and she excelled in it. She gave many solo performances.

Today, she teaches music at a public school in the suburbs of Chicago.

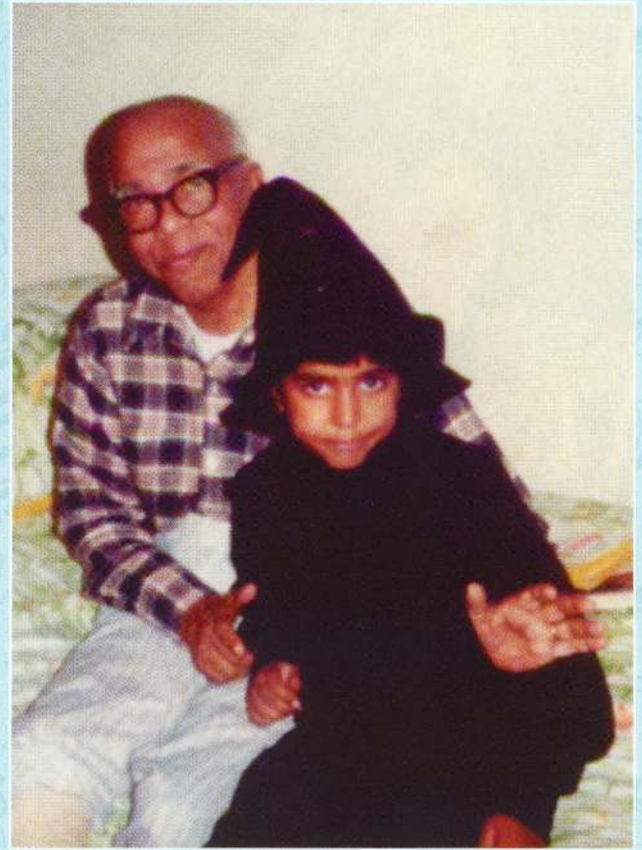
Anjali married Jalin Karina in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania. Karina is of Indian origin but was born and raised in Tanzania. He is an information technology officer.

They have one Grand son, Akash, born in March 13th, 2010

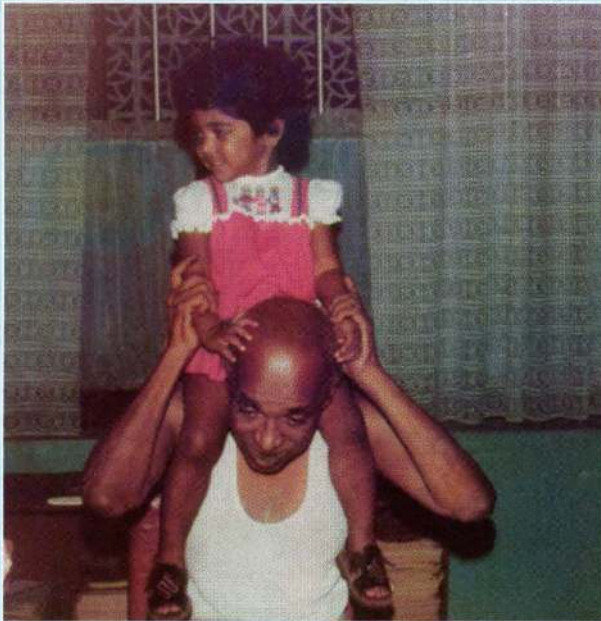
Pravin was born on 16th September, 1984. He was a good student. He worked for some time as a bond trader. His fiancée is Noelle. He has a son, Jordan.



Mali and Asokan with Amma in Chicago, 2007



With Ayah, Chicago, 1984



Anjali with Ayah, Colombo, 1977



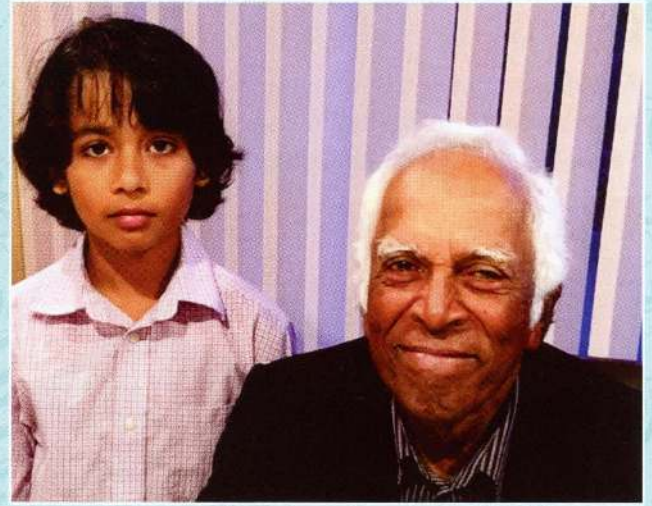
Amma with Pravin, Chicago, 1986



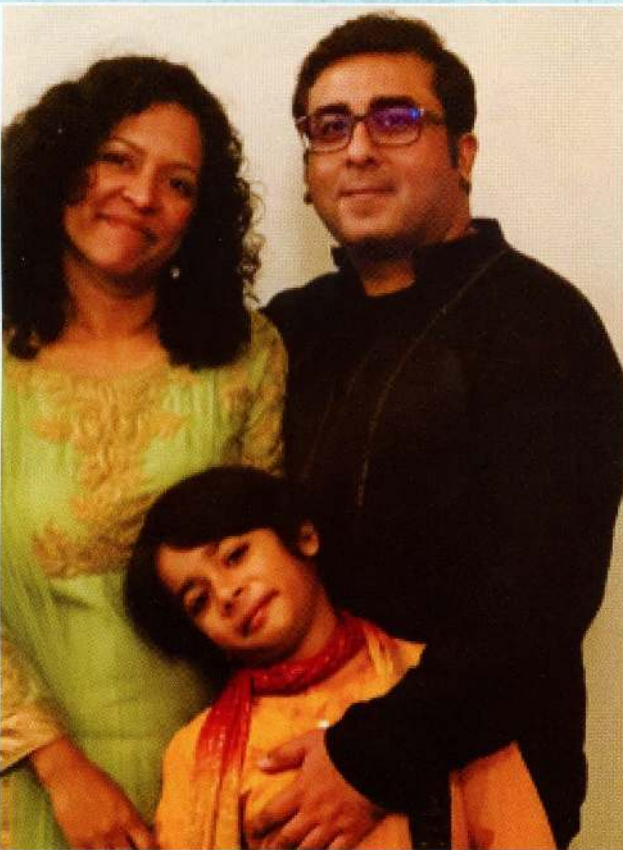
Amma with her great grandson, Akash and Anjali, Chicago, 2011



Pravin with Amma and Ayah, Chicago, 1985



Asokan with grandson, Akash, Chicago, 2019



Anjali, Jalin and Akash



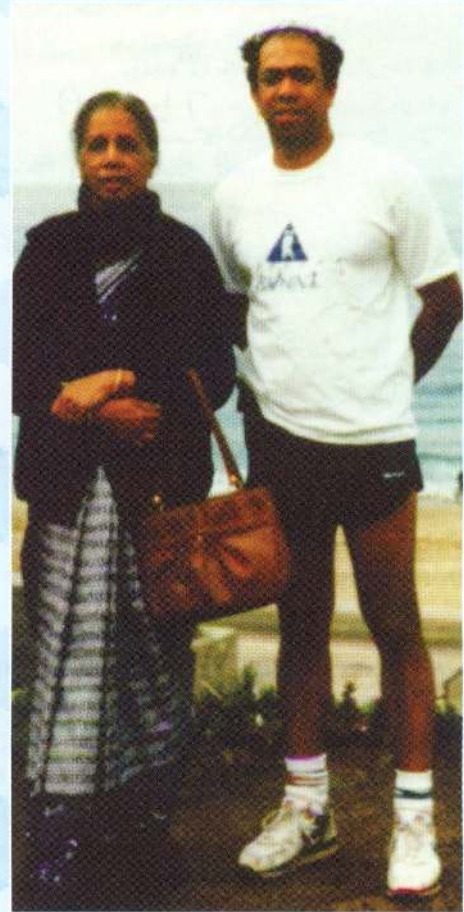
Noelle, Pravin and son Jordan

Nagendran's Family

Nagendran was educated at St. Joseph's College in Colombo, Sri Lanka. After his high school, he entered Colombo Medical College. He was a hardworking student. He did his internship in Colombo before proceeding to Chicago in 1971.



Nagendran, Colombo, mid 1950s



Amma with Nagendran, California, 1992



Ayah with Nagendran, Tarzana, CA 1988



Amma with Nagendran, Chicago, 2006

AUGUST 1970
 25 Tuesday
 1973-26 - Nagendran
 1974 - 26
 1967 - March 7 1/2 -
 1971 - 7 1/2 -
 1972 - August - 9th -
 1969 - Dec 26 Wednesday -
 Jan 1974 -
 American girl -
 Jan 1974 - 17th Dec -
 children

Ayah's prediction about Nagendran's marriage

Nagendran specialized in Internal medicine in the US.

Ayah, though a very good astrologer had predicted that Nagendran will marry an American Girl in 1974. Nagendran proved Ayah wrong by marrying Gwen (Gigi). Gigi who is of Sri Lankan origin was born in Tanzania and later moved to the UK. Astrology is a science but even the best cannot predict everything accurately.

They have two sons, Julian and Devin. Julian works in Information technology and Devin is an engineer. Devin, who attended Notre Dame university, works as an engineer.



Ayah and Amma with Julian, 1988



Amma with Julian and Devin, Tarzana, 1991



Amma with Julian, 1992



Amma with Julian and Devin, Chicago, 2008

Mahendran's Family

Mahendran was educated at St. Joseph's College in Colombo.

He was a good student but had tendencies to get distracted. As a child, he was also the most mischievous among all the brothers.



Mahendran, Rudramawatte, 1952

Mahendran entered the Sri Lankan university at Peradeniya to do Agricultural Engineering. He excelled at the University. He played cricket and rugby for the University. Amongst all the brothers, Mahendran was also the most athletic.

While he was at the University, he fell in love with a student, Amirthvathy Thirunavukarasu, who was two years junior to him.



Ayah with Mahendran, Chicago, 1977



Mahendran with Amma and Ayah, Glendale, California, 1986



Mahendran, Amma and Ayah, Torrance, California, 1990

Amirtha - as she was fondly called - came from a conservative family of nine (five girls and 4 boys).

Amirtha had entered the University from Vembadi High School - a popular public high school in Jaffna.

After completing his degree, Mahendran got a job at the University as an Assistant Professor. Like all Sri Lankans he also wanted to go abroad to pursue higher studies and seek better job opportunities.

Mahendran switched his career to accountancy in the US. He is now a Certified Public Accountant (CPA). Amirtha also pursued a career in accountancy but later quit to be a stay home mother.



