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TAMIL SAGES AND SEERS OF CEYLON



By
V. MUTTUCUMARASWAMY

M. Sathkumar
Sri Ranga Bhavanam
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Korumbur (E. L.)

New Series Part 1

Tamil Sages And Seers Of Ceylon

BY

V. MUTTUOMARASWAMY (TRAINED GRADUATE)
(Teacher, Forest Hill School, London S. E. 23, U. K.)

Our land of Eeelam, holy not only to the Hindus but also to the Buddhists, from time immemorial, has had an array of eminent sages and seers. But the nature of the Tamils Sages has been such, that no proper record of their lives are available. Some of these we have to build up from fragments of tradition and hearsay.

The "Agasthiyar" legend is kept at Thirukarasai and no doubt that of Pulasthiyar at Polonnaruwa, Keerimalai has the tradition of Nabula the sage and it was known as Nahuleswaram in Sanskrit from times of yore. The story is found in Thadachana Kailasa Puranam, reproduced in the paper and is well known.

In the 17th century there lived a great sage and poet Thayumanavar in Thamil Nadu. He seems to have been born at Varani, at Jaffna according to the traditionary account as mentioned by Pandit Thirugnanasambandar (a former Editor of the "Inthusathanam" and my Tamil Pandit at Jaffna Hindu College) in an article

கல்வியிற் பிறந்த யாழ்ப்பாணப் பெரியார் in Sri Lanka December 1960.

Three hundred years ago, there was a free flow of people (a two way traffic) between Jaffna (Eealam) and Vedaraniyam and Thayumanavar, may have been incidentally born at Varani—he belonged to the family of Saiva Kurukkals. Many biographers have said that he was born at Vedaraniyam and died at Ramnad in 1742.

Thayumanavar's poems have been translated in a fascinating manner in English by Dr. Issac Tambyah, under the title of "a Tamil mystic" and published by a leading firm of booksellers W. G. G. Foyle, Charing Cross Road London W. C. 2 in 1919. He speaks of the melodies of the great mystic Thayumanavar whose fascination never flags. He compares the mysticism of Thayumanavar to the mysticism of Christianity; a Great work it is, but nevertheless, the translations of Thayumanavar as rendered by Sir Ponnambalam Arunasalam seem to be true to the intentions of the poet.

We have to think of Sepparai Chidambaram Swami, who lived at Chidambaram and Thirunelvely and who wrote illuminating commentaries on Appar's poems and Sivaprakasam. He also published a criticism of Tholhappiyam Sanmuga Virutbi.

SRI LA SRI GNANAPIRAGASA TAMBIRAN

Ancestry (17th Century)

Gnanapiragasar's ancestor was Pandi Malavan, who was a Vellala Noble and came from the Pandyan country during the 13th century in the time of Singai Pararaja Sekaran and settled at Thirunelvely - a hamlet on the outskirts of Nallur and about two miles from Jaffna. There is a story told about Gnanapiragasar in Jaffna History. During the 17th century (Dutch rule) the Dutch authorities had ordered every household to supply a cow for their daily food in Jaffna.

Gnanapiragasar felt deeply that if he were to do such a thing, even for others, the sin of killing a cow would be his. So a day before it was his turn to send a cow to Dutch, not wanting to remain anymore in Ceylon, he preferred to quit for Chidambaram, and so he did. He bathed in the Siva Ganga, fasted (eating pepper and drinking water only) for forty-five days in the precincts of the temple of Sivakamy at Chidambaram. This shrine of Chidambaram, built in the tenth century and whose ramparts were built in the fifteenth century, command the attention of all Saivaites. Gnanapiragasar was inspired to leave (It is said by

the Goddess) for the Ganda country (Bengal in North India). There, a Brahmin ascetic taught a few pupils, logic, grammar, Meemamsa (Vedantic philosophy), in Sanskrit; he taught the pupils to recite the Vedas. Gnanapiragasara listened to the teaching from a distance and implanted it in his heart. The Brahmin ascetic did not speak to this non-Brahmin youngster. One day the ascetic while testing his pupils found that they had not assimilated his teaching. The Ascetic had a thought that the non-Brahmin youngster who listened to him from a distance might have grasped what he taught. On questioning Gnanapiragasara, he found that he was one who had a good memory. He complimented him and took him as his pupil and taught him Grammar, Logic, and other subjects. After that he had Gnanapiragasara go to the Tamil country and spread the knowledge acquired by him.

