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Letters to the Editor

BOOKS IN THE VERNACULARS

Sir,—The publicity that was given recently to availability and cost of books printed in Tamil as compared with those available in Sinhalese, would appear to indicate that the position occupied by the Tamils and their language in some parts of the island in ancient times has deteriorated within the last few decades.

According to Fr. S. Thaninayagam quoted by M. D. Raghavan in his book, *India in Ceylonese History, Society and Culture*, "when printing was introduced into this island for the first time, the Dutch published books in Tamil and Sinhalese tongues. A copy of a Tamil Book published in Colombo in 1754 by the Dutch Pastor, Brunsweld, refers in its dedication to the Tamil Language spoken within the greater area of this island. Robert Knox and the Dutch despatches speak of Tamil town ships and Tamil speaking people of the Kandyan Kingdom".

It is of interest to note in this connection that the following books were printed in Colombo, "Christian Religion in Tamil Language" in 1754, "Tamil Catechism for Children", in 1776 "Gospel of St. Mark in Tamil", in 1741, "The Four Evangelists and The Acts of the Apostles in Tamil", in 1748, "The Four Evangelists in the Sinhalese Language" "Sixteen Sermons in the Tamil Language" by Philippus de Vriest." in 1747, A grammar of the Sinhalese language by Johannes Buel, printed at Amsterdam in 1708. Copies of these books should be available at the University of Upsala in Sweden.

Ptolemy's map of Ceylon issued in the year 1552 and reproduced in *Lands, Maps and Surveys* by Brohier and Pouluz has the legend attributed to Varthema, who visited Ceylon in the year 1505,

that is the year after the Portuguese got a footing in Colombo, "In the language of the country Pepper is called "Molaga," Molaga is of course the Tamil for pepper.

John Brohier, Provincial Judge, Puttalam (1797) has left on record that "The inhabitants differ as much in the North and South parts of the Island as the generality do from those of the coasts. In the former that is to say from Calpety on the West to neighbourhood of Batticaloa in the East side hardly a vestige of the Sinhalese customs is to be found and their language is generally unknown.

On the South and South West Coast the Sinhalese compose the greatest part of the inhabitants."

Cleghorn in his *Minute 1/6/1799* states "Two different nations from a very ancient period have divided the land. First Sinbala in its Southern and South Western Parts from Walawe to Chilaw and secondary Malabars in the Northern and Eastern Districts"

The Charter of 1810 established two district areas for judicial administration. The Tamil area extended from Chilaw river to Kumbukkan aru and the Sinhalese area from Chilaw river to Kumbukkan aru.

Nell says in a contribution to the journal of Royal Asiatic Society, Ceylon Branch, 1892, "When I was acting as Deputy Queen's Advocate at Jaffna.....I had been struck by the fact that the people along the Western coast and through out the Southern Province, upon inquiring after any offender who had absconded to the Kandyan Provinces, always reported that he had run away to "Sinhala" or the Sinhalese country thus distinguishing themselves from the Sinhalese".

Yours faithfully
J. R. Sinnathambay

"Good English"

Sir,—The large percentage of failures in English at the last G. C. E. (ordinary) level examination saddens all of us. I don't know whether Jaffna Town schools fared better than schools in less prominent areas in the Peninsula. With the exception of Colombo Jaffna town has the best English teaching talent in the Island. For example a school like Jaffna Hindu has besides its principal, Mr. A. S. Kanagaratnam and Mr. M. Karthigesan. Jaffna Hindu now enjoys the status of an All Island school and I feel the initiative for improvement of English standards in Jaffna schools should come from this institution. The services of retired school principals who were recognised experts in English teaching while in service like Mr. Handy Perinpanayakam (of Kokavil Hindu) and Mr. C. Subramaniam (of Skantha) should be roped in and an association suitably named should be formed for the purpose. The work of this association will be supplementary to the seminars organised by the Education Department. The association should have as its target not raising the standards of English in schools to what it was before switch over to Swabasha as medium of instruction (an unattainable and rather unnecessary ideal) but arresting further deterioration in standards in English in schools.