Ayah, Amma with Mahendran, Glendale, California, 1985

Currently, they live in Southern California.

They have three children - all girls.

The eldest, Suganya, is a lawyer. She attended Amherst College and later did law at UCLA.

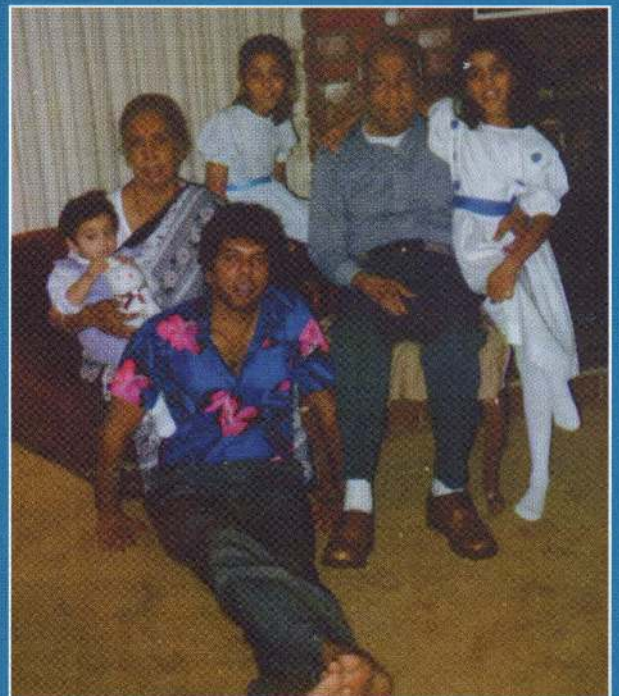
Currently she works in Los Angeles.



California, 1990, Seated, left to right :
Amma, Sri Vidya, Ayah, Suganya, Lavanya.
Standing (left to right) : Mahendran, Amrita and Maha
Last picture of Ayah before his death

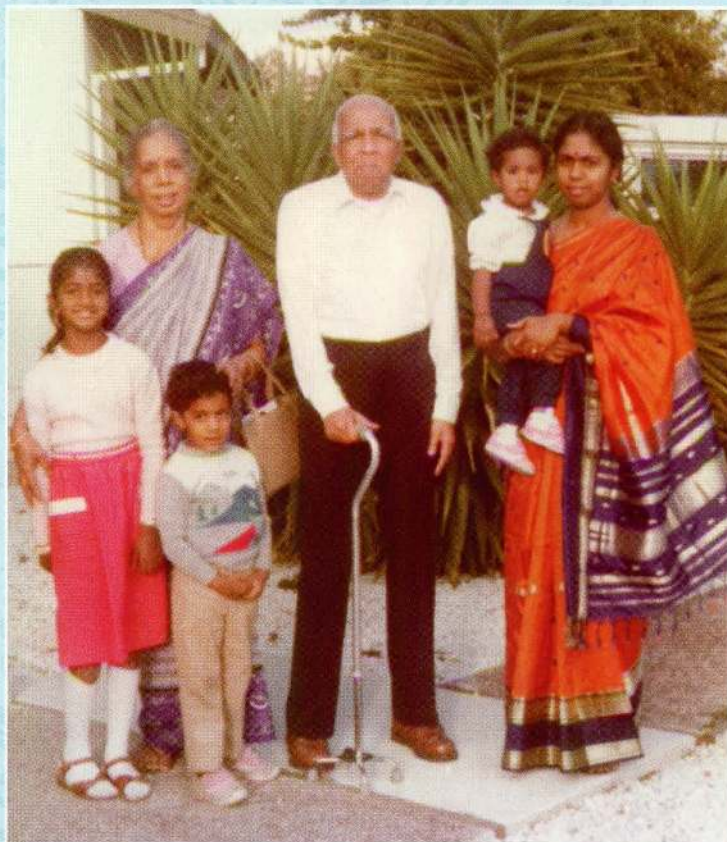
Lavanya went to UCLA for College and did her Law at Columbia Law School in New York. She works in San Francisco for TikTok, a Chinese firm.

The youngest, Sri Vidya, went to University of California at San Diego. She graduated with a degree in digital media communication. She lives in Southern California. She is married and has a girl.



Sri Vidya, Amma, Suganya, Ayah and Lavanya.
Mahendran seated on the floor. Reseda, California, 1989.

Jayanthi's Family



Kavitha, Amma, Janakan, Ayah, Jayanthi, Abarna - San Jose, California 1985

Jayanthi was the first girl in the family. She was dark and had sharp features. She attended Saiva Mangaiyar Kalagam and St. Bridget's Convent.

She completed her diploma in home science.

Jayanthi was an ambitious girl. She was a doer. She learnt carnatic music. She sang and taught religion at the Rama Krishna mission in Colombo.

Jayanthi got married at the age of twenty three in 1975. She married Suthanthira Raj who had studied Electronics Engineering in London.

Their first child - a daughter, Kavitha - was born in 1976.

Kavitha is an accomplished Indian dancer who graduated in commerce. She married Rajiv, a lawyer and they have two daughters. They live in Sydney.

Janakan was the second in the family - and their only son. He is an excellent mridangam player (Indian drums) who had accompanied



Raj and Jayanthi. London, 1975



Janakan with Ayah, Sydney, 1985



Jayanthi with Amma, Tarzana, Los Angeles, 1990.



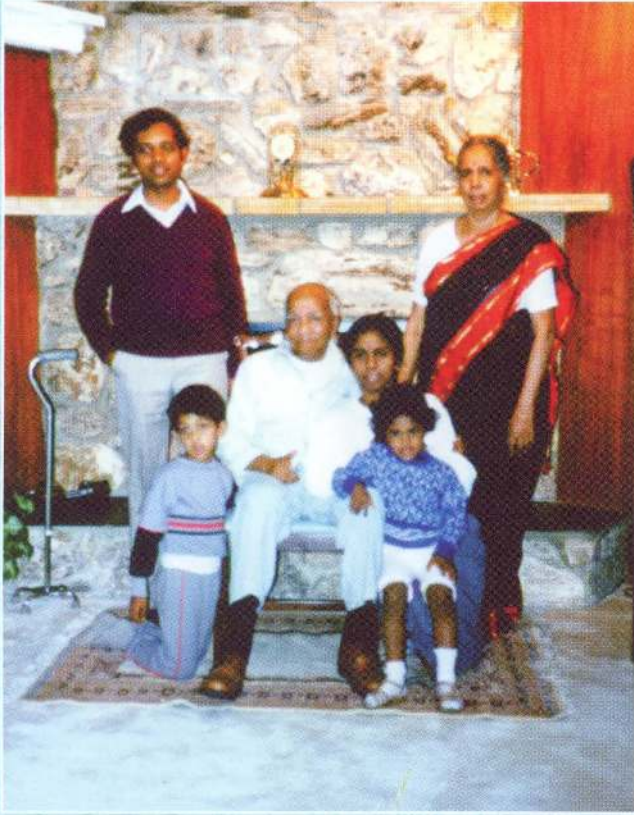
Kavitha and Rajiv with Amma - Chicago

many of the top South Indian musicians. He graduated with a degree in visual arts. He is married and now lives in Sydney.

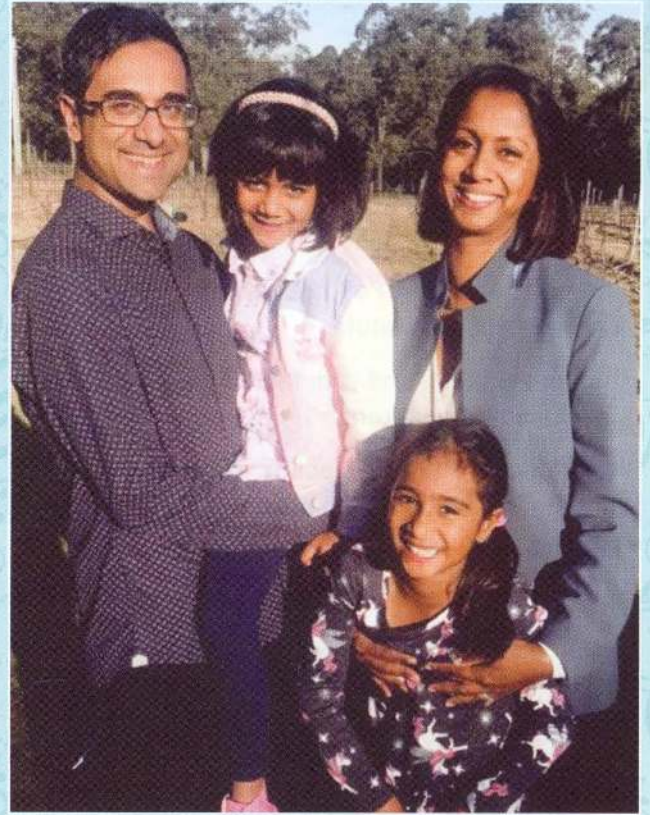
Abarna is the youngest in the family. She is a lawyer by profession. She also runs an NGO (Non Governmental Organization) in Northern Sri Lanka, helping the widowed women who were affected by the ethnic war.



Jayanthi with Manoharan - Sydney, 2006



Jayanthi family with Ayah and Amma
Seated (left to right) ; Janakan, Ayah, Jayanthi, Abarna
Standing (left to right); Raj, Amma



Rajiv, Ishana, Kavitha and Mahila, Sydney



Janakan and Ashika, Sydney



Kylaq, Nishan, Abarna and Elijah, Sydney

Manohari's Family

Manohari was one of the twins - older than Manoharan by ten minutes.

Manohari was tall and very fair. She was one of the fairest of all the children.

She attended all her schooling at Saiva Mangaiyar Kalagam in Colombo. The school was just a couple of houses away from our house.



Amma with Aswini, Sydney, 1986

Shivani is a very popular Yoga teacher. She is married to Jeramy, who is from France. Both of them are now settled in France.

The youngest daughter, Aswini, works in Sydney.



Amma with Manohari, California, 1999

After she completed her high school, she pursued diploma courses in home science.

She married Jeyendran in 1982. After her wedding, they moved to Nigeria for a couple of years and then to the UK. Jeyendran is an engineer. After a few years in the UK, they settled down in Sydney, Australia.

