
PONNAMBALAM RAMANATHAN

1851—1930



JAFFNA, 12th DECEMBER, 1961

**SIR PONNAMBALAM
RAMANATHAN, Kt., K. C., C. M. G.,
ALL-CEYLON LEADER AND EDUCATIONAL SEER**

A Sketch of
His Life & Work

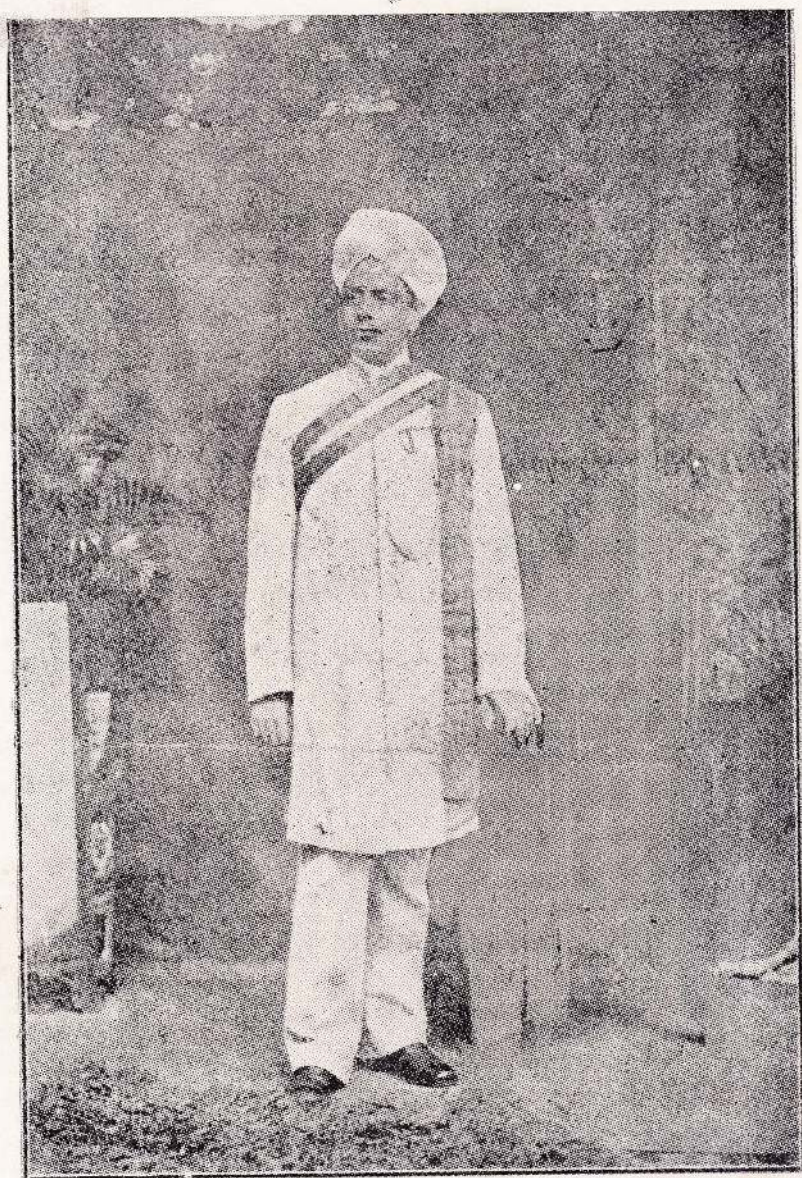
Published by
The Saiva Mankaiyar Sabai
on the
RAMANATHAN DAY

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PREFACE

Children are hero-worshippers. Ceylon school teachers have not many records of noble lives to give to their pupils. Until recently, all that they had were stories of the feats of warriors and adventurers like Wellington and Robert Clive or highly tinted accounts of the darings of heroes of the type of Shivajee. So far none has thought of holding before children of school going age the life of a modern Ceylonese as example of good living. As the present writer believes the life of no other person in Ceylon excels that of Ramanathan for high thinking and noble achievements, he hesitates not to present the youths of today and tomorrow, this brief story of the life and work of Sir P. Ramanathan.

The Ramanathan Centenary Celebration Committee had in view, ten years ago to get a statue of Ramanathan erected in a central spot in the Jaffna Town. It is yet a dream. But today, a more enduring establishment as a source of perennial inspiration to all generations for noble endeavour and right living is about to see the light of day.

