GOLDEN JUBILEE SOUVENIR
of
THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION
SRI LANKA CENTRE

1930 [illegible] 0

GOLDEN JUBILEE SOUVENIR

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

SRI LANKA CENTRE

1930-1980

Edited by :

K. LAKSHMANA IYER

Former Director of Education

Chairman, Souvenir Publication Committee

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Our Seal

"The wavy waters in the picture are symbolic of *Karma*, the lotus, of *Bhakti*, and the rising-sun, of *Jnana*. The encircling serpent is indicative of *Yoga* and awakened *Kundalini Shakti*, while the swan in the picture stands for the *Paramatman*. Therefore the idea of the picture is that by the union of *Karma*, *Jnana*, *Bhakti*, and *Yoga*, the vision of the *Paramatman* is obtained."

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

எமது சின்னத்தின் உட்பொருள்

இப்படத்திலுள்ள

சுருண்ட அலைகள்	—	கர்மத்தினையும்
தாமரை மலர்	—	பக்தியினையும்
உதய சூரியன்	—	ஞானத்தினையும்
சூழ்ந்திருக்கும் சர்ப்பம்	—	யோகத்தினையும், விழித்தெழும்பிய குண்டலினி சக்தியினையும்
படத்தின் மத்தியில் இருக்கும் அன்னப்பறவை	—	பரமாத்மனையும் குறிக்கும் சின்னங்களாய் அமைந்துள்ளன

எனவே இச்சின்னத்தின் உட்பொருள்: கர்மமும், ஞானமும், பக்தியும், யோகமும் ஒன்றித்து இணையும்பொழுது பரமாத்மனின் அனுபவம் கிடைக்கின்றது என்பதாம்.

Sri Ramakrishna

FOREWORD

It is a matter of joy that the Sri Lanka Centre of the Ramakrishna Mission has in an unassuming and unostentatious way, completed fifty years of dedicated service, and is celebrating its Golden Jubilee during the last week of September this year. Elaborate arrangements consisting of appropriate and significant programmes are underway to celebrate this jubilee in a fitting manner. The Mission feels happy and honoured that the President of Sri Lanka, His Excellency J. R. Jayewardene and the Hon. Prime Minister, R. Premadasa have both kindly consented to participate and grace the occasion.

The Oratorical Contests and Essay Competitions in all three media, at an all island level are being conducted. The response has been very significant and encouraging.

The publication of this Souvenir also is part of this celebration. A word or two about the structuring and the objectives of the Souvenir may be useful to the reader.

The Souvenir has three sections, the first consisting of messages, second consisting of articles and the third of advertisements. The section on articles is arranged in three parts. The first part pertains to activities and contributions of the mission in Sri Lanka. In the arrangement of the articles in this part, a particular order has been observed. The second part pertains to the teachings and ideals of Bhagavan Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and the Holy Mother. The third refers to Swami Prematmananda who has complected 50 years as a Sannyasin. Added to these are some useful features such as a chronology of notable events and a list of publications connected with Ramakrishna Mission published in Sri Lanka.

Of the objectives aimed at while planning the preparation of the Souvenir, three may be mentioned.

1. To create among the Sri Lanka readers a greater awareness and greater appreciation of the contribution made by the mission and thereby anticipate a greater participation in the activities and development of the mission in the future.

2. Among the readers outside Sri Lanka to create and develop feelings of similar interests which may serve as incentives for the spreading of the mission ideals throughout the world.

3. It may be said that bringing together from various angles, various aspects, activities and attainments of a movement throughout a period of over half a century in itself has its own value. Incidentally, to the movement this may serve as an opportunity for self-assessment which in turn may form the basis for the planning and programming of future development and progress.

It is a happy coincidence that Swami Prematmananda, the Vice-President and the Swami-in-charge of Colombo Centre, has also completed 50 years as a monk and arrangements are being made to fete and felicitate him. Swamiji, a person who stands for more work and less talk, with a nice sense of humour which is peculiar to him is unique in many ways. It should be observed that it is during his period and under his able and wise guidance that the mission has made many outstanding achievements.

We pay our respects to him and also express our gratitude for the selfless service which he has rendered for the last fifty years of which more than half has been to our dear motherland, Sri Lanka.

Let us thank all those who have sent messages of goodwill and those who have written articles and appreciations and all those who were generous to give advertisements.

A word of appreciation is also due to the patient and efficient printing staff of Ranco Press who did a very good job in a very short time.

K. Lakshmana Iyer.
7.9.80.

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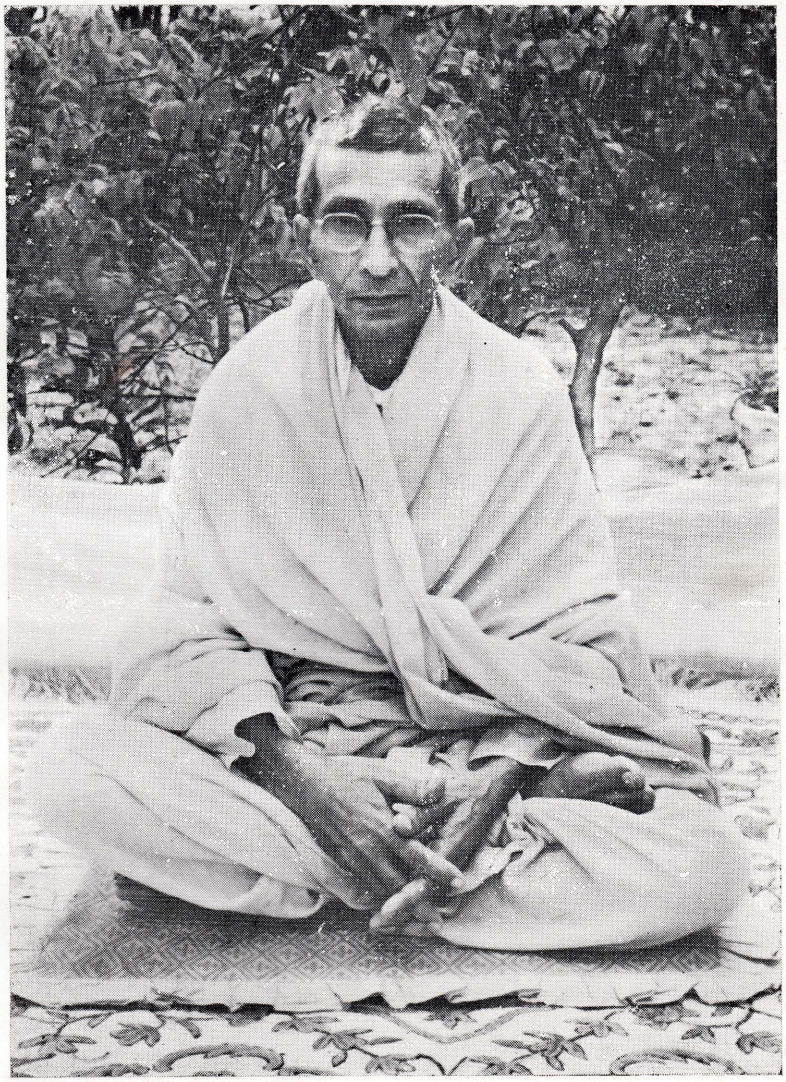
The Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi



Srimat Swami Vireswaranandaji Maharaj
President, Ramakrishna Math & Mission

RAMAKRISHNA MATH
P.O. BELUR MATH, DT. HOWRAH
PIN : 711-202

PHONE : 66-3619

July 2, 1980

On the auspicious occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Ramakrishna Mission in Sri Lanka, I invoke on it and its branches in the island the blessings of Sri Ramakrishna and pray to Him that the Mission there may function with greater and greater success as the years roll on, benefiting larger and larger number of people.

Though the Mission started functioning in Sri Lanka in 1924 with the management of a few schools, the Ashrama at Colombo was established in 1930. For the last fifty years it has been rendering significant service to the inhabitants of the island in various fields — educational, cultural and spiritual. It is gratifying to note that Sri Lanka Branch of the Ramakrishna Mission is celebrating its Golden Jubilee in a befitting manner.

While wishing all success to its Golden Jubilee celebrations, I send my blessings to all connected with the activities of the Mission there.

Swami Vireswarananda
President
Ramakrishna Math and
Ramakrishna Mission

Prime Minister of Sri Lanka

MESSAGE

The Colombo Centre of the Ramakrishna Mission is celebrating its Golden Jubilee. It marks fifty years of dedicated and devoted service to the welfare of the people of Sri Lanka. It is an occasion not only for public rejoicing but also for public gratitude and thanksgiving.

The message of the great Teacher has been carried by the missionaries of the Ramakrishna Mission, led by Swami Vivekananda to many parts of the world. It has been the message of goodwill and hope - the unity of all religions and the brotherhood of Man. It is a message of which the whole world is surely in need of today.

It is not surprising that the profound truths propagated by this great missionary faith has found an echo and a response in the hearts of thousands of people in Sri Lanka. We, in this Island, in our quiet way, present an unusual spectacle - the spectacle of all the great religions of the World co-existing in profound peace and harmony.

There is taking place, throughout the World, a great religious renaissance. It is not confined to one religion. And the most encouraging part in this is the fact that it is the young that are in the vanguard of this revival of faith. The active work of the Swamijis of the Ramakrishna Mission has played no small part in this revival during the past few decades. It is my conviction that its success will continue to increase in the coming years.

Whilst expressing my gratitude for its unselfish work, I wish the Colombo Centre of the Ramakrishna Mission continued success in its noble work.

Prime Minister

सत्यमेव जयते

PRIME MINISTER

MESSAGE

Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was one of the most remarkable sages in Indian history. By his intuitive understanding of the essential unity of all religions he taught men to rise above the narrow dividing walls and showed them how to realise their spiritual potential through devotion, contemplation and right action. His message is universal and it is not surprising that it has given solace to people in many lands.

I am glad that the Colombo branch of the Mission has completed fifty years of its ministrations. Having visited the place I know the tranquillity it exudes and the affection it commands in the hearts of the residents of Colombo. I give my good wishes for the success of the golden jubilee celebrations of the Centre.

Indira Gandhi

(Indira Gandhi)

New Delhi
May 25, 1980

Swami Prematmananda

ARCHBISHOP'S HOUSE,
COLOMBO,
CEYLON.

29th June, 1980.

The Golden Jubilee of the Colombo Branch of the Ramakrishna Mission is an invitation to express, in the first place, gratification and gratitude for the friendly relations that these fifty years have cemented between us through the gestures and activities of such exponents and leaders of the Movement as our dear Swami Prematmananda.

An appreciation of the Mission itself must, of course, in all fairness take into account its objectives. Now, avoiding superficial first impressions, we must, I believe, recognise that it is not a Ramakrishna intention to advocate an amalgam of all Religions. Such an attempt would be as futile as unfounded either on fact or on principle. It is physically true that pure (" white ") light comprises all the colours of the spectrum ; but what a process of refining of each of these colours is required to reconstitute them all into their parent, simple, brightness. In the realm of Religion, where Thought is so interwoven with Affection, the process cannot but pass through the crucible, the personal experience often proving excruciating, excoriating to the core.

All this the Ramakrishna Mission accepts—like all of us, painfully. What it wishes to keep before us is the Hope, the deeply-felt Belief, that one day when shadows have fled, we shall all be ONE in the Immortal Light. If so, why should we be adversaries, not friends and brotherly, as we journey on in stages. Respecting one another's moment of religious convictions why should we not appreciate the attachment of each to the symbols, the ritual, the incarnating Person of his creed and code ? Blessed be the Mission that rallies Sri Lanka to such thoughts of moderation, peace and love.

THOMAS CARDINAL COORAY, o.m.i.,
Archbishop Emeritus of Colombo.

Cardinal's Residence,
Tewatta, Ragama, Sri Lanka,
29th June, 1980.

I take this opportunity to send our cordial greetings to the Sri Lanka Ramakrishna Mission on the occasion of its Golden Jubilee Celebrations.

In a multi-religious and pluralistic society, it is of paramount importance that there should be forces at work fostering greater harmony through inter-religious dialogue and interaction. Ramakrishna Mission has been actively involved in this process.

Inspired by its philosophy of the essential unity of mankind and the search for truth and emancipation as man's religious goal, Ramakrishna Mission has had a very relevant message for the modern technological secular age. Its emphasis on realisation of serenity of mind and spirit through meditation, and the achievement of a greater degree of happiness through a simpler life has attracted the serious attention of those who are disillusioned by the glamour of the affluent society.

Ramakrishna Mission has worked relentlessly but unobtrusively to propagate its message. Man who is in search of authentic humanity and growth into fullness of manhood must take spiritual values seriously. Man can blindly deny or arrogantly disregard the demands of the spirit at his own peril.

With our best wishes.

REV. Dr. W. G. WICKRAMASINGHE,
PRESIDENT, SRI LANKA BAPTIST
SANGAMAYA.

VEYANGODA.
CEYLON.

28th June, 1980.

I am glad to know that the Colombo Branch of the Ramakrishna Mission has decided to publish a Souvenir to mark the completion of 50 years of its service to the people of Sri Lanka.

It is gratifying to note that the Mission besides disseminating the Universal Message of our rich culture and spiritual heritage has also been serving the poor and needy in a magnificent manner.

I am sure that the eternal and soul elevating teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda will be a source of inspiration and a beacon light to all who are dedicated in the pursuit of Truth.

I fully appreciate the interest and the earnestness of the Mission in organizing various social welfare and spiritual re-awakening activities.

May the blessings of Allah Almighty be always with the Mission to go ahead with its noble undertakings.

I send my good wishes and pray that the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Mission be attended with complete success.

Dr. K. M. P. MOHAMED CASSIM,
Founder-President,
Prefect Peace Lodge.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA
Morabadi, RANCHI.

May 16, 1980.

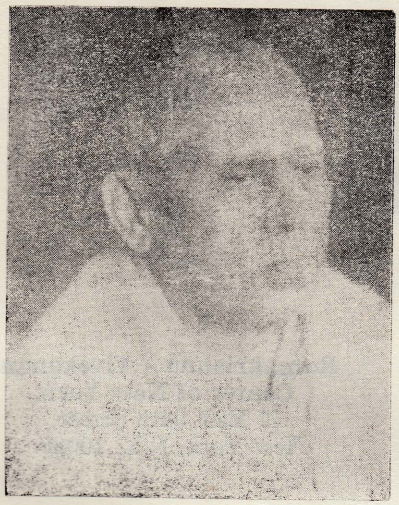
I am glad to note that our Mission Centre at Colombo is going to celebrate its Golden Jubilee in September 1980.

The city of Colombo holds a notable place in the history of the Ramakrishna Order since in early 1897 it had the privilege of according a commendable reception to Swami Vivekananda who was on his way back to India after the splendid success in preaching the gospel of universal harmony in America and Europe for over three years. It is at and from Colombo that the illustrious Swami started his inspiring lecture tour which ended at Lahore in the then undivided India.

During its fifty years of existence at Colombo the Ramakrishna Mission branch has tried its best to serve the people of Sri Lanka at different places and disseminate the message of peace and tolerance as propounded by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda.

I wish the celebrations all success.

SWAMI GAMBHIRANANDA,
Vice President,
RAMAKRISHNA MATH &
RAMAKRISHNA MISSION,
BELUR MATH.



RAMAKRISHNA YOGODYAN MATH,
Kankurgachhi,
Calcutta.

May 21, 1980.

I am glad to know that the Ramakrishna Mission, Colombo, is going to bring out a Souvenir on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Ramakrishna Mission, Sri Lanka Branch, Colombo. The Mission is going to complete its fifty years of useful service to the people of the state of Sri Lanka in various fields. The Mission has been carrying on its educational, spiritual and cultural activities among the people with its spirit of dedication and ideal of serving God through the service of men without any distinction of caste, creed or nationality which is the guiding principle of the Mission from the day of its inception. I pray to God Almighty on this great occasion that through His grace may the Mission continue its service to the people with devotion and dedication and be more and more useful to the society there in all respects.

SWAMI BHUTESHANANDA,
Vice President,
Ramakrishna Math & Mission,
Belur Math

Ramakrishna - Vivekananda
Center of New York,
17 East 94th Street,
New York, N.Y. 10028.

The Centres of the Ramakrishna Order, in India and abroad, are not merely houses of worship, but also homes of service. They stand in testimony to the message of practical Vedanta as demonstrated in the lives of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda. About eight-five years ago, Swami Vivekananda foresaw the oncoming spiritual crisis in the twentieth century world—a world characterized by loss of direction, dissension, and self-destructiveness that are endemic to an over-stimulated materialism. He signified the unifying role of Vedanta as the only hope for humanity.

Vedanta is not a new or particular religion ; it is the essential spirit of all the religions of the world. The keynote of Vedanta is ; " Truth is one : sages call it by various names " and its four cardinal points are : non-duality of the Godhead ; divinity of the soul ; unity of existence ; and harmony of religions. Practical Vedanta calls for the worship of the living God—God in man—and its exhortation is : " Service of man is the worship of God. "

The Ramakrishna Mission, Colombo, Sri Lanka, like every other Center of the Ramakrishna Order, exemplifies the message of practical Vedanta. The Center, founded in 1930 with a modest beginning, has since then grown considerably. With the orphanages it runs and the many philanthropic and humanitarian activities it conducts, the Center has always been a source of spiritual inspiration to the people of Sri Lanka. Its contribution to the heritage of the Ramakrishna Order is notable. It has to its credit a record of dedicated service that is worthy of recollection and emulation. It is, therefore, very appropriate that the Center is celebrating its Golden Jubilee this year.

On the occasion of this celebration I offer my humble homage to the spirit of those noble-hearted monks and devotees who, through their selfless service, have contributed to the growth and development of the Colombo Center. Their dedicated lives prove that the message of practical Vedanta—the worship of God in man—is not just a sterile philosophical concept, but a spiritual experience that is at once purifying, inspiring and liberating.

SWAMI ADISWARANANDA.

VEDANTA SOCIETY OF NEW YORK,
New York, N.Y. 10023,

June 12, 1980.

I am glad to know that the Ramakrishna Mission, Sri Lanka Branch, Colombo, intends to publish a Golden Jubilee Souvenir, celebrating fifty years of beneficial and living service to the public.

The people of Sri Lanka had the unique privilege of giving a fitting reception to Swami Vivekananda when he landed there on January 15, 1897. Inspired by the prophetic message of the great Swami, monks and devotees dedicated themselves to the service of people in various ways. From humble beginnings, that work has grown enormously during the last fifty years.

Today the spiritual significance of the Ramakrishna phenomenon is known to enlightened people all over the world. This multi-dimensional movement, initiated by illumined souls of rare calibre, is rendering a positive service to humanity by awakening their spiritual consciousness. The benign power released through this movement will usher in a new civilization. Blessed are those who are instrumental in this " great work ".

I wish the Golden Jubilee Celebration all success.

SWAMI TATHAGATANANDA.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH,
MADRAS.

The message of Sri Ramakrishna, inculcating a deep faith in the Supreme Being and the practice of love and surrender to Him, together with the service of man as His tabernacle—is the most urgent need of humanity today. Unless the Supreme Lord is brought into the everyday life of society, there is no enduring solution for the multi-farious problems facing humanity. It is heartening to know that the Colombo Centre of the Ramakrishna Mission has been doing its best to spread the great message of the Master for the past fifty years. May the Lord bless the Centre and help it carry on its noble work of love and service for all time.

SWAMI TAPASYANANDA.

VIVEKANANDA VEDANTA SOCIETY,
CHICAGO ILL. 60615.

May 19, 1980.

I am glad to know that the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of Colombo Centre are being planned and preparations have begun. The Colombo Centre has contributed its best for the last fifty years in bringing about the harmony between various ethnic groups who have settled in the Island. The message of harmony preached by no less a person then Swami Vivekananda himself, expounded through four cardinal principles, viz., the Existence of God, the Divinity of the Soul, the Oneness of Existence throughout the Universe and Harmony of Religions forms the basis of the Colombo work for the last fifty years. This work will certainly bring about peace and joy and spiritual evolution to all those who participate in the works carried out by the Mission. I salute and convey my deep respect to the Colombo Ashrama, and all the Swamis who worked tirelessly during the last fifty years.

SWAMI BHASHYANANDA.

VEDANTA SOCIETY
HOLLYWOOD.

13.6.1980

We are very happy to know that the Colombo Centre of the Ramakrishna Mission is going to celebrate its Golden Jubilee in September. Fifty years can be considered a milestone in the life of an institution. Sri Ramakrishna's message of religious harmony, spiritual view of life and social service looking upon all people as manifestations of the Divine is the message that is essential for modern times.

The Colombo Centre is well known for its social services in doing pioneering work in establishing schools and orphanages in Jaffna and Batticaloa, services to school children, prisoners, delinquents and leprosy patients and also feeding thousands of pilgrims for years in Kataragama. It contributes a good deal in the spiritual and cultural life of the country, Sri Lanka, through its temples, libraries, lectures, festivals and the international guesthouse and cultural centre.

In these days of social disharmony, political strife and economic uncertainties, the immediate impact of a spiritual and social service institution is not always evident. But, popularizing of spiritual values and demonstrating through living and service constitute the only basic way. I wish and pray that the Centre continues its services and helps in bringing about spiritual upliftment, social harmony and international understanding.

SWAMI SWHANANDA

RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA,
BUENOS AIRES,
ARGENTINA.

I trust by the grace of Sri Ramakrishna the Celebration under your guidance will be a great success and during this event the name and teachings of the Master will spread throughout Sri Lanka.

SWAMI PARATPARANANDA,
Swami in Charge.

Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service
(General Hospital)
Luxa, Varanasi

20.5.1980.

I am extremely delighted to learn that the Ramakrishna Mission, Colombo, is going to celebrate the Golden Jubilee in a befitting manner. To commemorate this, the centre is going to publish a Souvenir.

It would not have been possible but for the inspiration received this Branch centre is able to function from a small beginning to do service, in Educational, Cultural and Religious spheres irrespective of caste, creed, nationality, religion and language.

May Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda bestow THEIR DIVINE blessings to all is the earnest prayer at THEIR Lotus Feet.

SWAMI SATTWANANDA.

RAMAKRISHNA MATH,
OOTACAMUND.

28th June, 1980.

It was the proud privilege of the Hindus of Sri Lanka in general and of Colombo in particular to have had first the honour and joy of receiving at the Colombo Port more than eight decades ago, on the 15th January, 1897, a great son and Teacher of India, the illustrious Swami Vivekananda, who was returning to his motherland after leaving an electrifying and deep impression about the unique Hindu Religion and Philosophy upon the minds of American and European scholars and populace of the times. Since that red-letter day, the Hindus of that pendent-shaped and historical island have hungered for the life-giving teachings of Swamiji and also that of his spiritual Master Sri Ramakrishna, with the result that several educated young men of Sri Lanka were inspired to renounce the wordly life for the good of many, for the happiness of many and, guided by Swamiji and his brother-disciples, carry on the torch lit by the world leader on that memorable day by establishing in the island a number of centres of learning and culture, among which the one at Colombo became the premier.

During these fifty years of its spiritual and cultural ministration, of which more than 25 years have been under the sagacious guidance of the present Swami-in-Charge, Revered Swami Prematmanandaji Maharaj, to the residents of and visitors, too, of the metropolis, the Colombo Centre in association with its flourishing Branch at Batticaloa has done yeoman service to the people of Sri Lanka, despite difficult times and trying circumstances. And so, it can legitimately rejoice on this great occasion.

I sincerely pray for the success in every respect of the Golden Jubilee Celebration.

SWAMI EKATMANANDA.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA,
BANGALORE.

7th April, 1980.

It is with great pleasure that I learnt that you willl soon be celebrating the Golden Jubilee of the Colombo Centre in a fitting manner.

The Celebration is a noteworthy event. The Colombo Centre has adapted itself to the changing conditions and highest standard required in modern era. I am sure that it will make still greater progress in the coming years.

SWAMI ADIDEVANANDA.

The Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama,
Varanasi,

13.6.1980.

It gives me great pleasure to learn that our Colombo Branch of the Ramakrishna Mission has completed fifty years of useful service and is making arrangements to celebrate the Golden Jubilee in a fitting manner in September this year.

I am happy to send a message to the Souvenir, which is being printed to mark this event.

As everyone knows, the Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna is based on love, harmony and service. Firmly established in these most cherished fundamental values, the Colombo Branch has been engaged in various activities making valuable contributions to the spiritual and cultural life of the Sri Lankans in general and the residents of Colombo in particular.

May the Colombo Branch continue and expand its valuable work more and more in coming years.

I wish the Golden Jubilee Celebrations all success.

SWAMI APURVANANDA,
President.

The genesis of the Ramakrishna Movement in Sri Lanka can be traced to the association Swami Vivekananda had with that island towards the end of the last century. He visited Colombo three times ; first, when he was going to America to participate in the historic Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago in 1893, alone and unknown after his 'Parivrajaka life' in India ; second, when he landed in Colombo in January 1897 after he had become world famous at the Parliament of Religions, which was a turning point in the religious history of India and the world ; and third, when he was going to the West for a second visit in 1899, to consolidate his earlier work there.