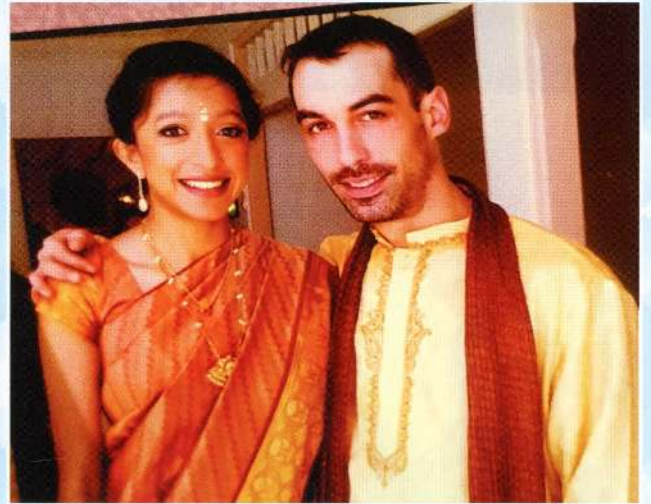
They have two daughters - Shivani and Abarana.



Amma, Ayah, Shivani and Abarana, Sydney, 1986



Manohari, Amma and Aswini, California, 1990



Shivani with Jeremy

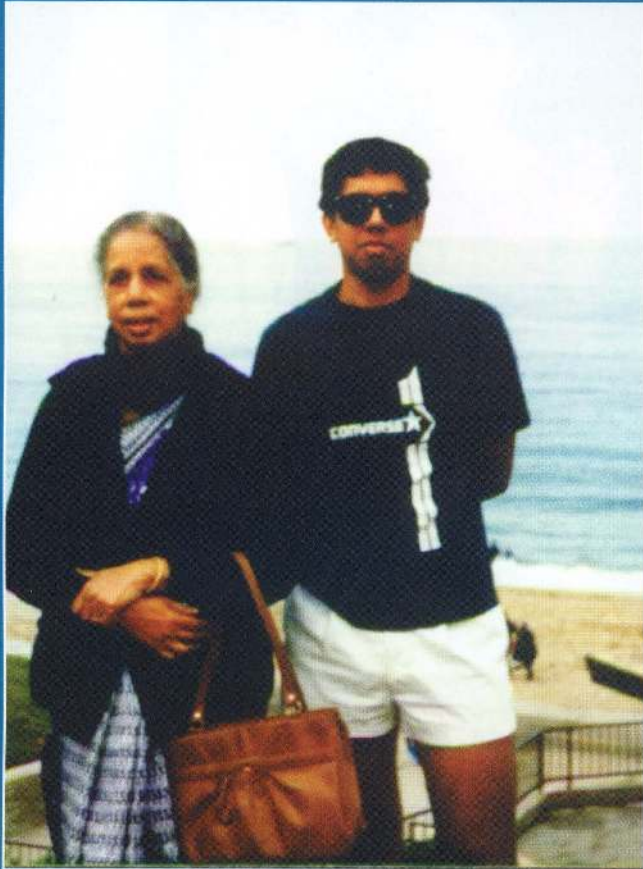


Manohari with Amma, Sydney, 1995



Jey, Ashwini and Manoharai, Sydney

Manoharan's Family



Amma with Manoharan, Torrance, California, 1991

Manoharan was one of the twins. He had his early education at the Royal College, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

After high school, Manoharan pursued his medical degree at the prestigious Manipal Medical College, Karnataka, India.

After completing his medical degree in 1985, he settled in California. He was trained as an Emergency Room Physician.

He married Mahaluckshmy Murugesampillai, a Physician from Sri Lanka in 1989. The marriage took place in Toronto, Canada in 1989. Both Ayah and Amma were present at the wedding.

They have two children, a son, Sathya Manoharan, and a daughter, Parshanthi Manoharan.

Sathya Manharan graduated from University of California at Riverside (UCR) majoring in Biology and is a United States Marine officer currently.

Prashanthi Manoharan graduated from the University of California at Riverside (UCR) in psychology. She is also an accomplished Indian classical dancer (bharatanatyam) and did her solo arangetram (debut performance) in 2018. She is pursuing a career in law.



Amma with Sathya, California, 1995



Amma with Sathya, Anaheim, California, 1998



Amma with Prashanthi, Anaheim 1999



Sathya with Amma, Anaheim, California, 1999



Manoharan, Sathya, Prashanthi and Amma, Anaheim, 1999



Prashanthi, Amma and Sathya, Chicago, 2002



Manoharan, Amma and Ayah, Torrance, CA, 1988



Amma with Prashanthi, Chicago, 2005



Sathya, Manoharan, Amma and Prashanthi, Chicago, 2005



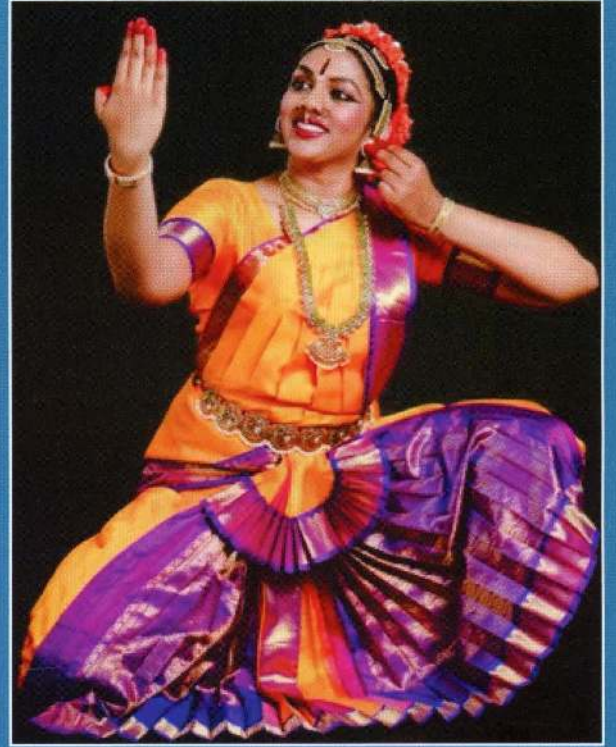
Amma with Manoharan, Chicago, 2005



Sathya with Amma, Chicago, 2005



Sathya Manoharan, Officer, US Marines



Prashanthi



Manoharan with Amma, Chicago, 1995



Sathya, Maha, Prashanthi, Hunter - California, 2019




உள் ஒன்று வைத்துப்
புறம் ஒன்றும் பேசாதே !

Speak your
mind upfront.


Birthdays of Sangarapillai Family

Noted by Amma



Our Children

Full Name	Place of Birth	Date of Birth
Chandra Mohan	Jaffna	25-9-41
Asokan	Jaffna	28-6-44
Nagendran	Jaffna	16-6-47
Mahendran	Colombo Jaffna	25-2-49
Jayanthi	Colombo	25-5-52
Manohari	Colombo	13-3-57
Manoharan	Twins Colombo	13-3-57
Eldest son Siddharthan Born 28-6-39 Died 9-7-48		



Our Grandchildren and Descendants

Anjalie Sharon Asokan 25-2-75

Kavitha Suthanthiraraj 12-7-76

Suganya Mahendran 15-7-77

Lavenya Mahendran 14-4-79

Tanakan Suthanthiraraj 18-7-81

Shiva Shankar Mohan 5-2-82

Shivani Jeyendran 11-6-83



Abayna Suthanthiraraj 20-6-83

Pravin Neil Asokan 16-9-84

Sri Vidhya Mahendran 31-12-85

Aswini Jeyendran 28-2-88

Julian Dilip Nagendran 1-4-89

Veena Lakshmi MOHAN
2-1-90

Devin Shankar Nagendran
11-2-93

Sathya Skandan Manoharan
25-8-95

Prashanthi Lakshmi Manoharan
10-10-97

TIME LINE and LIFE NOTES FROM AMMA'S DIARY

1717 June 30th Birth at Rangon
 1918
 1919 Birth of my eldest brother Jayaratnam
 1920
 1921 " " " 2nd " Rajaratnam
 1922 " " " " " Rajaratnam
 1923
 1924 " " " 3rd " Shanmugam
 1925
 1926 " " " 4th " Thiruvalluvar
 1927 Returned to Ceylon from Rangon for Mother's confinement to the sixth child
 1928 Mother gave birth to a girl in October. The young child died on a very sacred day (Ainiparas & Sri) (Nov 22 Sunday)
 1929 Mother died on the 23rd day after the confinement
 1930 attained puberty, uncle Ramanah wedding
 1931
 1932 Death of my grand father (maternal)
 1933 My beloved mother brought me up well
 1934 Trained me in the house work + good conduct
 1935 gave knowledge & wisdom from my
 1936 14 years up to my marriage
 1937 went to school upto the 14th year (only) Wednesday
 1938 Marriage marriage to Sanyasipillai from Ceylon to Colombo on Sep 15th

1939 Birth of my eldest son Siddhartha on 23rd of June
 1940
 1941 " " " Second son Chandra Mohan Sep 25th
 1942 Death of
 1943 Death of my father on Sep 1st
 1944 Death of my father / Birth of my 3rd son Ashoka
 Death of my father on the 25th of June
 1945
 1946 eldest son Siddhartha died on the 9th of June
 1947 Birth of my 4th son Rajendra 16th June
 1948
 1949 Birth of my 5th son Mohan Feb 25th
 1950 Built a house in Wellawake and came on June 1st
 1951
 1952 Birth of the eldest daughter Jayanthi 25th May
 1953
 1954
 1955
 1956 child born in the 5th month of pregnancy
 1957 Birth of twins (a boy + girl) Mar 13th (16 lbs)
 1958 communal riots
 1959
 1960 49th birthday for 17 years beginning things are very favourable

1963
 1964
 1965 Began to consider the influence of Sri Ram
 1966 My second birth. Initiation from my father
 1967 Republic of Siam, independence of Malaya
 1968, 1969 after Vedanta philosophy under a teacher
 1970 went to S. India my first pilgrimage stayed 4
 Visited all the temples in S. India + Malaya.
 1970 on 5th April (1970) asokanant to the States on 19-10-70
 1971 (2nd pilgrimage)
 1972 went to India (Madras - Bangalore - Pudukottai)
 a visit to Sri Lanka with Mr. Albas on Feb. 2.
 1973 - Nageswari went to the States
 1974
 1975 Jayanthi's marriage in May 31st
 1976 Left Colombo for London with airport family on July 2nd
 Left London for Chicago on August 7th returned
 to London Sep 9th and stayed in London till Sep 22
 Chandru's marriage to Rajivana
 1978
 1979 - Nageswari's marriage (3rd pilgrimage)
 1980 went to Calcutta + India for the convention of Ashoka with a
 batch of 13 disciples. Visited, Madras, Pondicherry, Kanchi,
 Calcutta, Praying what the 3 Relics were kept.
 1981
 1982 Manohar's marriage Aug 20th
 1983 Rishi July 25th after the convention of Ashoka went abroad on Aug 27
 1984 Manohar went to London on 6th Feb. My 5th son Ashoka
 1985 Manohar in C.A. under in Chicago
 1986 " " " " " C.A.
 1987 " " " " " C.A.

1917 : June 30. Birth at Rangoon.

1919 : Birth of my eldest brother , Jeyaratnam .