From there Gnanapiragasara came to Thiruvannamalai Atthenam—the Hindu spiritual headquarters and became a Sannyasi. He persevered in learning many Saiva Siddhanta works. From Thiruvannamalai he left for Chidambaram and stayed there. During his stay he wrote commentaries on "Panshkaram", and Sivagnana Bodham". He wrote "Siddhanta Sihamani", "Brahmana Theepikai", "Pirasadha Theepikai" and Siva Yohasaram" in Sanskrit. He wrote a Tamil

commentary on "Sivagnana Siddhiyar" as if in answer to the challenge that he knew no Tamil. All these he gave in charge of the Thiruvannamalai Atthenam. He remained at Chidambaram until he attained spiritual bliss at the feet of Lord Nadaraja. It was Gnanapiragasar who built the tank at Chidambaram now known as the Gnanapiragasar tank. He became known as Gnana - piragasar Munivar (Sage).

SREEMATH ILLAKANAM SWAMY

ALSO KNOWN AS

MUTTU KUMARA TAMBIRAN

(1865 — 1949)

There were many men who may be classed as seers in Ceylon after Gnana-piragasa Tambiran — the first subject of our biographical sketches. Men such as Kadaiyit Samy lived and moved in Vannarpannai. Over his "Samadhi" near the Neeraviady Tank, has been built a Sivan Temple. We find a Kadaiyit Swamy Math in the Navalar Road — on the way to Nallur at Vannarpannai. He lived in the nineteenth century.

We hear of an "Anaikutti Sami who lies in "Samadhi" at the Arunachaleswara Temple at Mutwal. Over his Samadhi has been built a Sivan Temple by Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam and Lady Arunachalam. He seems to have frequented Captain's Garden at Maradana — where there is another Sivan

Temple, originally built by the Nakarattar — the business community (the Chettiars).

The subject of the present biography is one whom we may describe as a Saiva - Siddhantic Tamil seer, an adept in Tamil grammar, and who therefore earned the soubriquet of Illakana - Swamy and became a great authority on Saiva Siddhanta.

He was for fifty years in South India, alternately in one Math or the other and finally settled at Chidambaram. Saiva Siddhanta scholars of the stamp of C. K. Subramania Mudaliyar flocked to him for final guidance in the publication of important Saiva Siddhanta works in Tamil or Sanskrit. Let us trace the early history of his life.

His Early Life

He was known as Muttukomara-swamy. He hailed from Vannarpaunai, which is an important residential section of Jaffna. His father was Vettivetpillai; he himself was descended from an old family - Kumara Kulasingham. He had connections at Puloly. He had a sister, Thaiyalmuttu Sittampalam, also popularly known as Sinnathamby. Sinnathamby Pariyariar, was well known at Vannarpaunai. (Mr K. C. Thangarajah, the Proprietor of Eeela Nadu and is a son of Sinnathamby Pariyariar).

As a boy, possibly from 8 to 14, Muttukumaraswamy used to frequent the Sivan Temple at Vannarpannai, and also the Ganesha Temple at Villoonri, which was not very far from his house. There this lad would perform his morning ablutions and daily worship.

Possibly in the last quarter of the 19th century, a retired Indian soldier who came to Ceylon bent on pilgrimage, had visited its ancient shrines - Kataragama, Trincomalee, Kanniya, and Keerimalai, and finally settled at Vannarpannai, in the environs of the Sivan Temple. He lived in one of the Maths in one of the quadrangular roads of this temple. He worshipped Lord Vytheesivaran and Devi Valampihai daily by the recitation of the names of the Lord Siva - 'Nama Japa' is a very effective medicine for all troubles.

This "Samiyar" had a golden complexion and a robust build; his hair was gnarled and twisted and fell across his shoulders gracefully; holy ashes were found on his forehead; and a large dot of sandal paste in its centre; round his neck, head, and chest were found garlands of "Urudraksha" beads (as worn by Sannyasins in India); in his hands were brass cymbals (Talam) and around him flocked children who also had little brass cymbals (Talam)

the "Samiar" led the chorus and the children echoed him; on his supple body would be found beads of perspiration; his face was lit with a glow of divine ecstasie joy; this "spectre" of the Samiyar altogether attracted and intrigued the passersby. He gave crystal sugar "Katkandu" to the children around him to endear them all the more to him. He was therefore rightly dubbed the 'Katkandu Samiar'. Amongst the circle of lads who foregathered around this marvellous figure was young Muttukumaraswamy who was then under 14.

Muttukumaraswamy's kith and kin at Van-narpannai did not fail to notice the changes in his habits. They suspected that he had drifted into an unworldly life; Muttukumaraswamy had tried to leave his home for South India to follow his own bent - but he was prevented from so doing. At last one day he was noted missing from home. This time his kinfolk could not trace him. He was 14. In those days there was no customs barrier between Ceylon and India - there was a two way traffic of the peoples. Muttukumaraswamy had crossed over (we presume) by a dhoni from Kayts (Ur-Kaval-turai) to Nagapatam, a distance of thirty miles with hardly any money with him,

Muttukumaraswamy had learnt "Sivapirakasm", an important Saiva Siddhanta text, from Ramalingaswamy of Eeesaniya Math. Later we learn that Muttukumaraswamy had settled at Suriyanar Kovil Math and learnt many a Saiva Siddhanta work, Tamil Literature and grammar, and Sanskrit from Muttukumara Thesikar Thambiran, the Head of this "Mutt". He had been a Brahmachari, and having successfully completed his period of training, had donned the "ochre robe", Of him it was said that he had all the perfect qualities of a "Sannyasin" or a "Seer". He had renunciation; regularity of habits, a deep love for Saivism and advised those who deviated from the straight path and succeeded in putting them on to the correct path.