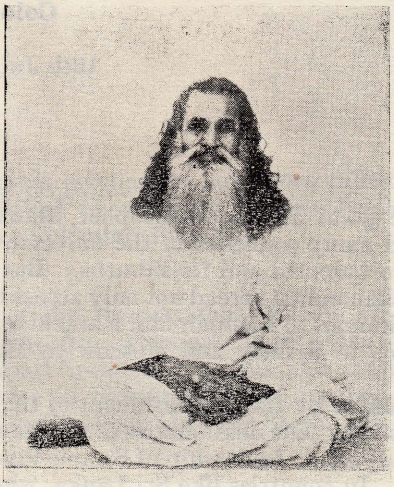
The capital city of Colombo had the honour of first receiving the home-coming hero on his return to the motherland. He gave his 'First Lecture in the East' in the Floral Hall of Colombo. Thence it was all a triumphant march from Colombo to Almora, during which period he delivered a series of inspiring lectures **en route** and unfolded his own plan for the regeneration of India in tune with her national genius and tradition. These lectures are published in a book entitled **Lectures from Colombo to Almora.** Every citizen of India and Sri Lanka should consider it a duty to go through those inspiring lectures to know the heart and mind of Swami Vivekananda—how intensely he felt for the poor, the ignorant, and the downtrodden of his motherland, and for her regenration.

On his return to India, he deputed to Sri Lanka one of his own brother-disciples, Swami Shivananda, to propagate the teachings of Vedanta as exemplified in the life of Sri Ramakrishna. In due course, the seed sown by Swamiji and Swami Shivananda grew into a mighty tree, providing shelter to many a wearied wayfarer on the spiritual path. The Ramakrishna Mission (Sri Lanka Branch), Colombo, was formally established in 1930, though the work had started functioning since 1924. It has a proud record of service to the citizens of the island through its educational institutions in Trincomalee, Jaffna and Batticaloa, and serving all sections of people through the Kataragama pilgrim centre which is since closed following the take-over of the building by the Government. The Colombo Centre is celebrating its Golden Jubilee this year. The Centre has diversified its activities in recent years. It currently runs a Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Hall, one of the biggest auditoriums in Colombo, and an International Cultural Centre, with guest rooms, library, etc.

On behalf of the brotherhood of Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, it gives me great pleasure to send our good wishes and greetings on this happy occasion, while I sincerely pray to Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother that the functions connected with the Golden Jubilee pass off smoothly and with resounding success.

SWAMI ANANYANANDA,
President.

1 July, 1980
Advaita Ashrama,
Mayavati (Himalayas),
Dt. Pithoragarh (U.P.),
262-224 (India).



Swami Satchidananda

Now the Colombo Sri Ramakrishna Mission is celebrating its Golden Jubilee. Certainly its great cultural and ecumenical work has enhanced Sri Lanka and will be recorded in history. I sincerely wish that the the Celebration will be a grand success and the Mission will continue to perform its noble activities for the benefit of humanity, and Sri Lanka in particular.

I would like to take this opportunity to convey my special appreciation and reverance to the current Vice President of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission, Sri Swami Prematmanandaji Maharaj, who in his own beautiful and gentle way helped and encouraged my activities in Sri Lanka during my fifteen years of service there.

SWAMI SATCHIDANANDA.

Ministry of Rural Industrial Development,
Colombo.

19th July, 1980.

The gospel of the great ascetic philosopher, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa which has now enveloped many countries in the universe with electrifying effect, was once confined only to Calcutta and its suburbs. But with the advent of the savant saint Swami Vivekananda it spread not only across the lengths and breadths of Bharat, from Kanyakumari to Kashmir and Karachi to Calcutta, but across the world from San Francisco to Sydney and Moscow to Mauritius.

This was made possible by the establishment of the Order of Paramahamsa and the Ramakrishna mission. The missionaries of the Ramakrishna mission under the pious pioneering and dynamic leadership of Swami Vivekananda began blazing a new trail in the Orient. In countries like Sri Lanka, where missionaries of other religions from the west were attempting to proselytize the Hindus, the Ramakrishna Mission acted as a bulwark to safeguard their religious sanctity.

Not only has it performed yeoman service in spreading the Hindu way of life and philosophy among its adherents, but it has also helped the community in various ways by running orphanages, religious classes for the children and social service through its Sarada Samithi.

Therefore to learn that the Sri Lanka branch of the Mission celebrates its fiftieth anniversary, gives me great joy. The Golden Jubilee is a unique occasion not only to remind ourselves of the underlying philosophy in the teachings of the Paramahamsa, the ' Cyclonic Hindu Vivekananda ' and the Holy Mother Sarada Devi, but also to recount the service the mission had done in Sri Lanka. It would not be inappropriate at this time to recount what a boon the Mission's ' madam ' at Kataragama was, its school and orphanage at Batticaloa and the Meditation and Cultural Centre in Colombo, have been furthering Hindu thoughts.

There is no doubt that with the blessings of Paramahamsa and the devotion and dedication of the revered swamijis, the Ramakrishna mission is Sri Lanka will grow and spread to greater proportions in the years to come and inundate the land with its service.

May the Mission grow stronger in service and celebrate countless jubilees.

S. THONDAMAN,
Minister of Rural Industrial Development
and President
Ceylon Workers' Congress.

Ministry of Transport,
Colombo.

June 4th, 1980.

I consider it a great privilege to have been called upon to give this message for the Souvenir published to mark the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission, Colombo Branch.

The activities of the Ramakrishna Mission are too well known not only amongst the Hindus, but also amongst those following other faiths, to need enumeration here. Apart from its religious and cultural work the Mission has rendered yeoman service in running a large number of schools including some secondary educational institutions, until the State took over the sole responsibility to run all schools.

I have been observing the efforts made by the Mission to bring about inter-religious understanding and harmony. I am aware that the Mission authorities have made arrangements to celebrate non-Hindu religious festivals like Vesak and Christmas even inviting the clergy from the respective faiths to deliver discourses on those occasions. In a multi-racial and multi-religious country like ours these efforts deserve every encouragement and assistance. They help to dispel doubts and suspicions about other religions and achieve the goal of a united Sri Lanka where every citizen can have his rightful place irrespective of his religion or community.

I wish the Mission all success in its efforts to continue its good work in the years to come.

M. H. MOHAMED,
Minister of Transport and
Minister of Transport Boards.

Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya,
Coimbatore.

We are happy to learn that our Ceylon Ramakrishna Mission at Colombo will be celebrating its Golden Jubilee shortly. The Mission in Ceylon has been doing great work in spreading the common culture of our countries and has worked for nearly half a century in cementing bonds between our two peoples, who are bound by age-old ties of history and culture.

It was here in Colombo that Swami Vivekananda first landed on his return back to the east after his great spiritual message in the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, U.S.A. and England. Here again other disciples of Sri Ramakrishna like our Revered Swami Shivananda have come and made this country hallowed land. In continuation of their work—Swami Vipulananda and many others have dedicated their lives for the establishment of this centre.

The Message of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda given to the people of Ceylon is a Universal Message of Love and Service to all without any distinction of caste, creed or religion, with its motto of renunciation and service.

May the Colombo Ramakrishna Mission continue to give this message of love and dedicated service in the ages to come to the people of Sri Lanka.

T. S. AVINASHILINGAM,
Founder—Director.

பிரதேச அபிவிருத்தி அமைச்சு
21 - 7 - 80

சுவாமி பிரேமாத்மானந்தா,
இராமகிருஷ்ண மிஷன்,
கொழும்பு.

அன்பு நிறைந்த சுவாமிஜி அவர்களுக்கு,

தங்கள் 08 — 07 — 80 நாள் அஞ்சல் கிடைக்கப் பெற்றேன். இராமகிருஷ்ண மிஷன் மனிதகுலத்திற்கு ஆற்றிவரும் சேவை அளப்பரியது. அகில உலகமெங்கும் அன்பு, அமைதி, சாந்தம், சகோதரத்துவம், தெய்வ நம்பிக்கை சுடர்விட்டுப் பிரகாசிக்க உயர்ந்த பணியாற்றி வருகிறது. கல்விக்கூடங்கள் மூலம் கதியற்ற குழந்தைகளைக் கையேந்தி அவர்களை மனித சமுதாயத்தில் உயர்ந்த இடத்திற்கு உயர்த்தும் பணியினை மேற்கொண்டு வருகிறது. பாரதநாட்டின் பெருமையை மனிதகுலத்திற்குத் தெய்வீக அருட் கடாட்சத்தினால் அள்ளி வழங்கிய பகவான் இராமகிருஷ்ணரின் உபதேசங்களை உலகமெங்கும் அள்ளிப் பரப்பிய சுவாமி விவேகானந்தர் போன்றோரினால் உருவாக்கப்பட்ட இராமகிருஷ்ண மிஷன் இலங்கையில் ஆற்றிய பணி வரலாற்றுச் சிறப்பு மிக்கது. கல்விச்சாலைகளற்ற பல கிராமங்களில் கல்வி நிலையங்களும், மாணவ விடுதிகளும், அநாதைச்சிறுவர் இல்லங்களும் அமைத்ததன் மூலம் ஆயிரக்கணக்கான குழந்தைகள் கல்வியும், உயர்கல்வியும் பெற்று இந்நாட்டிலும், இந்நாட்டுக்கு வெளியிலும் பெருமை தேடித்தந்த நல்ல அறிஞர்களாக உருவாவதற்கு உதவியிருக்கிறது. சுவாமி பிரேமாத்மானந்தாஜியின் பிரதிபலன் கருதாத பேருழைப்பாலும், எல்லாச் சமய மக்களினதும் இன, மொழி பேதமற்ற சேவையினாலும் பெருமதிப்பைப் பெற்றுள்ளது. மனித குலம் உள்ளவரை இராமகிருஷ்ண பரமஹம்ஸரின் புனித நாமம் நிலைத்து நிற்கும்.

வணக்கம்.

இங்ஙனம்,
தங்கள் அன்புள்ள,
செ. இராசதுரை,
(பிரதேச அபிவிருத்தி அமைச்சர்)

ஸ்ரீ இராமகிருஷ்ண மடம்'
நாட்டறம்பள்ளி,
தமிழ்நாடு.

ஈழநாடு, கொழும்பில் 'மக்கட்பணியே மகேசன் பணி' எனக்கொண்டு நற்பணி பலவாற்றி மிளிரும் ஸ்ரீ ராம கிருஷ்ண இயக்கத்தின் 'பொன்விழா' இவ்வாண்டு சீரோடும் சிறப்போடும் நடந்தேறி வருவதை எண்ணி, மகிழ்ந்து மேலும் அப்பணி வளர ஸ்ரீ குருதேவரை இறைஞ்சுகின்றேன்.

நரேந்திரர் இந்தியாவில் இனம் தெரியாத துறவி. அவர் சிகாகோ மாநாட்டினின்று வெற்றி வீரராக, சுவாமி விவேகானந்த ரென – இந்து மதத்தின் கலங்கரை விளக்காகவும் – பாரதப்பண்பாட்டின் பாரம் பரியத்தின் மொத்த உருவமாகவும் மீளும் பொழுது, வரவேற்றுச் சிறப்படைந்த பெருமை கொழும்பு வாழ் மக்களுக்கே கிடைத்தது. அவரின் கொழும்பு அல்மோரா சொற்பொழிவு கொழும்பையும் பாரதத்தை யும் பின்னிப்பிணைக்கும் அரும் பாலமாகவே அமைந்துவிட்டது.

ஈழநாட்டு ஸ்ரீ ராமகிருஷ்ண மடத்துத் துறவிகள், இயக்கத்தின் கொள்கைகளைப் பரப்புவதில் முன்னணியில் நிற்பதோடு, இந்திய நாட்டிற்கும் குறிப்பாக நாட்டறம் பள்ளி ஸ்ரீ ராமகிருஷ்ண மடத்திற்கும் அவர்கள் செய்த தொண்டினை எண்ணிப் பெருமை அடைகின்றோம்.

இலங்கை ஈன்றெடுத்த சுவாமி விபுலானந்த அடிகள் தமிழ் ஆங்கிலம் ஆகிய இரு மொழிகளிலும் புலமையில் சிறந்து விளங்கினர். நாட்டறம்பள்ளித் திரு மடத்தில் இருந்த பொழுது ''ஸ்ரீ ராமகிருஷ்ண ஜீவிதம்'' என்னும் குருதேவரின் வரலாற்று நூலுக்கு அவர் யாத்த முன்னுரைக்கவிதை இலக்கிய நயம்மிக்கதொன்றாக ஒளி வீசு கின்றது.

ஈழம் தந்த சுவாமி கூடஸ்தானந்தர் இம் மடத்தின் தலைவராக 17 அகவைக்காலம் இருந்து சுவாமிஜி காட்டிய நெறியில் சமய சமூகத் தொண்டுகளைச் செய்ததை இன்றும் இவ்வூர் மக்கள் நன்றிப் பெருக்கோடு பேசி, தம் நெஞ்சத்தில் நினைந்து மகிழ்கின்றனர். யாவரும் கல்வி கற்பதற்கு அவர் செய்த தொண்டு அரியதொன்றாகும்.

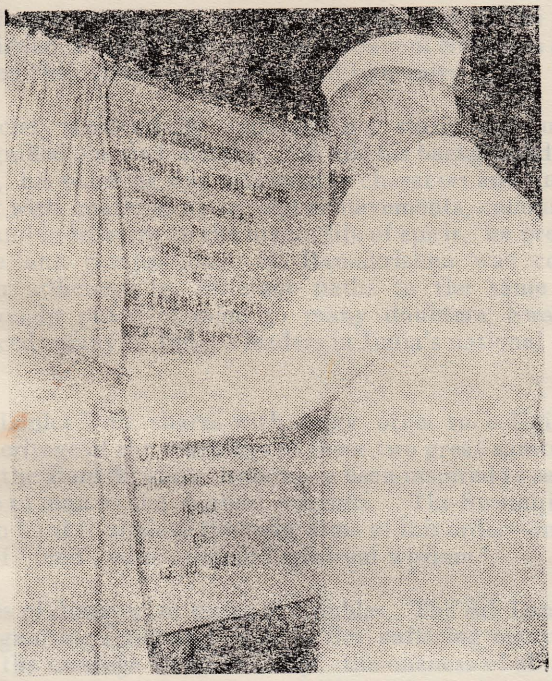
மட்டக்களப்பில் பணியாற்றிவரும் சுவாமி ஜீவனானந்தர் இம்மடத்தின் தலைவராகத் திகழ்ந்தபோது இங்குள்ள இளம் தலைமுறை யினரின் வாழ்க்கை நெறி முறைகளைச் செவ்வனே உயர்த்தினர்.

ஈழநாட்டைப் பார்த்துத் திரும்பும் இந்திய மக்கள் கொழும்பு ஸ்ரீ ராமகிருஷ்ண மடத் துச் சுவாமிகள் காட்டும் அன்பினையும் செய் யும் உதவிகளையும் உளம்மகிழ உரைப்பதைக் கேட்டு, மிக்க இறும்பூதடைகின்றோம்.

இவ்வினிய நினைவுகளோடு கொழும்பு ஸ்ரீ ராமகிருஷ்ண இயக்கம், 'பொன்விழா' வெற்றிநடை போடவும், இந்திய இலங்கை நட்பு வலிமை பெறவும் ஸ்ரீ குருதேவரின் தொண்டு பல்கிப்பெருகவும், ஸ்ரீ குருதேவரின் திருப்பாத கமலங்களை இறைஞ்சுகின்றேன்.

சுவாமி சர்வக்ஞாநந்தா
தலைவர்.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India, Opening the Cultural Centre in Colombo.



Message from H. E. Shri Thomas Abraham,

High Commissioner for India in Sri Lanka.

Ramakrishna Paramahamsa flashed across the Indian sky like a meteor, between 1836 and 1886, a period in which we saw the renaissance of Indian thought and culture not only through him but also through other great figures such as Ram Mohun Roy, Dwarka Nath Tagore, grandfather of the poet, and Keshub Chandra Sen.

His message was carried throughout the world by his great disciple, Swami Vivekananda, and the Missions established by the Ramakrishna Order have now spread far and wide and have left a permanent impact on makind.

I am happy to send this message of greetings to the Ramakrishna Mission in Colombo which is celebrating its Golden Jubilee this year. In the 50 years of its existence, the Ramakrishna Mission has made a valuable contribution to the enrichment of the spiritual and cultural life of Colombo. Motivated by the high ideals of its Founder, I am confident it would continue to function as a beacon of solace for many more years to come.

THOMAS ABRAHAM
High Commissioner for India

Colombo,
September 10, 1980.

Rajiv Jayawardene, the then Prime Minister of India,
Opening the Cultural Centre in Colombo.

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Ramakrishna Paramahamsa dashed across the Indian sky like a meteor, between 1836 and 1886, a period in which saw the renaissance of Indian thought and culture. Not only through him but also through other great figures such as Ram Mohun Roy, Dayanda Nath Tagore, grandfather of the poet, and Keshub Chandra Sen.

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THOMAS ABRAHAM
High Commissioner for India

Colombo.
September 10, 1980.

100, Norris Canal Road,
Colombo 10,
5 July, 1980.

On this happy occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Sri Lanka Unit of the Ramakrishna Mission, I salute the long line of devout Swamijis and their disciples who have devoted their lives to the service of humanity.

Hindu Society is essentially dynamic, not static and unchangeable. Sri Ramakrishna signified one such change. While his background and training were intensely Hindu, his teaching was spiritual in character and universal in quality. In a world giddy with material power and achievements, callous to human suffering and misery and indifferent to the higher life of spirit, he presented an ideal of holiness, service and compassion. Sri Ramakrishna was convinced that all religions led their adherents by different paths to the same goal. While Sri Ramakrishna brought peace of mind to many doubters, Swami Vivekananda's message influenced many of India's leaders in India's national awakening in the 20th. Century.

The Sri Lanka Unit shares with many other such Units, throughout the world, the rich heritage of the teachings of these two great saints of modern times. The Swamijis of the Ramakrishna Order have been inspired to see God in man and to regard service to man as the highest worship. The Swamijis of the Sri Lanka Unit have striven hard to achieve the twin aims of this order—individual salvation and the giving of ' food , education and spiritual wisdom '.

In times of disaster, in times of troubles, The Sri Lanka Unit has given leadership in organising relief and help to the suffering many. To the young, the Unit taught the message of spirituality, the oneness of all religions, love and compassion. They were taught to have faith in themselves and to lead a disciplined life.

The Ramakrishna Hostel in Wellawatte and the Madam at Kathirgamam are two significant monuments to the useful work of the Sri Lanka Unit. The Hostel provides a cheap accommodation in clean, comfortable rooms, with an atmosphere of spirituality and holiness. The madam was a welcome place of rest to the thousands of poor pilgrims who flocked to Kathirgamam. Poor and rich, sick and healthy, young and old, men and women—all found a home from home in the madam. It is sad to think that this madam is no longer there under the management of the Sri Lanka Unit to cater to those pilgrims.

Spirituality is the heart of Sri Lanka.

It is therefore, no wonder that the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda found a fertile soil in Sri Lanka. The world has seen many changes but man's yearning for the spiritual always asserts itself. The Sri Lanka Unit has always provided the spiritual insights to control excessive materialistic tendencies.

Fifty years in the life of any institution is a significant event and deserves to be taken note of ; it is much more so in an institution which had done so much within that period. Once again I salute all the Swamijis and the band of enthusiastic men and women who so devotedly served those less fortunate than themselves. Let us thank the Almighty for all his blessings and pray that each one of us be given the strength to do our bit to leave this world a better place than the one to which we came.

M. SIVASITHAMPARAM,
Member of Parliament.

The Ramakrishna Mission,
Ceylon Branch.

4th June, 1980.

It has been my good fortune to be associated with the Ramakrishna Mission (Ceylon Branch) since its inception. I have had the honour and pleasure of meeting and coming under the influence of Swamis Gananda, Avinashananda, Asangananda, Prematmananda and many other Swamis. The Mission's motto is almost like Rotary International " Service Above Self ".

The teachings of Sri Ramakrishna have taught me the path of tolerance and to conquer hatred and anger. The conquest of these senses leads to peace and love of God.

May all mankind be able to attain this high standard.

G. WIGNARAJA,
Hony. Secretary.

நல்லை ஞானசம்பந்தர் ஆதீனம்,
யாழ்ப்பாணம்.

கொழும்பு ஸ்ரீ இராமகிருஷ்ண மடத்தின் பொன்விழா அண்மையில் நடைபெற இருப்பது மகிழ்ச்சிக்குரியது ஒன்றாகும். இலங்கையில், சமயப்பணியாற்றும் ஸ்தாபனங்களுள், சர்வ மதத்தினராலும், பாராட்டப்பட்டும், போற்றப்பட்டும் வருவது கொழும்பு, ஸ்ரீ இராமகிருஷ்ண மடம். பல சோதனைகளுக்கிடையே, மக்கள் சேவையே மகேசன் சேவை என்று, அயராது பணிபுரியும் இச் சங்கம் பொன்விழாக் காணுவது ஈழத்திருநாட்டின் பெறு பேறு. அமைதியின் உருவமாக, வற்றா அன்பின் ஊற்றாக, தன்னலமற்ற தியாகியாக, அதன் அதிபர் ஸ்ரீ பிரேமாத்மானந்த மஹராஜ், அரும்பணி ஆற்றி வருகின்றனர்.

உலகாசைகளைத் துறந்து உத்தமத்துறவிகளாகி, உலகில் மக்கள் சேவைக்கே தம்மை அர்ப்பணித்த, துறவிகளின் துணை கொண்டு, கல்வி, சமயம், கலாசாரம், சமூகசேவை ஆகிய பல துறைகளிலும், சர்வ சமய சமரஸ நோக்குடன், சகோதரத்துவ உணர்வை, ஊட்டும் இணையற்ற ஸ்தாபனம், இலங்கை ஸ்ரீ இராமகிருஷ்ண சங்கம். இதன் கல்விப் பணி, 1917ம் ஆண்டில் யாழ்ப்பாணத்தில் ஆரம்பமாயிற்று. யாழ்ப்பாணம் வைத்தீஸ்வர வித்தியாலயம், விவேகானந்த வித்தியாலயம் ஆகியன பொறுப்பேற்கப்பட்டன. விபுலானந்த அடிகள், அவிஞசானந்தா, நிஷ்ரேஷானந்தா போன்ற பல துறவிகள் தலைமையில் கல்விப்பணி சிறப்புற நடந்தது.

இச்சங்கத்தின் கீழ் இயங்கிய பாடசாலைகளை, 1960 மார்கழி மாதம் அரசாங்கம் தேசிய கல்விச் சட்டமூலம் பொறுப்பேற்றதால், சங்கத்தின், கல்விப்பணி பெரிதும் பாதிக்கப்பட்டது. இராமகிருஷ்ண சங்கத்தின் உயரிய நோக்கங்களைச் செயற் படுத்துவதில் இலங்கை இராமகிருஷ்ண மிஷன் பெரிதும் வெற்றி பெற்றதென்றே கூற வேண்டும்.

நல்ல திட்டங்களை வகுத்துச் செயற்படுத்தி, நற்றொண்டு, புரிந்துவரும் இத்தாபனம், வைரவிழா முதலிய பலபெரு விழாக்களைக் கொண்டாடவும், அதை வழி நடத்திச் செல்லும் ஈழம் தந்த தவமணியாம் ஸ்வாமி பிரேமாத்மானந்தஜீ, பல்லாண்டு வாழ்ந்து பணிபுரியவும், உளமாரப் பிரார்த்தித்து வாழ்த்துகின்றேன்.

ஸ்ரீலஸ்ரீ ஸ்வாமிநாத பரமாச்சாரிய ஸ்வாமிகள்

ஸ்ரீ ராம கான சபா,
கொழும்பு.

அன்னையும் பிதாவும் முன்னறி தெய்வம் என்பது ஆன்றோர் வாக்கு. முன்னறி தெய்வம் என்று கூறியமையால், பின்னறி தெய்வமும் உண்டு என்பது அதனுள்ளேயே மறைந்து கிடக்கிறது.

குருவும் தெய்வமும் பின்னறி தெய்வங்கள் ஆகையால்தான் நம் முன்னோர்கள் மாதா பிதாகுரு தெய்வம் என்று வரிசைப்படுத்திக் கூறியிருக்கின்றார்கள்.

அறியாப் பருவத்திலேயே அன்னையைக் குழந்தை இலகுவில் தெரிந்து கொள்கின்றது. சில மாதங்கள் சென்றபின்பு தாய் "இவர் தான் உன் தந்தை" என்று காட்டத் தந்தையை அறிகின்றது குழந்தை. தாயும், தந்தையும் முக்கியமாகப் பிள்ளையை அன்போடு வளர்க்கின்றார்கள். அதே போல உயிரும் பேரின்பத்தை அடைய வேண்டுமானால், பார்க்குமிடமெங்கும் நீக்கமற நிறைந்திருக்கின்ற இறைவன் திருவடி சேரவேண்டும். அதற்குரிய நன்னெறியைக் காட்டுபவர்தான் குரு. ஆகையால் ஒவ்வொருவருக்கும் குரு மிகவும் அவசியம்.

எரிகிற விளக்கிலிருந்து இன்னொரு விளக்கை ஏற்றுவது போல், குருவானவர் தம்முடைய தவவலிமையால் சேகரித்து வைத்த தெய்வ அனுபவம் என்ற ஜோதியிலிருந்து மந்திர உபதேசம் மூலமாக சீடனிடத்தில் ஞானவிளக்கை ஏற்றி வைக்கின்றார். அந்த ஞான ஒளியை விருத்தி செய்வது சிஷ்யனது கடமையாகும்.