Would that the Government of Ceylon and the trustees of the Ramanathan Foundations give Jaffna a full and regular centre of the University of Ceylon after the name of Ramanathan, just in the same way, the Government people of India have perpetuated the name of Poet Rabindranath Tagore by making Visva-bharati a full Central University.

This brochure, though it makes its appearance rather late, would have done its work, if it succeeds in inspiring its readers to emulate the example of a man who lived his life well and nobly and thus pave the way for a successor or successors who would play the role of correct leadership of the Tamils particularly at this juncture when there is a test of character for the Tamil Man in Ceylon.

44, Chapel Street,

T. Muttucumaru.

Jaffna,

12th December 1961.

Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, Kt., K. C., C. M. G.,

The Representative Man of Modern Ceylon

Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan represents most outstandingly life in Modern Ceylon in all its varied aspects. The hundred years from 1851 to 1950 is in Ceylon's History Ramanathan century. The life story of Ramanathan is as well the story of the march of Modern Ceylon towards freedom, political, economic or cultural. Hence this sketch of the life of Ramanathan makes an attempt to give the story of how great men of thought and action wrought out their country's emancipation from other rule under the leadership of the hero of this narrative.

I

Pre-Ramanathan Ceylon.

Ceylon is throughout the ages, the home of the Sinhalese and Tamils, the twin branches of the Ceylonese Nation. From the time Mahinda and Sangamitta bringing the gospel of the Buddha landing in a Northern port passed through these parts to Mihintale and Anuradhapura, the Sinhalese and the Tamils were building up the glory that was Lanka. Through Art and Architecture, through religion and culture and above all through common traditions of living together, the Sinhalese and Tamils were with the march of time fusing themselves into a united nation.

The process of this national evolution was slow. There were periodic eruptions of civil warfare because

of the rival claims of ambitious princes and nobles. But the general mass of the people were steadily undergoing a synthetic change into a national entity.

The European expansion from the beginning of the 16th century quickened life in the East, more particularly in India and Ceylon. Trade and cinnamon brought the Portuguese to the sea coasts of the Island. The impact of the West first through the Portuguese followed by the Dutch and the British effected a dramatic change in the social life and cultural outlook of the people.

The Portuguese and the Dutch in addition to introducing the Roman Catholic and Protestant Christianity changed completely the political, the economic and the social structure of the country through the imposition of alien administrative and *legal systems* (The Roman Dutch Law) through schools and churches, and above all through the open and decided preferment to people who embraced the Christian faith. Christianity and Western democratic institutions were not without blessings in that they roused up the people to a racial or national consciousness.

The British have a traditional genius for constitutional progress. Modern Ceylon, therefore, is singularly fortunate in that the British were here for a century and a half to help Ceylon in its onward march towards the attainment of responsible Self-Government as an equal partner in the Commonwealth of nations.

The early years of the British rule saw the establishment of schools all over the island, and the gradual introduction of the British legal and administrative institutions to govern the country. The English language became the *lingua franca* of the island. In fulfillment of the wish of Macaulay to make a cultural conquest of the Eastern lands through the English Language and Literature, schools with English as the medium of instruction and the Bible as a compulsory subject sprang up everywhere. The Buddhist and Hindu schools had to close shop for want of Government patronage. The nett result was that the people craved for English education and service under Government. The peasantry lost its hold on the land. The British Governors threw open the lands to the European planters. The Government constructed roads and railway lines to connect centres of trade and industry with Colombo.

In this stage of transition, life in India and Ceylon became wholly westernised. The cultural domination and economic exploitation brought in their train a social degradation. But the study of the English language and literature and the consequent assimilation of, all that is best in British national life and character brought about in India and Ceylon a Renaissance with Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Kes-hub Chandra Sen in India and Sri La Sri Arumuga Navalar and Sir Mutu Kumaraswamy in Ceylon in the vanguard of the movement for national and *cultural revival*.

The British set up the Legislative and Executive Councils in Ceylon, transplanting thus the germ of western democratic institutions for the first time in an eastern land. And in the Legislative Council of Ceylon for a century right from the start, the members of the Ponnambalam family were nominated or elected representatives of the people. And more, Ramanathan himself was a member for fifty years and was rightly and universally acclaimed as the "Father of the Council". Hence this brief sketch of his brilliant career gives the history of Modern Ceylon during what may be called the Ramanathan Century.