Services

While serving at Suriyanar Kovil Math, he published for the first time Sivagoana Padiyam and Sivakra Pandiyam which were two rare Saiva Siddhanta texts in Sanskrit. The head of this Math held Muttukumara Thambiran in great regard. It was a great pity that when the Head of this Math was working on Gnana Varna Vilakkam, another rare Saiva Siddhanta text, he passed away.

Muttukumaraswamy Tambiran was also responsible for the publication of Muttbi Nichchaya Padiyam - another Saiva Siddhanta text in Tamil by the Dharmapura Math..

Muttukumaraswamy Tambiran published Kiriya Padikai - which is an exposition of the different rituals.

He also published Saiva Sanniyasa Pathathi and Thirunaraiyoor Puranam in Tamil and Sanskrit.

The reason why Sreemath Ilakanam Swamy or Muttukumara Thambiran transferred his services from Suriyanar Kovil Math to Chidambaram is a mystery.

At Chidambaram, Muttukumara Thambiran helped to finalise the commentaries on Periyapuranam by Siva Kavi Mani C. K. Subramaniam Mudaliyar.

The late Kalaipulavar Navaratnam and a few friends of his, the late Eeelakesari Editor N. Ponniab, S. Ambikaipahan. then Principal, Vaidyeswara Vidyalayam Vannarponnai, and K. Vairamuttu had met Ilakkanam Swamy at Chidambaram.

Navaratnam had requested the Swamy to translate the commentary written in Sanskrit

by Umapathy Sivam on the Paushkara Agamam into Tamil. Ilakkana Swamy replied that this should be undertaken by the youth of Tamilakam. When Navaratnam persuaded the Swamy to visit his native land, Jaffna, stay at Kala Nilayam, and spread the Saiva Siddhantic doctrines. the Swamy had reluctantly acceded to the request—but it was not to be—he had attained Samadhi soon after.

To the innumerable votaries of the Saiva faith in Ceylon who visited Chidambaram, Ilakkana Swamy never revealed himself as a son of the soil of Ceylon.

He was of the opinion that even a cycle of birth is not too much for the study of Sanskrit — to understand the Saiva faith. He was of the opinion that the original Saiva Siddhanta texts were in Sanskrit. He was also of the opinion that the time schedule of the past history of the "Sangam" period, as classified by western research, was not correct.

One feels a great wave of emotional and just pride, that Ceylon has contributed not inconsiderably to the history of religious culture.

New Series Part 3

YOGAR SWAMY

We have much pleasure in presenting the biography of Yogar Swamy. It is seven years since Yogar Swamy — passed into Samadhi on 24th March 1964. There are thousands of Hindus, Christians and others who have been influenced by his thoughts and life. We present this biography for the first time in English relying for its main facts on the Biography of Yogar Swamy by Vidvan K. K. Nadarajs, and what we know by experience to be true. We have also added some facts from the notes of Mr. S. C. Ratnam's of Anaicottai on Yogar Swami in the Hindu Organ of December 18, 1970.

PART I

The port of Columbuturai is in the south of Jaffna Town and bears its name by virtue of the fact that this is a harbour where many sailing vessels are found en route to Colombo. It is close to "Pasai Yoor" adjoining the Jaffna harbour. Columbuturai is famous for its orphanage erected by Rev Father Samania—a Catholic priest in 1857. Its name is now

immortalised because it was the residence of Yogar Swamy and because of this, it has become a holy place as his "Samadhi" is there. It has been the home of many Saivites, particularly in Chesty Street.

His parents had given the name of Sathasivan when he was born at Maviddapuram in Jaffna. He was born on May 1971. His father was Ambalavanar of Columbuturai who had a retail business at Maskeliya, his mother was Sinnachchi Ammal of Maviddapuram. Mr. Rajaratnam gives his mother's name as Selvi Amutham. They were married in 1865 says Mr. Ratnam.

Although Sathasivam was born at Maviddapuram, the major part of his boyhood life was spent at Colombutturai.

After Ambalavanar died, his brother Sin-niah who was married to a Catholic and known as Joseph took an interest in Sathasivam and sent him to St. Patrick's College, Jaffna. He was given the name 'John' and registered as such in the register of St. Patrick's College. He was Christened Yoganather says Mr. Ratnam. Yoganathan, although brought up in a Christian atmosphere, never forsook the Saiva faith of his ancestors. (The songs of

Yogar Swamy end with the abbreviated form of "Yoga") remarks Pandit K. K. Nadarajah.