இராமகிருஷ்ண பரமஹம்சர் விவேகானந்தருக்கு ஞானோபதேசம் செய்தார். உலகெல்லாம் சுற்றி வந்த விவேகானந்தர் மக்களுக்கு நல்லுரைகளைக் கூறினார். மக்களாகிய நாம் தினமும் சிவராமகிருஷ்ண ஜபம் செய்ய வேண்டும், ஸமர்த்த ராமதாஸர், சிவாஜி, பத்ராசல ராமதாஸர், கபிர்தாஸ், சூர்தாஸ், அப்பர், சுந்தரர், சம்பந்தர், மணிவாசகர், காந்தியடிகள் போன்ற மகான்கள் வாழ்ந்த நாட்களில், மக்கள் நம்பிகையிழந்த போதெல்லாம், நாமஜபம்தான் நாட்டில் புத்துணர்ச்சியை ஏற்படுத்தியிருக்கின்றது. மாந்தரின் பாவங்களையும் அதனாலான துன்பங்களையும் போக்கிக் கொள்ள, சிவராம, கிருஷ்ணாதி நாமங்களை விடப் பிராயச்சித்தம் வேறில்லை. கட்டுப்பாட்டுக்குலைவு, ஒருமைப்பாட்டுச் சிதைவு, பஞ்சம், மக்கள் தொகைப் பெருக்கம், ஒழுக்க நெறிக் குறைவு, தைரியமின்மை, ஆகியவற்றிலிருந்து, இந்த நாமஜபம் மக்களை நிச்சயமாகக் காப்பாற்றும் என்பது பெரியோர்களின் நல்லுரை என்று விவேகாநந்தர் கூறுகின்றார்.

இராமகிருஷ்ண பரமஹம்ஸரின் அருளாலும், ஆசியாலும், அந்தச் சீடபரம்பரை சாகோபசாகையாக உலகெல்லாம் வளர்ந்து வந்திருக்கின்றது. பரமஹம்சரின் பெயரிலே இயங்கி வரும் நிறுவனம் இலங்கையிலே ஆரம்பித்து ஐம்பதாண்டு பூர்த்தியாகும் பொன்னான வேளையிலே பொன் விழாக் கொண்டாடுவது மிக்க மகிழ்ச்சியைத் தருகின்றது.

இராமரது அருளும் கிருஷ்ணபகவானது சக்தியும் சேர்ந்த உருவமே இராமகிருஷ்ண பரமஹம்ஸர். அதனாற்றான் அந்த மகானுடைய பெயரால் இயங்கும் இராமகிருஷ்ண மடமும், கொழும்பில் ஆஸ்திகம் வளர்த்து வரும் இராமகான சபையும் நெடுங்காலமாகப் பரஸ்பர அன்புடனும் ஒருமைப்பாட்டுடனும் இணைந்து செயல்பட்டு வருகின்றன.

வருஷத்திலே 365 நாட்களும் வழிபாடுகளும் நாமஜபமும் விசேஷமாக ஜயந்திகளும், நவராத்திரி சிவராத்திரி போன்ற தினங்களில் பூஜைகளும், பல பெரியார்களின் சொற்பொழிவுகளும் இராமகிருஷ்ண ஆச்சிரமத்திலே நடைபெற்று வருகின்றன. அறிஞர்களான பல ஸ்வாமிஜிகள் சிறந்த முறையில் தொண்டாற்றி வந்திருக்கின்றனர் தொண்டு செய்து கொண்டும் வருகின்றார்கள்.

பலவாண்டுகளாகத் தலைவராக இருந்து இந்த நிறுவனத்தை நடத்தி வருகின்ற பிரேமாத்மானந்த மகராஜ் அவர்களுக்கும், அவருடன் ஒத்துழைக்கும் ஸ்வாமிஜிகளுக்கும் பொன்விழாக் கொண்டாடும் மங்களமான நேரத்திலே ஸ்ரீ ராம கான சபை அங்கத்தவர்களின் சார்பிலே நன்றியையும், மட்டற்ற மகிழ்ச்சியையும் தெரிவித்துக்கொள்கின்றேன்.

ஓம் பத்ரம் கர்ணேபிஹி ச்ருணு யாமதேவாஹ
ஓம் சாந்தி: சாந்தி: சாந்தி:

ப. வே. நாராயண சாஸ்திரிகள்

Swami Vivekananda

THE IMPACT OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON HINDUISM IN SRI LANKA

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Among the factors that contributed towards the national awakening of Sri Lanka, must be reckoned the historic visit of Swami Vivekananda to the Island. For various reasons the impact of the visit was greater on the Hindus than on the others. Vivekananda (1863-1902) visited Sri Lanka three times: the first time in 1893, while he was on his way to U.S.A. to participate in the Parliament of Religions at Chicago; he was then little known outside a small circle of admirers in India. As the author of **The Ramakrishna Movement in Sri Lanka** observes, during the Swami's stop over in Colombo in 1893, "no Hindu appears to have taken note" of him: the second visit was in 1897, while he was on his way back to his Motherland from the West, having electrified his audiences in U.S.A. and Europe by his personality and speeches; he was returning in triumph to his **Punya Bhumi**, having established a firm foothold in the West. Of his presence and performance in Chicago the New York **Herald** had observed: "He was undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions. After hearing him we feel how foolish it is to send missionaries to this learned nation". The third visit was in 1899, while he was sailing for the West the second time; he spent a day in Colombo meeting old friends. Vivekananda himself has recorded the events of the day in his Memoirs.

Any estimation of the impact of Vivekananda's visit to this country can properly be dated only from 1897. He stayed in the country for about ten days, travelling from Colombo to Kandy, Matale, Anuradhapura, Vavuniya and Jaffna. His visit to Jaffna was made before the construction of the railway to that part of the country. From all accounts the journey appears to have been rough and troublesome. But the **Parivrajaka**, the itinerant monk, who had travelled on foot all over India, to spread the message of the Master, probably enjoyed the coach journey to Jaffna, where he received a tumultuous welcome. The ten days he spent in Sri Lanka were hectic, as can be seen from contemporary accounts and his biographies published subsequently.

It is true that since the proceedings of the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, Vivekananda had over-night become a celebrity. Not only India but Asia as a whole took pride in his towering success. The Swami had visited China and Japan. News of his glory at Chicago spread far and wide. In fact Vivekananda himself was astonished at the speed with which news about him reached India. In a letter to his Madras Disciples written from Chicago he observed: "I am surprised that so much about me has reached you." To another adherent he wrote: "It is very strange that news of my Chicago lectures has appeared in the Indian papers; for whatever I do, I try my best to avoid publicity." Thus there was considerable amount of publicity about Vivekananda even before his visit to Sri Lanka. (Incidentally it may be remembered in this connection that Anagarika Dharmapala (1864-1933) of Sri Lanka too attended the Parliament of Religions at Chicago representing Buddhism. In a letter to Alasinga Permual of Madras, Vivekananda had this to say: "Dharmapala of Ceylon was one of the favourites..... He is a very sweet man, and we became very intimate during the Parliament." The Anagarika Dharmapala himself has referred to his conversations with Vivekananda in his writings. Naturally the Buddhists too would have been keenly interested in the events of the Parliament. Anagarika Dharmapala maintained close links with Bengal nationalists throughout his life.)

The Hindu **elite** of Sri Lanka, shared the elation and exuberance of their counterparts in India at the unprecedented success attained by Vivekananda in the West. They basked in the glory showered on the brilliant monk. But there was one other factor that made the Sri Lankan Tamils draw closer to the Swami : he had begun to catch the imagination of the South Indian **elite** even before he became an international personage. To quote from **The Life of Swami Vivekananda :**

> It was in Madras that many young men became his devoted adherents. It was here that he secured funds wherewith he was enabled to go to America. It was in Madras that the message of his Master gained a ready acceptance. It was here also, that his first work in India in the way of organisation and publication was commenced, and it was his Madrasi disciples who widely circulated his message even before his return from the West. "

From Colombo, Vivekananda was proceeding to Madras. The Madras Reception Committee had deputed Swami Niranjananda—a direct disciple of Ramakrishna and one of the first batch of monks who formed the monastic Order of Ramakrishna—to welcome Vivekananda when he arrived in Colombo. Thus to the Hindus of Sri Lanka were given the unique privilege of receiving first the returning 'conqueror.' Consequently one of Vivekananda's books came to be titled, **Lectures from Colombo to Almora.** Geographical proximity and deep-rooted cultural ties between the Tamils of Sri Lanka, especially of North Sri Lanka and South India have played an important part in making the Sri Lankan Tamils relatively more receptive to Ideas and Movements from India. From the time of Vivekananda's visit this receptivity grew in intensity reaching its apex in the Gandhian era. One can imaginatively comprehend the exhilaration with which the Hindu **elite** of Sri Lanka would have received the man who, in the words of an American journalist, " with his handsome face and magnetic presence and wonderful oratory " was being lionised by society.

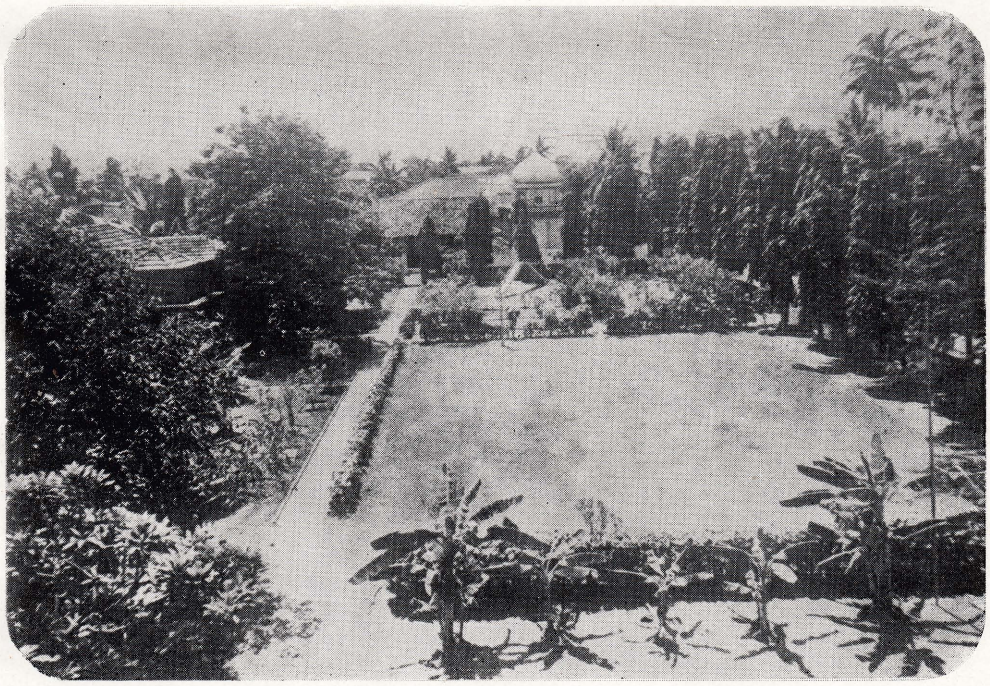
Considerable amount of information pertaining to Vivekananda's visit to Sri Lanka and the growth of the Ramakrishna Movement has been collected by Swami Virupakshananda and S. Ambikaipahan. The former has concentrated on available material in English and the latter in Tamil. Rather than describe the events over again I hope to analyse and hypothesize on the nature of Vivekananda's impact on Sri Lankan Tamils, and its possible consequences.

One of the most important contributions to the revitalization of Indian religious thought was his search for and propagation of the common bases of Hinduism. All major Hindu reformers from Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833) onwards had observed that sectarianism was the bane of Hindu society. To unify Hindu society, Vivekananda felt, one had to see the universality of Hinduism—Said the Swami in one of his lectures : " To find the common bases of Hinduism and to awaken the national consciousness in them. " In Vedanta he found the common bases of resurgent Hinduism. In his own words :

> " The Vedanta, whether we know it or not, has penetrated all the sects in India, and what we call Hinduism, this mighty banyan tree, with its immense and almost infinite ramifications has been throughout interpreted by the influence of the Vedanta. "

The voice is clear and its all embracing quality manifest. Both in India and Sri Lanka Hindu religious stirrings had begun decades before Vivekananda came on the scene. Hindu responses to the inroads of Islam and Christianity had at times been even quite virulent. In so far as Sri Lanka was concerned, Arumuga Navalar (1824-1879) had spearheaded a militant revivalist movement among the Saivites of Jaffna. Christian proselytization had gone on unabated in that part of the country for centuries. Navalar's intense efforts stemmed the tide and his robust counter attacks on Christian doctrines instilled confidence in the minds of Saivites. His influence was felt in Tamilnadu too which gratefully honoured him and acknowledged its indebtedness to his untiring service. Navalar's manifold activities had naturally stimulated the interest and evoked the admiration of people like Sir Mutu Coo-

Visit of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, President of The Republic of India



Aerial view of the Park with the Ashrama in the background

maraswamy (1834-1879) and Ponnambalam Ramanathan (1851-1930) who were prominent and influential men at the metropolis. Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan had referred to him as " The champion Reformer of the Hindus. " And yet all considered, Navalar was a provincial, functioning at a local level. Besides Navalar propagated Saiva Siddhanta, a religio-philosophical school largely confined to South India and North Sri Lanka. As a staunch Saivite he was critical of Vedanta as much as he was hostile to Christianity. Such an unflinching standpoint and unaccommodating attitude was perhaps necessary and inevitable in a traditional society which was fighting to preserve its identity. But the English educated elite in the towns probably preferred more flexibility in matters of religious belief and practices. To the rising middle class an inclusive outlook was more appealing than an exclusive orthdoxy.

In many ways Navalar can be compared to Dayananda Saraswathi (1824-1883) whose contemporary he was. If the watchword of Dayananda was ' Back to the Vedas ', Navalar's was ' Back to the Agamas '. As is well known Saiva Siddhanta recognizes eighteen Agamas to be supreme scriptures. The fundamentalist standpoint of Navalar would have appeared to many English educated ' moderns' very sectarian. In fact as early as 1857 Mutu Coomaraswamy had published a " Synopsis of the Saiva Siddhanta " in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Ceylon. His paper was based on **Sivagnanabotham** of Meikanda Thevar. In 1860 he gave a lecture on " Hindu Philosophy " at the R.A.S. In 1873 he had prepared the English translation of a few poems of Tayumanavar (1706-1744), a mystic poet who in the true tradition of mysticism sought to synthesize the Vedanta and Saiva Siddhanta schools of thought. (It is of some interest to note that both Ponnambalam Arunachalam and Ponnambalam Ramanathan translated verses of Tayumanavar into English and wrote about the poet.) The English title Mutu Coomaraswamy gave to his translation of Tayumanavar is revealing : **Tayumanavar or Hindu-Philosophic Poems of the Vedanta-Siddhantic School.** Having gone to Vedanta from Siddhanta, he next proceeded to translate in 1874 a Buddhist Text from the Pali : **Sutta Nipata or Dialogues and Discourses of Gotama Buddha.** The widening mental horizon can readily be perceived in the successive works of Mutu Coomaraswamy. The point to be noted is simply this : limiting oneself to the Siddhanta School would have been too much of a constraint. Hence the more liberal stance and attitude. Mutu Coomaraswamy who visited England twice, travelled widely in Europe and was the first Hindu and the first non-Christian Asiatic to have been admitted to the English Bar (1863) ; knighthood was conferred on him by Queen Victoria in 1874. His approach to Hinduism in particular and other religions in general was typical of the elite of his times.

It was essentially the English educated upper class that first responded to the vibrant speeches of Vivekananda. English was the medium of communication. It also enabled the preacher and the audience to reach out to an ever-widening populace and seek after universalism. In other words the teachings of Vivekananda were apposite for the elite of India and Sri Lanka who were on the threshold of the twentieth century. Revivalists like Navalar had to fight hard to preserve the identity of Hindus—whatever their sects may be their battle was primarily defensive. They had to prove that Christianity was unworthy. But Vivekananda's approach was entirely different. Following the teachings of his Master, he stressed the equality of all religions, " meaning thereby, by implication, that Hindu religion was in no way inferior to other religions. " At the same time its universalism was impeccable. Thus the Vedanta preached by Vivekananda accommodated all sects and creeds as equal and allowed enough room for double recognition : one could be a practising Saivite and at the same time be a Hindu in the broader sense. One could be an ardent Vaishnavite and yet be a Hindu in the larger sense of the word. Among the Hindus of Jaffna Saivism was the predominant school. Orthodox Saivites revelled in demolishing **Maya Vada** or Shankara Vedanta. But gradually Vedanta came to be tolerated if not accepted. To put it briefly, the impact of the teachings of Vivekananda and the message of the Ramakrishna Movement was, at least among the Tamil Hindus of Sri Lanka, not so much in making Vedanta acceptable to them in the strict sense of the term, but in making many of them less sectarian and doct-

rinaire. It also made them more responsive to their society and the world of politics.

It is logical to deduce that the teachings of Vivekananda would have influenced several individuals too. When Vivekananda arrived by boat in the Colombo harbour, "several leading Hindus went on board and brought him ashore in a Steam Launch. On landing at the jetty he was received by the Hindus headed by the Hon. P. Coomaraswamy and Mr. P. Arunachalam." Sir P. Ramanathan must have observed carefully the career of Vivekananda. Being a devout Saivite and normally not prone to the study and propagation of the **Bhagavad Gita**, Ramanathan undertook in 1904 the translation of that great Sanskrit work into Tamil. Likewise his deep interest in different systems of religious and philosophic thought—Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism, Islam and Judaism, might be traced to the liberating influence of Vivekananda. In 1898 and 1902 were published his two major works, the **Commentaries on St. Mathew and St. John.** He published these works under the pen name of Sri Parananda, which although it was the name of his guru, was never the less very similar to the names of the monks of the Ramakrishna Order. His lecture tour of U.S.A. was also very much on the lines of the Swami. The biographer of Ramanathan has this to say :

> "He it was who, following the trail set by Swami Vivekananda carried to the West the message of the East ..... His immense body of speeches and writings, commentaries and translations opened the eyes of the Western World to the vast treasures of spirituality and high philosophic thought that had hitherto remained a closed book to it."

In another place he makes the following observations :

> "He had heard how fruitful and far-reaching in its results was the work of Swami Vivekananda in the West and desired to follow it up himself. He felt he had a great mission to fulfil."

It must not be misunderstood that Vivekananda's influence was confined to the English educated class. On the contrary from the outset of his public life Vivekananda was particularly keen in reaching out to the massess. Reading his inspired letters from America we see him exhorting his admirers and disciples to popularize his and his Master's message among the ordinary people. In 1894 he wrote from Chicago to his disciples in Madras :

> "I do not require any help from India, I have plenty here. Employ the money you have in printing and publishing this short speech, and translating it into the vernaculars, throw it broadcast ; that will keep before us the national mind."

Over and over he was directing them to the area of mass education. To Alasinga Perumal he wrote in May 1894 :

> "I do not require any help. Try to set up a fund, buy some magic-lanterns, maps, globes, etc., and some chemicals. Get every evening a crowd of the poor and the low, even the pariahs, and lecture to them about religion first, and then teach them through the magic-lantern and other things, astronomy, geography, etc., in the dialect of the people. Train up a band of fiery young men... You must have a hold on the masses. Do not try to lead your brethern, but serve them."

Vivekananda's eagerness to educate the neglected poor and to serve them runs through all his letters and speeches like a theme song. His Madras disciples did their best in this matter. From contemporary accounts in the newspapers we gather that even before he reached Colombo and Madras his speeches were in print and were circulated widely. **The Ceylon Review** said this in its reportage : "His lectures, which have been reprinted, have an extensive circulation in India and Ceylon." In Jaffna where Vivekananda was accorded a grand ovation his speeches were immediately translated into Tamil and published. Mr. A. Muthuthamby Pillai (1858-1917) who had returned to Jaffna in 1893 after an absence of twenty years and had established

a printing press and publishing house, brought out in Tamil the quintessence of the Swami's speech within a few months. It was again Muthuthamby Pillai who brought out the Tamil translation of Ananda K. Coomaraswamy's speech at the Jaffna Hindu College in 1906. Vivekananda too had delivered his major speech in Jaffna at the Hindu College.

It was the idea of service by education that stirred the imagination of young idealists in Jaffna and elsewhere. Following Vivekananda other outstanding monks of the Ramakrishna Mission visited Sri Lanka: Shivananda, Trigunaitananda, Abhedananda, Ramakrishnananda, Sharvananda were among those who kept " bright the flame lit by Swami Vivekananda ". It was as a result of Vivekananda's impact at the local level especially in Jaffna and Batticaloa that Hindu education in the country received a tremendous fillip. It is true that Navalar had set the trail in this direction by establishing Saiva schools in Jaffna and Tamilnadu. But Navalar, conditioned by the circumstances under which he struggled, emphasized the Saiva character of the schools. With a greater emphasis on secular and modern ' type ' of education, Vivekananda put it in the following manner :

> " We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet. We must have life-building, man-making character-making assimilation of ideas. What we need is to study different branches of the knowledge that is our own and with it the English language and Western science. We need technical education and all else which may develop the industries, so that men instead of seeking for service, may earn enough to provide for themselves and save something against a rainy day. "

The Swami's call for such new type of education kindled the idealism of at least a few in Jaffna and elsewhere. T. Nagamuthu (1868-1932) who founded the Vaidyshwara Vidyalaya in 1913 and later handed over the institution to the Ramakrishna Mission was certainly influenced by Vivekananda ; likewise Swami Vipulananda who joined the Mission in 1922 was inspired by Swami Sharvananda who visited Jaffna frequently. Vipulananda's unique contribution to education is without doubt the result of Vivekananda's impact on the Tamil intellectuals of this country. Through savants like Nagamuthu and Swami Vipulananda Vivekananda's message was absorbed into the mainstream of twentieth century Tamil literature, when people who were influenced by this message of universalism were inspired to write poetry and fiction. This creative embodiment is perhaps the best testimony to the fruitful impact of Swami Vivekananda's visits to Sri Lanka.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MOVEMENT IN SRI LANKA

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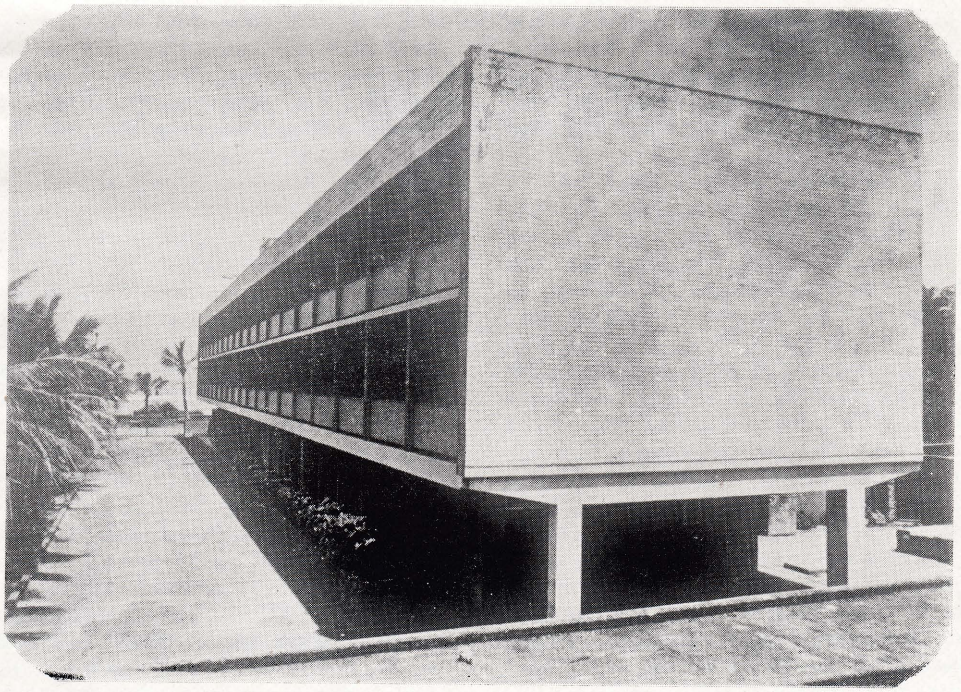
The impact of Hindu religious movements that arose in India in the nineteenth century on Sri Lanka was largely indirect. Evidence is meagre to show that the Hindu religious movements of the early nineteenth century had any desire to spread their message beyond the Indian sub-continent. The Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj were more concerned with immediate problems at home. While the former is more of a social reform movement the latter was a fighting movement to re-establish the predominance of Hinduism. Besides both were based more on the vedantic philosophy of Hinduism which had little attraction for South Indian and Sri Lankan Hindus. The Ramakrishna Movement did believe in a Pan-Hindu philosophy but was never sectarian ; its main purpose was to give new direction and re-interpret the philosophy of India to a much wider and larger audience. That is why it is more apt to say the movement had its origins in Chicago than at Belur. It had all the semblance of a national-religious movement.

When the message of the Ramakrishna movemenat spread across the continents, Sri Lanka had experienced nearly half a century of religious awakening. The Saiva Siddhanta School of thought championed by Arumuga Navalar, through the publication of Vernacular Literature, Catechism and schools helped to kindle a desire to revive the religion of the forefathers. Later it passed on to the English educated elite who organised themselves into societies and sustained the movement. But this movement was not organised on an Island-wide basis. Besides being sectarian in religious outlook it also appears to have had a regional bias, depending on the challenge offered by the Christian missionaries. The lustre of English education lured many a northern Hindu to the christianfold and hence the necessity to concentrate the activities of the movement in the North. In the metropolis, where the interest was only peripheral, the resident trading communities and leading government servants, built temples and conducted regular festivals and religious discourses. However by and large there lurked a sense of identity of religion to the whole personality of a Hindu. Historically therefore, the main contribution of Swami Vivekananda to the cause of Hinduism was the strength offered and confidence created among the Hindus to idenfity themselves, their whole personality with their religion. Such a message of Swami Vivekananda had been circulated in Sri Lanka long before he arrived in Sri Lanka in 1897—an year which is considered to be a convenient land mark for beginning the history of the Ramakrishna movement in Sri Lanka.

The Hindu Organ, published by the Jaffna Saiva Paripalana Sabhai had been regularly publishing the speeches and the interpretations given by Swami Vivekananda to European and American audiences as to the true nature of Hinduism. Hindu Organ had also entered into polemics over the performance of Swami Vivekananda in Christian lands, with the Christian Organ, Morning Star, published by the American Missionaries.