1921 : Birth of my second brother, Rajaratnam.

1924 : Birth of my third brother, Shanmugaraja .

1925 : Birth of my fourth brother, Thurairatnam .

1927 : Returned to Ceylon from Rangoon for mother's sixth confinement. Mother gave birth to a girl in October. The baby died in three months.

1928 : Mother died on the twenty-eighth day of confinement, on a very special day (karthigai deepam – full moon day).

1930 : Attained puberty. Uncle Ramiah's wedding.

1932 : Death of my grandfather-maternal.

1933 : My grandmother brought me up well.

1934 : Grandmother trained me in the house work and good conduct.

1935 : Grandmother gave knowledge and wisdom to me.

1936 : Went to school up to the fourteenth year only.

1938 : Marriage on the September 7th to Sangarapillai from Maviddapuram. Came to Colombo on September 15th.

1939 : Birth of my eldest son, Siddarthan, on June 28th.

1941 : Birth of my second son, Chandramohan, on Sept 25th.

1943 : Death of my father on September 1st.

1944 : Birth of my third son Asokan, on June 28th. Death of my grandmother in January.

1946 : Eldest son, Siddarthan, died on the 9th of June.

1947 : Birth of my fourth son, Nagendran, on 16th June.

1950 : Built a house in Wellawatte and moved in to the house on June 1st.

1952 : Birth of the eldest daughter, Jayanthi, on 25th May.

1956 : Aborted a girl in the fifth month pregnancy. Rasa's wedding.

1957 : Birth of twins, a boy and a girl, March 13th. Sixteen pounds (both).

1958 : Communal riots.

1960 : Puthan period starting for the next 17 years. This is a very favorable period for me.

1965 : Began to come under the influence of Sri Rama Krishna.

1966 : My second birth. Initiation from my Guru Swami Vishverananda , president of Rama Krishna mission.

1967 : Learning Sanskrit and Upanishads. Learning Gita and Vedanta philosophy under Swami Virupakshananda.

1970 : Went to South India on 5th April 1970, my first pilgrimage and stayed for one month. Visited all the temples in South India. Asokan went to the States on October 19, 1970.

1972 : Went on my 2nd pilgrimage to India on February 2nd to Madras, Bangalore and Puttarparthy.

1973 : Nage went to the States.

1975 : Jayanthi's marriage, August 31st.

1976 : Left Colombo for London with Ayah and Amirtha, July 23rd. Left London for Chicago on August 9th. Returned to London September 9th and stayed in London until September 22nd.

1977 : Chandra's marriage to Ranjana.

1980 : Nage's marriage. Went to Calcutta on my third pilgrimage for the convention at Belur math with a batch of 19 devotees. Visited Madras, Puri, Bodhi Gaya, kasi , Allahabad where the three holy rivers meet.

1982 : Manohari's marriage, August 20th.

1983 : Riots, July 25th. Ayah's toe operation, June 27th. Went abroad on August 7th. Ayah's leg amputation at Chicago on August 25th.

1984 : Manoharan went to Colombo on 6th February. My Guru attained Maha samadhi on March 13th at the age of 93.

1985 : Summer in Chicago and winter in California.

1986 : Summer in Chicago and winter in California.

1987 : Summer in Chicago and winter in California.

Notes from Amma's Diary about her spiritual activities

FROM AMMA'S DIARY

Spiritual path of Manonmani Sangarapillai

I got my initiation on the full moon day of the month of May in the year 1968. It was a Buddhist Jayanthi day from Rev. Swami Vishveshwarananda, the 10th President of the Ramakrishna Mission of Belur Math, Kolkata India.

The initiation of a mantra by a highly spiritually evolved guru slowly and steadily produces the way to a spiritual life. The mantra was given in the shrine room of the Colombo mission. 50 devotees of the mission were initiated on two days with their own chosen deity mantras. We should meditate twice daily.

I was 50 years old. We were told of the regularity of the meditation. At the beginning I was very busy with the family and household works. I missed the prayers and meditation often. But the spiritual power of the seed planted by the powerful guru started to grow. I had enough time and started going to the mission center at least five times a week and doing my daily meditation morning and night.

The walk - sea breeze, the evening puja at the Ramakrishna Mission, meditation, holy company, gave me joy and inward happiness. The seed was working. There came to the mission a young scholar monk, Swami Virupakashnanda on transfer from the center in South India. His native place is Mangalore. He came in 1970. He started teaching Bhagavad-Gita from 1970.



Ramakrishna Mission , Colombo

I was very eager to attend the Gita and other Vedic classes. It also suited my free time in the evening. The class begins at 5 to 6 PM some days (and) 7 to 8 PM in other days. I joined a group of 20 Devotees, men and women.

Some stay for the daily evening puja performed by the monks at 6 PM to 7 PM. The special Hindu religious days were celebrated at the Mission. The Swami our teacher, a jovial Man though some of us were older than him, (he) treated us lovingly.



Swami Virupakshananda

Sometimes he will tell about his life and how he happened to join the order. The Gita has 18 chapters and 700 verses. Two verses for a day once a week.

They are in Sanskrit. He explains in English. No fee is charged for the classes. The mantra was working in us, prompting us to learn more about the Gita.

One day he asked how many knew Sanskrit . Only about 5 put up their hands. I also did not put up my hand. He said Sanskrit is the language of Devas (Gods). All the vedas and scriptures were written in Sanskrit. To know and understand those beautiful scriptures and enjoy them, one should know Sanskrit.

This set a yearning to learn Sanskrit in some of us. A young girl, a Sanskrit graduate who was in our class

approached us and said that she can teach if we are interested.

It was arranged to have the Sanskrit class in my house for five ladies. I choose the time 3pm to 4pm in the evening which suited me well. It was once a week.

The class went well for a month and the girl stopped coming as she had to go to university.

The Swami met few of us and asked how far we are in Sanskrit. We told the girl has stopped the classes and gone to the University.

The spiritual seed was working and the almighty Guru gives a helping hand. The Swami saw our eagerness to study the language. He told that he will take Sanskrit classes . We arranged a day that suited us and all five of us were lucky to have learned Sanskrit under a Scholar Monk at the Mission.

We bought the infant Sanskrit reader and started the alphabet at once. Homework was done and corrected by swami in our notebooks. Within a year we were able to read and write lessons from the third grade book.

My husband did Sanskrit as a language for his BA degree. So I approached him to get help with my homework. “ Why do you want to learn Sanskrit. It is a dead language “ came the reply.

With a heavy heart, I went to a neighbor living down the road who has learnt Sanskrit at college. She said she is very sorry. She has forgotten everything. The kind hearted Monk corrected our homework and we were able to understand the Gita in its original language.

It is a wonder and purely the grace of my Guru Ramakrishna. The Swami was in Colombo for seven years and transferred later to Chengalpattu in South India .

During the seven years, a few of us were really lucky. Every birthday of Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda were celebrated with great devotion. I will get up at four in the morning, bathe, get dressed and walk all the way to the Mission. The deserted roads, the sea breeze and the sunrise brought the devotion and thrill inside us. We chanted the “Suprabhatam” the early morning song awakening Ramakrishna, Saradadevi and Swami

Vivekananda to bless all mankind .

Midday pooja will start with bhajan singing , prayer and arthi. About 300 people will be fed with sumptuous lunch, and dessert follows . Again in the evening puja, singing and special talks will be given .

Thus I spent many days in the year joining in holy company.

Tears came to our eyes as the swami left us on transfer to South India.

He was the one who taught us how to worship Shiva on holy Shivaratri Day, Saraswathy Pooja and about Divine Mother, her maya and the universe.

I am ever grateful to Swami Ramakrishna to have given us the scholar Monk to teach us the scriptures and to progress in our spiritual life.

Divine grace took me for a month pilgrimage in 1970 April. A couple who took initiation on the same day, took me to India with them . They are Mr and Mrs. Muthuswamy, owners of Saraswathi lodge in Colombo. I stayed with them in Nagercoil. They arranged for a three day trip to Kerala, mainly to worship Sri Krishna at the Guruvayur temple. Two other families also joined us and we went in three cars. They refused to take money from me for the expenses. Kerala is like Sri Lanka. The woman dress is similar to the village women of Sri Lanka.

After Kerala trip , Mr. Muthusamy arranged for a 15 day pilgrimage trip by bus to the south Indian famous temples. There were 30 passengers and a man to load and unload all of our bags and baggage at our hotel resting places. I was the only one from Sri Lanka and Tamil speaking person in the group.



Madurai Meenakshi Amman temple



Thiruvannamalai temple

We went to all the famous Murugan Temples and a must for the Hindus.

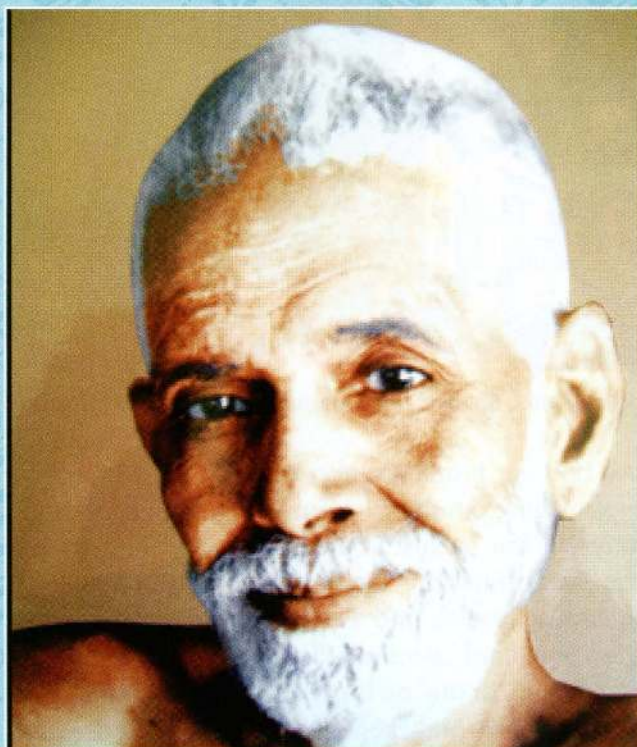
In Madurai we worshiped the mother of the universe called Meenakshi, always awake, fish-eyed.

We went to Thiruvannamalai where Ramana Maharishi lived and preached to find out “ Who am I” principle. To know thyself is the greatest of all knowledge he said.

It is a difficult path. We have to climb inch by inch on the spiritual path. Our tour included most of the south Indian temples and cities like Madras, Bangalore Goa, Ooty, Trichy, Trivandrum, etc. After a month stay in South India I returned to Colombo.

The pilgrimage to North India:

My spiritual quest took me to Sri Ramakrishna's Mission headquarters in Kolkata. It was in the year



Ramana Maharishi

1982 December. There was a convention at the Belur Math in Kolkata. About 25 men and women from Colombo went for the convention and pilgrimage.