II

Early Life and Training for Public Life

Ramanathan saw the light of day on the 16th April 1851 at a time when Ceylon has just begun to make a bid for freedom all round. This was the age of Sri La Sri Arumuga Navalar. In the field of politics Gate Mudaliar Ponnambalam, father of the three great sons and Sir Mutu Kumaraswamy, uncle of the illustrious trio were along with Sir Richard Morgan, S. A. Lawrence and Arthur de Alwis were the dominant characters of their day. Great changes were in the offing. Missionary influence has reached it's climax for weal or woe. The English was driving down Sinhalese and Tamil as languages of the slaves (vernaculars) and was usurping their place as the language of the even homes

of the so called enlightened Sinhalese and Tamils. The Education Ordinance with the Conscience Clause and the Village Committees Ordinance were yet to be enacted.

Ramanathan received his education at the Royal Academy, Colombo and the Madras-University. But his real education was at home. Sitting at the feet of his illustrious uncle, the silver tongued orator of the East, one of the first two from the East to be called to the English Bar a member of the Legislative Council and above all a scholar of no mean repute both in Western Classics and in Oriental Learning, Ramanathan imbibed that love for learning which in his day made of him the versatile personality that he was. After his general education, Ramanathan articulated himself as an apprentice under Sir Richard Morgan.

Sir Richard Morgan, the most eminent lawyer of the time. Sir Mutu Kumaraswamy and Sir Richard Morgan prepared Ramanathan for service of the country. The training that he received from these great men of thought made Ramanathan a good student for life. Always an earnest student of men and things, Ramanathan acquired such a profound knowledge of the Law both spiritual and temporal as to make a good Christian of a Civil Servant exclaim with sincere admiration on reading his Commentaries on the Gospels that Ramanathan's knowledge of the Law was "unfathomable".

His life as a practising advocate was brief. But during this two or three years, he complied and

published the Ramanathan Law Reports that foreshadowed the shape of things to come.

III

Beginnings of Public Life.

Sir Mutu Kumaraswamy died in the very prime of his life. All Ceylon mourned his untimely end. And the Tamils and Muslims in particular received a rude shock at the sudden demise of their trusted leader and Representative in Council. A formidable opponent in the person of Ramanathan's brother-in-law, a senior advocate, Mr. C. Brito thrust himself forward into the political arena against young Ramanathan, the elect of the people. The Governor of the time in response to the voice of the Tamil speaking people nominated Ramanathan as their representative in Council. And from the very beginning of his career, young Ramanathan made his mark both as an all Ceylon representative and the accepted unofficial leader of the Council. The Governors and the official members of the Council tasted perhaps for the first time frank, fearless and open unofficial criticism, if not a decisive opposition to the Government of the time. During the first fourteen years of his life as member of the Council, Ramanathan through sheer force of character, ready and intelligent grasp of public affairs and the convincing manner with which he presented his case was able to achieve many a victory against officialdom and get the government to

1. establish the Council of Legal Education and the Law College.

2. admit freely qualified Ceylonese into the Civil Service,
3. codify the Law of Criminal and Civil Procedure,
4. create the Post Office Savings Bank,
5. pass the Buddhist Temporalities Ordinance, and, as his crowning glory as a representative of the Tamils,
6. open the Railway to the North which a Governor of those far off days ridiculed as the 'Railway to the Moon!'

In 1886, he paid his first visit to England. He had the honour of being called to the Bar (*honoris causa*) in a day without having to keep the usual terms with the Inns of Court. Her Majesty the Queen created him a C. M. G. in recognition of his services as an unofficial member of Ceylon's Legislative Council

Ramanathan's wit, ready repartees and fearless independence made him a regular thorn in the flesh of the official members of the Council, more particularly of the Colonial secretary and the Governor, the President of the Council. Perhaps to get him out of the Council, and perhaps in recognition of his merits, the Governor offered him the appointment as Solicitor General. His acceptance of office under Government caused great disappointment among all classes, for in him the people had a redoubtable champion of all races of the people irrespective of caste, creed, or community. His popular brother,

Cumaraswamy who was no less a fearless critic of the Government succeeded him as Tamil representative in Council.

IV

Ramanathan as Second Law Officer of the Crown

As Solicitor General, Ramanathan did good work, both as an able administrator and as strong prosecutor. "He was a fighter and his encounters with the Frederic Donhorst, the Unofficial Leader of the Bar cannot be forgotten. "He was a terror as prosecutor in the Assize Court, and it was a treat to listen to him summing up a case to the jury. Donhurst was powerful and eloquent. Ramanathan was very snave in his manner and polished in his diction. He was extremely calm and never got raffled." (Sir. G. W.)