Whether future G. C. E. candidates offering English will benefit by answering comprehension questions in Sinhala or Tamil is left for time to show but the fact that such concessions have to be granted does not speak well for our G. C. E. students. Besides teachers, anyone with good command of English and

Continued on page 2)

HIGH TRIBUTE TO JUDGE ON TRANSFER

BY JAFFNA BAR

When Mr. G. C. Niles Additional District Judge, Jaffna mounted the Bench on March 8, 1968 the last day he was presiding at this Court before assuming work as District Judge, Negombo, Mr. K. E. Kathirgamalingam, Crown Advocate of Jaffna, addressing Court said, "Before your Honour begins the work for the day it is my duty and privilege to bid you farewell on behalf of the Members of the Bar and on my behalf. From 1-4 1963 you have presided over this Court in a manner that has endeared you to us all. There has been perfect co-operation between the Bench and the Bar during this period of five years. Out of 11,400 cases instituted during the last five years you have disposed of 10200 odd cases and some of the old cases which were real marathons, have been disposed of in a manner in which the parties were satisfied, whether they won or lost, that their cases had been given full hearing by the Judge and there has been no question of any party feeling that their cases have not been presented in full or stifled in any way.

Your Honour has been most courteous to the Members of the Bar though you have been firm whenever firmness was called for. Your Honour has shown great consideration to every member of the Bar whether he is a senior or a junior in carrying out your work. I must say that you have been closely associated with the Jaffna Bar from your boyhood as your father was a leading member of our Bar whose reputation for ability and integrity has become almost legendary, and that has been perhaps the real reason for this perfect harmony and co-operation between the Members of the Bar and

the Bench during your time.

Your honour has been endowed with a fine judicial temperament which has made you one of the most ideal Judges who have presided in this Court. Now that you are transferred to Negombo, I may venture to say that after having dealt with such a large volume of work in this Court, and having seen the manner in which you have done it, no other Court would be a heavier station for your Honour. I am sure that in the fullness of time your Honour may come back to preside over our Court in a higher capacity. May I, on behalf of the Members of this Bar and on my behalf wish you good health, long life and success in your career. May I also wish the same happiness and prosperity to the members of your family.

Mr. G. C. Niles replied as follows:—

"Mr. Kathirgamalingam and friends.

I thank you for having assembled here in such large numbers to bid me good-bye.

I thank you Mr. Kathirgamalingam for the very kind terms in which you have referred to the work I have done in this Court for the last five years. I must say that I have been very happy here. As Mr. Kathirgamalingam has said when I was a little boy I have been coming to this Court with my father, who was a member of this Bar. He was known to some of you. My connection with the Jaffna Bar goes back to four generations. It is my duty to thank each and every member of the Bar. They have co-operated with me and assisted me and helped me to discharge my duties.

(Continued on page 2)



மாச்சிவரயலே குரளமுல் கவிதயுல்
மாச்சிவரயலே நானறி விசுவயுல்
மாச்சிவரயலே நானறி நேத்தயுல்
மாச்சிவரயலே நானறி காலகுலே

Hindu Organ

FRIDAY, MARCH 15, 1968

CORRECT COURSE

At the Conference of Managers and Trustees of Hindu Temples that was recently held in the Jaffna Kachcheri at the invitation of the Government Agent new and nourishing ground was covered when it was unanimously decided that consultation on the question of entry by Harijans into Hindu Temples with the Hindu public should be had by means of propaganda meetings. In fact this suggestion, the only course that can bring about a prudent approach to the solving of this protracted discussion at the official or semi-official level, was advanced at the very outset by many a responsible Hindu Association. The Jaffna Saiva Paripalana Sabbai and the 'Hindu Organ' have been, time and again, referring to this method of persuasion and frank consultation at meetings of congregations of Hindu Temples. However, we feel happy that eventually the correct course has been decided upon and that at the suggestion of no less a Hindu Dignitary than the High Priest of the Mavidapuram Kandasamy Temple. Even now it cannot be ruled out that the political parasites, those pseudo-patriots who thrive on dissensions and disputes and promote disruption may see red at this sudden and unexpected change of course and attempt to sabotage the move for public consultation. But the Hindu Public should have, by now, studied the working of the mind of the marxist mischief makers and political opportunists who frequent centres of disturbances and formed their own opinion of the matter.

The basic tenet of the Hindu Religion is the belief in the Blissful Grace of Parameshwara that calls for good will always and everywhere. The Saiva philosophy of life has

High Tribute To ...

(Continued from page 1)

I am fully conscious of my own short-comings. It is because of your great help and assistance that appreciating the evidence and understanding the law became less difficult and I was able to achieve anything. Sometimes when a client was not represented and I required any assistance I had called upon some member of the Bar present to assist Court as amicus curiae and that assistance had been gladly and readily given. More than one year ago when I had a brush with death the affection and regard that you members of the Bar had for me was amply demonstrated by the great concern you showed for my health and welfare. For this too I thank you.