From Madras went by train to Puri. Visited the famous Jagannath temple and stayed there for two nights. The next journey was to Kolkata, Belur Mutt. About 10,000 Ramakrishna devotees from all over the countries in the world attended. The first opening ceremony was at the Belur mutt headquarters. The next day there was a convocation address at the Kolkata Netaji stadium. Several heads of various centers spoke. It was a sight for the Gods to see. The monks in flaming red robes and all the Sarada Mission nuns in white sarees on other side. Their renunciation and selfless work shown on their serene faces

I have to write about my experiences and how Sri Ramakrishna fulfilled my ardent desire to see his birthplace. (Kamarpukur). and Sri Sarada Devi's birth place, Jayampati, etc.

Kolkata business and industrial people took care of the hosting of the devotees. We, the Sri Lankan devotees, stayed in one of their places. For six days, we were taken to Belur math in private buses.



Belur Mutt, Spiritual Headquarters, Rama Krishna Mission

We had our breakfast and lunch at the monastery hall. Young students from Vivekananda college served the meals. The food was cooked by the monks at the Mutt kitchen. We enjoyed the North Indian delicacies and sweets. We paid homage to the president Swami Vireshwarananda - 10th President. For me, he is my spiritual guru, who also initiated me in May, 1968 in Colombo. After visiting

various places in Kolkata we left for Allahabad.

We stayed at the Mission Center. The next day we were taken to the Triveni Sangam in Allahabad (Prayag). This is a dangerous place for robbers. The Swami told us to remove and keep all of the jewelry at the Mission. We went in a boat with a Mission guide who explained and showed us as we were going how Yamuna river meets Ganga. We could clearly see as the Yamuna blue waters joining the white Ganga waters.

The guide told us the Saraswati river that flows underground and except the highly evolved soul, no one can see it. Triveni Sangam where three rivers meet.

The famous Kumbh Mela takes place once in 12 years here. We had a bath in the holy river where water was shallow and the boat anchored.



Triveni Sangam, Allahabad

Then we went to Kashi (Benares) the city of SHIVA. We stayed at the Mission guest house. The Mission runs a hospital there. The Mission guide took us to Kashi Vishwanath temple, a boat ride up and down the Ganges. We had a bath in the holy river. The Swami told us to stay till Monday to see the temple Saptarishi puja for Kashi Vishwanath lingam. The temple gopuram is of gold, built by a king of Kashi. Altogether we stayed for five days in Kashi. At that time I did not know that I will be going in 1990 with Manoharan to immerse my husband's ashes in the holy Ganga.

I had to cut short my pilgrimage since I had to go to Colombo to meet Asokan and Nagendran who had come to Colombo. So, I broke the pilgrimage and then travelled from Kashi to Madras by train for two



Kashi Vishwanath Temple

days . Only Mangalam travelled with me . The rest of the Devotees continued the pilgrimage to Haridwar, Rishikesh, etc.

Thus, ended my 25 days pilgrimage to north India. This was the best period of my life. My Guru Sri Ramakrishna knew my heart's desires and fulfilled



Ganges river in Kashi (Benares or Varanasi)

this spiritual pilgrimage. On this trip, I had the good luck to see places where Sri Ramakrishna and Sarada Devi were born.

First we went to Kamarpukur where Sri Ramakrishna was born and spent his boyhood. Now they have built a temple and a resident monk lives



Sarada Devi

Sri Ramakrishna



Kamarpukur, birthplace of Sri Ramakrishna

there. Kamapukur is 125 miles from Calcutta. About 2000 devotees who came for the convention were taken in 40 buses . It was like a wedding procession . We enjoyed it very much. Pandals and tents were put . After the pilgrimage, we were served a good lunch . Young students from the Vivekananda College, Madras served the guests .

There is a mango tree which is more than 100 years , planted by Sri Ramakrishna. Some took a leave for remembrance of the visit . That day was Sarada Devi's birthday . So, Monks said Mother is feeding her children on this day .

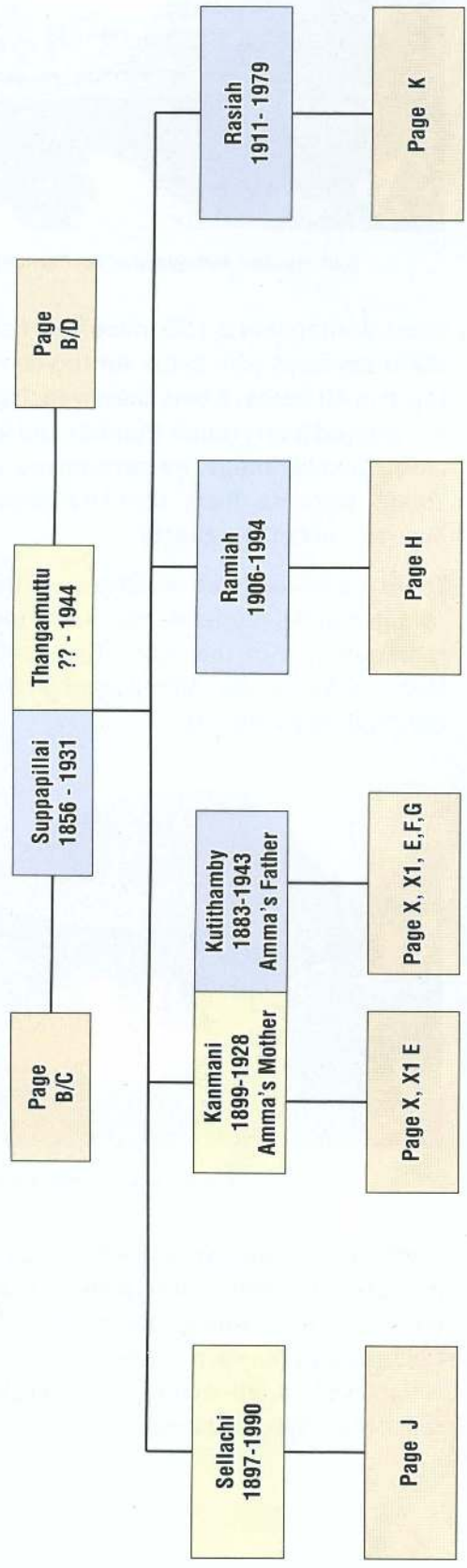


Jayampati , birth place of Sarada Devi

We went to Jayampati where Sarada Devi was born. It is 15 miles from Kamarpukur. I cannot describe the joy I had during these days. I fully forgot Colombo, my house, my husband and children. Such is the joy of a spiritual life. One must experience and relish that inner happiness.