Swami Vivekananda's visit to the Island in January 1897, on his way back from America and Europe, and his address to audiences in Colombo, Kandy, Anuradhapura and Jaffna evoked such enthusiasm among the Hindus that they began to take much interest in the movement. Newspapers of the day gave prominence to his speeches and this gave additional fillip to the religious awakening. After the passing away of Vivekananda, religious societies were formed and named after him in Colombo, Jaffna, Manipay, Anuradhapura, Trincomalee and Batticaloa. In Jaffna a press, a book depot and a bilingual paper were started. The paper Vivekananda helped to disseminate the works of Vivekananda and other dis-

The reading room and the library



The cultural centre, Colombo

ciples of Ramakrishna among the Hindus. The Vivekananda societies established libraries and conducted religious discourses. They helped to popularise the movement among the educated group. Thus the movement at its embroynic stage appeared mostly in the garb of Vivekananda movement.

Following the footsteps of Vivekananda, Swami Shivananda and several Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order, visited Sri Lanka and conducted religious discourses all with the idea of setting up a branch of the mission in Sri Lanka. Of the sixteen direct disciples of Ramakrishna, at least eight of them visited Sri Lanka. Till 1930's the Colombo Vivekananda Society hosted the visiting Swamis.

Any direct involvement of the movement in Sri Lanka may be said to have commenced in 1917, in which year Swami Sharvananda, took over the management of Vannarponnai Vaidyeswara Vidyalaya. The movement became stabilised when Swami Vipulananda donned the robes of the Ramakrishna Order in 1922 and from that time onwards the movement made a steady progress.

A feature common to all modern religious movements was the emphasis laid on the education of the children. Ramakrishna movement too, like the Christian missionaries and other Hindu organisations in Sri Lanka began to concentrate more on the educational activity. The Eastern province was a virgin field where the movement began to put into practice its objectives. Swami Vipulananda, realising the backwardness of this region on matters of education, took over the responsibility of managing a number of Hindu schools and opened a few new schools. So intensified was their activity in this sphere that within four or five years, between 1925-1930, the mission came to manage fourteen schools, of which ten were in Batticaloa, two in Trincomalee and two in Jaffna. In order to provide elementary education in Tamil, a Tamil mixed school was opened at Wellawatte in February 1932. This was closed down in July 1933 as the one started by the Saiva Mangayar Kalagam in Wellawatte fulfilled the needs of the Tamil community. (RKM (CB) Report—July 1932-June 1933). The establishment of these schools was a great boon to the people of this region; otherwise only the wealthy were able to send their children either to Colombo or to Jaffna for their education. Mission schools provided education at elementary and secondary levels, in both English and Tamil. The Ramakrishna mission had twenty-six schools at the time Government enacted the " Assisted Schools and Training Colleges (Special Provisions) Bill" and took over the management of private and assisted schools on December 1, 1960. Of these twenty-six schools, nineteen were in Batticaloa, two in Jaffna, one in Lunugala, three in Trincomalee and one in Vavuniya. This operation enabled the Government to put into effect its policy of establishing a United System of Schools where every pupil will have equality of educational opportunity and will also be able to learn his or her own religion. (Administration Report of the Director of Education for 1960—Vol. VI A 119). It is still too early to assess whether the government has achieved its objectives.

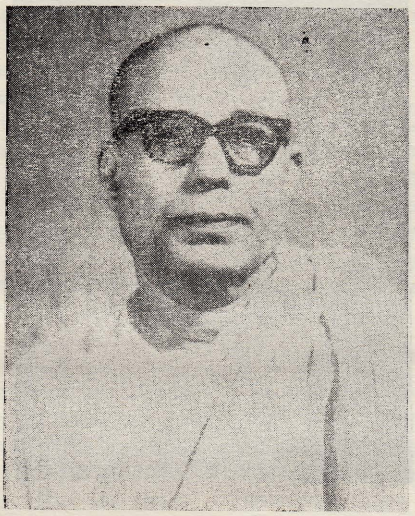
As the movement began to gain confidence, several people began to donate properties to the mission. They were held in trust and managed by Swami Vipulananda and Swami Sharvananda. As the necessity to give it a legal status was felt, Hon. M. M. Subramaniam, who represented Trincomalee Revenue District in the Legislative Council presented a Bill for the Incorporation of the Ramakrishna Mission (Ceylon Branch) on July 28, 1928. It was finally passed by the Legislative Council on July 4, 1929.

As some leading residents of Colombo showed interest in opening a centre in Colombo, Swami Sharvananda was sent to Sri Lanka. With the assistance given by the Ceylon Branch a new Ashrama was inaugurated on 23.10.1930. This Ashrama housed at No. 48, Hamers Avenue, Wellawatte, began to function as Headquarters of the Sri Lanka mission. The Headquarters was left in charge of a resident Swami and he was invested with the responsibility of overseeing the activities of the mission in Sri Lanka. As the activities of the mission increased rapidly, the need to have a permanent home to house the Ashrama, office and residence for the Swami in-Charge began to agitate the mission. In 1935, a piece of land was purchased at 44th Lane and a modest building was completed in 1936. During the second world war, for a brief period the mission's Headquarters was shifted to

Lunugala (April 1942) thence to Batticaloa (July 1942) and finally to the present site in July 1944. Since then the building programme of the mission loomed large and the mission, thanks to the enthusiastic munificence of its devotees and the Governments of India and Sri Lanka, was able to complete the International Cultural Centre in 1962 and the Swami .Vivekananda Memorial Hall in 1969. A modern madam (pilgrims rest) to to provide accommodation, food and other facilities to pilgrims who annually trek to the sylvan shrine at Kataragama was opened in 1953. This madam was left in charge of a resident Swami, until it was taken over by the Government in 1976. The madam accommodated not merely Hindus but all sections of the Sri Lankan Community which went on pilgrimage to Kataragama. It helped to bring together under one roof, people of various denominatons in a spirit of harmony and concord. It should be also observed at this juncture that Ramakrishna mission was the only institution of its kind in Sri Lanka that provided an opportunity to people to gather together shedding all their external apparent differences. As a recognition of the services of the movement, the Colombo Municipal Council in 1952 renamed the forty-third and forty-fourth Lanes as Vivekananda Road and Ramakrishna road, respectively.

Having been deprived of its educational and Kataragama Pilgrims' Rest activities, the mission now manages three orphanages, all at Batticaloa. Karaitivu Girls' Orphanage, Anaipanthy Sri Sarada Girls' Orphanage, Kalladi-Uppodai Boys' Students Home are the social institutions that are now in charge of the mission. A Sunday religious school was inaugurated in 1952 and this continues even to this day. Since 1968 the Mission also runs a Home for disabled labourers at Ampitiya, Kandy.

The mission within a short span of fifty years has achieved phenomenal success in Sri Lanka. It is largely due to the efficient and disciplined management of the mission controlled from Colombo, which in turn functions under the supervision of the parent mission. More than any other religious system in the world, Hinduism as it is practised and functions today is in dire need of an organisation of the type of this mission. It is all the more urgent in Sri Lanka's context. Self-sacrificing and disciplined Swamis are the only persons who could be trusted to carry out religious and social work with missionary zeal. The mission in Sri Lanka represents the only organised form of Hinduism in Sri Lanka.



LATE SWAMI SIDDHATMANANDA

Swami in Charge of Colombo Centre

1941-1950

LATE SWAMI ASANGANANDA

Swami in Charge of Colombo Centre

1933-1940, 1951-1953

THE TORCH-BEARERS

S. Ambalavanar

(*Retired Principal*)

Every religion has had its moment of history. The moment of history that would be common to all religions was an event that occurred in the precints of the Dakshineswara temple in the closing years of the nineteenth century. This was a temple dedicated to the worship of the Mother of the Universe on the banks of the broad and rippling Ganges near Calcutta. The event was one of cosmic proportions which advanced the progress of the human race. The phenomenon was centred in the personality of an illiterate peasant of Bengal who was Thakur to the devout and Sri Ramakrishna to all others.

The event was the revelation of a richer truth that was conceived in the deep silence of the Panchavati. In relation to this event, the spiritual evolution of man stands divided neatly into two parts, the pre and the post Dakshineswara eras.

A bewildering discord of conflicting creeds was transformed by the magic touch of the Master into a symphony worthy of the aspirations of the human race. It was an integration of amazing simplicity. But its realization called for much undoing and redoing. The Master lived his life in total awareness of the presence of God. The effulgence of his sadhana and the beauty and music of his words drew to him an inner orbit of youthful disciples. He picked them with great care and they came from a wide spectrum of life in Calcutta.

There was Rakhal son of a millionaire, affectionately called, Raja, who became the first president of the Ramakrishna Mission. His disciples formed a galaxy of scholastic monks whose insight and erudition won the acclamation of the leaders of contemporary thought in the West. There was Naren, the versatile genius who later became the great awakener of Asia. Then there was Latu, the miracle boy—a mere domestic who knew not how to read or write, but displayed the highest wisdom in all its glory. There were sixteen of them who were ordained to form the nucleus of a new apostalic order by the Master himself. They drank deep from the fountain of enlightenment that flowed from him. They were the torch-bearers of the light of Dakshineswar—the harbingers of harmony Samthood came on them with rare grace. Renunciation and service were their watchwords.

The Sri Lanka centre of the Mission owes its inspiration to the visits of four of these direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. Their visits, like that of the great Asokan prince, several centuries earlier, have left beehind vortices of spiritual ideals which are today beacons of bliss to thousands of souls in this island.

The first to arrive in 1897 was Swami Vivekananda, the hero of Hindu renaissance. The island stood hushed by the magnificence of his spiritual lustre. The thousands who thronged the entrance to the harbour felt an overwhelming fascination which defied, description. Some prostrated in adoration, others knelt in worship, others bowed in homage to the majesty of his personality. Shouts of joy rent the air. The more dauntless broke the bonds of security, replaced the horses of his landau with strands of cord and dragged it all the way to his residence. It is significant to note that one of the leaders of this unscheduled activity, became in later life the first prime Minister of Sri Lanka.

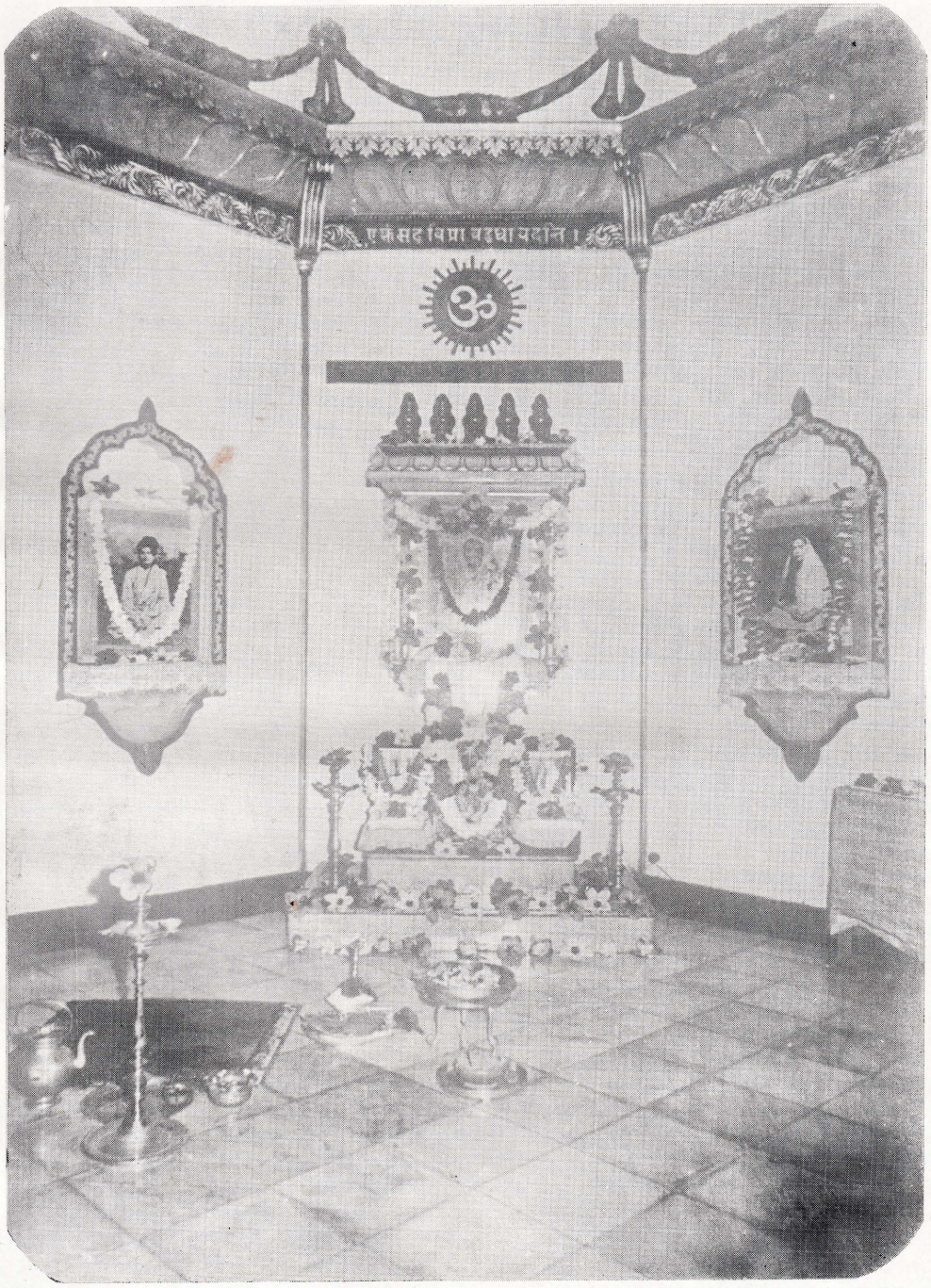
Swami Niranjananandaji another direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna arrived in Colombo at the same time to meet the leader who was returning after his triumphs in the West. He belonged to the inner circle and was elevated to the sublime position of Iswarakoti by the Master himself. He was tall and handsome and bore seraphic smile. He looked every

inch a saint. The presence of these two brothers and especially the eloquent speeches of Swami Vivekananda, kindled in the minds of his listeners an urge to start a centre to disseminate the message of the Master. They appealed to the Swamiji for help.

In response to this appeal, Swami Shivanandaji, lovingly called Mahapurushaji as a tribute to the purity of his character, arrived in Colombo in 1897. He laid the spiritual foundations of the Colombo Ashram by his authoritative exposition of his Masters message His stay was short but he left a lasting impact on the religious development of this island. As President of the Ramakrishna Mission, this venerable sage was the person who piloted the Colombo centre during its formative years. Let us not forget that it was during his incumbency as the Head of the Mission that some of the finest sons of Sri Lanka joined the Ramakrishna Monastic order and brought great honour to their motherland. Let us not forget that most of the members of the Ramakrishna Brotherhood who adorned the Colombo centre by their matchless devotion to ideals, like Swami Vipulanandaji, Swami Avinashanandaji, Swami Asanganandaji, Swami Sidhatmanandaji and the present head of the Ramakrishna Mission in Sri Lanka were all initiates of Mahapurushi Maharaj and received their training at his feet. It was through him that they had glimpses of the light of Dakshineswar, and thereby inherited a share of the fabulous riches of Kamarpukur. Their dedication to him was unrivalled. If one were to ask any of them about Mahapurushaji, one would not fail to note a quiver in their voice, their faces would flush and light up with joy and eyes glisten with a rare limpidity and one would be dumbfounded.

In the year 1934, another torch-bearer arrived in this island. He was Swami Vignanandaji, the last of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. He was a tall and well-built person in his late sixties, with delicate features. He was somewhat unusually attired wearing several overcoats in deepening shades of ochre. There was a distinct aura of sancity about his personality. His mere presence would inspire instant meditative moods of stillness. He had acquired this quality from the Master himself, when as a young undergraduate he was challenged by him to a bout of wrestling and was humbled in defeat by his frail opponent. He was a talented engineer, who sacrificed a brilliant career to follow the footsteps of the Master in the rugged paths of asceticism. However, the beautiful temple of Sri Ramakrishna at the Belur Math stands as a monument to his skill. He was a man of few words, but when he spoke in English, the elegance of his diction showed his mastery of the language. His blessings can even now be felt at the Colombo ashram as a fragrance of rare value.

The present celebration is an occasion dedicated to the memory of these grand personages whose inspiration and blessings have sustained the centre through many a stress and storm. Structural frameworks of institutions have often proved to be transitory. Others may lay hands on them. Ideals and inspired concepts are everlasting. To keep them alive let us bow our heads in homage to the memory of the great ones who set alight the flame of idealism which this great institution represents. The Colombo centre of the Mission has an unbroken record of sweetening the lives of thousands of devotees of all communities and creeds for a period of fifty years. It is thus fulfilling a divine purpose particularly in the present state of turbulence in which we are living. Let us on this occassion, give expresion, however inadequately, to our deep sense of gratitude for all that we have received from this institution and invoke the blessings of Sri Guru Maharaj on this beautiful haven of happiness, peace and tranquility in the City of Colombo.



The Shrine Room

HISTORY, ACTIVITIES AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE COLOMBO CENTRE

K. Subramaniam B.A. (Lond.) M.A. (Cey.)

Retired Government Accountant, Sri Lanka

Ramakrishna mission and math are twin aspects of a single world-wide religious movement. Its founder was not Sri Ramakrishna, although the mission is now known by his name. Nevertheless he is the central figure of the movement and its activities. Any account of the Ramakrishna Mission or Order without reference to its inspirer would be like enacting the play of Hamlet without its central figure, Hamlet. It is therefore appropriate that we refer, briefly to this world figure and Mahatma, before we trace the movement's origin and growth, its ideals and aims and its impact on the life of Sri Lanka.

India the birth place of several rishis, saints and sages from ancient times was blessed with the birth of a spiritual child in a poor Brahmin family in Calcutta on 17th February, 1836. This was Sri Ramakrishna who without even a semblance of academic education became later a storehouse of spiritual wisdom and power. When the boy attained school-going age he was admitted by his elders to an elementary school. But the boy was quite indifferent to studies and he eventually dropped out of the school, in spite of his elder brother's insistence on his continuing the studies to equip himself with some learning in order to meet the physical needs and problems of life. He innocently asked one day his brother " Brother, what shall I do with a mere bread-winning education ? ".

The next phase of an eventful life began with his being inducted sometime after 1855 as officiating priest of Mother Kali, the presiding Deity of Dakshineswar Temple. He performed his daily pujas with care and devotion to the Mother of the Universe. He was not an ordinary priest merely following routine and external worship. He became so infatuated with spiritual love for the Divine Mother that he developed a burning desire to have a vision of the Mother. His conception of the Deity behind the stone image was different from that of others. For him, the Divine Mother was none other than Brahman, the all-pervasive Reality of the Universe. He was determined to have a vision of the Mother even by sacrificing his life. For days on end he would bitterly weep and cry like a child crying for its earthly mother. His idea was to play and talk to the Divine Mother in the manner of a child playing and talking to its earthly mother in real flesh and blood.

Days rolled on and his agony at not being blessed with a vision of the Mother, in spite of incessant and tearful prayers, became so unbearable that one day he seized a sword lying beside the image of the Mother and was about to cut himself. Suddenly the Mother revealed Herself to her beloved divine child. The God-intoxicated priest was so overwhelmed with ecstasy on seeing the vision that he fell on the ground momentarily unconscious and oblivious of the outside world. This was his first grand spiritual experience. This incident is illustrative of two points.

(*i*) The immense power of faith in and love for God. Jesus Christ once told a disciple " If you have faith even to the extent of a mustard seed and say unto the mountain, be thou removed, it shall obey you " Ramakrishna often impressed on his disciples and seekers after God the necessity to love God thousand-fold or more than we love our wives and children. The importance of love for God was stressed by Jesus Christ and other God-realised men also. The idea seems to be that we cannot love God and Mammon together.

(*ii*) The usefulness of idol worship in certain instances. It is however not a sine qua non for all.

Another important event in Sri Ramakrishna's life was his marriage. It was not a marriage in the physical sense but a spiritual marriage. Anyone familiar with his spiritual life history knows how he and his spiritual wife lived like 'Sivam and Shakti'. Sri Ramakrishna used to exhort his disciples to look upon every woman as their mother. He himself set the example. Sri Ramakrishna, Wife (Holy Mother) and Swami Vivekananda are regarded as a sort of Trinity by the Mission.

Mission's Origin, Growth and Ideals

The inspiring founder of the Ramakrishna Mission was Swami Vivekananda, the first and foremost of the direct disciples of the Master who transferred wholesale to his beloved disciple his spiritual powers, before his release from earthly life. Swami Vivekananda possessed a unique and well-integrated personality which fitted him eminently to broadcast far and wide the Master's message and vedanta which is the essence squeezed out of the vedas, some portions of which are confusing to a casual reader. He was a spiritualist of a high order, a fine humanist, a patriot-saint, a genuine socialist, a man-making, character-building and nation-building educationist, all rolled into a charming and dynamic personality. The chosen disciple to whose care and leadership the Master, before his departure from his earthly sojourn, entrusted his young disciples, readily took charge of them and organised them into a monastic Order of monks with a new orientation, different from the traditional band of monks. Sri Ramakrishna's emphasis was on renunciation, service and God-realisation. The service aspect was implicit in his teachings but he did not elaborate on it. Swami Vivekananda who understood the Master and his teachings better than his brother-monks insisted on their engaging themselves on spiritual as well as secular work in selected fields, such as provision of education, medical facilities and relieving of distress where necessary. The brother monks who took the view that their sole aim was self-realisation as taught by the Master at first demurred to their leader's suggestion. But the superior persuasive power and the spiritual wisdom of the leader prevailed and all submitted to his authority in the matter.

In 1897, the Association called the Ramakrishna Mission Association was started. Two years later in 1899 the Swami on his return from the West established the Ramakrishna Math at Belur in Bengal under a deed of Trust known as the Belur Math Trust which received government sanction. Since then the Missions activities expanded by leaps and bounds, by grace of the Divine Mother of the Universe whose favourite child was Sri Ramakrishna. There are now in India and other parts of the world well over 100 branch centres, in addition to the Headquarters at Belur. These centres are manned by educated and well-disciplined monks whose self-less and dedicated services to humanity are a matter of legitimate pride to the Mission. In order to evaluate and appreciate the type of work undertaken by these monks, it is necessary to refer to the Memorandum of Association of the Ramakrishna Mission.

(*a*) To impart and promote the study of vedanta and its principles as propounded by Sri Ramakrishna and practically illustrated by his own life, and of comparative theology in its widest form.

(*b*) To impart and promote the study of the arts, sciences and industries.

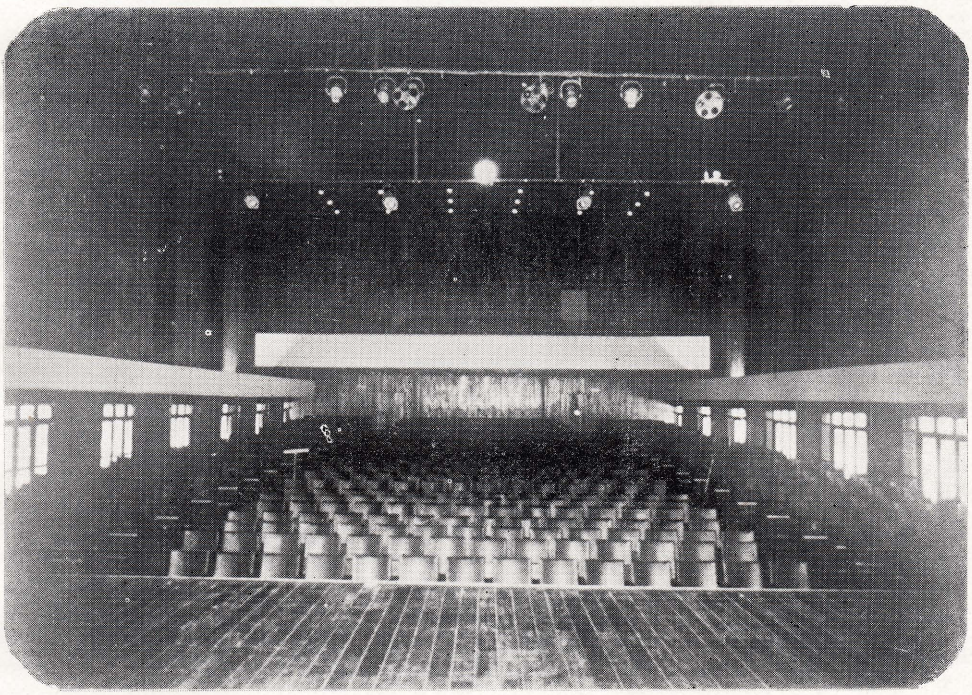
(*c*) To train teachers in all branches of knowledge above-mentioned and enable them to reach the masses.

(*d*) To carry on educational work among the masses.

(*e*) To establish, maintain, carry on, and assist schools, colleges, orphanages, workshops, laboratories, hospitals, dispensaries, houses for the infirm, the invalid and the afflicted, famine relief work and other educational and charitable works and institutions of a like nature.

(*f*) To print and publish and to sell or distribute, gratuitously or otherwise, journals, periodicals, books or leaflets that the Association may think desirable for the promotion of its objects.

Front view of the Colombo Ashrama



Inside View of the Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Hall, Colombo

(g) To carry on any other work which may seem to the Association capable of being conveniently carried on in connection with and calculated directly or indirectly to promote any of the above-mentioned objects.