He acted as Attorney General thrice and the permanent Attorney General envied him. The Government overlooked his claims for promotion as Attorney General. He had at this time an invitation from his American friends like Myron H. Phelps to visit their country as a teacher of Hinduism through lectures in the various parts of America. Obtaining leave preparatory for retirement from the Public Service as Solicitor General, he left Ceylon on his voyage to America late in 1905.

V

His American Tour

Ramanathan's tour in America was a triumphal march. His imposing personality, in a costume

characteristically Ramanathan's, crowned with a gold laced white turban, his perfect command of the English language and his masterly exposition of the sublime truths of the Vedanta and Saiva Siddhanta philosophies given in a simple clear but with forceful language, captured for him the hearts of thousands of Americans who flocked to hear him speaking. Both by lectures or discourses like the famous address to the Brooklyn Institute and by publications on subjects like

- 1 Culture of the Soul among Western Nations,
- 2 Eastern Pictures to Western Students,
3. Commentaries in the Gospels according to St. Mathew and St. John, and
4. Bhagavat Gita,

He left behind in America an indelible impress and returned home to Ceylon early in 1907.

VI

Ramanathan's Quest after Truth.

After he returned from America, Ramanathan retired to his retreat 'Sivanadi' at Kodaikanal. His life there was almost that of a mystic enshrouded in mystery. But the work he did from 1910 to the time of his passing into Peace is a sure pointer to a life of sweet contemplation and prayer that he must have been leading by way of preparation to the last phase of his memorable life as a servant of God and humanity. His wholly detached view of life, his serene perfectly well-

balanced mind ever unruffled by political turmoils were perhaps the resultant of years that he spent in his search after Truth at 'Sivanadi' and 'Sukastan'

VII

Returned to Politics and the Last Phase

Over seventy five years after the installation of the Legistative Council, His Majesty's Government extended unofficial representation by means of a limited franchise entitling the educated Ceyloness, irrespective of caste, creed, or community to elect their own representative to the Legislative Council. Here again, the British in keeping with their wonted characteristic stumbled upon something good to bring about a national consciousness by getting together the educated classes of all communities into one composite electorate. And the leaders of all communities particularly those of the Sinhalese thought of Ramanathan who was then enjoying the charms of solitude at 'Sivanadi' as the fittest candidate to represent all Ceylon. And stalwarts like Hector Jeyardena and A. de A. Seneviratne of the majority community together with intellectual giants like J. M. Hensman and Louis C. Williamspillai leaders of the Christian minority in Jaffna literally forced Ramanathan to come out of his self enforced Retired Leisure of Peace and Prayer; and, Ramanathan the devoted servant of God and man had no alternative but to respond to the call of his countrymen for service to his land and people.

Ramanathan had an easy but exhilaratingly educative election campaign. He was unlike his moneyed opponent never known to have gone out canvassing for support by kissing children of the newly enfranchised electors. All that he did was to address public gatherings on subjects like

1. Citizenship and Duties of Citizens,
2. Political Education,
3. Duties of Electors and Elected,
4. Patriotism, and
5. Law in its Higher Plane

and thereby gave to the world a political Bible for education of all citizens particularly those of Ceylon. Through his lectures he taught the Electors how best to make use of their sacred rights of electing their representatives and help themselves forward in their constitutional progress toward Democratic freedom. The great leaders of the Indian National Congress viewed with admiration the way that Ramanathan was educating the Electors of Ceylon.

Vested and selfish interest of Ramanathan's opponent egged his supporters to launch in a vitriolic campaign of calumny and vituperation against Ramanathan. But with his singularly fearless and ever undaunted courage, Ramanathan went on with his work of educating the electorate, every now and again replying to his critics of the press and platform in a thoroughly refined manner with forcibly convincing logic. His devoted election agents copying their great leader carried on the work of canvassing support

for their candidate without abusing the opposing side. for theirs was a righteous cause. It is no wonder, therefore, the educated Ceylonese particularly those of the South returned Ramanathan to Council as the Ceylonese Member by an overwhelming majority even though owing to an error of judgement of the Presiding Officers, the votes of Trincomalee, Mannar and Mullaitivu were not counted.

VIII

The Last Phase of Ramanathan's Political Career

All Ceylon rejoiced over his victory. All sections of people from the North and East and South and West vied with one another to accord him Public Receptions. And Ramanathan unlike the political adventurers of today did not allow himself to be carried away by the display of peoples' joy.