Yoganathan, for some time known as John, possibly studied up to the 7th standard in English at St. Patrick's College, Jaffna. He showed great skill in studies and often assumed the role of teacher and instructed his colleagues in the class.

Quite early in life Yoganathan wished to get a job. At that time the ancient tank of Iranamadu (close to Kilinochchi) was repaired. This work was done under the supervision of Mr. Brown, the Chief Engineer, who was an Englishman. (It was during the rule of the British). Young Yoganathan was given the job of Store Keeper, P. W. D. He did his job honestly and meticulously. His evenings were spent in meditation. Mr. Brown who came to know of this was impressed and spoke of him as a good and god fearing man. Mr. Brown never liked strangers to mix with his children, but when Yoganathan *petted* his children, he was really pleased. Yoganathan also undertook on instruction to carry letters from Iranaimadu to Kilinochchi. Could it have been the reason why a part of Yogar Swamy's spiritual thoughts were called "Letters to God"?

Yoganathan's cousin Vythial ingam, who lived at Suthumalai, narrated a few personal facts about Yogarswamy to Mr. K. K. Natarajah, the Editor of Sivathondan, who wrote a biography of Yogar Swamy in Tamil. The author is indebted to this publication for this biography.

Yoganathan, was often lost in meditation from his boyhood. It would appear that when Yoganathan was at Kilinochchi he would shed tears and address God:- "O! my dear mother! O! my dear father! and so sit continuing his meditation.

Yoganathan after some years gave up his job and wanted to live a wholly spiritual life. He wanted to prepare himself to lead an ascetic life. He once had chillies ground into a paste and rubbed it all over his body and walked here and there. He performed "Ankap-pirathadchanam" (rolled his body over) from Columbutturai to Nallur. He had become "Yogar Swamy".

The place where Yogarswamy's Samadhi has been built today belonged to Mr. Thirunavukkarasu. One Nanniyar of Ariyalai East was running a shop there. Once Chellappa Swamy, a deeply pious sage, passed by Nanni-

yar's shop. Nanniyar who was drunk, nonetheless had a sense of piety. He got hold of Chellappa Swamy, dragged him and bound him to a large pestle and threatened him with knife in hand that he would not set him free until the Swamy blessed him. The Swamy yelled out for help and the Manager's people who lived close by came in time to free him.

Yogar Swamy, a disciple of Chellappa Swamy, once commented on this incident thus:-

"In the place Chellappar had been bound, many came and battered their heads. I have taught a good lesson to Nanniyar."

It is not clear when Yogar Swamy met Chellappa Swamy — his Guru. An incident narrated by Yogar Swamy gives an inkling.

Once there was a cut in my (Yogar-swamy's) toe. I was on my way to a Physician to get some medicine. Chellappaswamy saw me on the way and remarked "Why do you want medicine?", and told him of a simple remedy. Yogar swamy did as he was told and the wound healed.

Yogar Swamy in his book "Nat-Sinthanai-kal" has given us a vivid picture of how he met his Guru Chellappaswamy.

It was the day of the Car festival at Nallur Kandasamy Temple. Chellappaswamy surrounded by a large number of his devotees was there. As soon as Yogar Swamy saw him he lost himself in piety. Chellappaswamy remarked: "I am eagerly awaiting you" Then the Guru placed his right hand on Yogar Swamy and said:—"Do nothing. Everything has been accomplished long ago. It is wholly true. There is no evil," These words charged with deep wisdom appealed to Yogar Swamy. The writer recalls the first meeting of Narendranath Dutt (Later Swamy Vivekananda) and Ramakrishna Paramahansa, which produced a great change in the former's life.

Chellappa Swamy's Guru was Kadaiyit Swamy. V. Ramanathan of Vannarpannai who was the first Editor of Thinakaran and a poet in Tamil, has sung a few verses on Kadaiyit Swamy. There is a Hindu Temple now raised over the "Kadaiyit Swamy" samadhi at Neeraviady, Vannarpannai.

The Guru and the Disciple — Chellappah Swamy and Yogar Swamy

Chellappa Swamy used to take Yogar Swamy along with him and put him to many tests. He would allow Yogar Swamy to fast. He would give him a cent or two and ask him to get food. They would both sometimes set out to go to Keerimalai and after proceeding to the Bo tree say "How we have bathed!" and return without bathing. Chellappa Swamy would shout to him to come from a distance.

Once both Chellappah Swamy and Yogar Swamy stood before a shop of a Chettyar. They were there till the Kanakka Pillai (accounts clerk) finished his accounts. After this, he (the Kanakka Pillai) came and gave them each a cent. After taking the cent and raising it in veneration to the eye Yogar Swamy asked Chellappa Swamy, "Should a cent be earned after all this tribulation?" Chellappa Swamy rejoiced:— "Don't you remember what Auvaiyar had said, "One must toil for one's food." The Divine Father has something anyway."