Admission to the Ramakrishna Order is not an easy matter. Only unmarried young men above 18 and below 25 years of age are eligible as undergraduates to membership and in the case of graduates the admission age is 30. A minimum educational qualification of the S.S.L.C. or its equivalent standard is necessary. The applicants should take the vow of celibacy, chastity and other vigorous requirements are insisted on. There is a pre-probation period of one year, and eight years of probation before the spiritual aspirants are admitted to the Order of the Monks. It is no wonder that the Mission Monks selected and trained under such strict conditions acquit themeselves creditably in the mission work.

A great international centre of culture was established sometime ago in Calcutta. It conducts occasionally religious and humanitarian seminars. It also publishes valuable religious journals for the benefit of mankind.

Mission work in Sri Lanka

It is through Swami Vivekananda the bearer and broadcaster of Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual message that Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) came to know the teachings and life of a great spiritual giant of the 19th century. The Swami first visited Colombo in May 1893 on his way to America. His second visit was in January 1897 on his way back to India from the West. This time he visited Colombo, Kandy, Anuradhapura and Jaffna, delivering lectures and replying to addresses by the public. At Hindu College, Jaffna he delivered a lecture on religion which made a deep and profound impression in the hearts of the people. The Ramakrishna movement in Sri Lanka took shape on this occasion in a small way. It is understood that the Swami paid a third visit also to Sri Lanka in June 1899 on his second trip to the West. Thereafter, Swami Shivananda another direct disciple of the Master came to review the work done here by some local trustees appointed on an ad hoc basis. While this small-scale mission work was being carried on as an interim arrangement, some leading Hindu residents of Colombo persuaded the Mission in India to establish a permanent centre in Ceylon. The Mission acceded to the request and a centre was established on 10.10. 1930 as an Ashrama at No. 48, Hamers Avenue, Wellawatte. For financial reasons, the Ashrama was shifted to No. 49, Sri Wickrema Road (Now I.B.C.S. Road). Subsequently the present Math at No. 40, Ramakrishna Road, Colombo 6, was established. Swami Ghanananda was the first Swami-in-charge appointed in 1931. He was succeeded by others. The present Swami-in-charge Prematmananda took charge from his predecessor in 1954.

Over the last 3 decades the Mission has made rapid progress in its manifold activities. Kadirgama Madam was established some years ago. The Mission through this Madam situated in a jungle area where no lodging and food facilities are available rendered charitable and philanthropic service to the numerous pilgrims of different communities visiting the shrine at Kadirgamam in and out of season. Most of the pilgrims were provided free board and lodging. Only the affluent pilgrims who could afford payment made voluntary payments. No demand was made from the pilgrims. But this humanitarian service was terminated recently when the Madam was taken over by the Government.

The Mission put up during the last 3 decades an up-to-date hostel in which students were provided with board and lodging at nominal rates. This magnanimous service had to be abandoned when Government rationed rice and other foodstuffs. The Mission also built a large Hall with modern appliances and amenities which is mainly used for religious functions. Occasionally it is let for other peaceful purposes also. Schools and orphanages were established in places like Jaffna, Batticaloa, Trincomalee. The schools were run efficiently and the students in these schools received education with a religious back-ground. In 1960 these schools were taken over by the Government. The orphanages are being maintained and managed well. A special feature of the Mission's salutary activities at the Math is the Sunday School. Hundreds of young students of either sex receive religious education on Sundays. The eoungsters are encouraged in their studies by bying awarded several prizes annually.

The Mission runs a free library where books on religion, philosophy and allied subjects are available. Monthly/quarterly religious and philosophical magazines are found in this library. Daily newspapers of Ceylon and India are also available. This library is open to all irrespective of caste or creed.

The Mission has also provided minor recreational facilities to children. There is a miniature park wherein are sited on one side, the hostel (now guest house) the spacious Hall and the Library.

In a corner of the park is a playground with a glide, swings and see-saw for children's recreational activities. Recreation and physical exertions are necessary for the development of a healthy body and mind. It is in keeping with a Latin tag, mens sana in corpore sano (healthy mind in a healthy body). Swami Vivekananda in his patriotic moments used to exhort the youth of India to play even football to build a nation of virile and muscular men.

In the small hall attached to the Math the Swami-in-Charge, as opportunities offer, arranges lectures and musical entertainments (Vocal with instrumental accompaniments) on religious topics which are a fairly regular feature. In the Chapel (shrine) are installed pictures of Sri Ramakrishna (Master), Sarada Devi (Holy Mother) and Swami Vivekananda. Daily Pujas are conducted which are attended by devotees of both sexes. Some of the devotees practise meditation in their spare moments and also immediately after the evening pujas. Group devotional singing is a regular feature during prayer meetings. In short, a holy atmosphere pervades in and around the chapel.

Mission works' impact on Sri Lanka

The burden of this article as implied in its caption is the impact or influence of the Ramakrishna movement on Sri Lanka (its citizens). Long before the establishment of the Ceylon Branch centre, the Tamil community of the country had come in contact with vedantic ideology and its principles through the forerunner of the movement Swami Vivekananda. Since his visit to us Vivekananda societies sprang up in places like Colombo, Jaffna, Trincomalee. These societies are even now doing valuable service to the cause of Hinduism. These centres may not come under the jurisdication of the Ramakrishna Mission. All the same, they are complementary to the Mission in promoting a healthy religious atmosphere.

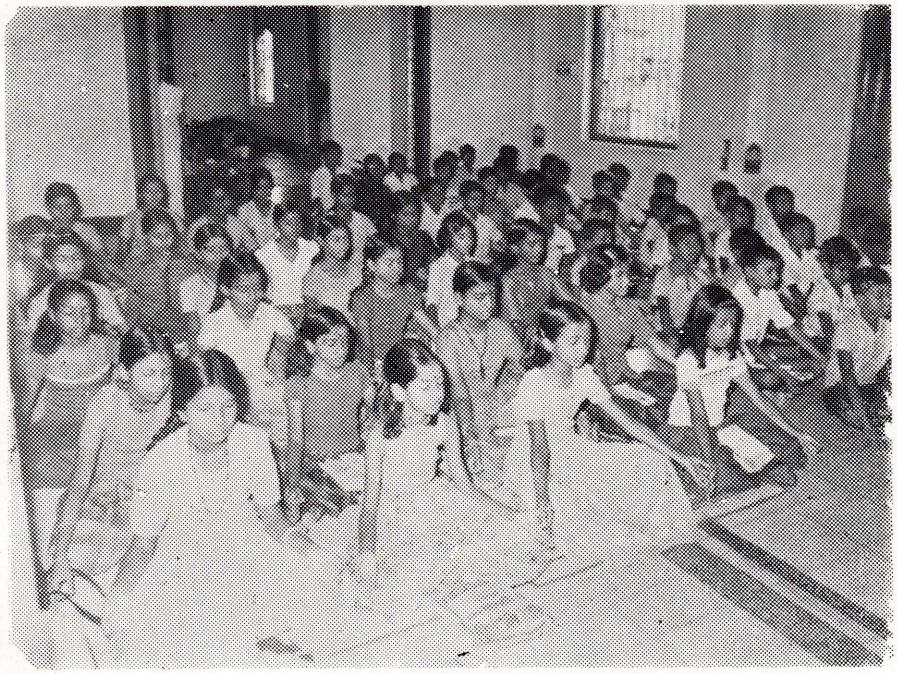
The scope and objectives of the Ramakrishna Movement have been outlined in the Memorandum of Association referred to above. The main thrust of the movement is towards spiritualism and social service. On the spiritual side the Mission has achieved much and is doing a lot as briefly stated in the foregoing sections of this article. The Mission's work is intended for the benefit of all irrespective of any racial or parochial considerations.

One item of social work enthusiastically undertaken by the Mission is relief work in Sri Lanka. In times of national and natural disasters the Mission does its utmost to relieve distress and suffering. The 1978 cyclone which caused colossal damage in Batticaloa and other places is a case in point. The Mission rose to the occasion and did a splendid job of relief work.

At the Batticaloa Centre of the Mission, there is a resident Swami. Religious and Cultural services are provided on lines similar to those obtaining at Colombo Centre (Headquarters). Regular pujas are conducted, religious and cultural lectures are arranged when convenient and library facilities are also provided. Sunday school is a regular feature as in Colombo. In addition, there is an agricultural farm where the inmates of the Boys' Home are taught scientific methods of agriculture and animal husbandry.

The most humanitarian and desperately-needed desideratum is the establishment and maintenance by the Mission with Government grant of 3 Homes for the orphans and destitute children. One Home is for boys and 2 for girls. Free board, lodging and education are provided to all the children. The children of the Boys' Home, in addition to acadamic education, are trained in agriculture so that they can become self-reliant and useful citizens. The children of the Girls' Homes are taught sewingt spinning and other occupational subjecs, suited to them.

Staff of the Ramakrishna Mission Sunday School 1964



Sunday School Students in Meditation

கொழும்பு,

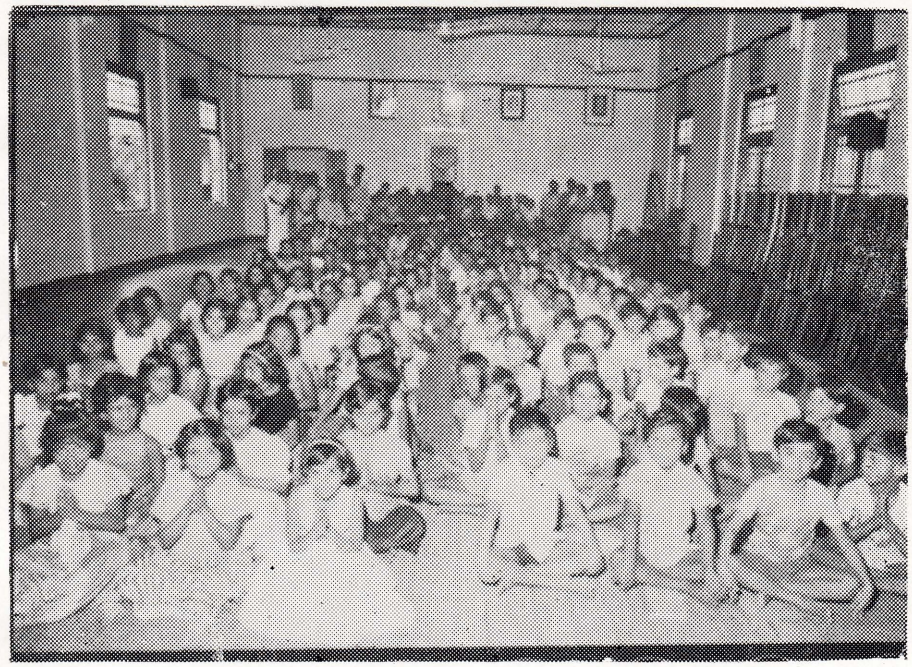
ஸ்ரீ ராமகிருஷ்ண சங்க சமயப் பாடசாலை மாணவர்

கொடி கீதம்

ஜயஜய ராமகிருஷ்ணய நமோ நம:
ஜயஜய ஸத்குரு தேவா
நாராயண ப்ரஹ்ம மஹேச்வர ரூபா
கிருஷ்ணய நமோ நம: — ராம
கிருஷ்ணய நமோ நம:
ஆதி சக்தி அருள் ஞானசாகரா
மாதா சாரதை நாதா
பணிவோம் அவர்திருப் பாதம்!
பகர்வோம் அவர்திரு நாமம்!
புரிவோம் அவர்திருப் பணியே!
வீரந ரேந்திரர் வியந்திட்ட போதா!
தாரணி போற்றுந் தயாளா!
ஜயஹே ஜயஹே ஜயஹே
ஜயஜய ஜயஜய ஹே
ஜயஜய ஸத்குரு தேவா!

ஸ்ரீமதி புவனேஸ்வரி அருணாசலம்

Students of Sarada Bala Mandir learning Bhajan



General Assembly of Sunday School Students

Before vedantism as practised and taught by Sri Ramakrishna was introduced to Sri Lanka by Swami Vivekananda and the Ramakrishna Mission, it was not a popular ideology among the masses. The Hindus of Sri Lanka are for centuries reared mainly in the traditions of Saiva Siddanta which is another aspect of Hinduism and which even now has a strong hold on the people. After all there is no basic difference between these two sects of Hinduism. Hindus worship different deities like, Siva, Visnu, Kali, etc., but they know in their hearts that these different names and forms of the nameless and formless represent one Truth. As stated in the Vedas, Truth is one but sages call it by different names. In fact all religions theistic or non-theistic are at one in respect of the goal.

The Ramakrishna movement from its inception in Ceylon has had a fascinating appeal to the masses. Sri Lanka has contributed its quota of Monks to the Order. First (perhaps) to join the Mission was no less a person than late Swami Vipulananda. He was followed by Swami Prematmananda the present Swami-in-charge of the Ceylon Branch Centre and Swami Kutastanananda.

Another Swami who joined the Order was alte Swami Sarvatitananda popularly and affectionately known as Kadirgama Swami. Still another Swami known to the writer is Swami Jeevanananda who is also popularly known as Batticaloa Swami. Recently two young boys, Nithiananda Sarma an engineer and Raj Kumar (G.C.E. A.L.) and another youth from Batticaloa, Muttucumaru, joined the Order of Monks. It is likely that some other young boys who are are now school-going will follow suit in due course.

This contribution of monks by Sri Lanka to the Ramakrishna Movement is a measure and appreciaton of the value of the services rendered by the said Movement to Sri Lanka. On an over-all review of the manifold activities of the Misson, it is no exaggeration to state that the contribution made by Ramakrishna Mission to the life of Sri Lanka is very praise worthy, esteemable and commendable.

Sunday School at Colombo Centre

Special mention has to be made of the Sunday School conducted in our Colombo Centre. His Holiness Srimat Swami Asanganandaji the then Vice President of this Institution, realizing the importance and urgency of the right type of moral and religious education for our younger generation of this country started this religious School on Krishna Jayanthi Day in the year 1952, with 15 children. Gradually the number increased upto 500 and more on roll. This school continues to function throughout the years inspite of numerous difficulties.

School maintains attendance registers and record of work. Syllabus is drawn up for all the classes. Children are divided into grades according to the School Grades up to Grade 10. What we are endeavouring in our Sunday lessons is to guide the youngsters to cultivate proper values of life and to develop right attitudes.

Bhagavad Gita, Vedic Slokas, Hymns of Saiva Saints, Epic stories and the philosophy of religions find a significant place in the scheme of studies. Sanskrit is also taught in order to make them understand our scriptures correctly.

Students give public recitals of devotional music and stage plays depicting scenes from epics and life of Saints.

Our hope and prayers are that the children who go out of this Sunday School will be useful and distinguished citizens wherever they go by their conduct, behaviour and character imbibed from the training they have received in our School.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION AND VAIDYESHWARA VIDYALAYA

S. Ambikaipakan

Retired Principal

Vaidyeshwara Vidyalaya was the first institution to be taken over by Ramakrishna Mission in Sri Lanka and when the Mission is celebrating its Golden Jubilee it will be useful to give an account of its history and its rapid development under the fostering care of the Mission.

The Vaidyeshwara Vidyalaya was started by the late Mr. T. Nagamuthu who was a teacher and warden at Jaffna Hindu College. He was a man of sturdy independence and when he resigned from the staff of Hindu College, he wanted to form an institution where he could put into practice his ideals of education, unhampered by external interference. In his noble undertaking he was ably assisted by Messrs. Ponnusamy Chettiar, V. Vinasithamby Udayar and 'Vivekanandan' Velupillai.

The Vidyalaya was started in April 1913 and was first housed in a storeyed building belonging to the Sivan Temple, the Manager of which at the time was the late Ponnusamy Chettiar. The ideals which stirred Mr. Nagamuthu could be easily seen from the name he gave to the institution. He did not want to associate it with any personality and so he gave it the name of the presiding deity of the adjoining Sivan Temple. Sri Vaithilingam Chettiar who founded the Sivan Temple during the Dutch period came from the Chola country and he must have had the name of the famous Vaidyeshwaran Temple of his country in mind, when he gave the name Vaidyeshwaran to the temple built by him in Jaffna.

The land in which the main hall stands belongs to the Vidathaltivu Pillaiyar Temple in the Mannar District and the trustee of the temple at the time of the founding of the Vidyalaya was the late Sri Vinasithamby Udayar. It was he who gave the land to Mr. Nagamuthu for founding the school.

Mr. Velupillai, known as 'Vivekanandan' Velupillai, through his devotion to the ideals of Swami Vivekananda, played an important part in the life of Jaffna at one time. He started a school on the Pannai Road, to commemorate the visit of Swami Vivekananda to Jaffna. This Vidyalaya was shifted to the premises of the Vaidyeshwara Vidyalaya and functioned as a separate school till it was merged with the Vaidyeshwara Vidyalaya in 1951. He also started a Press called the Vivekananda Press, which is still in existence. It was he who started the Jaffna Mutual Benefit Fund to promote the economic welfare of Jaffna.

The late Mr. Nagamuthu got the services of Mr. V. Casipillai, Crown Proctor of Jaffna, as the first Manager of the Vidyalaya. The late Mr. Casipillai was one of the leading public figures of his time and took an active part in all public movements. He was one of the founders of the Jaffna Hindu College and took an active part in welcoming Swami Vivekananda to Jaffna.

The late Mr. Nagamuthu had to run the institution without Government recognition or aid for five years. He had to face opposition from unexpected quarters.

At this time interest in the Ramakrishna Mission was created in Jaffna by the visits of Swami Sharvanandaji who was then the head of the Ramakrishna Mission, Mylapore. The public reception accorded to Swami was held at Vaidyeshwara Vidyalaya and he delivered many lectures there. In all these activities the Vidyalaya staff took an active part. Further when Pandit Mylvaganam who later became Swami Vipulananda became a teacher at St. Patrick's College, a Vivekananda society was founded in Jaffna and his residence became its headquarters.

Mr. Nagamuthu who was keen on putting his school on a permanent footing and who had heard of the good work done in India by the Ramakrishna Mission through his brother, T. Saravanamuthu, M.A., M.Sc., a graduate of the Calcutta University, decided to hand-over the school to the Ramakrishna Mission. Swami Sharvanandaji took it over on behalf of the Mission in 1918 and thus the foundation for the Ramakrishna Mission in Sri Lanka was laid with the taking over of this school. As there was no branch of the Ramakrishna Mission in Ceylon, Swami Sharvanandaji gave the responsibility for managing the school to a local committee. The late Mr. A. Canagaratnam, a nephew of the late Mr. Casipillai, and one time member of the Legislative Council became the Manager of the Vidyalaya.

With the return of Swami Vipulanandaji to Sri Lanka after being ordained a Monk in 1925 a new lease of life was given to educational activities of the Mission in Sri Lanka. He became the Manager of the Mission Schools and Vaidyeshwara Vidyalaya came under the direct management of the Mission. One of the headmasters of the school was Sri Raman Nambiar who later became a monk of Ramakrishna Mission under the name of Swami Nisreyasananda. During this period, the Vidyalaya became the hive of Mission activities. Swami Avinashanandaji joined Swami Vipulanandaji in these activities. An orphanage was started in the Madam on the Pirappamkulam road of which the trustee was the late Mr. Thiruchittampalam. In all these activities the late Mr. Kalaipulavar K. Navaratnam played an important part. Brahmachari Sivadas (later Swami Paripurananda) and brother Navaratnam (later Swami Kutastananda) helped the Swamis in running the school and students' home.

My direct contact with the Mission began when I joined the staff of Shivananda Vidyalaya, Batticaloa in January, 1934 at the request of Swami Vipulanandaji. My stay at Batticaloa was productive of great good inspite of the frequent attacks of Malaria. Swami Vipulanandaji aimed at developing Shivananda into an ideal residential institution which could attract students from all parts of the island. He was a versatile teacher and could handle any class from the Kindergarten to the University. Living with him was an education by itself. Mr. P. Ragupathy who was then headmaster of Vaidyeshwara Vidyalaya wanted to go to his father-in-law's school at Karampan and requested the Swami to send me to fill his place. I was appointed headmaster of Vaidyeshwara Vidyalaya in October 1935 and continued to remain there till May, 1968. During this long period I had the unfailing support of two of my assistants, Messrs. C. Vyramuttu and T. Seenivasagam. Kalaipulavar K. Navaratnam's valuable advice and support were always available. When I joined the Vidyalaya it was a Junior secondary school with seven teachers and about 150 children. The school building constituted of only the hall which was partitioned for accommodating the classes. There was another shed to house the primary School, the Vivekananda Vidyalaya.

By the grace of Almighty and the encouragement given by Swami Vipulanandaji the school began to make rapid progress. We got good results at the J.S.C. examinations and in 1938 we established a record by securing hundred percent success at J.S.C. examination. The next landmark in the history of the school was the starting of the S.S.C. classes in 1942. We made a good start by producing cent percent results in the first year (1943) at the S.S.C.

Owing to the increase in numbers additional accommodation became urgent. We succeeded in getting the adjoining land from the Sivan Temple authorities. With the getting of the land in 1945 our building programme started. In that year a Building Fund Committee was formed with Doctor Subramaniam as Chairman. Swami Ritajanandaji as Treasurer and Mr. M. R. Karalasingam and myself as joint secretaries. The foundation for the new block was laid by Sir Vaithilingam Duraiswamy on 30th August, 1946, in the presence of Swami Siddhatmanandji and Swami Harishilesanandaji. The building was completed in 1948 and it was declared open by Sri S. Avinasalingam Chettiar, the then Education Minister of Madras on 21st September, 1948.

We had put up and equipped a science laboratory and got a playground at the Esplanade. Thus we satisfied the conditions for a Grade II school and it was accordingly

raised to Grade II in 1948 : By the end of 1950 we had staff and equipment required of a Grade I institution and so the Manager, Swami Natarajanadaji, applied for raising the school to Grade I. After some delay the school was raised to Grade I as from 1.1.1952.

When the College was raised to Grade I, it was felt that the buildings were not adequate for a Grade I College. Further the hall was in imminent danger of collapsing. We discussed with friends various ways and means of raising funds for the College and it was finally decided to have a Festival of Arts and Raffle to collect the necessary funds. The Festival of Arts and Raffle was held in August, 1953 and it brought us Rs. 84,000/-.

It was decided to put up a new hall and to extend the laboratory building with this money. The foundation for the new hall was laid on 15th April, 1954, and the work was completed in October, 1954 in record time. The hall was declared open by his Holiness Yatiswaranandaji in the presence of Swami Prematnandaji and Swami Chidbhavanandaji on 16.10.1954.

It was decided to put up a new building to house the library. The present library building is a gift of Messrs. L. K. S. Brothers, Jewellers. This building was declared open by Swami Chidbhavanandaji on 21.9.1958.

The college continued to make rapid progress and the first student entered the University in 1957 Two students got through the G.C.E. (Advanced Level) in 1958. The year 1960 proved to be a successful year to the Vidyalaya. All the four candidates who sat for the University Entrance (Arts) gained admission to the University and another secured admission to the Science Faculty.

At the end of 1960 the Government decided to take over the assisted schools and our school along with other schools managed by the Ramakrishna Mission became Director-managed as from 1.12.60 and was vested as from 1.6.62. At the time of the take over, the Mission had entered into a contract for Rs. 15,000/- to put up the upstair building over our library and they saw to its completion. The completion of the open air theatre and the extension to the laboratory werp made possible as a result of the financial hele given by the Mission.

The Vaidyeshwara Vidyalaya stands as a noble monument to the good work done by the Ramakrishna Mission in North, Sri Lanka.

THE IMPACT OF RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ON EASTERN PROVINCE OF SRI LANKA

K. Kanapathipillai, B.A.,F.R.G.S.,Dip.Geo.(Lond.)

Retired Principal

In the land where I hail from, religion as such, is not a thing that is preached to the people from pulpits.

Here, in this Eastern coastal strip of Sri Lanka, man lives stripped of all paraphernalia that goes in some other parts, as religion. Here, man has not learnt to pose, and whosoever came here, came and saw that the faith of the people, here, is the unsullied faith of a Sith-Anai-Kutti, and that of a Sri Ramakrishna. When the Sadhu Sith-Anai-Kutti came to these parts somewhere in the early part of the 20th century he found the soil of spirituality perfectly virgin and fertile. He fell in line, He didn't preach, for he hadn't a gospel ; he didn't teach, he didn't distribute handbooks and hand-bills ; he didn't promise a heaven after death ; neither did he frighten them with hell fire. He didn't build temples, organize " sangams ". He didn't even say a word against the missionaries who came into this land and went about establishing schools, building churches and performing a conversion-motivated social service. He just went about wandering all over the place like a cranky vagrant in his loin cloth ; unkempt, unshaven, meagerly dressed and yet heavily weighted with spirituality. The people flocked to him in numbers, and the hovel he occupied in the village of Karativu became a place of pilgrimage.

Here, to this land where this revolutionary yet perfectly natural sadhu had roamed for over half a century, there came the Ramakrishna way of thinking and the Ramakrishna way of life. The perfect natural social harmony and natural religious way of life that had been obtaining in these parts had, in a way, prepared the ground for the incoming flow and impact of the true spirituality that came in the shape of the Ramakrishna Mission. It came somewhere in the 1920s ; and the impact was most astonishingly noticeable, especially in the life of the unsophisticated village folk.

These simple people, despite the fact they were handicapped in various ways, socially, economically and politically, have survived the odium of being caught in the mad hurry that oftentimes goes by the name of progress ; and having come under the benign influence of Sith-Anai-Kutti followed by that of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission, have lived to see life bloom in all its pristine purity. Men in these parts are free ; free to live the life that pleased them, free to practise the religion of their heart untrammelled by doctrines and dogmas, free to think and to aspire to a nobler, sincerer and truer way of life.