As for his work in the Council as Ceylonese Member let the Ceylon Morning Leader and the Ceylon Observer, the two relentless critics of Ramanathan in the days of his election campaign speak.

The Morning Leader had the following Editorial comment in its issue of 17-1-12.

"Nothing is more salutary and essential for the good of this much misrepresented land than that the finances of the administration should be rigorously scrutinised. That is a duty which has been neglected scandalously in the past; and the

discharge of it is eminently desirable. It has to be admitted that the Ceylonese Member rose effectively to the right conception of his obligation. If, incidentally, he found an opportunity to give the Government a taste of his combative quality, that is a circumstance which, far from meeting censure will delight those of his critics who feared that the powerful leader who in the old days made some of the finest speeches on the annual Budget not destructive merely but statesmanlike in their constructive criticism - was no more. It is a pleasant surprise to note that he is with us still, as capable and resolute as of old to exercise due vigilance and to disconcert the Officials who are accustomed to hurry large items of expenditure through the Council with a perfunctory remark that they are "all right and have been passed by the Finance Committee." The people wished to know how their money is spent, and why it is spent in the way it is. It is distinctly refreshing to find that the Ceylonese Member proposes to maintain a watchful eye over the expenditure".

And the Ceylon Observer waxes eloquent in its Leader of the same date:

"There is a change undeniable, unmistakable. The voice of the 'free and independent' is making himself heard in a way never known before. For this Mr Ramanathan whether he plays the gallery or not, is responsible. With a smile childlike and bland, and effective mask for the keen wit of the lawyer, and a voice soft, swave, and almost sub-

missive he asked, yesterday, for information on votes usually passed in a soporific, eminently respectful silence, and, when a strong hint by the Governor that his wordiness was undesirable, stuck to his guns, contradicted the Governor and, what is more, carried his point. The very walls nearly fell. One honourable member woke up (a most unusual occurrence) others were petrified with astonishment at this unwanted daring, even the Pressmen lost their bored look and the large gathering present would certainly have applauded had it dared. The gathering was a feature of the meeting Ceylonese were present in large numbers, very large numbers. The presence of elected members has undoubtedly led to a much greater curiosity in the proceedings of the body”.

Ramanathan made most remarkable contributions to the debates on the Excise Bill, Municipal Administration Bill and the Annual Appropriation Bills. His speech on the Municipal Bill was so convincing that his illustrious brother Arunachalam who was then Executive Councillor obtaining the prior permission from His Excellency, the President voted along with the opposition

As if to return the compliment to the Governor for getting his name removed during Election time from the list of those entitled to Private Entry, Ramanathan moved in Council that the Governor of a Colony was not a representative of the King, but only a paid servant of the Crown. His eloquence in moving that motion was devastating as he was moved

by righteous indignation over what he felt a personal wrong down to him, Ramanathan, the indomitable fighter made one of the best speeches that made officialdom shiver in their shoes by his biting sarcasm and satire.

The Riots and the aftermath of the Riots saw Ramanathan reaching the climax of his career as the champion of the oppressed and a true devoted servant of his land and people. The service that he rendered then so selflessly remains for all time ever unforgettable enshrined in the hearts of a grateful people. The night of October 14-15, 1915 would for ever be remembered, for on that glorious night, Ramanathan the People's Man, coming out of his sick bed making an eight hour long speech rose up to sublime heights when he exposed the enormities of a hide-bound, heartless, and panic-stricken bureaucracy. Finding the Government of the day unreasonably unyielding he took up the appeal of a tortured and oppressed people direct to Caesar (Home Government), braving the perilous seas during the time of the First World War. His book on the Riots of 1915 created a favourable impression in the minds of the authorities of the Home Government. He had the Governor recalled, and got the great men who were thrown into jail released. On his return home to Ceylon as victor, a grateful people accorded him such a reception, the like of which was never before witnessed in the Island. From the Jetty to Sukhastan, it was a triumphal procession on a par with those of a Roman Conqueror of old or Indian National Congress Presi-

dents in the early decades of this century. The oil painting of this memorable scene that adorns the wall of the Assembly Hall of the Paramesbhwara College recaptures to a great extent the scenes of joy, that characterised the triumphal march of Ceylon's National Hero.

This supreme act of service so selflessly rendered at grave risk to life has made Ramanathan's name for all time undying as it is enshrined in the grateful hearts of the Sinhalese people.