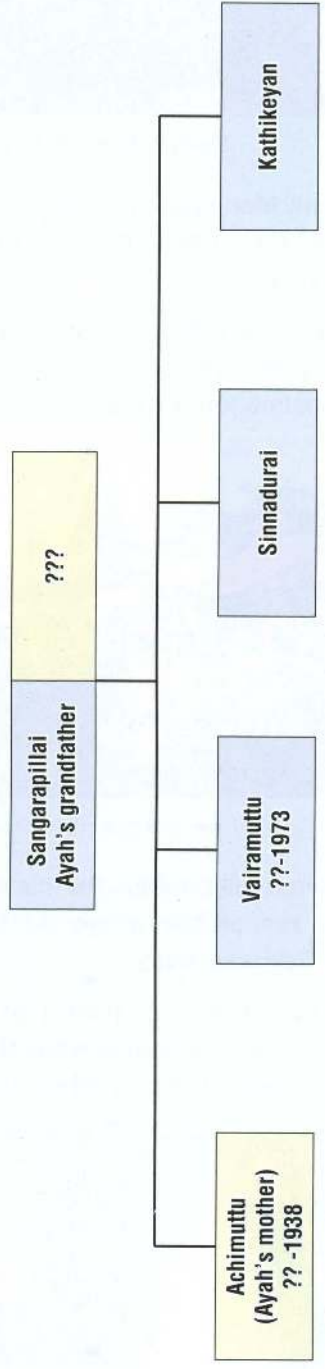
FAMILY TREE CHARTS

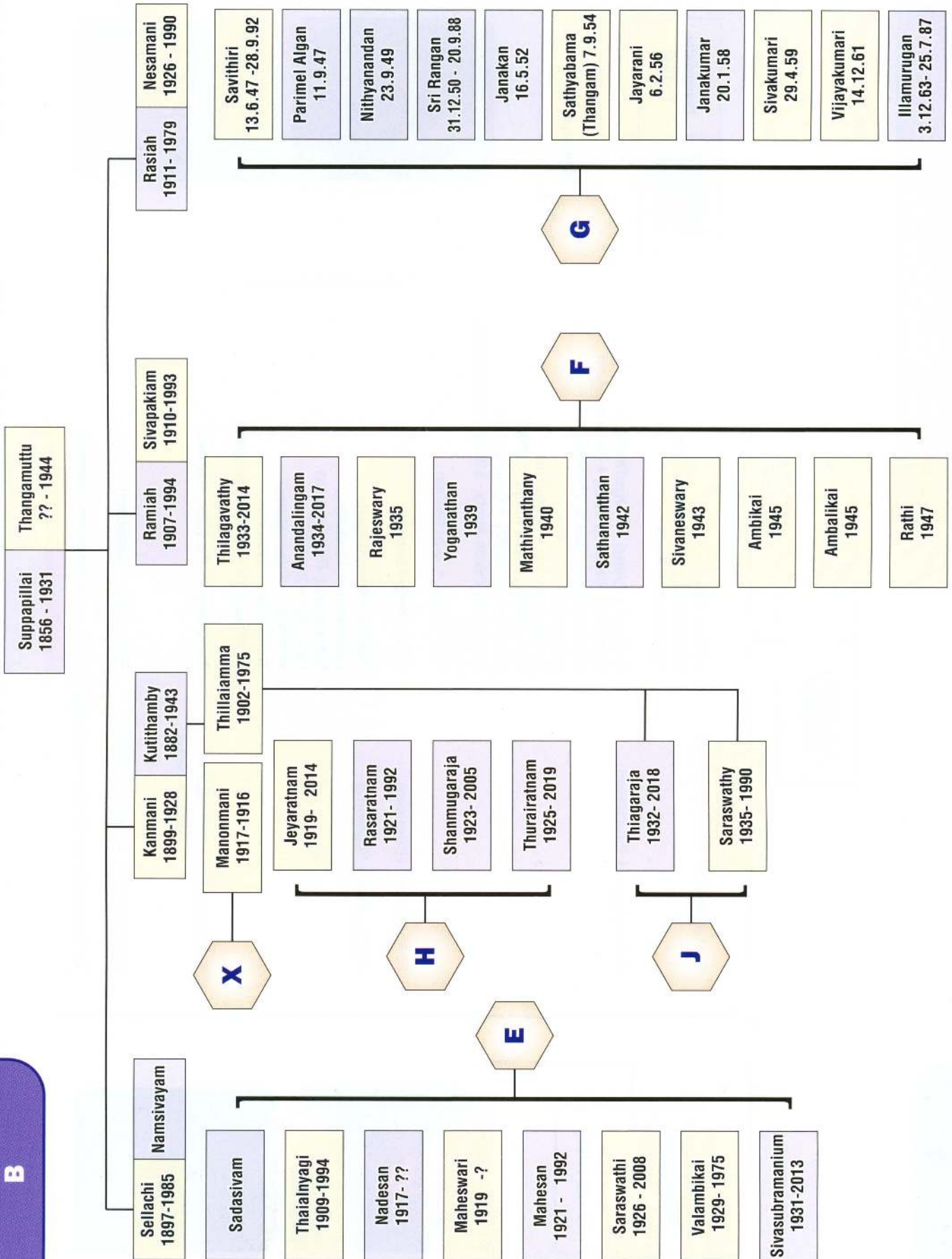
AMMA SIDE



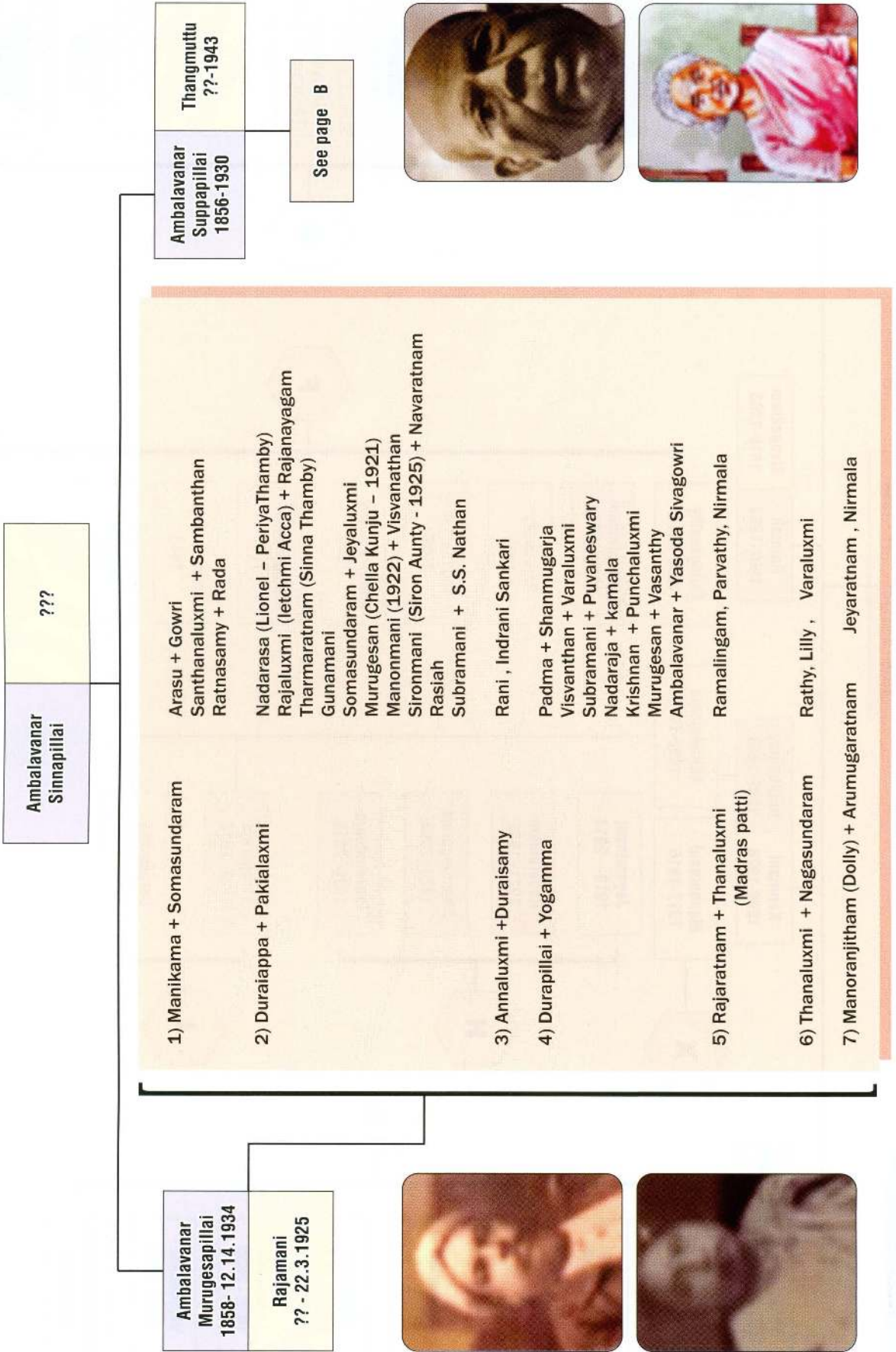
See Page L

AYAH SIDE

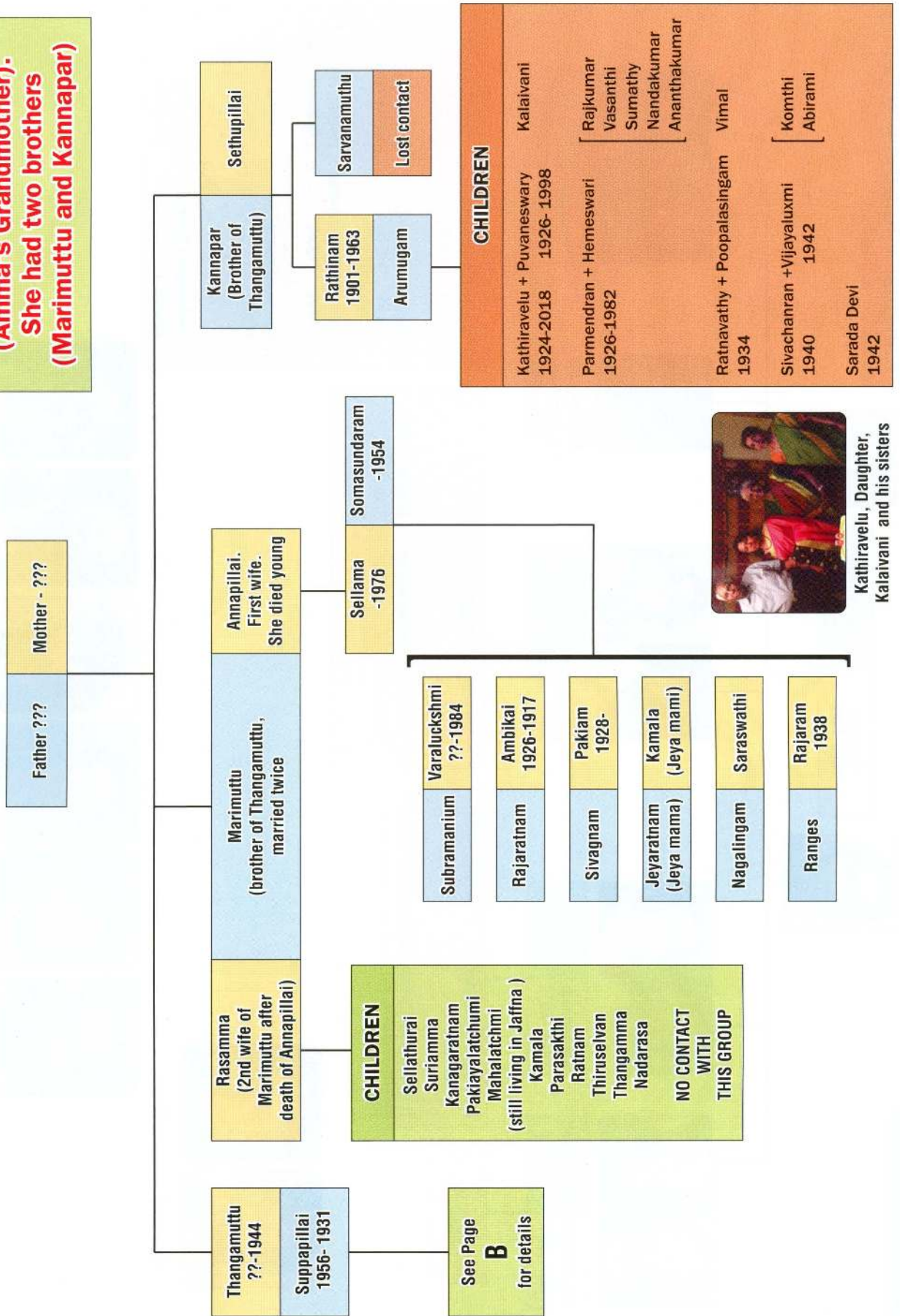




A.M. Pillai Family – Suppappillai's Brother



**Thangamuttu
(Amma's Grandmother).
She had two brothers
(Marimuttu and Kannapar)**



Kanmani + Kutithamby Family



Kanmani
1899-1928



C.K. Thamby
1883-1943



Sangarapillai
1913- 1990



Manonmani
1917-2016



Jeyaratnam
1919 - 2011



Kamala
1930



Rasaratnam
1921 - 1992



Rajeswari
1937



Shanmugarja
(Bachelor)
1923- 2005



Thuraiatnam
1925-2019



Padmini
1935

Page X

- 1) Kanmani + Shivakumar (1952-1983)
- 2) Geena (1954) + Rathinakumar (1952- 2004)

- 1) Rajkumar + Rekha (1958) [Divya
- 2) Gaitree + Jagatheeswaran (1.11.1963) [Surakshi (1986) Arun (1988) Deshan (1990)

- 1) Sumathi + Janakumar (1957) [Sam Naren (91)
- 2) Malathy + Ravindran (1957) [Gajan (1991) Milan (1997)
- 3) Udishra + Shivakumaran (1964) (1958) [Kieran (99) Mithuran (2003)
- 4) Vishnumohan + Grace (1966) (1969) [Dashan (2000) Nilushi (2003) Umica (2005)
- 5) Sudharshan + Bremini (1968) [Priyanka Swedha



Kanmani



Gina



Rajkumar



Gaitree



Malathi



Udishra



Vishnu Mohan



Sudharshan



KUTI THAMBY
1883-1943

THILLAI AMMA
1902-1975



Thaiyanayagi

Thiyagaraja
1933-2018

- 1) Balakrishnan + Subodhni [Gajendran Gayithiri
- 2) Ravivarman + Sudharshini [Durgesh Lingesh Umesh
- 3) Sothimalar + Somasiri Dineth
- 4) Rathi + Kunalan [Mathura Nijan