I suppose it would be strictly more correct to say not that I had a brush with death but that I came to grips with life, because it was during that time that I put out my hand in the dark in faith and found it was firmly held, held by God.

English Tuition

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been lucidly presented by the Great Seers and Saints in their prayers to Parameshwara popularly known as the *Thiruvanas*. The Saiva public are acquainted with these sacred poems by constant recital. Hence a clear understanding of the course of action that has to be adopted in the present circumstances can be readily appreciated by the Congregations of Temples provided the proposition is placed in its full implications rid of prejudice and personal feelings.

Once again we appeal to the Saiva Paripalana Sabbai as the oldest and the most authoritative assembly of Saivaites always following in the footsteps of the Great Navalar to initiate the Consultation Conferences of Congregations in order that a correct guidance might be made available to the Hindu Public.

Gandhi Centenary Memorial Series-2

Reflections Regarding God

BY MAHATMA GANDHI

[This illuminating understanding of God in a nut shell reproduced from the invaluable writings of Mahatma Gandhi was supplied to us by Shri S. Sivasubramariam of Colombo whose plea for a sincere observance of the great centenary appears elsewhere in this issue.

— Ed H O.]

There is an indefinable mysterious Power that pervades everything. I feel it, though I do not see it. It is this unseen Power which makes itself felt and yet defies all proof, because it is so unlike all that I perceive through my senses. It transcends the senses. But it is possible to reason out the existence of God to a limited extent.

Even in ordinary affairs we know that people do not know who rules or why and how he rules; and yet they know that there is a power that certainly rules. In my tour last year in Mysore I met many poor villagers, and I found upon inquiry that they did not know who ruled Mysore; they simply said some god ruled it. If the knowledge of these poor people was so limited about their ruler, I who am infinitely lesser in respect to God than they to their ruler need not be surprised if I do not realize the presence of God, the King of Kings.

Nevertheless I do feel, as the poor villagers felt about Mysore, that there is orderliness in the universe; there is an unalterable Law governing everything and every being that exist or lives. It is not a blind law; for no blind law can govern the conduct of living beings; and thanks to the marvellous researches of Sir J. C. Bose, it can now be proved that even matter is life.

That Law, then, which governs all life is God. Law and the Law-Giver are one. I may not deny the Law or the Law-Giver because I know so little about It or Him. Just as my denial or ignorance of the existence of the earthly power will avail me nothing, even so my denial of God and His law will not liberate me from its operation; whereas

humble and mute acceptance of divine authority makes life's journey easier even as the acceptance of earthly rule makes life under it easier.

I do dimly perceive that whilst everything around me is ever-changing, ever-dying, there is underlying all that change a Living Power that is changeless, that holds all together, that creates, dissolves, and re-creates. That informing Power or Spirit is God; and since nothing also that I see merely through the senses can or will persist, He alone is.

And is this power benevolent or malevolent? I see it as purely benevolent. For I can see that that in the midst of death life persists; in the midst of darkness, light persists. Hence I gather that God is Life, Truth, Light. He is the supreme God.

But He is no God who merely satisfies the intellect, if He ever does God, must rule the heart and transform it. He must express Himself in every smallest act of His votary. This can only be done through a definite realization more real than the five senses can ever produce. Sense perceptions can be, and often are, false and deceptive, however real they may appear to us. Where there is a realization outside the senses it is infallible. It is proved, not by extraneous evidence, but in the transformed conduct and character of those who have felt the real presence of God within.

Such testimony is to be found in the experiences of an unbroken line of prophets and sages in all countries and climes. To reject this evidence is to deny oneself.

I know, too, that I shall never know God if I do not wrestle with and against evil, even at the cost of life itself. I am fortified in the belief by my own humble and limited experience. The purer I try to become the nearer to God I feel myself to be. How much more should I be near to Him when my faith is not a mere apology, as it is today but has become as immovable as the Himalayas and as white as the snows on their peaks?

Mahatma Gandhi Centenary Celebrations

Sir,=

As we are all aware, Mahatma Gandhi was one of the greatest Hindus that ever lived. He lived in the Kali-yuga and thus his record, his life, his conduct, his activities, and his preaching are all the more creditable. According to ancient Hindu religious theory, the life and precepts and conduct of a great soul forms part of Hindu religion itself.