Yogar Swamy heard that Chellappa Swamy was ill and went to see him. The Guru spoke

to him:—“Have you also come like others? Go and look inside.” (meditate)

One day Yogar Swamy was visited by a large number of people so that there was hardly any space to sit in his cottage. He said to a group “Go and find the shade of a tree.” There was an old margosa tree near his cot which afforded shelter from heat and rain.

While travelling together one day, Chellappa Swamy spoke to Yogar Swamy (pointing to a place);—“Be here; I shall leave,” and left. Yogar Swamy was seated as the Guru had told him to do so. Chellappa Swamy came there after several days and found him seated in the place he asked him to sit and was amazed. Chellappa Swamy never allowed anybody to come and worship him.

One day in 1922 Yogar Swamy went to Sinnakkaddai from Columbutturai. Pundit K. K. Nadarajah was with him (this incident is mentioned in his biography of Yogar Swamy). At Sinnakkaddai (the Small Bazaar) in Jaffna, Yogar Swamy attempted to buy some vegetables. He desisted from going to the vegetable sellers who knew him and who showed signs of veneration to him. He would go to ‘bargain’

with those who did not know and ask one fourth of the price the vegetable seller offered. A woman vegetable seller was so angry that she asked Yogar:- "Have you ever bought vegetables before?" Probably Yogar Swamy enjoyed this repartee.

It seems Chellappa Swamy once gave a piece of advice to Yogar Swamy: — "Do not allow people to worship you. If you do so, the Jaffna man will tread on your head," The Yogar had himself expressed this view.

Chellappa Swamy and Yogar Swamy sometimes used to cook food. But after they finished cooking, they broke the pots and pans and went away without eating.

The Vidane or Head man of Columbatturai Thirugnanasambanthar, Thuraiyappa and Yoganathan (Yogar Swamy) used to go to Nallur Kandaswamy temple — sometimes on foot — and sometimes they went in a places of worship together, particularly bullock cart.

Chellappa Swamy and Yogar Swamy could bring pouring rain at will. At Nallur, during one of the festival days; Yogar Swamy, forgetting the presence of Chellappa Swamy,

said:—"Today the Nallur Kantan statue will get wet." Chellappa Swamy turned round and said "Many have said like that," When the statue turned to the northern junction of the outer-street there was a big down pour and the statue did get wet.

Both Chellappa Swamy and Yogar Swamy would pay visits to Panri Thalaichchi Amman Kovil (a Kannagi Kovil) every year on the first Monday in the month of "Panguni" (before the New Year - Chittirai). This is 12 miles from Nallur.

Another Swamy — Kathiravelu — was a disciple of Chellappa Swamy, Yogar Swamy and Kathiravelu Swamy would be seated near the steps of the Car of the Nallur Kandaswamy Temple and be deeply immersed in meditation. Chellappa Swamy saw to it that these two were given tea and food to eat from a near-by tea-boutique through another disciple of his. Chellappa Swamy admired Yogar Swamy and Kathiravelu Swamy in their meditation.

Yogar Swamy wanted to possess the begging bowl of Chellappa Swamy. But Chellappa

Swamy threw it down and broke it saying:—
 “Should you be attached to this?” Both went
 together towards the east, and after some time
 they parted. Yogar Swamy went to Kataragama
 on foot and it was only after four years that
 he returned to Jaffna.

Soon after Yogar Swamy disappeared from
 Jaffna; his relatives went and inquired where
 he was. Chellappa Swamy said “He is dead”
 “Avan Settan”. His relations believed this to
 be a fact and did all the ceremonies of post-
 cremation. When Yogar Swamy returned from
 Kataragama, his relatives went and remons-
 trated with Chellappa Swamy asking why he
 had told lies. Chellappa Swamy replied:—
 “We are not in the habit of telling lies. We
 told nothing but the truth. He is ‘dead’.” They
 thought that Chellappa Swamy’s madness had
 reached the Nth stage and returned home.
 That is why the world called him:—“Chellappa-
 the mad”.

There was a cot established at Columbu-
 thurai for Yogar Swamy in the land belonging
 to Thirunavukkarasu. It became a holy herit-
 age. In the place that Chellappa Swamy was
 bound by Nanniyar, Yogar Swamy, who bound
 him in his heart, came to stay.

Devotees come from far and near like bees after honey. Saivites, Christians of all sects, and other religionists, men of all races went to see Yogar Swamy. In the next section we shall give some aspects of the personality of Yogar Swamy.

PART II

Aspects of Yogar Swamy

"Wake up the Note
 The Song that had its birth
 Far off, where worldly taint
 Could never reach.
 In mountain caves and
 Glades of forest deep
 Whose calm no sigh
 For lust or wealth or fame
 Could ever dare to break
 Where rolls the stream
 Of knowledge, Truth and
 Bliss that follows both —
 Sing high that note,
 Sannyasin bold ! Say
 Om Tat Sat Om."