The second decade of this century saw a reform movement under the leadership of Ramanathan's scholarly brother Arunachalam who had just retired from the Public Service, as Registrar General of the Island. Ramanathan was the President of the second Sessions of the Ceylon National Congress founded by Sir P. Arunachalam. It was during this period, Ramanathan received his knighthood and became the second Sir Ponnambalam.

In the Reformed Legislative Council of 1921 Ramanathan was a nominated member and in 1924, he became an elected member representing Kankesan-turai. Ramanathan along with eminent Sinhalese leaders like Sir D. B. Jayatilleke presented a determined opposition to the Donoughmore Reforms. Subsequently the Sinhalese leaders finding that the proposed Reforms were to their immediate advantage withdrew their opposition to the Reforms, and let down the people of Jaffna whom they made to boycott the New Constitution. But Ramanathan had

the courage of his convictions and made his wonted sustained efforts to undo the mischief of the proposed Reform. He must have then honestly thought that the people must organise the collective life in such a way as to get a truly democratic government, a government by the wise people. He must have also had a firm conviction that the immediate extension by direct and universal suffrage without prior political education and experience, Government would only be in the hands of "Vote Catchers." He contended further with the full strength of his forceful personality though in declining years, that if the people adopted too soon the too optimistic rule that every citizen was capable of expressing his opinion on the Government of the Nation, then they were not going to get a good government,

Feeling that it was his duty as the leader of the country to do all that he can to oppose the Donoughmore Reforms he paid his last visit to England early in 1930. and presented his case to the Secretary of States to the Colonies. His memorandum against the Reforms is a memorable document serving as it were a Constitutional Bible to his school of political thought.

Events that took place in the Northern Province soon after his death justified his fears to a very large degree. The candidates for election to the State Council without careful thought and planning decided to boycott the Council. There was no one to take up the leadership. Those candidates who refrained from giving their nomination papers for election retired

to slothful ease. They never went out into the country to educate the electorates as to why they boycotted the Council. As there was no outstanding leader among the Tamils, political careerists started up a movement for lifting the boycott. And these politicians through the communal cry were eminently successful as "Vote Catchers" justifying fully the apprehensions of the far-sighted statesmanlike leader Ramanathan.

Immediately before Ramanathan left Ceylon for England, the Nation in Ceylon celebrated the Golden Jubilee of Ramanathan's political career as "Father of the Council". He was right throughout an all-Ceylon representative and history very rightly acclaims him as the apostle of Ceylon's National unity through Sinhalese-Tamil unity.

IX

Ramanathan the Educationist

Ramanathan's contribution to Education in Ceylon both by thought and action are by far more marvellous and more enduring than what he did in any other field. As a junior contemporary of Sri la Sri Arumuga Navalar, he continued the work of the great Reformer. Very early in his career he began to take a deep and abiding interest in the work of the Saiva Paripalana Sabha and its educational undertakings. He was the President of the Sabha when the late advocate Nagalingam, the late Pasupathy Chettiar, the late Proctor

V. Kasipillai, a most devoted lieutenant of Ramanathan in his educational activities and along with several others founded the Jaffna Hindu College seventy years ago.

The Hindu Organ of 24th September 1890 reports that there was a meeting of Saivites held in the Sivan Temple at the request of Honourable Mr. P. Ramanathan, at which meeting he made an appeal for setting up a National College for the education of their children and for funds for efficient maintenance of the National Institution.

In the early years of this Century, he was in the front rank of a movement for a University of Ceylon. And when at last the Government decided to establish a University, Ramanathan made some of the finest contributions to educational thought in the debates on the 'Battle of the Sites'. His contributions as a member of the Riddell's Ceylon University Commission are invaluable indeed in shaping the policy and work of the new University.

In response to an appeal from some Hindu leaders of Jaffna, Ramanathan took the preliminary step of acquiring twenty acres of land at Maruthanamadam to erect a school, for higher education of Saiva Girls of Jaffna. Very unlike other founders of Hindu Schools who had or who have no claim for knowledge of school, organisation and management, Ramanathan as a result of his sound education, and wide travel and

practical knowledge of men and things knew that the first requisite for a good school was a well-planned, well-ventilated set of commodious buildings standing on a healthy site of extensive land. The selection of this site at Chunnakam for Ramanathan College reveals another trait of Ramanathan's many-sided character. The protest of Dr Scott, the head of the American Ceylon Mission brings out, Ramanathan's respectful tolerance to the Christian Mission in that he gave his hearty appreciation of the good work done by them for the children of their own fold in India and Ceylon. But at the same time he expressed his firm conviction and determination to see that Saiva children received their education in Saiva schools from Saiva teachers.