This freedom of spirit has been given the people of Batticaloa by the Ramakrishna Mission. The social, religious and political harmony that prevail in these parts may be attributed to the spirit of free utterance, free choice of faith, and free thinking that the Ramakrishna ideal of a harmonized social existence has instilled into the people. The orderly life led by the people, their high sense of dignity, of labour, and of loyalty to the noble cause they espoused, their high regard for the other man's point of view, their ideal of co-existence as equals in a community, their rare community of interest, their ' live-and-let-live ' policy: these have all been the rare assets that they have distilled from the Ramakrishna ideal, and made their own.

Like Prometheus of the mythical tales, the Ramakrishna way of life brought the light of knowledge and true understanding to the benighted people of this region. They received the light ; they were guided by it. They felt in their heart of hearts that it was a kindly light that led their way. Caught as they were in the briars of misleading tradition, a faith in a caste and a crippling creed that came from elsewhere, entangled in the snares of centuries of a slavish mode, these people sought after the truth that underlies human existence' were free to find it, were guided and put on the

correct path, and were rewarded with an awakening sense of the true teleological intent in life—the grand purpose of human existence. Even those who strayed away lured by pelf and filthy lucre, enticed by the scintillating gloss and glitter of a sophisticated life, and the attainment to a much coveted " in-group status ", stepped back from the pedestal they thought they occupied, became free thinkers, and then went back to nature's pattern of life. It is not a question of merely drifting from one status-landing-jetty to another. It is a matter of the perfect liberation of the inner self. Having followed the Sri Ramakrishna way of life one felt as if one were perfectly free to breathe in a free atmosphere. It was like plunging from the ' fish-out-of-water, ' state, to 'fish-under-water' state that is to say : One's spirit was free of any kind of entanglements and perplexities and conditioning.

Many a poor home where the light of knowledge had never found a way, had been lit with the spark of true learning. There was a spring in every step of every orphan child, a smile on its lips, a ray of light beamed in its eyes, and an upsurge of hope seemed to stir its inner being. Those waifs and strays who entered the Ramakrishna Mission Homes found a true haven, and those who were fortunate enough to enter the Ramakrishna Mission Schools found the inhering ' rita'—the freedom and the harmony—that lurked in their inner self. Considerations of caste and creed, linguistic and racial differences were cast to the winds, and children were brought up in a perfectly free atmosphere stripped of all garbs of sophistication. Children of all faiths participated in all the religious observances, Deepavali, Christmas, Ramazan, Wesak and Pongal. It was a mingling of all the cultures in the best of circumstances, and in consequence, the best of spirits prevailed.

The children who went from these institutions into their respective villages carried the torch of learning and the noble message of a rare goodwill, amity and a harmony and a rare regard for service. There was no such thing as religious bigotry and intolerance. On the contrary there was religious harmony existing among all.

Even in society the best of understanding prevailed in the social set-up despite the fact that here jostled peoples of all creeds and of all castes. Here is a multilingual, multi-religious and multiracial community. Yet all lived and moved and had their being like children of the same parents in a peaceful, homely atmosphere and all this was possible because of the spirit of harmony that prevailed in the region as a result of the selfless service rendered by the Sri Ramakrishna Mission in this part of Sri Lanka.

This effort of the Ramakrishna Mission has proved that if at all a ' Religion of Man ' has to be discovered—a way of life that shall lead to religious and racial concord—it shall have to be sought for in the way indicated by Sri Ramakrishna and the service that is being conducted in his name. We are able to descry the path clearly in its main outline indicated by the terms : sacrifice, renunciation and service.

CONTRIBUTION OF RAMAKRISHNA MISSION TO TRINCOMALEE

N. Krishnadasan

Former District Judge

The Ramakrishna Mission, Sri Lanka Branch, is having its Golden Jubilee celebrations and this gives an opportunity to the people of Trincomalee to express their gratitude and indebtedness to the Ramakrishna Mission for the great service it had rendered to them at a time when it was most needed.

In or about 1920 there was a Hindu School in Trincomalee with two teachers and five classes; the teachers depended for their remuneration mostly on the Government Grant based on the number of passes obtained in the annual test conducted by the Inspector of Schools. This was a time when students and teachers alike could not attend the better equipped denominational Schools with holy ash on their foreheads and the students held the view that their religion was second class.

Swami Vipulananda came first followed by Swami Avinashananda and took over the Hindu School. Hindu culture and Hindu Religious practices were for the first time observed and practised in an educational institution in Trincomalee. With the assistance of ardent workers and helpers the Swamis transformed the Hindu School into Ramakrishna Mission Hindu College—the premier educational institution in Trincomalee. The resident Swamis and other Swamis from India gave lectures and discourses and made the people of Trincomalee aware of their Hindu Heritage.

The Ramakrishna Hindu College has been taken over by the State but it still retains its position as the Premier College for boys in Trincomalee.

Ramakrishna Mission has no institution educational or social in Trincomalee now and it is the fervent hope of the people of Trincomalee that the Mission will start or take over some institution in Trincomalee and nourish and nurture the sense of service in the minds of the people of Trincomalee.

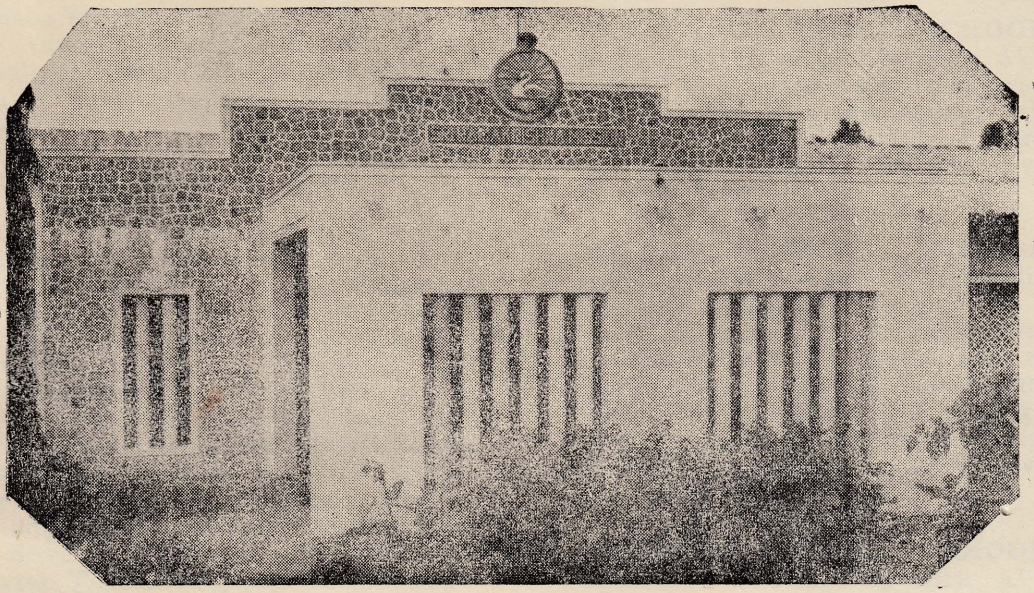
History and Contributions of the Batticaloa Branch of the Ramakrishna Mission

Swami Jivanananda

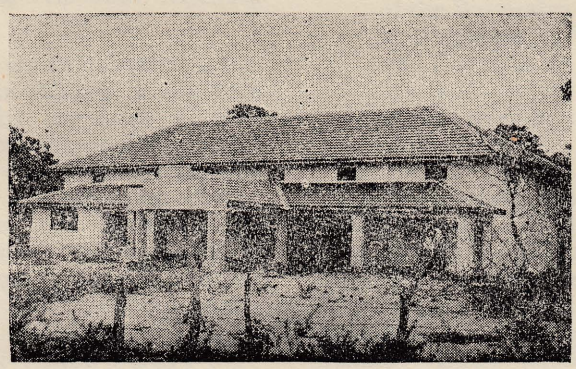
Swami Vivekananda landed in Colombo on the 15th of January 1897 with world renowned fame and as harbinger of a new era. The leaders of the Hindu Community in the Capital City received him with due honour, and he delivered a series of lectures which were well attended. The Swami also visited Kandy and Anuradhapura, the Ancient Capital of Sri Lanka ; and Jaffna, the centre of Tamil and Hindu Culture. The Swami in his speeches stirred the Hindus, especially the youngsters into unprecedented activities. He told his audience about the greatness of " SANATANA DHARMA "—the Religion Eternal, about his Guru Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Deva, and his plans for the revival of Hinduism, and exhorted them to give their best for the rejuvenation of their great religion. The message which he delivered was well received, and charged with a spirit of action. His admirers were eager to continue the work for which the seeds have already been sown by the Swami. They in turn requested the Swami to send a religious teacher to preach the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, to to hold classes of Hindu Scriptures and guide them in practical spiritual life. The Swami in response to the eager request made by his devotees and admirers, sent Swami Shivananda Maharaj, one of his brother disciples to Colombo towards the end of 1897. Swami Shivananda Maharaj was stationed in Colombo for nearly seven months. By his noble presence and practical instructions communicated to yearning souls who came to him, the message of his Great Master, and gave practical lessons in spiritual life.

The visit of Swami Vivekananda and the stay of Swami Shivananda resulted in the establishment of religious activities in many parts of the Island namely, Colombo, Jaffna, Manipay, Anuradhapura, Matale, Trincomalee and Batticaloa, to study, assimilate, and put into action the great truths taught by Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Deva and Swami Vivekananda. The Vivekananda Society in Colombo was established in July 1903 and it had the unique privilege of inviting to Sri Lanka some of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. Thus the link was established and it was further strengthened by Swami Sharvananda who had visited Ceylon repeatedly from 1915. The Swami with his magnetic personality, erudition and scholarship, and the message he had to deliver, always attracted the attention of the youths. In 1917 Swami Sharvananda Maharaj undertook the management of Vaideswara Vidyalaya of Vannarpannai, Jaffna, at the request of Sri T. Nagamuthu, a school master, the founder of this institution. It was during one of such visits to Jaffna that Pandit Mylvaganam, later known as Swami Vipulananda, came in contact with Swami Sharvananda, and was inspired by him and a Vivekananda Society was started in Pandit Mylvaganam's residence at Anaipanthy, Jaffna. In 1922 Pandit Mylvaganam joined the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madars, as a novice, and on 17th April, 1924, he was ordained as a Sannyasin of the Ramakrishna Order of Monks by Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj and he was named as Swami Vipulananda.

At the earnest request of the Hindus of Trincomalee, Swami Sharvananda and Swami Vipulananda visited Trincomalee in December, 1924. They by their benign presence and by their inspiring talks, evoked the enthusiasm on the local public which resulted in the opening of a centre of the Mission in Trincomalee. The work of organising this centre was entrusted to Swami Vipulananda and thus on 9th May, 1925, the first Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama in Ceylon was opened at Trincomalee.



Ramakrishna Mission Boys' Home, Kalladi-Uppodai, Batticaloa.



Swami Vipulananda Memorial Hall,
Kalladi-Uppodai, Batticaloa.

In March 1925 Swami Vipulananda visited Galle, Nawalapitiya, Matale, Hatton, Badulla and Batticaloa. The leading Hindus of Batticaloa convened a meeting at the Vivekananda Hall at Kalladi Uppodai (now Vivekananda Girls' Maha Vidyalaya) on 10.4.1925, to consider the educational needs of the local Hindu Community, at which conference Swami Vipulananda was invited to give his views about the education of the Hindus. The Swami in this conference emphasized the necessity of starting an educational institution for the Hindu Children which would give as much attention to religious education as to secular instructions. The conference resolved to establish at Kalladi Uppodai a residential College equipped with modern requirements and having within its precincts a shrine for worship, laboratories and a playground. It was also resolved to establish in Batticaloa a branch of the Ramakrishna Mission. An Executive Committee, consisting of Swami Vipulananda as President, Sri K. N. Nallathamby, Notary, Vice-President, Messrs. K. S. Sandrasegarampillai and N. Seenithamby Joint Secretaries, Messrs. M. Chinniah (Advocate), T. Shankarapillai, K. O. Veluppillai, N. S. Chelvadurai, S. O. Ratnasingam, Gurunathapillai Kanagasabai, P. Kanagasabai, N. M. Masilamany (Notary), S. W. Aerampamoorthy and K. N. Kasipathipillai, was formed to carry out the objects of the conference. A sum of Rs. 11,000/- was subscribed on the spot to meet the expense of the proposed educational institution.

Transfer of the existing National Schools to the Mission

At this time there were in existence a few national schools for Hindu children which were being managed either by the local Vivekananda Society or by local Hindu Philanthropists. The managers of these schools thought it best to transfer the management of the schools under them to the Ramakrishna Mission so that their future will be ensured. Five such schools, namely the Karaitivu Hindu School, Mandur Hindu School, Araipattai Hindu School, Anaipanthy Hindu School, and Eachantivu Hindu School were handed over to the Management of the Ramakrishna Mission on May 28th, 1925.

It will not be out of place here to give some details of these institutions for they were started by the leaders of the Hindu Community, mainly with the noble purpose of imparting an education placing emphasis on Hindu religion and culture.

1. **KARAITIVU HINDU SCHOOL :** Opened in the year 1912 by Sister AVABHAMIA—a Western disciple of Swami Vivekananda. The promoters of this institution were the villagers of Karaitivu. Mudaliyar K. V. Marcandan was the Manager.

2. **MANDUR HINDU SCHOOL :** Founded in the year 1918. The building was constructed as a pilgrims' rest by Mr. C. Muthiah, J.P., Batticaloa, from the funds that were available from the charity money of Mr. K. Thambimuttu Podiyar of Valaiyaravu. The building is used as a pilgrims' rest during the temple festival days ; and on other days it served as a school.

3. **ARAIPATTAI HINDU SCHOOL :** Opened on 19.1.1912 by Sister AVABHAMIA. The chief promoters of this institution were Sinnathamby, Teacher, Thambipillai Kosthaper and Kulandavel Udaiyar and the villagers of Araipattai. Mudaliyar K. V. Marcandan was the Manager.

4. **ANAIPANTHY SAIVA SCHOOL :** Founded in the year 1902 by the Hindus of the Batticaloa town. It was managed by Mudaliyar K. V. Marcandan and Advocate Chinniah in their individual capacity and later the management was handed over to the Vivekananda Society, Batticaloa.

On 1st June, 1925, the management of the Trincomalee Hindu Boys' English School (now known as Hindu College), Hindu Boys' Tamil School (now known as Sri Koneswara Vidyalayam) were transferred to Swami Vipulananda and an Association called " Sri Ramakrishna Educational Association " with Honourable Mr. M. M. Subramaniam, J.P., M.L.C., President, Mr. M. Somanathapillai, Hony. Secretary, Swami Vipulananda as Manager with 18 others as members was formed to manage these institutions.

With a view to imparting a liberal education based on Hindu Culture to the girls, the first Hindu Girls' School was founded in Karaitivu. The foundation stone for this school "later known as Sarada Vidyalaya" was laid by Swami Vipulananda on 28th October, 1925, on the land donated by Mr. R. Ramanathapillai. The School building was constructed out of the donations of Mr. T. Ponniah and Mr. P. Viswalingam of Karaitivu.

As proposed in the conference convened on 10th April, 1925, at Kalladi Uppodai the foundation stone for the Hindu Boys' English School (Shivananda Vidyalaya) was laid on November 6th, 1925, with due solemnity. This was perhaps the only English School founded by the Mission. Thus one could see that the Mission within one year of its existence had begun a useful limb of the Society which it had chosen to serve. The Kalladi Uppodai school "now Vivekananda Girls' Maha Vidyalaya" for which Sister Avabhamia laid the foundation stone on 19.1.1912 was managed by the heirs of Sri Sabapathypillai Udaiyar and Sri Kathirgamathamby Udaiyar. Mr. K. N. Nallathamby was the Manager. The Management of this school was transfered to Swami Vipulananda, the representative of the Ramakrishna Mission in Ceylon on 15.2.1926. The school from then onwards was known as Vivekananda Vidyalayam.

On 6th June, 1926, a Home in the lines the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Mylapore, Madras, was opened for deserving orphans and needy poor boys in the premises called the "Vellikilamai Madam" in Vannarapannai, Jaffna, with four inmates under the separate managing committee consisting of Swami Vipulananda—President, Mr. C. Rasanayagam Mudaliyar, C.C.S., Vice President, Mr. K. Aiyathurai, Secretary, Mr. K. Navaratnam, Treasurer, Mr. C. Mylvaganam, Warden, Messrs. S. T. Chittampalam, K. Thambiaiyah, T. N. Suppiah and V. Thamby as members of the Committee. The premises where the Home was housed belonged to the late Sri Viswanatha Udaiyar of Vannarpannai West, and Mr. S. T. Chitampalam who was a Trustee of the Madam, was also a member of the managing committee of the Home.

On November 3rd, 1926, Swami Avinashananda arrived in Jaffna to assist the Swami in the growing activities of the Mission. He was followed by Sivadas (Swami Paripurnananda). The onerous task of organising the activities of the Ramakrishna Mission (Ceylon Branch) fell into the hands of Swami Avinashananda and Swami Vipulananda.

The leading Hindus residing within the Urban Area of Batticaoa convened a meeting on October 25th, 1926, to consider the possibilities of opening a Hindu English School in the Batticaloa town, and on the same day Swami Vipulananda accepted on behalf of the Mission from Mudaliyar K. V. Marcandan, the gift of an incomplete building known as the "Vivekananda Hall" and its premises. In this meeting it was resolved to collect funds towards the completion of the buildings and rupees One Thousand Four Hundred and Thirty (Rs. 1,430/-) was subscribed at the spot. An executive committee consisting of Messrs. C. Muthiah, J.P., President, V. Visvalingam, Hony. Secretary, S. Kumaraswamy, Treasurer. V. C. M. Aiyathurai, V. Kanapathipillai, T. K, Tharmalingam, Advocate and Swami Vipulananda was formed to carry out on behalf of the public all works in connection with the proposed educational institution.

The Vivekananda Hall at Hospital Road, Batticaloa, was declared open by His Excellency the Governor Sir Herbert Stanley, in November 1928. The religious ceremonies connected with the opening function were conducted by Swami Yatiswaranandaji Maharaj, and Swami Anantanandaji Maharaj. The Hall became the centre of religious and cultural activities of the Mission in Batticaloa. A Library was started and it was functioning till 1943.

FIRST GIRLS' SCHOOL OPENED: Sri Sarada Girls' School at Karaitivu was opened on 15.1.1929 by Swami Yatiswarananda in the immediate presence of Swami Avinashananda, the then Manager.

In February 1929 the Shivananda Vidyalaya Building, 15 acres of land and the buildings and premises of Kalladi Tamil School, the management of which had already been transferred to the Ramakrishna Mission on 15.2.1926, and the land and buildings of Morrakkottanchenai Hindu School (Ganeshananda Vidyalaya) the management of

which was transferred to the Mission in 1927, all amounting to an aggregate value of Rs. 13,000/-, were handed over to the Mission by the heirs and descendants of Messrs T. K. Kathirgamathamby Udaiyar and T. K Sabapathipillai Udaiyar of Kalladi Uppodai.

The Hindu Boy's English School (Shivananda Vidyalaya) was opened with due religious solemnity on 15th April 1929 by Swami Vipulananda, who was the then principal of Ramakrishna Mission Hindu College, Trincomalee, and the public opening was performed on the 22nd April 1929, by Mr. Harrison Jones, Government Agent, Eastern Province and classes were started on 1st May, 1929.

In the pioneering days of the activities of the Mission (between 1928-1932) the Swamis who were in charge of the work and those Swamis who visited the centre took their abode in the Kalladi Street (now Anaipanthy) Hindu Tamil School, where there was a room constructed out of clay and thatched with cadjans. This formed the nucleus of the Batticaloa Ashrama.

On the 26th November, 1929, the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home (Orphanage) was moved to Kalladi Uppodai, Batticaloa, from Vannarpannai, Jaffna, with 6 inmates to give a fillip to the newly started Shivananda Vidyalaya. When the Home was moved from Vannarpannai, it was under the wardenship of Swami Paripurnananda. The inmates of the Home had to take their abode in the Shivananda Vidyalaya buildings which consisted of a hall 42" × 30", two rooms—15" × 10", and a verandah 10" × 30". This building served the purpose of the school as a dormitory for the inmates of the Home, the teachers of the Vidyalaya and the resident monastic worker. One of these rooms served as the Shrine for Sri Ramakrishna Deva and the other as the office of the Mission, and the living room of the resident Swami.

In January 1930, the Kalmunai Young Mens' Hindu Association transferred to the Mission two compounds in one of which there was an incomplete building consisting of a hall and a big room. The land for this building was donated by Mrs. S. V. Chelliah, wife of late Muhandiram S. V. Chelliah, Vanniyanar. The foundation was laid by Nagamani Podiudaiyar and the building was constructed out of the donations received from the local Hindus. This building on completion served as a local Centre of the Mission in Kalmunai till it was registered as a school.

For the first time the Tamil New Year Day was observed in the Manthivu Leprosy Asylum and in the Batticaloa Prison in April 1930, under the auspices of the Mission. A treat was arranged to all the inmates in both these places. An appeal was issued to the public for contributions to open a reading room and library for the benefit of the inmates of the Leprosy Asylum.

On 9th June, 1930, Periya Kallar School, now (Vinayaga Vidyalayam) and on 16th June, 1930, Thampalawatte School near Mandur, were opened. Both these schools were subsequently handed over to the government owing to management difficulties.

Swami Vipulananda left for Annamalai Nagar in 1931, and the task of managing the schools descended on the shoulders of Swami Ghanananda who had to take up this work along with his duties as Vice President of the Ramakrishna Mission. He was assisted by Brahmachari Avyakta Chaitaniya, who was stationed in Batticaloa up to April 1932, and then by Swami Paripurananda. The Students' Home of Kalladi Uppodai moved into its own buildings on 12.5.1932. Swami Sundarananda succeeded Swami Ghanananda, as Manager of Schools in 1932 and Swami Paripurananda continued to assist the Manager of Schools. Swami Asangananda became the Vice President of the Ramakrishna Mission (Ceylon Branch) and Swami in charge of Colombo Centre in November 1932. Towards the latter part of 1933 Swami Vipulananda assumed duties as General Manager of Schools for the second time.

At the request of the Batticaloa South Teachers' Association a class was organised for the study of advance Tamil in the Mission Hall at Kalmunai by Swami Vipulananda. A memorable event took place which gave much impetus to the growth and activities of the Mission. This was the first visit of His Serene Holiness Srimath Swami Bijanananda ji Maharaj a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Deva, to the Batticaloa Centre. The Swamiji and

his party visited Batticaloa on 3rd January, 1934. His Holiness was given a grand reception and was presented with an address of welcome. This was a very great day for all those who were connected with the activities of the Batticaloa Centre, and with regard to to this visit we have heard from Swami Natarajananda who was then a teacher, telling us that His Serene Holiness Srimath Swami Bijanandaji Maharaj in an exalted mood stood near the mango tree which was on the Eastern side of Shivananda Vidyalaya (the tree had since been uprooted by the recent cyclone in 1978) and held his arm fully out streched and said : " This Institution will grow Thus ! And Thus ! ! And Thus ! ! ! Every time he uttered the word " Thus " his arms opened out as if to enclose the entire void in his embrace. His blessings did have their rare effect, for immediately in the wake of his visit, there was a spate of activities sending its tentacular benign influence into the Hindu Society of Batticaloa. A shrine room dedicated to Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Deva was built at Kalladi Uppodai. The temporary roof of the Students' Home was replaced with a tiled one.

In the year 1935 a residential section for the paying students of the Shivananda Vidyalaya was opened in the two Halls built for the purpose. The hostel buildings were named as " Kamalalayam ". A temporary structure called " Chitrakoodam " became the residence of the Swamis and later it was converted into the dining hall of the hostel. The Ashrama building called " Shivapuri " was under construction then. The hostel to start with had 12 inmates, and there were two resident teachers to supervise them. The pattern of life followed in the hostel was the same as in the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Kalladi Uppodai, which was being run on the Gurukula System, providing an all-round training, inculcating the virtues of self-reliance, self-confidence, self-help, dignity of labour and religious tolerance. The hostel caters to students of all religious denominations. The inmates in the hostel were encouraged to follow their own religious tenets in their traditional way.

The Birth Centenary of Sri Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Deva was observed with due eclat. Apart from the usual meetings that were organised, more activities of a permanent nature took place. New schools were opened, new buildings to existing schools were added. Thus, we see the Anaipanthy school was opened on 30.1.1937 by Sir Vaitilingam Duraisamy, Speaker of the State Council, and on the same day Mr. Prasad, C.C.S., Government Agent, Eastern Province, opened the new hall of the Ramakrishna Vidyalaya of Karaitivu. Mr. P. Vaitilingam, District Judge of Batticaloa, opened the Ramakrishna Vidyalaya, Kalmunai. The other notable events were the opening of the Ramakrishna Mission Girls' Home (Orphanage) at Karaitivu by Sir Vaitilingam Duraiswamy on 31st January, 1937, and a Science laboratory at Shivananda Vidyalaya by Sir Kandiah Vaithianathan on 7.2.1937. The Kokkotticholai Hindu Tamil School (Vipulananda Vidyalaya) was opened in March 1937. Land for this school was donated by Sri Ekamparampillai and Sri Thirumenipillai of Kokkotticholai, and the temporary buildings of the school were put up by the villagers. A rural reconstruction centre forming a part of the Students' Home at Kalladi Uppodai was started by Swami Kedareswaranandaji Maharaj who was an assistant to Swami Vipulananda then. The Swami together with the inmates of the Students' Home and Hostel started cleaning the nearby villages, and the local temple compounds. Practical training in Animal husbandry was given to the inmates of the Students' Home at the instance of the Swami.