This poem of Swamy Vivekananda entitled "The Sannyasin" recalls to us some of the salient characteristics of the Sannyasin — Yogar Swamy of Columbuthurai.

We find the following passage in the works of Rabindranath Tagore in his poem on "Sannyasin":—

"The division of days and nights is not for me, nor that of months and years. For me the stream of time has stopped on whose waves dances the world like straws and twigs."

In his teens the author remembers visiting Yogar Swamy at his cot at Columbuthurai. There was the smell of incense and camphor. Flowers of various hues, the shoe flower, the jasmine, the mullai, the red lotus, the cham-pak,.....there was a deer skin - on it squatted Yogar Swamy. This scene reminded one of Sage Visvamisra or Sage Vashista mentioned in the Ramayana — Yogar Swamy had a flowing beard and his hair was silvern. His eye was magnetic. People come with various offering, betel, arecanut, fruits - mangoes, pomegranates, pineapples - rice and vegetables. Some came with prepared food — "pittu", "hoppers", "thosai",

"Vadai", "Mothagam, etc. Yogar Swamy would ask the people to be seated quietly and a few devotees would distribute the offerings to the rest.

Yogar Swamy had a deep love of God. He had no narrow "ism" to preach. He wanted to revive Hinduism by making people to follow the real ideals of the Four Great Saiva Saints. Great was his joy when he heard that the portals of the Sivan temple at Vannarpannai -which was established by Gopala Chettiar during the last days of the Dutch too was opened for the Harijans.

Yogar Swamy founded the "Siva Thondan" paper in 1935. He galvanized the men and women into leading a spiritual life in North Ceylon. Today the monthly magazine "Siva Thondan" edited by Pundit K. K. Nadaraja and published by the Siva Thondan Society, is a dynamic force moulding the lives of the people. It is mainly in Tamil with a section for English readers,

When Swamy Vipulananda wanted to re-suscitate the Vaidyeshwara Vidyalayam, at Vannarpannai, just over a quarter of a century

ago, it was Yogar Swamy who gave him the first donation of a rupee and blessed this move.

This institution has now grown like a big banyan tree under whose shade many youths enjoy a true education with a deep religious basis.

A "Sivathondan Nilayam" has been founded at Chenkaladi in the Batticaloa District.

At the "Sivathondan Nilayam" at Vannarpannai every Sunday there are Yagnas when "Puranams" are read, "Devarams" sung and "meditation" is done. In this Nilayam "Sivathathi" has been conducted every year, as enjoined in the Saiva Agamas.

Yogar Swamy encouraged journeys from shrine to shrine. This reminds us of Chaucer's stories of the Pilgrim who went from shrine to shrine walking and telling stories. Nallur and Sellachchanathi were two of Yogar Swamy's favourite shrines. Sometimes Yogar Swamy would travel by train to the hill country - to Nawalapitiya and to Matale. In Kingsbury Estate near Nawalapitiya was a Samadhi of a

"Swamy" - who was a kindred spirit with Yogar Swamy. While passing Kandy Yogar* looked at the trees and seemed to have remarked that they were like Yogars.

Yogar Swamy had occult powers. He could read people's minds and read their inmost thoughts. It is said that when Mr. Veerasingham, the Principal of the Manipay Hindu College, went with a problem in mathematics to see Yogar Swamy as he was pondering whether it was true or otherwise. Yogar Swamy told him that he was thinking the correct answer to it.

The following story was narrated by Dr. Francis Pillai, a colleague at Forest Hill School in the United Kingdom to the author. It would appear that the mother (a Christian) of an engineer who is now in the U. K. (he likes to remain anonymous) was deeply worried about her son, as she had not received any letter from him for a long time. She

*Mr. V. Veerasingham, Principal Manipay Hindu College, made this reference in an article on Co-operation printed in the Hindu Organ. This we presume is the "Yogar" of this article.

begged Yogar Swamy to find details about her son. Yogar Swamy tried to dissuade her, but she persisted. So Yogar Swamy went into a seance and recorded what the engineer was doing. He found that he was in good health and good spirits. Then he came back from his seance and gave an exact description of her son, his friends, his room and what he was doing. The mother wrote a letter to her son about this and got a letter back which exactly confirmed what the Yogar Swamy had told her.

The Yogar Swamy used to go to Vivekananda Press at Vannarpannai which was close to the Shanmugarathan Book Depot (and not the present Vivekananda Press). He also went to Pariariar (Ayur. Doctor) Muttucumaru's house (presently the house of Dr. Pasupathy, his son in law). He visited sometimes the writer's father's press and book depot "Navalar Press" at Vannarpannai. The men who came in contact with Yogar Swamy very early, about fifty years ago, were Kalai Pulavar Navaratnam, C. Mailvaganam (M. Sri Kanta's father), Pundit Mailvaganam (later Swami Vipulananda), S. Ambihaipahan, Pandit K. K. Nadaraja, and several other teachers of the Vaidyeshvara Vidyalayam, Vannarpannai came later in contact.