On an ideal site selected after careful inspection as to its suitability for a school, Ramanathan put up the necessary buildings and in 1913 opened the Ramanathan College as a model National School for the education of Saiva Girls. This he followed by establishing the Parameshwara College for boys. Here again in the selection of a site he met with opposition, this time not from the Christians but from a section of the Hindus. And why? Let me not wait for an answer; for Ramanathan in his famous speeches on educational Ordinance and the "Battle of the Sites" for Ceylon's University had as it were given his vision that the University for Ceylon should have its centres in Colombo, Kandy and Jaffna. And Ramanathan the Educational Seer that he was must have had in his

mind the idea of making his two Colleges as centres of University Education. Would that his successors take up where he left and complete his great and noble work!

In 1923 along with his Hindu Colleagues in Legislative Council and other Hindu Educationists Ramanathan founded the Hindu Board of Education with the one object of giving education to every Saiva child in a Saiva School. He was the Founder-President of the Board and the first Manager of its schools. He was the Father of the Hindu Educational Movement for saving the Hindu children from schools of other faiths.

Ramanathan, The Mar. His Work and His Religion.

1

Ramanathan lived a full life. His highly disciplined life was the secret of his success. As a worker and student of regular habits, he divided his day for work, for study, for relaxation and recreation and most important of all for meditation (dhyanam) and prayer. Becoming a leader of the people as Lawyer and Legislator very early in life, his outlook on life became wider and wider.

2

As a leader and servant of the people, Ramanathan made magnificent and ever enduring contributions. In politics, Ramanathan, the nominated member or the elected Ceylonese Member consti-

tuted himself as a constructive critic of the Government of the day. To him, therefore goes the credit of having created in Ceylon the democratic tradition of Government by discussion and criticism. He thus kindled in the minds of the people the light of understanding which made them to desire for a democratic government of the people by the people themselves.

He stands unique as the only all Ceylon Representative who brought about Ceylon's National Unity through forging most firmly the bonds of Sinhalese-Tamil amity—for before or after him no leader in Modern Ceylon ever succeeded in capturing the hearts of the entire people of Ceylon as Ramanathan did.

And one is so sad to say, think, or feel that the Tamils of today for whom he gave of his best and laboured all his life raising high the prestige of his race, have not a leader to play the part so well played by the great leader of men, Ramanathan!

3

As a student and devotee, his catholicity of taste in selecting matter for reading and study made of him a true lover of life ever holding communion with the noblest 'master minds' of all times and climes. This accounts for his tolerance towards all religionists, for he held that all men, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, or Muslim pursued the same ideal of freedom and happiness throughout

the different paths. To him the goal was one and the same, the roads might be diverse, but all the same, all men were but pilgrims wending their way towards that one consummation of all life. He thus gave due reverence to all religions, to all scriptures and to all holy men. And his large heart had no room for hatred.

But he personally chose his path to God on the lines chalked out by Saint Manicavasagar. He danced in divine ecstasy whenever he led his children, the pupils of Ramanathan or Parameshvara College round the shrine during Assembly time chanting from Thiruvagasam the sacred hymns like

முத்திரெறி அறியாத மூர்க்கொடு முயல்வேனைப்
பத்திரெறி அறிவித்தப் பழவினைகள் பாறும்வண்ணம்
சித்தமலம் அறுவித்துச் சிவமாக்கி எனையாண்ட
அத்தன்னைக் கருளியவாறு ஆர்பெறுவார் அக்கோவே!

*With the brutes who knew not Mukhi's way I used to move !
He the path of love taught me and age-old "deeds" drove off !
He pukcyed my mental bond and made me His own and Sivam !
Who can thus be blessed with Father's way of Grace ?*

Amazing eh !

the different paths. To him the goal was one and the same, the roads might be diverse, but all the same, all men were but pilgrims wending their way towards that one consummation of all life. He thus gave due reverence to all religions, to all scriptures and to all holy men. And his large heart had no room for hatred.