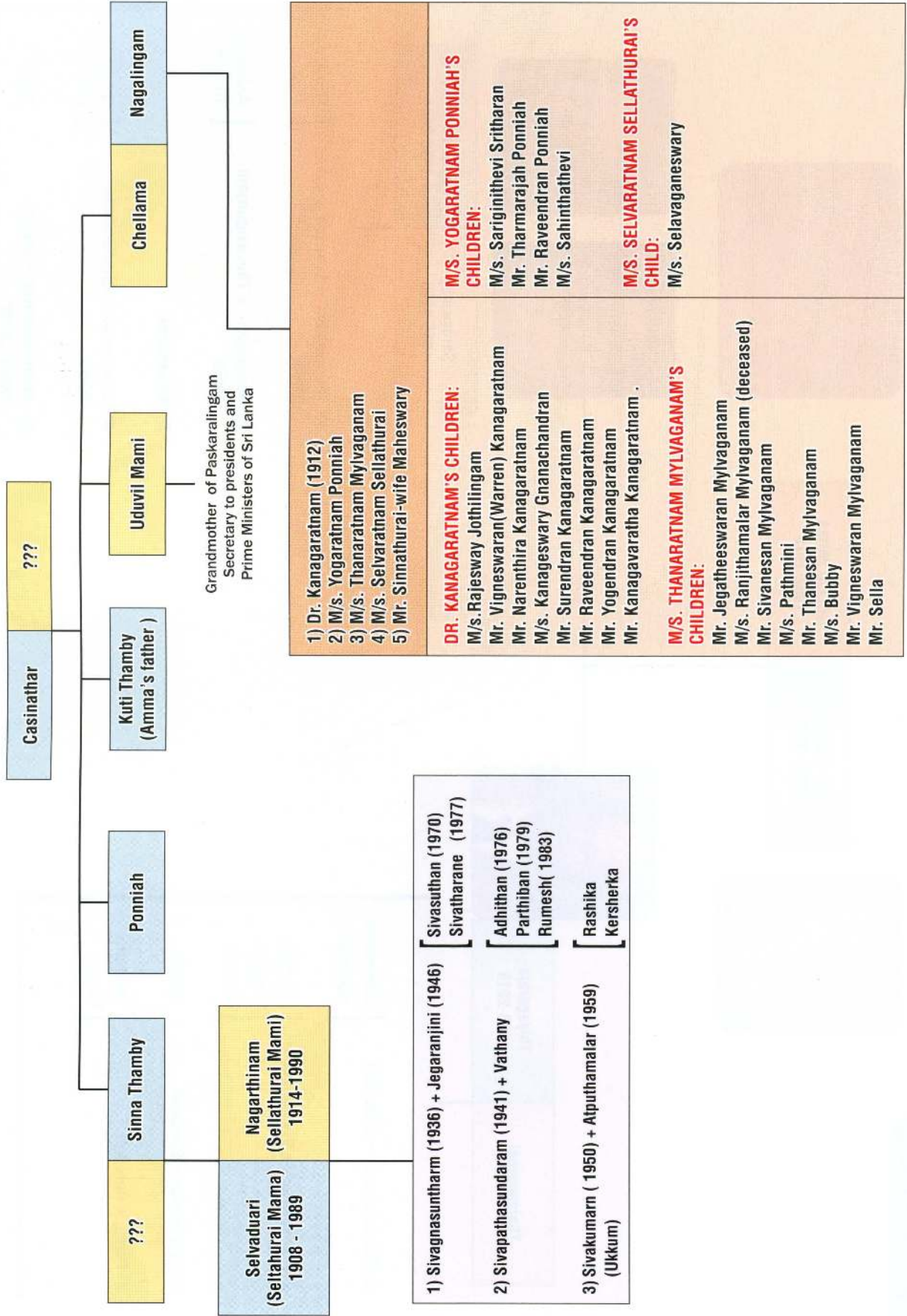
Saraswathy
1935-1990



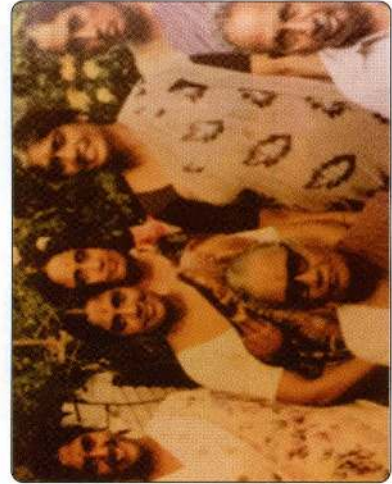
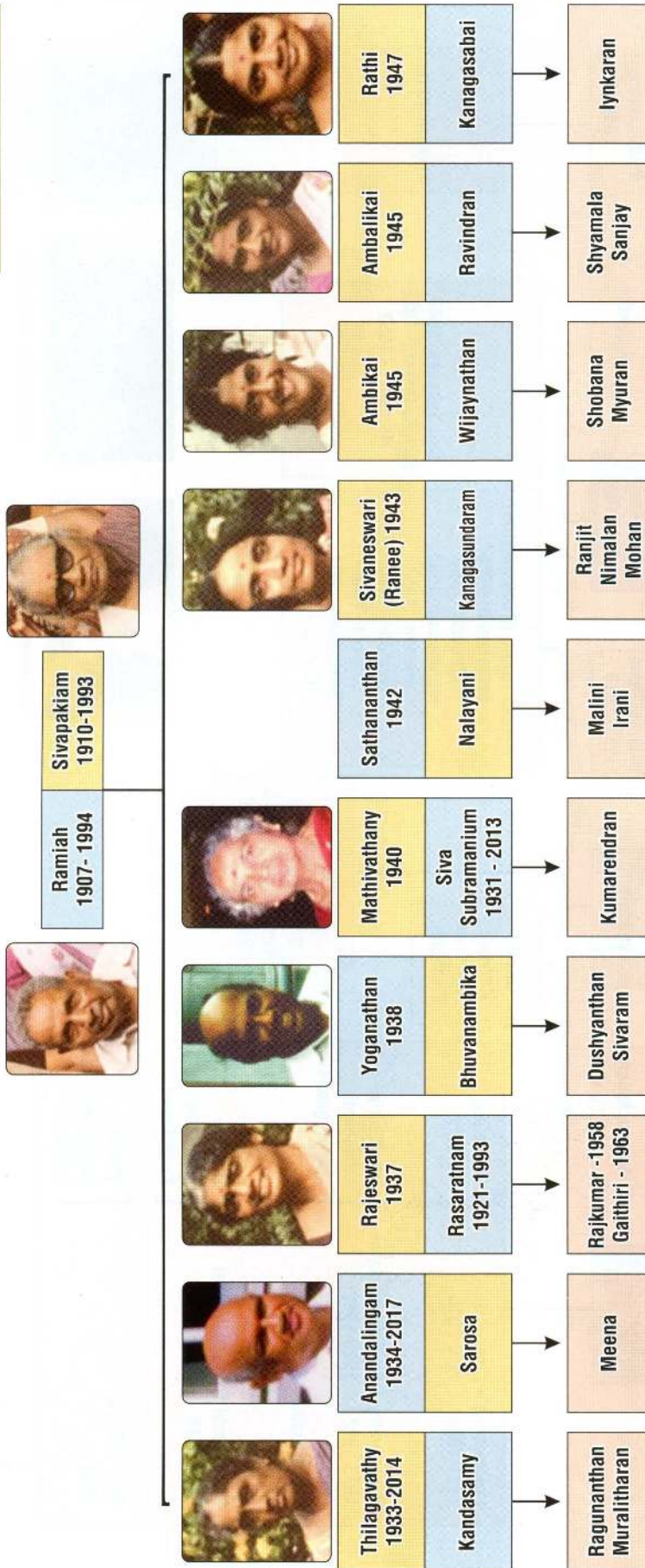
Ratnasabapathy
1930-2001

- 1) Thenmolizhi + Luxman 1958 [Trevor Troy
- 2) Malarvilzhi + Thevasigamani 1959 [Anbarasi Tharmini
- 3) Kayalvilzhi
- 4) Sivakumar + Chandrakala 1963 [Gayithiri Pavithra
- 5) Ananthakumar + Rajani 1966 - 2007 Yalini

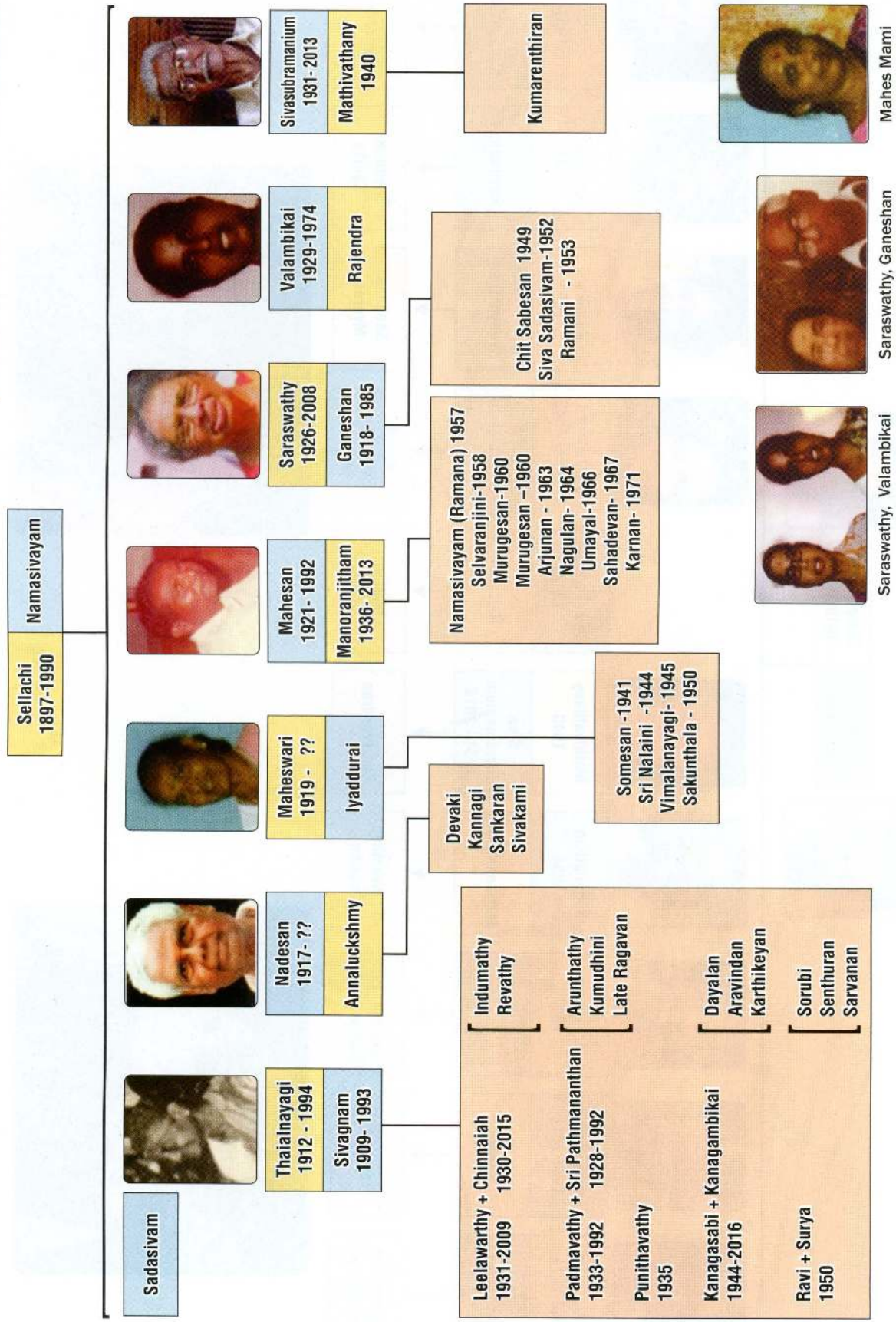
Casinathar - Kutithamby's Father - From Tellipallai