Yogar Swamy was a magnet to those who forgot God and who denied God. He instilled devotion into them. He made people understand the greatness of "Jnana Yogam". He was the guardian of the people, their language and their faith — the oldest faith in the world.

After the dark days of the Riots in 1958 between the Sinhalese and the Tamils,) the Tamils were forced to come from other parts of Ceylon, such as Colombo and Kandy, and live in Jaffna.

This, Yogar Swamy considered a blessing. Yogar Swamy was always bold. He saw the (Brahman" in all souls — as Rishi's do. His last words before he attained Samadhi were:— "I have not given any one any reason to grumble. I have done whatever I ought to have done to everyone."

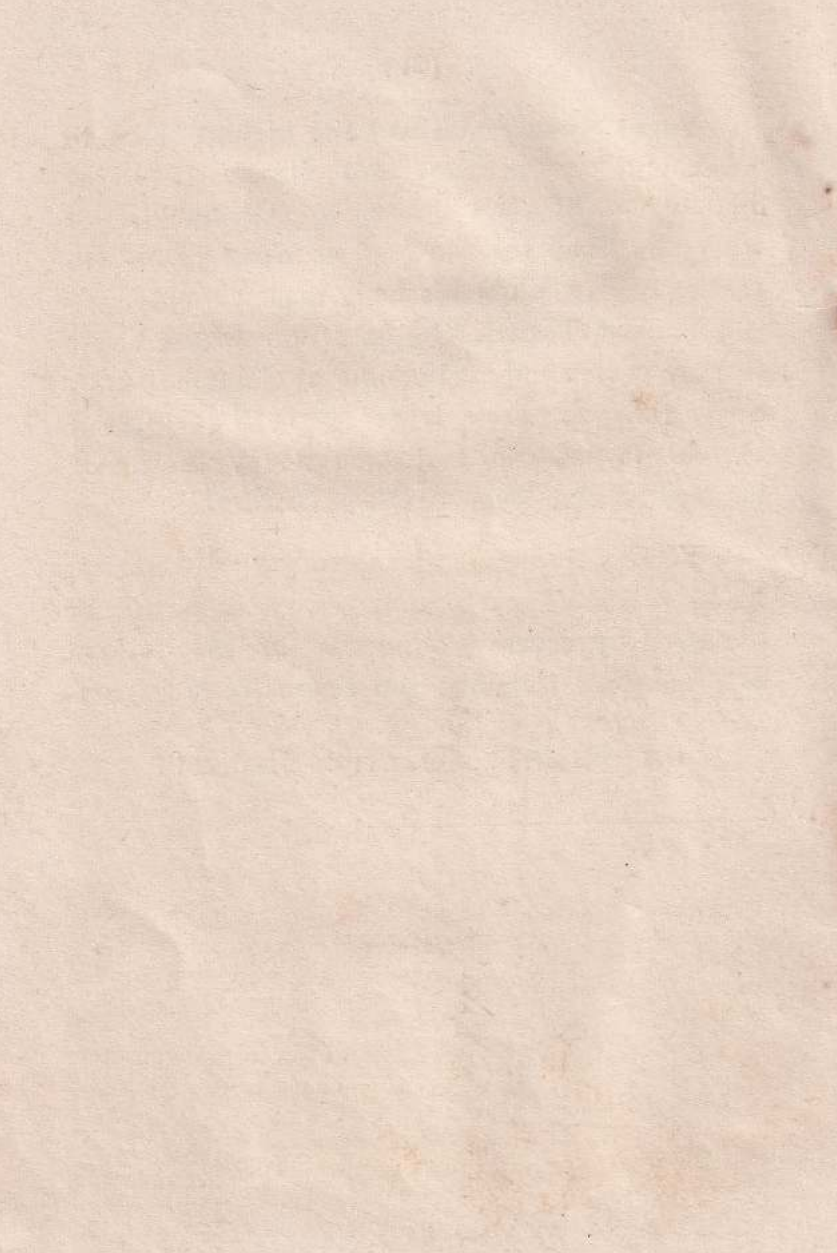
Yogar Swamy's legacy to us are:— "Thiyanakalam" (Translation of the book called "In the Hours of Meditation" published by the Ramakrishna Mission.) "Nat-Chinthanai" (Good thoughts), and a Synopsis of Swamy Vivekananda's speeches (printed at the Navalar Press, Jaffna, by the author's father Mr. K. Vythialingam). These books are fountains of wisdom. We find the quintessence of every system of philosophy embodied in them.