Further, the Mahatma by his holy living and other activities, raised the true status of the Hindu people in modern times against heavy odds, revived and re-embellished our religion in this wide world and rendered invaluable services to our culture, civilisation and religion in a distinctive manner, which in its way is unique. He was first and foremost a votary of God, true "fons and origo" of the entire Universe and of all beings.

I humbly feel that there is a special obligation on the part of Hindus wherever they are to celebrate the Centenary in a fitting manner and to bring about an improvement in the ethical, spiritual and religious life of the people. Hindus in Ceylon also share his obligations. We had the blessing of a gracious visit from him and have gained by his life and teachings. The Mahatma treated Life as one whole and worked for both Religion and Politics. The Hindu Organ is a journal which in its humble way has been dedicated both to Religion and politics and other departments of human welfare. In the circumstances I feel that the Hindu Organ should make its special contribution towards the centenary celebrations. I am prepared to send some articles now and then to the Hindu Organ from now till the Centenary Celebrations are over. (The first contributions has been already sent to you, which you have kindly published in your last issue) which could be of assistance in the religious, spiritual and cultural advancement of the readers of the paper and of the public. The articles would consist (include) mainly of

(A) Extracts from Mahatma's Writings
(Continued on page 3)

Adchalingam Vasiddan

AN APPRECIATION

(BY SABARATNASINGHE KUMARAKULASINGAM B. A.)

Sometime in the course of last year an obituary notice in the Ceylon Daily News attracted my attention and I came to know about the premature departure from our midst of Vasiddan. To the country at large he might have been just one of the hundreds of old boys of Jaffna Hindu who armed with an S. S. C. Certificate entered the Government Clerical Service as a matter of course, became part of the Wellawatta Tamil public and made full use of free Railway warrants to maintain contact with folks at home; but to us, his school contemporaries who envied his various talents, he was much more. If he had set about the task diligently he could have easily combined a high standard of scholarship with his versatility in the field of sports and adorned the staff ranks of the Government service and promoted sports activities in his department in the 'P. SARA' tradition and could have also thrilled crowds at the Tamil Union Oval like that erratic genius M. Sathasivam. As it happened he turned out to be an efficient clerk attached to the Audit Department and became one of those on whom the government relies to get things done. Dame Fortune could have been more kind to him.

Vasiddan and I were together at Jaffna Hindu for about eight years and while I had the edge over him in the class room, in the field of sport I had to function as a shadow of a sportsman of much greater talent. As student Vasiddan brooked no nonsense from his classmates however old they might be and a capacity beyond his age to hold his own against grown-ups outside school. He showed good student culture and interest in his attitude towards teachers and studies and one incident remains in my mind. In 1942 when we were in Form II the English teacher (Mr. M. M.) while dealing with the poem 'The loss of the Royal George' from the book 'Children's Garland' popular with both students and teachers then mentioned that while the Royal George was going down the captain was gested at his desk in his

cabin with pen in hand. On hearing this Vasiddan raised the question—How did the poet know that the captain was holding a pen? The teacher replied that the poet using his imagination visualised the scene in his mind and described it in his own way. This incident speaks well for the quality of English Education of those times.

As a tiny tot Vasiddan held an educated and drama-conscious audience spell bound with his per-

[Departing from the normal way of writing 'appreciation' the writer of this appreciation has chosen as his subject a person who had not caught the public eye and has brought out a very interesting study of a young man who was silenced by Death in the prime of life presenting a readable account of men and matters contemporaneous with the period of the young man's life time. Hence the appropriateness of this appreciation in these columns. — Ed. H. O.]

formance as 'PRAHALATHAN' in a play staged at Jaffna Hindu by the college music master Mr. Rajupillai. His brother Vyasana was also in the cast in a minor role also acted superbly in the play. My father highly taken up by Vasiddan's performance took up Vasiddan in his arms after the play was over and looking at me said "can you act like this boy?" Those were days when talented fathers wished at least for one offspring to follow in their footsteps (and planned his career accordingly) and many a mediocre boy made a mess of his teenage career by overstraining himself to live up to his parent's expectations. Sometime later Vasiddan also acted in 'Lava Kusa' and for reasons better known to him only neglected his inborn aptitude for music and drama after growing up while I on my part made no effort at all to establish myself as a schoolboy actor. I pass on to Vasiddan, the fine

sportsman.