H - Ramiah Family



Selachii (Kanmani's Eldest Sister)



Rasiah Family - Thangamuttu's Youngest Son



Rasiah
1911-1979



Nesamani
1926-1990

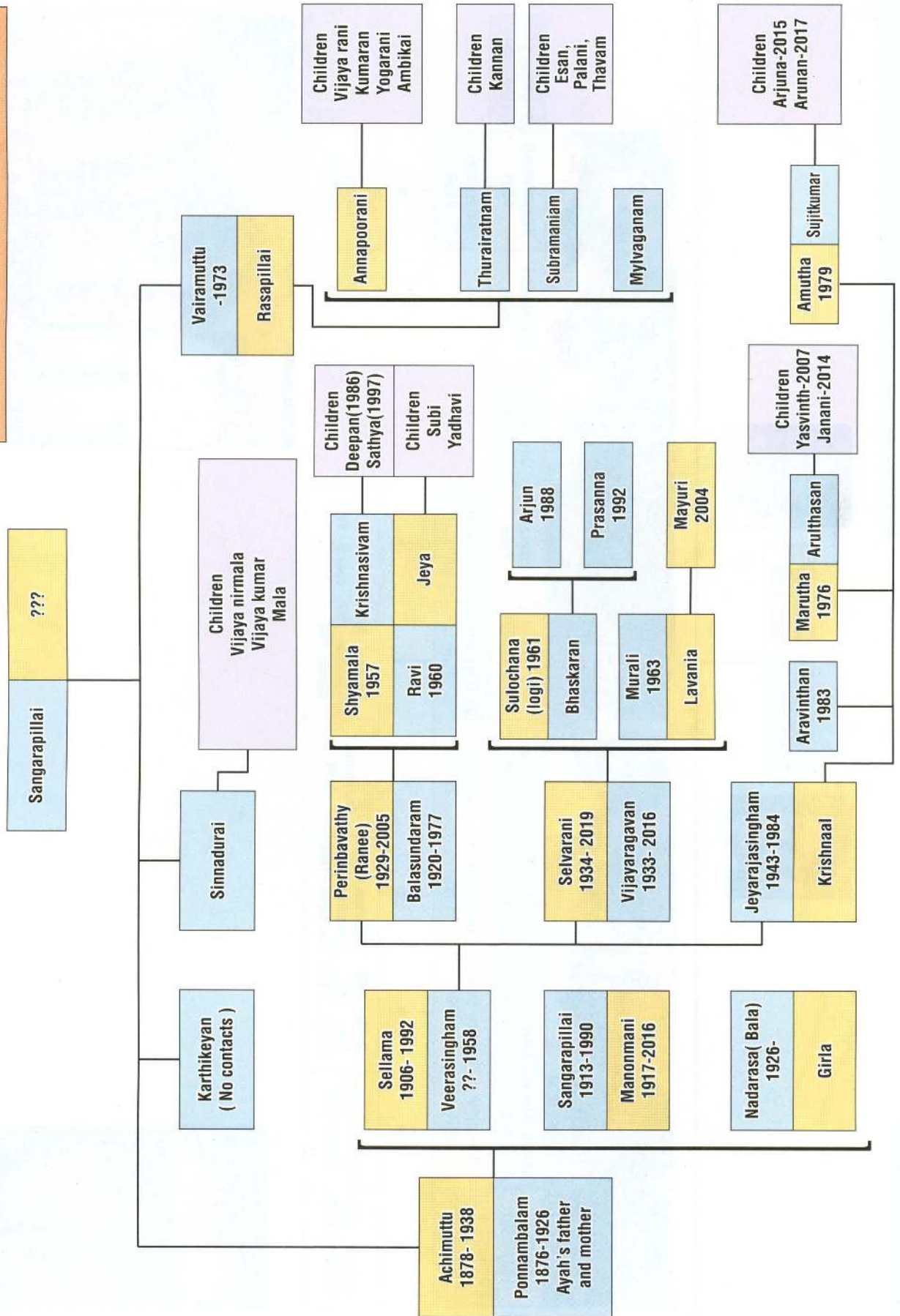


Nesamani



Nithi, Janakan, Thangam, B.Groom, Vaitheki, Rancee, Viji, Siva, Janakumar

L - Ayah's Maviddapuram Family Tree



Happy Birthday

CHILDREN



Sitharthan
28.6.1939



Chandrmohan
25.9.1941



Asokan
28.6.1944



Nagendran
16.6.1947



Mahendran
25.2.1949



Jayanthi
25.5.1952



Manohari
13.3.1957



Manoharan
13.3.1957

GRAND CHILDREN



Anjali Sharon
27.11.1975



Kavitha
9.12.1976



Suganya Neetra
15.7.1977



Lavanya Arthi
14.4.1979



Janakan
18.7.1981



Shankar Shiva
5.2.1982



Shivani
11.6.1983



Abarna
20.6.1983



Pravin Neil
16.9.1984



Sri Viday Abirami
31.12.1985



Ashwini
28.2.1988



Julian Dulip
1.4.1989



Neena Luckshmy
2.1.1990



Devin Shankar
11.2.1993



Sathya Skandan
25.8.12995



Prashanthi Luckshmy
10.101.1997

GREAT GRAND CHILDREN - AND GROWING



Akash
13.3.2010



Ishana
12.1.2012



Mahaila
13.8.2013



Elijah
23.1.2017



Kylaq
6.7.2018



Nazia
12.9.2018



Jordan
2.11.2018





1938
SANGARAPILLAI 13.12.1913 - 11.2.1990
MANONMANY 30.6.1917 - 1.8.2016



Sitharthan
1939 -1946



1977
Dr. Chandmohan 25.9.1941
Dr. Ranjana 15.10.1947



1973
Dr. Asokan 28.06.1944
Chitramali 27.4.1949



1980
Dr. Nagendran 16.6.1947
Gewn (Gigi) 7.1.1959



Shankar Shiva
5.2.1982



Nina Luxmy
2.1.1990



Anjali Sharon
22.11.1975



Pravin Neil
16.9.1984



Julian Dilip
1.4.1989



Devin Shankar
11.2.1993

Chris

Jalin Karia

Noelle



Nina and Chris



Akash
13.3.2010



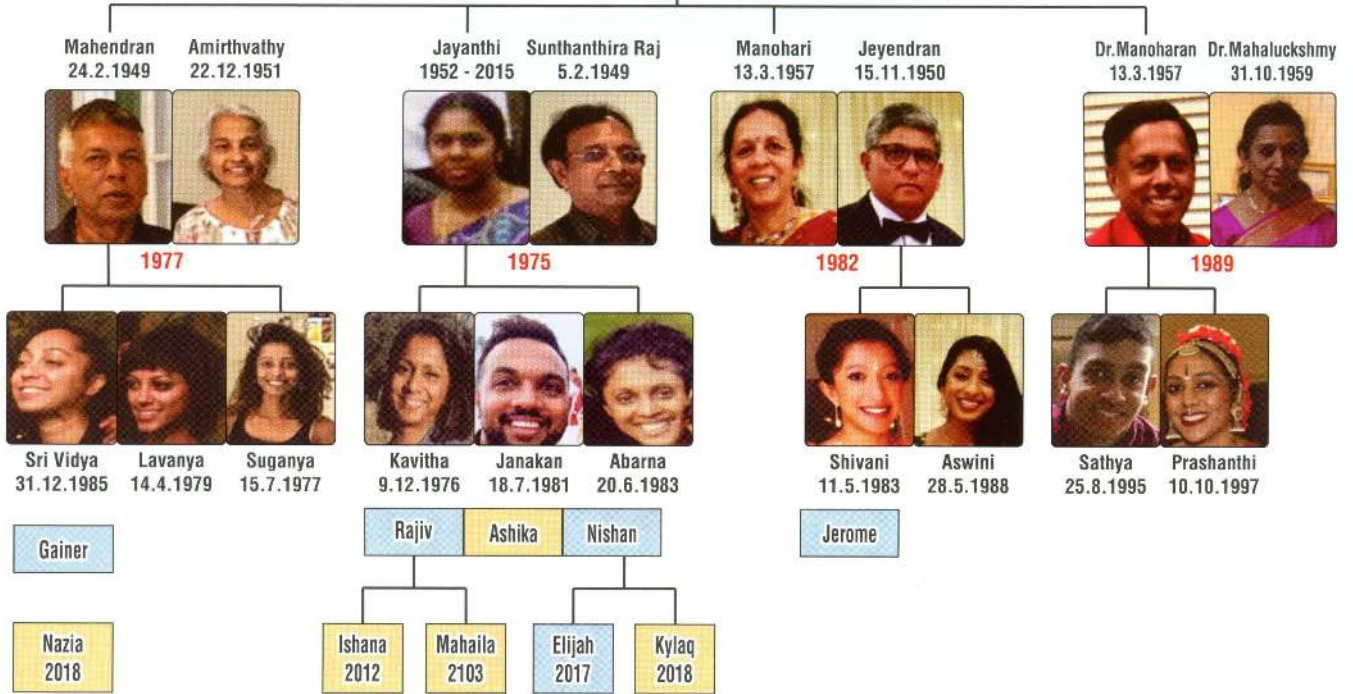
Jordan
2.11.2018



Anjali, Jalin and Akash



Jordan, Noelle and Pravin



Vidya Family



Kavitha Family



Janakan and Ashika



Abarna Family



Shivani and Jeremie



Manoharan Family

THE SANGARAPILLAIS



Seated (left to right) : Manohari, Amma, Ayah, Jayanthi

Standing (left to right): Dr.Chandramohan, Mahendran, Dr.Nagendran, Dr.Asokan, Dr.Manoharan