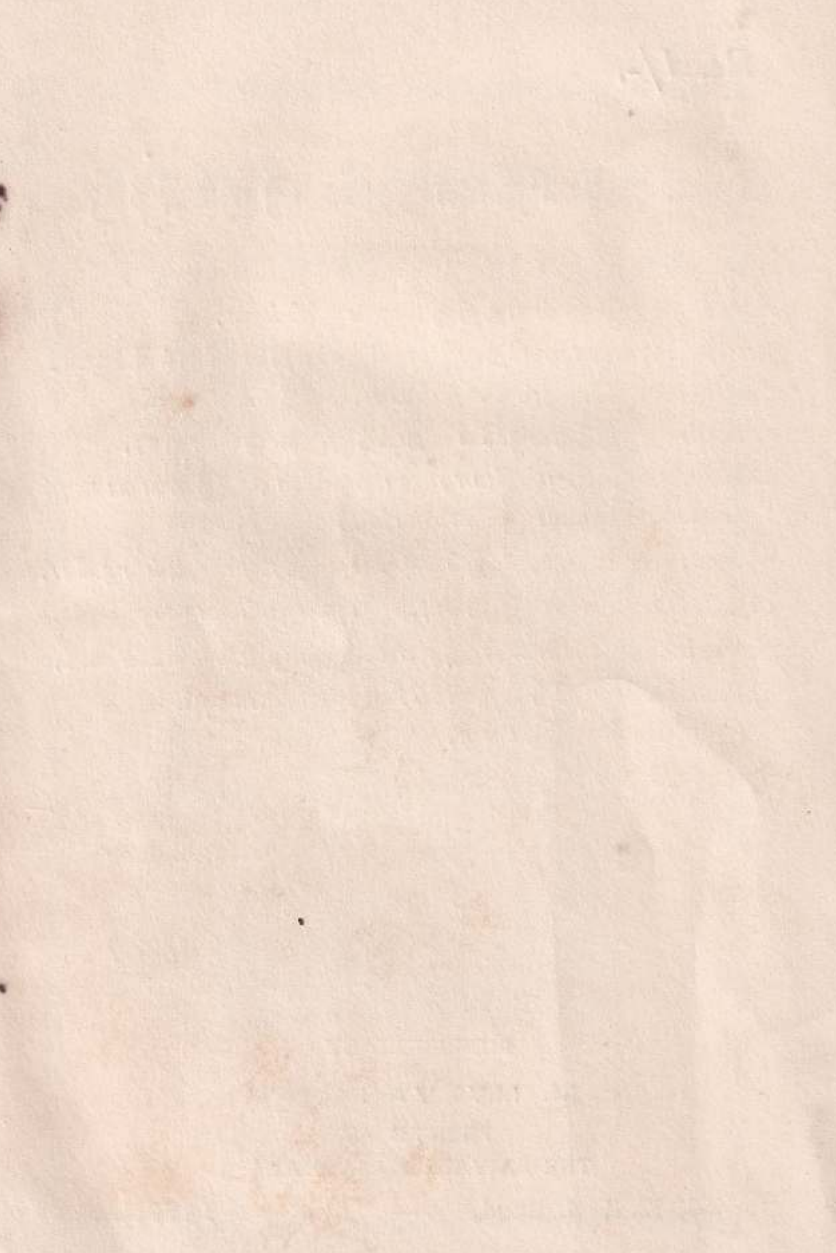
Yogar Swamy attained the highest bliss in "Samadhi" * on the 24th March 1964, at 3.30 a. m. at the place in Columbutburai where he lived for the last so many years. On the next day when his body was cremated at the famous Thundi Crematorium where Yogar Swamy performed meditation at Columbutturai, never did Jaffna see a larger crowd of devotees of various faiths, who had come to pay their last homage to the Sage of Columbutturai.

Yogar's likeness adorns many a home of his devotees. Yogar's anniversary is faithfully observed by several hundreds of his followers, in Jaffna, Colombo and elsewhere in Ceylon.

OM SHANTI! SHANTI!! SHANTI!!!

* Samadhi





Re. 1/-.

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தேவ சன்னிதானத்தில் இருக்கிறோம்

உனக்குச் சொல்வதற்கு ஒன்றுமில்லை.

நாங்களெல்லாம் தேவசன்னிதானத்திலிருக்கிறோம்.

இது ஒரு பெரும் சத்தியம்.

யாவும் இருந்தபடியே நடந்து வருகின்றது.

கிலேசமோ, அன்போ, பகையோ, இவை யாவும்
பகவானுடைய விளையாட்டு.

இவை, என்றும், இப்படியே. நாமும் அப்படியே.

பிறப்பைப்போல இறப்பு, புகழைப்போல இகழ்.

நன்மையைப்போலத் தீமை. முழுதும் உண்மை,

முன்னிலையின்றித் தன்னிலையில் யாவும்

இயங்காமல் இயங்கு,

முடிவைக் காணும்.

— கவாமி திருமுகம்.

— "சிவதொண்டன்"



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