Towards mid 1937, Swami Vipulananda accompanied by Swami Kedareswarananda went on a pilgrimage to Mount Kailas. Several requests came from the Hindu public for the opening of more schools under the Mission, but owing to the war, and consequent Departmental restrictons the response to these appeals had to be postponed.

In September 1939, Swami Vipulananda who was intimately connected with the activities of the Mission from its inception was called upon by the Head-quarters of the Mission to take up the Editorship of the " Prabuddha Bharata : and Swami Nishkamananda succeeded him.

In May 1940, Swami Madhavananda, the then General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, visited the Batticaloa

Some Swamijis who served in Sri Lanka

Swami Natarajananda

Swami Avyayananda

Swami Jivanananda
Presently in charge of the Batticaloa Branch

Centre. His stay and his words of advice were a great encouragement to the work that was being carried on here. Achariya Mandir—the residence of the Principal of Shivananda Vidyalaya was built in the year 1941. The Principal resided within the precincts of the Vidyalaya. This helped much for the better supervision of the school and the residential section. Swami Siddhatmananda succeeded Swami Asangananda as Vice President of the Ramakrishna Mission and the Swami-in-charge of the Colombo Centre in July 1941. The Mission placed all the schools under its management under the direct payments scheme sponsored by the Department of Education.

A hand-made paper making centre was started as an Industrial section of the Students' Home at Kalladi Uppodai. A good quantity of hand-made paper was produced by the centre. The process of paper making was demonstrated by the students at the Kalmunai Harvest Exhibition in 1941.

A Hall called Ratnalayam, donation of Mr. Kanapathipillai Podiyar, Kalladi Uppodai, was opened by Mr. M. K. T. Sandys, Government Agent, Eastern Province on 9.2.1942. This formed an addition to the residential section of Shivananda Vidyalaya.

Srimat Swami Nishkamananda who was manager of the schools and the orphanages was transferred and Swami Ritajananda succeeded him in 1942. Due to the emergency conditions that were prevailing in Colombo, the Ashrama over there had to shift its venue of activities to suit the conditions prevailing then ; and thus the sacred relics of Sri Ramakrishna Deva was brought in July 1942 to Batticaloa and it was kept in the Kalladi Uppodai Shrine, and worship was being performed till it was taken to Colombo. A Library named after the late Vidwan Sarawanamuttu, a Chemistry Laboratory built to commemorate the visit of His Holiness Srimat Swami Bignanandaji Maharaj and two spacious class rooms built out of the donations received from Mrs. Selladurai, and from the wife of the late Vidwan Sarawanamuttu, were opened in 1943. Swami Chidbhavananda of Thiruparaithurai Swami Kailashananda of New Delhi, and Swami Vaikuntananda visited the Batticaloa Centre in September 1943. Bramachari Nirveda Chaitaniya (Swami Natarajananda) who was posted to the Batticaloa Centre to assist in the activities of the Mission, was placed in charge of re-organising the two schools in Trincomalee, the normal working of which had been affected due to war conditions.

The Hindu Tamil Mixed School at Palugamam was opened on 28.4.1944. Another Tamil Mixed School started by Mr. V. Velappoday (Criminal Udaiyar of Eachchantivu) and Mr. S. Palipody, landed proprietor of Vilavadauwan, was opened in Eachchantivu on 26.6.1944 as an unaided school and it was handed over to the Mission on the same day. This school was recognised by the Department of Education for Government assistance on 1.1.1945. The land, building and the furniture for the school were donated by the abovesaid philanthropists. Swami Pavitrananda, President, Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Himalayas, visited Batticaloa on 6th February 1945.

Akkaraipattu Hindu Tamil Mixed School (Ramakrishna Vidyalaya) was started by the enthusiastic efforts of Ganeshananda Sabai of Akkaraipattu in 1944, and was handed over to the Mission in 1945. It was functioning as an unaided school up to May 1946. The Chitravel Tamil Mixed School, Sittandy, was started by the local Hindus of the village of Sittandy and was opened in a temporary building on 20.6.1945 by Swami Ritajananda and Mr. S. U. Somasegaram, Education Officer, Eastern Province. The school was recognised for Government assistance on 1.6.1946. The trustees of the Sittandy Chitravel Swami Temple donated all the buildings for the school at a cost of Rs. 25,000/-. A temple and prayer hall dedicated to the Holy Mother were built in 1945 and were donated to the Sarada Vidyalaya in Karaitivu by Mr. S. Sarawanamuttu, Government Contractor, Karaitivu.

Swami Ritajananda who was manager of the schools and orphanages from mid 1942 went on transfer in September 1945, an he was succeeded by Swami Hrishikesananda in November 1946. Mr. S. T. Arasu of Trincomalee made a gift of a permanent building worth about Rs. 20,000/-. known as the Somasundaram Hall to the Vivekananda Vidyalaya (English Girls' School), Batticaloa, in memory of his fater Mr. Somasundaram. The opening ceremony of this building was performed in

1946 by His Excellency Sir Henry Monck Mason Moore the then Governor of Ceylon.

Swami Ranganathananda, President, Ramakrishna Mission, Karachi, visited the Mission on 10.2.1947 and Swami Bhaswarananda visited the Batticaloa Mission on 10.8.1947. The Department of Education was pleased to note the rapid progress made by Shivananda Vidyalaya, Batticaloa, and it was upgraded as a first grade collegiate school on 3.12.1947. Swami Vipulananda the founder secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission (Ceylon Branch) and the founder of several educational institutions under the Mission in Ceylon attained Mahasamadhi on 19.7.1947. His body was brought from Colombo to Batticaloa and was buried in the Mission compound. A committee known as Vipulananda Memorial Committee was set up to found a fitting memorial to the late Swami. The committee decided to have a Memorial Hall at Kalladi Uppodai near the spot where his body was laid to rest and Shri T. S. Avinashilingam, the then Minister of Educaton, Government of Madras, laid the foundation for the Memorial Hall on 18.9.1948, at Kalladi Uppodai, Batticaloa.

His Excellency the then High Commissioner for India in Ceylon, Shri V. V. Giri visited the Batticaloa Centre on 18.1.1949. At the Ramakrishna Vidyalaya, Akkaraipattu, a Hall in memory of Swami Vipulananda was built by the untiring efforts of Mr. K. Natarajan, the then Head Master of the school with the assistance received from the public, and it was opened by Swami Nishkamananda on 12.5.1949.

Swami Gambhirananda, Saradeshwarananda, Nityaswarupananda, Punyananda, and Dayananda visited the Batticaloa Centre on 16.11.1950. Sri Sarada Girls' Home (Orphaage), Batticaloa, was opened on 9.5.1951 by Swami Natarajananda—the then General Manager of Mission Schools at Vivekananda Vidyalaya, Anaipanthy, Batticaloa. It is housed in the building called the " Vipulananda Mandir" which was built by the enthusiastic efforts of Mr. V. Nalliah and Dr. C. Sabapathy in the year 1940-1941. Twenty two children who were inmates at the Karaitivu Girls' Home were transferred to the newly started Home. The Home aimed at providing in a more comprehensive manner all the facilities needed for building up a modern Gurukula for Girls.

His Holiness Srimat Swami Vireswarananda ji Maharaj, Asst. General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission visited the Batticaloa Centre on 5.7.1951. Swami Asangananda succeeded Swami Siddhatmananda as Vice President of the Ramakrishna Mission (Ceylon Branch) and Swami in charge of the Colombo Ashrama on 12th November 1951. Swami Sarvatitananda who was a worker in the Colombo Centre was posted to the Batticaloa Centre on July 1952 to assist the Swami-in-charge in Batticaloa. A Tamil Mixed School at Karadithoddam, Karaitivu, was started in January 1953. The land for the school was donated by Dr. S. Thambipillai of Kalladi Uppodai and the building was constructed out of local donations It was working as an unaided school under the Mission till 1.6.1956. Swami Natarajananda who was General Manaer of Schools left for India on transfer on the 27th of April. 1953. He was succeeded by Srimat Swami Kutasthananda ; and Swami Natarajananda succeeded him on 9th August, 1954. Swami Prematmananda succeeded Swami Asangananda as Vice President and Swami-in-Charge of the Colombo Centre on 5th September, 1954.

The year long celebrations of the Birth Centenary (from December 1953 to December 1954) of the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi were conducted with due solemnity. The schools under the Mission took an active part in the celebrations. Several public meetings were organised, oratorical contests, and essay competitions on the life and teachings of the Holy Mother formed a part of the celebrations. A special feature of the celebration at Akkaraipattu was the grand and panoramic procession in which a picture of the Holy Mother was taken round the town on a decorated elephant.

In July 1957 Swami Sarvatitananda was posted to Ramakrishna Mission Madam, Kataragama. Swami Avyayananda arrived in Batticaloa in mid 1956 to assist the Swami-in-charge in the activities of the Ramakrishna Mission in Batticaloa. In the last week of December 1957 there were heavy floods causing

damage to life and property. The Mission had to take to relief operations in the most affected areas in the Batticaloa and Amparai Districts. The provisions sent by the Colombo Branch of the Mission were distributed in 35 villages and financial assistance to the tune of Rs. 4,000/- was given to 200 poor families for immediate repairs and renovation of their dwellings. Whole-hearted support was extended by the teachers under the Mission. The schools under the Mission were closed for the time being and the buildings sheltered the victims. The relief operations lasted for 2 months. Within this period relief was extended to 4,668 families resident in 35 villages.

A new hostel was started in the year 1958, at Anaipanthy, Batticaloa : it was especially meant for girls from the upland districts who were seeking admission to English schools in Batticaloa.

In May 1958 due to the unfortunate civil disturbances, the Mission centre at Batticaloa at the invitation of the Government Agent, Batticaloa District, undertook the responsibility of running a refugees camp at Shivananda Vidyalaya premises for the victims. The school and both its residential sections were closed. Food, clothing, shelter and travelling expenses were provided for about 120 families for nearly 2 weeks. The selfless service rendered by the Mission on these two occasions was well appreciated both by the public and Government.

A new school at Veeramunai, Amparai District, which had been handed over to the Mission by the trustees of the local temple, was recognised for Government grant by the Department of Education. In July 1960 the Government of Ceylon enacted the National Education Bill which empowered the Government to takeover all assisted denomination schools under private management which cannot be run without Government Grant. As a result of this measure all our schools became State schools from 1st December, 1960.

Here comes to a close the era of educational service of the Ramakrishna Mission in the Batticaloa District. Swami Vivekananda had defined education as ' the manifestation of the perfection already in man '. The educational institutions under the Mission had been projecting this ideal, and they aimed at imparting a man-making, character-building education to bring about a fully integrated personality of the individual. The schools under the Mission admitted children of all religious denominations and there was freedom of worship and the children mixed among themselves as brothers stripped of any caste, and creedal and racial differences. The selfless service rendered by the Mission will stand the test of time for it has through its educational institutions preached an ideal of ' harmony not discord '.

In September 1962 the Students' Hostel for the Boys at Shivananda Vidyalaya, Batticaloa, was handed over to the Government.

The centenary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated on a grand scale in 1963 in Batticaloa and other centres in the Eastern Province. Swami Natarajananda and other distinguished persons delivered speeches befitting the occasion. Essay competitions and oratorical contests on the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda were organised in the schools of the Eastern Province. The year-long celebrations culminated in a grand function in June 1963. On this occasion a public meeting preceded by a mammoth procession in which school children, teachers, and the public participated was held. Swami Ranganathananda, the then Head of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, delivered the inaugural address. Students from 35 colleges and schools took part in the essay and oratorical contests arranged by the Mission and prizes were awarded to the winners.

Another notable event in that year was the opening of the Vipulananda Memorial Hall in September by Swami Prematmananda, the Vice President of the Ramakrishna Mission (Ceylon Branch), Colombo. Messrs. K. Kanapathipillai, Principal, Shivananda Vidyalaya, K. Candasamy, teacher, Shivananda Vidyalaya, K. V. M. Subramaniam and K. N. Cumarasamy, Proctors, served on the Vipulananda Memorial Building Committee. A religious ceremony connected with this function was performed by Swami Sriranganda of Colombo. He delivered a speech at the evening function in the newly opened Hall.

On September 1963—Vijaya Dasami—a Sunday School to impart religious education was started for the benefit of the local children by Swami Natarajananda at Vipulananda Memorial Hall at Kalladi Uppodai.

Swami Kutasthananda who was connected with the educational activities of the Mission, and who was the General Manager of the Ramakrishna Mission Schools, passed away in August 1965.

His Excellency Shri Bhimsen Sachar, High Commissioner for India in Ceylon, visited the Ashrama and the Orphanage on 11.10.1965.

Swami Natarajananda who was very intimately connected with the activities of the Ramakrishna Mission particularly of the Batticaloa Centre first as teacher, then as a worker of the Mission, later as General Manager of the Ramakrishna Mission Schools and orphanages for nearly two decades passed away on 16th March, 1967. Swami Jivanananda succeeded him as the Manager of the Orphanages and the Ashrama on 1.4.1967.

Pravirajika Mukti Prana (General Secretary—Ramakrishna Sarada Mission) and Pravirajika Atma Prana (Principal—Sister Nivedita High School) visited Batticaloa on 17.4.1968 and they, on their way from Amparai, halted at the Ramakrishna Mission Girls' Home at Karaitivu where a rousing reception was accorded to them. Pravirajika Mukti Prana installed the Portrait of the Holy Mother in the newly improvised shrine at the Karaitivu Home on this day.

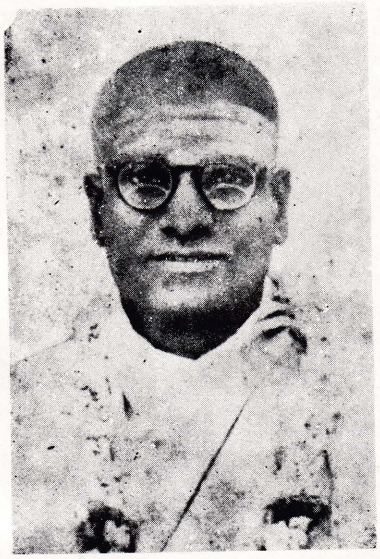
His Holiness Srimat Swami Vireswaranandaji Maharaj the 10th General President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission visited the Batticaloa Centre on 10th May, 1966. His Holiness and the party were received at the Batticaloa Airport by the devotees, friends and sympathisers. He was taken to the Ashrama. Many Pandals were erected to receive him on the trunk road leading from the Airport to Batticaloa Ashrama. Some devotees were given spiritual initiation. In the evening on the same day he laid the foundation for the new building to house the Boys' Home and the Ashrama. This was followed by a civic reception accorded by Mr. C. Rajadurai, Mayor, and members of the Batticaloa Municipality and a public meeting at the Town Hall, at which His Holiness addressed the gathering.

The visit of His Holiness has had a salutary effect on this centre. In the visitor's book there is this entry : ' I visited this institution after nearly twenty-five years. This is my second visit. I am glad to note that the original spirit of dedication is kept by all connected with this institution. I find the children happy and smart. May the blessings of Sri Ramakrishna Deva be on the children and all those connected with this institution. Wish the institution further progress and usefulness to Society. " It will have to be conceded that the blessings of Sri Guru Maharaj invoked by the Revered President Maharaj of the Order have had their benedictory effect on the Mission from then onwards, and in consequence the centre has recorded a phenomenal growth. It has expanded despite the inestimable ravage perpetrated by the Cyclone of November 1978.

Srimat Swami Gambhiranandaji Maharaj, the then General Secretary of the Math and Mission visited the Girls' Home, Karaitivu and the Batticaloa centre on 28.7.1969 and invoked His blessings on the centre.

The Mission from its inception in Batticaloa had been fully dependent on the assistance of the State and from its benefactors to manage its ever-expanding philanthropic activities, and thought it best to enter into some form of activity which will help the institution financially and at the same time give a training to the inmates of the Boy's Home and which will help them with self-employment when they go out of the Home. Training in Agriculture was thought to be the best suited to the inmates, since most of the inmates came from rural areas. The Mission approached the Government for land for its agricultural project. On 16.7.1968 jungle land belonging to the crown in the Sinnamavalai area adjoining the Nuwaragala Forest Reserve at Rugam was allocated to the Mission for development. This plot of land which was a little over 36 acres was handed over to the Mission by Mr. D. Nesiah, the then Government Agent, Batticaloa District. At the first stage nearly eleven acres were cleared of which six acres were brought under paddy cultivation and five under Chena cultivation during

Some Swamijis who served in Sri Lanka



Swami Nishkamananda

Swami Kutastananda

Swami Ritajananda

the Maha season of 1968-1969. The seed paddy for the first sowing was donated by the Swami-in-charge, Sivathondan Nilayam, Chenkaladi and by Dr. A. Caralasingam, Chenkaladi ; member, Board of Management of the Ramakrishna Mission (Ceylon Branch) and a long-standing devotee of the Mission. The clearing of the forest was done with paid labour with the assistance of the senior inmates of the Boys' Home. During the years following the first year of cultivation, the area experienced heavy rains and there was considerable damage to the standing crop. A study of the area was made by Mr. K. Kunanayagam, Assistant Engineer, a sympathiser of the Mission who was then at the Department of Irrigation, Chenkaladi. His survey revealed the fact that the main cause of the damage was the water-course, and the unpredictable state of weather in the season of cultivation (From September to February), and that the defect could be rectified by providing an Anaicut at a suitable point in the bed of the water-course. Thus the idea of a reservoir came. A survey was undertaken by Mr. K. Kunanayagam, Assistant Engineer with the help of Mr. Govindasamy of Vantharumoolai, another sympathiser of the Mission, and the findings were submitted to the Government Agent, Batticaloa, through the Irrigation Department. Mr. R. B. Weerakone, the then Government Agent, Batticaloa District, and the District Agricultural Committee approved the construction of a reservior (Kulam) on 1st September, 1973. Mr. S. Alaganandam, the then Asstistant Director of Works, Eastern Region, laid the foundation stone at the spot where the sluice gate was to be constructed. The original capacity of the reservoir was 75 acre feet ; later the bund was raised by two feet, thus the capacity had been increased to 120 acre feet now. The length of the bund is 700 feet and the height is 16—20. It has 2 Nos. sluices, one on either side, each leading to a channel which is a little over a quarter mile in length to feed the paddy land. The impounded water in the tank can fully irrigate the entire farm land in the Maha and Yala cultivations.

Mrs. N. Tambiraja, Kurunegala, a kind-hearted devotee of the Mission donated 5 heads of Sindhi cows and 3 calves to form the nucleus for the dairy section of the project.

Mr. K. Sivasubramaniam, a landlord from Vantharumoolai, placed at the disposal of the Mission for 6 years his tractor for clearing, levelling, and other operations connected with the development of the land. Mr. K. Natarajan and Mr. K. Kunanayagam devotees of the Mission, worked heart and soul for the development of the Rugam project.

Rt. Reverend Laxman Wickramasinghe, Bishop of Kurunegala, Anglican Church, visited the Mission on 29.7.1971.

Mr. M. Shanmugalingam, District Judge of Batticaloa, who had been a close friend of the Mission and its activities visited the Kalladi Uppodai Home on 15.9.71 and recorded his appreciation of the Mission's activities.

On the 27th of May, 1972, Swami Prematmananda, Vice President, Ramakrishna Mission (Ceylon Branch), performed the consecration of the newly-built Shrine for Sri Ramakrishna Deva and opened the new buildings of the Kalladi Uppodai Home, which was designed and planned by Mr. M. Villavarayar. Engineer.

This fulfilled a long-felt need of the centre. A whole day programme was gone through. There was a vast gathering of devotees, of old boys and sympathisers of the Mission. Akanda Name Bhajan was conducted from dawn to dusk. The occasion was marked by Homa and special puja performed by Swami Virupakshananda of the Colombo Centre. The message from His Holiness Srimat Swami Vireswaranandaji Maharaj, President, Sri Ramakrishna Math and Mission conveyed his blessings, and his benedicton. This was followed by the feeding of devotees and friends. The notable feature of this occasion was the presence of representatives of all religions. On the same day there was a meeting in the evening in which there were musical recitals and lectures. Mr. S. Somasundaram, O.B.E., a member of the Board of Management addressed the gathering and thanked all those who had helped the Mission in its religious, cultural, humanitarian activities in the District.

Swami Asangananda who was Vice President of the Ramakrishna Mission of the Ceylon Branch and Swami-in-charge of the Colombo Centre attained Mahasamadhi on 27th December, 1974.

Swami Mukiyananda of the Colombo Centre visited Batticaloa on 10.8.1975 and addressed meetings in the Batticaloa Town Hall, in Vipulananda Memorial Hall at Kalladi Uppodai and in some schools in the Batticaloa town.

The Boys' Home at Kalladi Uppodai completed its fifty years of service on 6.6.1976. This occasion was observed in a befitting manner on 6.6.1976. The Golden Jubilee Celebration was inaugurated with the hoisting of the Mission Flag by Swami Virupakshananda ; and this was followed by the garlanding of the statue of Swami Vipulananda, the founder of the Home. Then there were Homa special puja and feeding of the devotees. Day long Akanda Nama Bhajan was conducted. In the evening there was a public meeting at the Vipulananda Memorial Hall presided over by Mr. A. Thedchnamurthy, Retired C.C.S., and member of the Board of Management of the Ramakrishna Mission. On 7.2.1976, the the second day of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations two processions were organised. The processions converged near the Vipulananda statue in Batticaloa forming one stream and wended its way to the Town Hall of Batticaloa. Nearly 2,000 people participated in the procession. The Town Hall was tastefully decorated. Mr. G. C. Dissanayake, Government Agent, Batticaloa, presided over the meeting. The function commenced with the lighting of the traditional lamp by the heads of different religious denominations including the Bishop of Batticaloa. They also invoked the blessings of the Lord Almighty on the institution. Swami Virupakshananda of Colombo Centre and Pulavarmani Pandit Periyathambipillai spoke on the occasion ; and this was followed by ' Villupattu ' by the Master Sivalingam Group.

A Souvenir commemorating the Golden Jubilee was released on 7.8.1977 by Swami Tapasyananda, President, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, under the distinguished presidentship of Justice T.W. Rajaratnam, Esq., in the Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Hall at the Mission Head-quarters, Colombo. Later, it was released at the Town Hall, Batticaloa, on 9.8.1977 by Swami Tapasyananda.

Swami Sarvatitananda came to the Batticaloa Centre on 10.10.1977 to stay for the rest of his life.

Sri Lanka National Freedom from Hunger Campaign Board through its counterpart the West German F.F.H.C. joint Trust offered their kind assistance to develop the agricultural project under the Batticaloa Centre in Rugam. They made an allocation of nearly 2 lakhs and Rs. 30,000/-. as aid towards the purchase of the water pump and four-wheel tractor and trailor with their accessories, agricultural tools and implements and for building a Dairy House, a Flood protection bund and a well. The payments were made in stages from 22.2.1978. The aid by the E.F.H.C. Board had gone a great way in developing the Farm Project, which is the hope for the future.

On 14.1.1978 another important event took place, viz., the opening of the Health Unit sponsored by the Lions Club of Batticaloa by Mr. T. W. Rajaratnam, the then High Court Judge, Batticaloa. This is a valuable addition which will help to maintain the health of the inmates of the Home at Kalladi Uppodai.

The Cyclone of 23.11.1978 : The Boy's Home and Ashrama at Kalladi Uppodai, the Girls' Home at Karaitivu, and Anaipanthy and the Farm at Rugam suffered the biggest calamity, ever since their inception, in that the Cyclone that ravaged the Eastern Sea Board of Sri Lanka on the 23rd November, 1978, had put a temporary halt to our activities and has put the hands of the clock of progress of these institutions at least 10 years behind time. Many of the buildings of the Orphanages, the Ashrama building and the Vipulananda Memorial Hall where the Mission conducted its religious and social and cultural activities, the handicraft unit of the Boys' Home, the Coconut garden at Karaitivu, the Cashew garden at Kalladi Uppodai, with its out-house and the Rugam Farm were all devasted beyond description. Some of the buildings belonging to the Centre, were completely razed to the ground, necessitating complete reconstruction ; and all the buildings had lost their roof-tops. The inmates of our Homes and the boys stationed at the Rugam Farm had to face the fury of nature for full 10 hours. The loss is colossal. The premises of the institutions were littered with broken tiles, reepers, beams and asbestos sheets in splinters. Walls were blown down, and trees uprooted, and were

lying like dead bodies in a battle field, and on 24.11.78 we could painfully realize that what took almost a century to build up, had been brought to naught within 10 hours by this disaster. The entire place looked as if it had suffered a 'Hiroshima Horror'. The centre at Batticaloa and the Orphanages at Karaitivu and Anaipanthy and the Rugam Farm were completely out of touch with the rest of the country for 4 or 5 days after the disaster. Any form of communication was an impossibility. News, however, reached the Colombo Mission, and foodstuffs were rushed from there for the use of the orphanages, and to start relief operations. The Mission had lost nearly 7½ lakhs of rupees worth of property on account of this holocaust of nature.

Cyclone Relief operation by the Mission :—The Mission could not actively engage itself in relief operations as on previous occasions due to the fact that we ourselves were the victims of the Cyclone. Immediately after the disaster several religious, cultural, social, welfare associations and numerous devotees and sympathisers of the Mission came with their assistance which took the form of foodstuffs, cloths (old and new) and household articles. These articles were distributed in more than 10 far-off villages.