As soccer player (Rt. extreme Vasiddan may be considered to be the best in that position produced by any Jaffna school. His elder brother Vyasana was a good left extreme while the eldest of the Trio, Janakan was a well built, dashing centre-forward under whose captaincy Jaffna Hindu won the schools soccer championship in 1942. As a second eleven player Vasiddan was in the team which trounced Chavakachcheri Hindu 22 nil (in 1944). In another match in the same year, a vital one against a powerful Patriotic side it was Vasiddan's lovely goal which saved the day for Jaffna Hindu. In 1946 St John's 1st XI were humbled 4 nil by Jaffna Hindu and all four goals came from Vasiddan. The first was a long range beauty which beat the Johnian goalie neck and crop. To score the fourth Vasiddan anticipating a centre from Left extreme W. M. R. Thevarajah moved into centre-forward position and as the ball came over and was going down tapped it past the Johnian goalkeep stoically waiting for the inevitable goal. Those were days of bare footed soccer and Vasiddan having original talent could always improvise action to match his requirements.

As second eleven cricketer Vasiddan led a Jaffna Hindu eleven to victory in SOBER's fashion against Hartley. His sparkling 110 against a Jaffna College first team led by KURIEN GEORGE will remain in our memory forever. It may be noted that both elder brothers of Vasiddan (Vyasana and Janakan) also played for and captained their College teams. In style and approach to the game Vasiddan was a Jaffna schoolboy edition of LALAMARANATH. In Athletics Vasiddan showed great promise as a Junior but didn't take up to it seriously in later years while in Government service Vasiddan maintained his interest in sports at player level with success for some years.

Alas! Vasiddan is no more. Through his untimely death in middle age the Ceylon Government lost a talented Tamil clerical servant while we surviving fellow-members of the middle aged generation of Ceylon Tamil society lament the loss of one the sight of whom always reminded us of sports and friendliness. May his soul rest in peace!"

Letter To the Editor

(Continued from Page 1)

capacity to instruct to G. C. E. students needing help in English (eschewing monetary considerations) and libraries acting in consultation with teachers should have an English section with decent reading matter suitable for children of the age group 12—18.

Students should bear in mind that a little knowledge of English is a dangerous thing and should not mislead themselves into the delusion that having studied some English their life is incomplete or backward unless they westernise themselves at any cost. Tamil politicians on their part should refrain from creating in the minds of listeners the grand illusion that all that is available in print in English can be made readily available in Tamil and that there is no need for a knowledge of English for higher studies. If we are to prepare our children for world citizenship through our schools, we must see to it that our children are enabled to fair command of English. Anything done towards realisation of this end will be as beneficial as growing more food.

Yours etc.

S. Kumarakulasingham

55, Arasady Rd.
Jaffna, 7-3-'68

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Mahatma Gandhi Centenary Celebrations

(Continued from page 2)

hatma's speeches, writings, and interviews.

(B) Extracts from articles on the Mahatma.

(C) Extracts from articles from other thinkers and writers on religious subjects, mostly Hindus.

(4) I now enclose extracts from an article on re God by the Mahatma for favour and kind publication in your paper. This could be called if you think it useful and desirable contribution No. 2. of Gandhiji's Centenary Memorial Series or some such title as you deem appropriate could be given thereto.

Yours truly
S. Sivasubramaniam
Joint Secretary, India-Ceylon Society.

ORDER NISI

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF JAFFNA

Testamentary Jurisdiction
No. 2181 Testy

In the matter of the Intestate estate and effects of the late Murugesu Sivasubramaniam of Ponnasalai, Kalapoomy, Karainagar

Deceased

Puvaneswary widow of Sivasubramaniam of Ponnasalai, Kalapoomy, Karainagar

Vs. Petitioner.

- 1 Arunasalam Murugesu and wife
- 2 Meenadehy both of Kuluva-nai, Kalapoomy, Karainagar

Respondents

This action coming on for disposal before G. C. Niles, Esquire, Additional District Judge, Jaffna on the 27th day of January 1968, in the presence of Mr C. Mahesan Proctor on the part of the petitioner, and the petition and affidavit of the petitioner dated the 27th day of January 1968 having been read.

It is ordered that the abovenamed petitioner, as the widow of the deceased, be declared entitled to take out Letters of Administration to the estate of the said deceased and that Letters of Administration be issued to her accordingly unless the respondents abovenamed or any other person or persons interested shall appear on or before the 8th day of May 1968 at a. m. and show sufficient cause to the Court to the contrary.

This 27th day of January 1968.

Sgd. N. A. De S. Wijeyasekara
District Judge, Jaffna

Drawn by
Sgd. C. Mahesan
Proctor for Petitioner