But he personally chose his path to God on the lines outlined out by Saint Manikavasagar. He danced in divine ecstasy whenever he led his children, the pupils of Ramanaashram or Paramashivara College round the shrine during Assembly time chanting from Thiruvaymoli the sacred hymns like

மனசு உயர்ந்து உயர்ந்து
 உயர்ந்து உயர்ந்து உயர்ந்து
 உயர்ந்து உயர்ந்து உயர்ந்து
 உயர்ந்து உயர்ந்து உயர்ந்து

With the pulses throbbing not Manik's way I need to move!
 He the path of love taught me and age-old "kodes" drove off.
 He purged my mental bond and made me His own and strong.
 Who can thus be blessed with Father's ray of Grace?
 Amazing oh

RAMANATHAN UNIVERSITY OF CEYLON

A Campus or Centre of the University of Ceylon in the name of Ramanathan is the most fitting memorial to Ramanathan who rendered the most signal services, as All-Ceylon Leader, Educationist and Philosopher, Legislator. Along with Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, his world-renowned cousin and Arunachalam, and his illustrious brother, Arum-chalam, Ramanathan was a Pioneer in the Ceylon University Movement. It was his idea of a University that prompted him to take the initial steps of establishing the Ramanathan and Parameshwara Colleges. The thought of the man Ramanathan is there and at the moment the Trustees of the Ramanathan Foundation have decided to give to the name of Ramanathan, and thus give concrete shape to the Thought of the Man.

ADDENDUM

A synopsis of the final recommendations of the two Commissioners, Professor Joseph Nicholas F.R.S. (Chairman) and Professor Gnanesh Chandra Chatterjee of the Ceylon University Commission given below would, the present writer feels, be helpful to the authorities who are taking steps to establish the Ramanathan University of Ceylon:-

1. "The national characteristics of the university of Ceylon should be retained."

(a) "A university must have the capacity to bring to its alumni the heritage of the country in its

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A synopsis of the final recommendations of the two Commissioners, Professor Joseph Neadham, F.R.S. (Chairman) and Professor Gyanesh Chandra Chatterjee of the Ceylon University Commission given below would, the present writer feels, be helpful to the authorities who are taking steps to establish the Ramanathan University of Ceylon:-

1. "The national characteristics of the university of Ceylon should be retained."

- (a) "A university must have the capacity to bring to its alumni the heritage of the country in its

economic, cultural religious and linguistic manifestations and thereby give fresh impetus and energy to that heritage."

(b) "The University consciously through teaching and guidance and unconsciously through the intellectual atmosphere that is nurtured has a unique role to play in bringing the educated mind closer to the pulse of the country and thereby the country closer to the life of the University."

(c) "We visualise the University as an important agency through which educated minds will be brought to a sympathetic and responsible awareness of the average Ceylonese and his heritage"

2. "That new campuses of the University of Ceylon be established at an early date at Colombo and Jaffna."

3. That all three campuses (Peradeniya, Colombo and Jaffna) of the National University of Ceylon provide for teaching in Sinhalese, Tamil and English.

4. That every encouragement be given to the mutual learning of one another's language by Ceylonese students of Sinhalese, and Tamil speech."

The buildings of the Ramanathan and Parameshvara Colleges are, one understands, to be the nuclei of the University which should be a full-fledged one with provision to have Faculties of Arts, Science and Commerce, Medicine, Engineering, Agriculture etc. with special provision for a Department or School of Tamil Learning and Hindu Culture comprising the following departments :-

1. Tamil language and literature.
2. Tamilian (Dravidian Languages.
3. Sanskrit Language and Literature.
4. Hindu Religions and Philosophical Systems (including Buddhistic.)
5. Fine Arts, Music (carnatic) Dancing, Drawing, and Painting.
6. History and Archaeology of Ceylon, Tamil Nadu and Greater Tamil Nadu.
7. Education.

The above-Departments and sub-departments may be housed to begin with in the buildings of Parameshvara with needed extensions and Ramanathan (mainly for residential Halls of Woman undergraduates) and as recommended by the two Commissioners of the Ceylon University Commission the Government must should take steps to acquire suitable sites and prepare plans and estimates for buildings and equipment of the other faculties of learning and make the necessary financial provision to enable the functioning of all faculties of the full-fledged Ramanathan University of Ceylon before 1971, if not earlier.

As Ramanathan was the only All-Ceylon Leader, (no Legislator or Parliamentarian after him ever attained that high status) elected Ceylonese Representative of the old Legislative Council, corresponding to the Parliament of the present day representing the Composite Nation in Ceylon, the Government and People of Ceylon should perpetuate his memory through establishing early the full fledged Ramanathan University of Ceylon.

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