The Mission was confronted with the problem of giving a roof to the inmates in the three Homes under its management. So, steps were taken to restructure the buildings without loss of time. Repairs to the buildings at the Anaipanthy Girls' Home, Batticaloa; and the Girls' Home at Karaitivu were taken up. Finding building materials and skilled labour was posing a problem. The restructuring of the Boys' Home, the Vipulananda Memorial Hall, and the buildings at the Farm Project at Rugam, the Ashrama (Shivapuri) were done at a later stage. The repairs to the Boys' Home and the Ashrama were done and the Shrine was brought back to its former premises on 30.7.1979. The statue of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Deva, which was brought from the Ramakrishna Mission Madam at Kataragama, after it was handed over to the Government, and now defunct, was installed in the Shrine on the same day. To mark this occasion a special invocation puja was conducted by Swami Chidghanananda of Ramakrishna Mission, Colombo.

By the Grace of the Lord in whose name all the activities are being conducted, and with the sympathy, and unstinted assistance extended to the Mission by its several devotees, well-wishers, and social-welfare organizations, the Mission could restructure such of those buildings damaged by the cyclone most essential to continue its day to day activities. The second phase, that is, its reconstruction of those buildings which were to be replaced by new ones, is yet to be taken up.

Swami Sarvatitananda who was connected with the activities in the various centres of the Mission in Sri Lanka and who had spent a good portion of his life time at the Ramakrishna Mission Madam (Pilgrims' Rest) at Kataragama passed away on 28.10.1979. The late Swami had played a very important role at every stage of the growth of the Batticaloa Centre.

When an attempt has to be made to give a historical account of the multifarious activities of an institution it will have to be admitted that it will necessarily involve a number of dates and events and is bound to be somewhat sketchy. It will inevitably be, in a way, dull. This account of the Ramakrishna Mission covering a period of nearly eighty years may be divided into 9 phases. They are :

1. The impact of Swami Vivekananda's visit to Sri Lanka especially on the style of thinking and way of life of the Hindus there.

2. The formation of Vivekananda Societies in various parts of the Island, thus paving the way for the awakening of the slumbering religious sentiment in the minds of the people; both Hindus and non-Hindus.

3. The stay of His Holiness Srimath Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj in Colombo which had served as a preliminary to the establishment of the Ramakrishna Mission in Sri Lanka, the Revered Swamiji having served as the harbinger of the Mission.

4. The ordaining of Pandit Mylvaganam as a monk of the Ramakrishna Order.

5. The pioneering work of the Mission activities in Trincomalee where the Mission had started the first Ashrama.

6. The starting of the Mission activities in Jaffna which took the shape of a Students' Home apart from the management of Vaidyeswara Vidyalaya.

7. The starting of educational activities in Batticaloa, Lunugala and Vuvuniya where 26 schools had either been started or taken over by the Mission.

8. The take over of the Mission schools by the State, and

9. Further expansion of the Mission activities in the cultural, social and economic fields.

In Batticaloa, it would appear that there was the required social and cultural ethos for the implanting of the Ramakrishna ideal of the harmony of religions and the propagation of the cardinal notions of renunciation and selfless service. Here, in a benighted region, where man lived, moved and had his being much closer to nature than in, perhaps, any other part of Sri Lanka, where three communities professing the four major faiths, namely those of Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam jostled shoulder to shoulder and achieved their goals of right effort, right aspirations and right livelihood, the Ramakrishna ideal of living in harmony in the midst of a world of turmoil and stress could easily be achieved. The Mission had nothing to lose ; nor had it anything to gain. It just wanted to act in a detached manner stripped of all ulterior motives and sectarian trends. It was just human in its outlook, and universal ; and its notions went into the heart of the people ; and the people took to them like ducks to water.

The Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home at Kalladi Uppodai, Batticaloa, and Karaitivu and the Students' Hostels serve as apt examples of the inestimable service that the Mission had been rendering in the field of service to humanity at the right time when such service was needed. In any community the youth is the most pliable age when the human being can be caught young and given the required trends for higher development. The Homes' and Hostels run by the Mission provide the required spiritual milieu for the healthy development of the child. They have nothing of the sectarian element in them. Children of all denominations in Sri Lanka have found a suitable haven in these Homes and Hostels. They have become their homes. The children felt they were in their own homes hedged in by motherly love and fatherly care. They were fed, clothed, educated and given a training to face all life's hazards in a spirit of valour ; and to look upon all work in a spirit of service. Here at least we discover the true spirit in man finding its fulfilment in the right type of atmosphere. The Ramakrishna Mission Homes and Hostels have as their central and guiding feature the Shrine of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Deva and the theme : ' The aim of all human endeavour is the attainment of spiritual advancement and experience along with the fulfilment of the realization of the integrated man.' A very important and striking feature of the management of the Homes and the Hostels is that the entire administration and the day to day running of the institutions are in the hands of the inmates themselves. Dignity of labour, honesty, decency and integrity are given the pride of place as a very suitable ideal for the community. The training that is provided aims at developing in the child such rare and desirable qualities as self-help, service to humanity, humility, self-respect, detached endeavour and respect for all religions. A very important precept that is observed in these institutions is : Cleanliness is Godliness. There is a disciplined method noticeable in every aspect of student activity.

In every home, in every hut and hovel, the torch of learning was lit and the warmth of good fellowship and amity and goodwill found a permanent niche. This may be said to be the greatest achievement of the Mission namely that the people found in the Ramakrishna way of life the truest and noblest fulfilment of their aspirations. The Hindu child, the Muslim child, the Christian child, and the Buddhist child mixed and moved with each other like brothers in a home. They had shed all distinctions of caste, creed and race. They were essentially human.

On festival occasions all the children in the Students' Homes, the Hostels and in the other schools of the region mixed and mingled in an orderly manner, and received the guidance of the teachers and the Sadhus ; and moved and behaved as if they were members of the same family. Whether it be Christmas or Pongal Vila, Deepavali or Hadji or Wesak all the children participated in the festival, having completely sunk all their denominational differences. This was certainly a novel experiment in the development and evolution of humanism—the true and genuine human spirit and human understanding.

From their children, their parents and the other people of the village had slowly, yet steadily, inbibed this spirit of tolerance ; of brotherly feeling ; feeling for the other man and cherishing respect for the other Man's faith, and property. The outcome of all this form of behaviour is a rare genre : the true altruistic sentiment ; so clearly and nobly enunciated thus : Greater love hath no man than this that he lay down his life for his fellow beings. It is love for one's neighbour that is the true religion of man ; and this noble sentiment has taken root to an appreciable degree in human society in these parts. May it continue to influence social behaviour in man in every respect.

THE FIRST PROFESSOR OF TAMIL

Professor S. Vithiananthan

(*Vice-Chancellor, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka*)

It was in the year 1922, even before his renunciation, that Swami Vipulananda was requested to assume duties as a Lecturer in Tamil in the Ceylon University College. It was in the same year that he relinquished his duties as Principal of Manipay Hindu College and joined the Ramakrishna Mission in Mylapore.

During this time the University of Ceylon was called a University College. The Head of the Institution, Professor Marrs, requested Pandit Mylvaganam to assume the post of Lecturer in Tamil. The father of the University of Ceylon, Sir P. Arunachalam, who was then the President of the Saiva Board and the patron of the Colombo Vivekananda Board, wrote to Swami Sarvanandaji on behalf of these boards and the Tamils of Ceylon and requested the release of Pandit Mylvaganam to accept this post. By this time Pandit Mylvaganam had joined the Mylapore Ramakrishna Mission and earned the name Prabodhasaithanyar which signified his hermitage and vow of celibacy. He was also the editor of the Tamil newspaper **Ramakrishna Vijayam** and the English newspaper **Vedanta Kesari**. Since it was imperative that new recruits should not serve in schools which preserved religious neutrality, the request for his release was turned down by the Ramakrishna Mission.

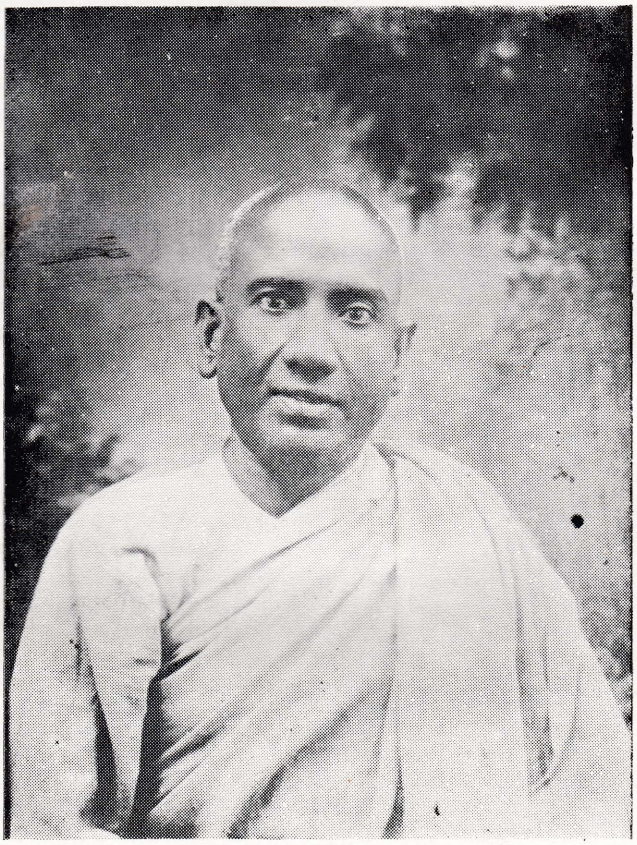
What was desired in 1922 reached fruition in 1943. Prior to this Swami Vipulananda was appointed the first Tamil Professor of Tamil Nad in 1931 and served for three years. In 1927 a Committee was formed in Madurai under the Chairmanship of the king of Ramanathapuram to explore the possibility of establishing a University in Chithambaram. The University of Madras which supported this move requested Swami Vipulananda to appear at the Committee sittings as its representative. Swami Vipulananda was then supervising the Ramakrishna Mission schools in Ceylon. He agreed to this request, proceeded to Madurai and stressed to the Committee the need for establishing a University in Chithambaram.

The Committee decided in favour of establishing a University in Chithambaram and Sir Annamalai Chettiar, the founder of the Annamalai University, requested Swami Vipulananda to accept the Chair for Tamil. This was accepted in 1931. It must be mentioned that even the University of Madras did not then have a Chair for Tamil and thus the honour of becoming the first Tamil Professor of Tamil Nad fell on Swami Vipulananda.

The signal honour of becoming the first Tamil Professor of Sri Lanka too fell on Swami Vipulananda. Although the University College was elevated to the status of a University in 1941, it was only in 1943 that a Chair was created for Tamil. The consensus of opinion was that this post should be filled by Swami Vipulananda. Accordingly, a request was made and the Ramakrishna Mission which twenty-one years earlier had turned down the offer now agreed to grant Swami Vipulananda permission to accept the post. When Swami Vipulananda came to accept the office he was accorded a glorious welcome by a number of societies.

From 1943 to 1947 he served as Professor of Tamil. Of these four years I had the good fortune to be his student for three years and a member of the staff under him for one year. When Swami Vipulananda accepted the Chair I was a final year student reading for a special degree in Tamil. Subsequently for two years I was a M.A. student. During these three years, I had the unique experience of listening to his lectures on Tamil literature and grammar.

As soon as I suceessfully completed my M.A. he recommended that I be appointed a lecturer in Tamil. In 1946, the year I received my appointment, a Vidvan course was begun in the University. Young as I was, he entrusted me with the task of delivering lectures both to this course and the special arts degree course,. To me this gesture signified the love and respect he bore towards me.



Swami Vipulananda

I take pride in the thought that I was his first student both in the special arts and the M.A. levels. Swami Vipulananda in collaboration with his student Professor K. Kanapathipillai, formulated the syllabi for the M.A. and Vidvan courses. He made available courses in Tamil for Sinhalese students and teachers. In 1947, some months before his death, the product of his research, **Yarl Nool** was published in Tamil Nad.

His mantle then fell upon the worthy shoulders of Prof. K. Kanapathipillai—a scholar of considerable stature. Swami Vipulananda himself had stated on various occasions, with characteristic modesty, that Prof. Kanapathipillai could well have become the first Tamil Professor of Ceylon. Prof. Kanapathipillai was first a student at the University College and subsequently sat the degree examination of the London University and passed with a First Class. In recognition of his academic achievement, the Ceylon government awarded him the scholarship in Oriental Languages. This gave him an opportunity to proceed to England and obtain his doctorate. It was around this time that Swami Vipulananda was Professor of Tamil at Annamalai University. Swami who spotted the potential of Prof. Kanapathipillai, invited him to Annamalai and persuaded him to follow the Vidvan course. True to the expectation of Swami Vipulananda, he read Tamil for two years, successfully completed the Examination and then proceeded to London for his doctorate.

Swami Vipulananda was succeeded by Prof. Kanapathipillai who adorned the Chair for eighteen years (1947-1965). He was then succeeded by Prof. V. Chelvanayakam who was also a student of Swami Vipulananda. In fact he was one of the few students who read for a special degree in Tamil when Swami was at Annamalai. Thus, the tradition of Swami Vipulananda continues, and the standards set by him remain a beacon light to those who follow in his path.

SWAMI VIPULANANDA—AN APPRECIATION

K. Sarveswaran

One of the teachings of Swami Vivekananda that greatly influenced many young people in India and Sri Lanka and quickened their conscience was the notion that self-realization is attainable through service to humanity. It is most likely that this seminal idea propounded by Vivekananda was largely due to the "Puritan protestant education" which he had imbibed at the British-inspired Calcutta Hindu College in his youth. It has also been suggested that Vivekananda's activism resulted from the secret instructions imparted to him by Ramakrishna. Whatever it might have been, "this activist conviction of Vivekananda and his followers" was a new ideal set before the Hindus, whose religious traditions, generally speaking, extol contemplation and quietism. Amaury De Riencourt has aptly put it in **The Soul of India** :

> "This eternal conflict between the claims of individual salvation and collective salvation, between personal self-realization and service in the world, is one that has haunted great men time and again ;— very few can ever resist, this hypnotic appeal of the spatial infinite—. But Vivekananda resisted, partly because of Ramakrishna's imprint on him, partly because of his own atavistic nature—the fighting spirit of a true ksatriya born for involvement in the affairs of this world, not selfish detachment".

The life of Swami Vipulananda (1892-1947), who was perhaps the most well-known Sri Lankan monk of the Ramakrishna Order, exemplifies this activist teaching of Vivekananda. An interesting anecdote is narrated by the biographers of Vipulananda : In 1920 two years before he took to robes, Pandit C. Mylvaganam, as he then was, was principal of Manipay Hindu College. In the course of a discussion with students in a class the problem of salvation cropped up. Pandit Mylvaganam questioned the students what boon they would ask of Lord Shiva if he were to present himself before them. The answers varied. Pandit Mylvaganam then said : "I for one will not beg for **Moksha**, 'deliverance ; That would be purely personal and selfish. Rather I would request a boon to enable me to serve others. Therein lies the greatest happiness". This incident illustrates vividly the spirit of service that was deeply embeded in him. Hence it was in the logic of things that he joined the Ramakrishna Mission as an acolyte in 1922. Six years earlier he had come into contact with Swami Sharvananda who was then Head of the Math in Madras. Sharvananda was a frequent visitor to Jaffna and had captivated the minds of many young men.

Vipulananda as born in 1892 at Batticaloa. He was tutored in Tamil and Sanskrit till his twelfth year by a Pandit who also instructed him in rhetoric and prosody. In 1902 he joined the Methodist English school at Kalmunai and four years later joined St. Michael's College from where he passed the Senior Cambridge Examination. After a brief period of teaching at the Catholic Mission School in Kalmunai he enrolled himself as a trainee in the Colombo Teachers' Training College and qualified as a teacher in 1913. He joined the staff of St. Michael's College the same year, but after two years proceeded to Colombo to follow the Diploma Course in Science at the Technical College, where he obtained the Diploma with distinction. During this period he also sat for the Pandit Examination conducted by the Madurai Tamil Sangam and earned the distincton of being the first Sri Lankan to pass that examination. In 1917 he became a science teacher at St. Patrick's College, Jaffna. During this period he studied for the B.Sc. Degree Examination of the London University as an external candidate, and successfully completed the examination. In 1920 he was appointed Principal of Manipay Hindu College, Jaffna, where he helped at the establishment of a Science laboratory. In 1922 he joined the Ramakrishna Mission, Madras Branch, as a novice and was ordained as a monk in 1924 by Swami Shivananda. In 1925 he returned to Sri Lanka and thereafter was fully engaged

in establishing schools in various parts of the island. He was most active in the Eastern Province. He inaugurated the Shivananda Vidyalaya, Batticaloa, in 1929. From 1931-1933 he was Professor of Tamil at Annamalai University—perhaps the first person to hold a chair for Tamil. In 1937 he travelled extensively in North India and the Himalayan region. In 1939 he became the editor of **Prabuddha Bharata** (**Awakened India**) the periodical started by Swami Vivekananda and published by the Advaita Ashrama in Mayavati. (while in Madras, he edited **Ramakrishna Vijayam** (Tamil) and **Vedantakesari** (English) both published by the Madras Branch of the Mission. He was invited to take up the first Chair of Tamil at the University of Ceylon in 1943; thus he became the first Professor of Tamil in Sri Lanka too. In 1947 he published his magnum opus, Yarl Nool "Treatise on Harp." containing the results of his researches for many years on the ancient musical instrument of the Tamils. He died in 1947.

It will be evident that Vipulananda lived the life of a scholar to his finger tips and though he was interested (and at times involved himself) in the broad socio-cultural movements of his time, never engaged in anything that did not savour of learning. He was a prolific writer—both creative and critical—and wrote in serious journals as well as in popular periodicals. His earliest piece of writing dates from 1915; some of his last essays appeared posthumously. Amongst his numerous publications are the exquisite translations of some works of Swami Vivekananda.

Looking back after more than three decades of his demise, it is somewhat safer to attempt an evaluation of his work and accomplishments. Vipulananda's many-sided work in fulfilling his great task of service to humanity touched upon several things. Basically he was a very religious person. At the same time as a result of embracing the dynamic teachings of Swami Vivekananda, he was also a great humanist. He had steeped himself in the literatures of East and West, besides making himself acquainted with the best of modern scientific knowledge. His culture was broad based. Althrough his life many people corresponded with him and sought his personal acquaintance.

Both as a writer and speaker he possessed those qualities essential for an intellectual-scholar: a perfect mastery of the classical and vernacular languages and a highly sober and critical judgement based on a pursuit of scientific methods. These qualities made him an outstanding personality in the world of learning, especially in the arena of Tamil studies, plagued by sectarian prejudices and chauvinism.

From the time (1925) Vipulananda took an active interest in the Students' Congress in Jaffna, he was much sought after to lead discussions and preside over conferences. At the second sessions of the Students' Congress held at Keerimalai in 1925, Vipulananda led the discussion on the revival of national literature. In 1928 he presided over the fourth Annual sessions of the Students' Congress and delivered a memorable address. Earlier the **Hindu Organ** in an editorial had said the following with reference to him:

> He points to us the ideal before us. He is the embodiment of plain living and high thinking. He is the messenger of the East building on the old and yet new. From him our young men will not only derive instruction but even inspiration.

Both in Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka, Vipulananda presided over many important congresses and conferences: the annual Tamil conference at the Math at Tiruppathiri puliyur; the annual sessions of the Kandy Saiva Maha Sabha (1927); the Tamil Conference at the Karanthai Tamil Sangam; Tanjore (1933); Annual Conference of the Saiva Siddhanta Samajam at Tiruvannamalai (1935); the Madras Conference for the development of scientific vocabulary in Tamil (1936) and a host of other learned conferences were enlivened and adorned by his chairmanship. In all such conferences not only his immense and commanding erudition but also his inherent tact and **savior-faire** made him a leader of men, popular and influential with diverse participants.

Perhaps, his attachment to the Universalism of Vivekananda gave him a frame of mind that was helpful, kindly and stimulating to others. In many ways he had to straddle two or more worlds: traditional Tamil scholarship and western analytical methodology; Saiva

Siddhanta and Vedanta ; literary culture and scientific ethos ; faith and rationality ; patriotism and universal brotherhood ; nationalism and internationalism. In all sense he made the best of both worlds. A study of his writings will at once show that a thorough grasp of details combined with remarkable skill in synthesis enabled him to evolve a unified world view that was his hallmark.

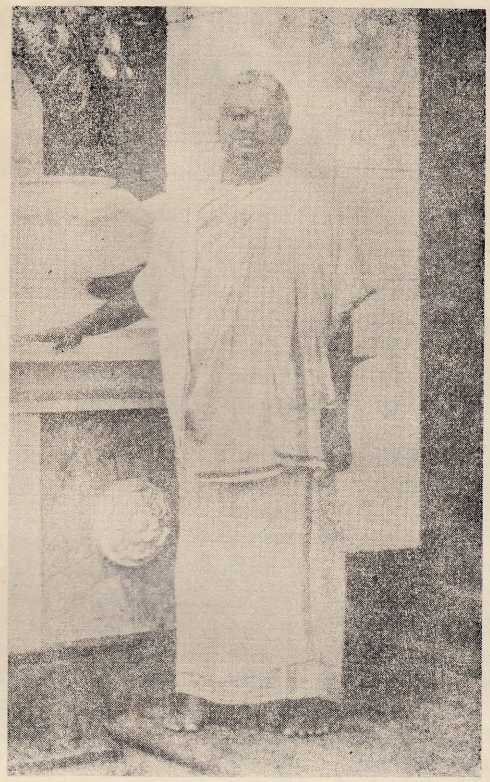
In a series of articles he wrote to **Modern Review, Calcutta Review, Vedanta Kesari, Prabuddha Bharata, Journal of Letters** and other publications he interpreted the history and culture of South India for essentially non-Tamil readers. Likewise in a number of articles he wrote for journals in South India and Sri Lanka, he expounded the salient features of North Indian culture and religious traditions. The purpose of all these expositions was to help integrate the apparently divergent strands of Indian heritage. Essays like " The Universality of the Spirit of Service" (1922), and " Religious Revival in Mediaeval India " (1941) show the working of his mind in this vein.

Although by nature and conviction Vipulananda was a gentle and loving person (qualities that manifest themselves abundantly in his creative works), he had at the same time great strength of nature and courage of convictions. When it came to a question of principles or his convictions he never wavered for a moment from his standpoint. As Handy Perinbanayagam has observed, " he was also man enough to enjoy a fight. In literary and philosophic controversies he went all out to smash his adversary and neither gave nor asked for quarter ". In 1933 on the occasion of the convocation at Annamalai University he dared to hoist the flag of the Indian National Congress in the courtyard of his residence (which he had as Professor of Tamil), when all others hoisted the Union Jack. Needless to say such an action called for considerable amount of conviction and courage. Similarly he was one of the earliest among academics to respond to the poems of Subramania Bharathi, at a time when the poet's works were proscribed and little thought of by the establishment. " It is largely due to Vipulananda that Jaffna was made aware of the dynamic quality of Bharathi's poetry ". Nurtured in the Tamil Classics Vipulananda had the artistic and critical sensibility and sensitivity to perceive the perennial quality in Bharathi's poems. His constant travels gave him breath of vision and depth of love and lifted him above that insularity which is admittedly one of the blemishes of many Tamil scholars. In 1939 when he was preparing to leave Colombo for Mayavati to take up the editorship of **Prabuddha Bharata,** he remarked to a group of persons who had complimented him on being appointed to that prestigeous position :

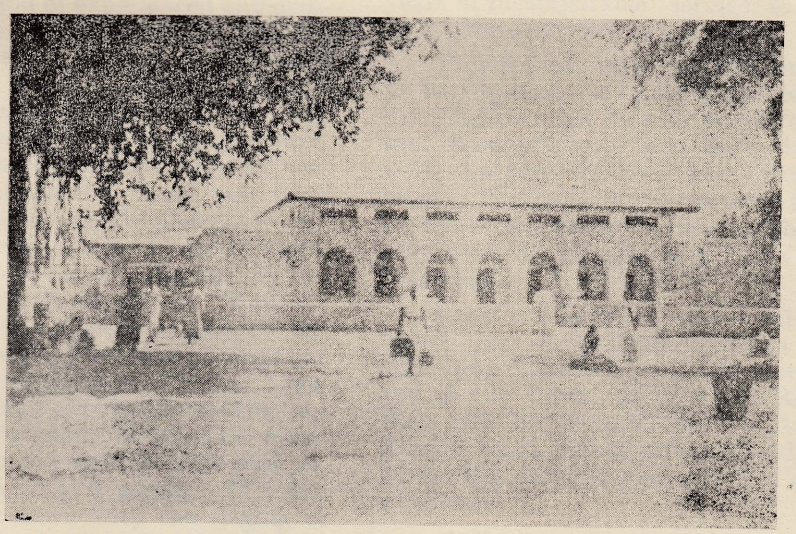
> "This is an Island. Here we develop insular qualities only. We must go to the wide world to study men and things. "

Another aspect of Vipulananda that deserves special mention is his passionate love of beauty. In his youth he was a votary of Keats. Both in his poetry and his critical essays one can see the blend of traditional Indian aesthetics and the great Romantic tradition of Europe. His austere sensuousness was unique. His poetry is written in a style fluent, impassioned and musical. The singer in him was no less remarkable than the scholar and philosopher. His translations of English poetry into Tamil are some of the best achievements of modern Tamil. The translations have great merit and combine true poetic beauty with sensitive fidelity to the original. It is tempting to assert that Vipulananda was perhaps the best translator of English poetry Tamils have produced. (He has also rendered into Tamil verse, selections from Rabindranath Tagore.)

In the ultimate analysis Vipulananda's contribution to the making of modern Tamil prose must be reckoned as the most abiding. His exemplary work in translating scientific words and concepts into Tamil was not the result of mere technical virtuosity ; It was an overall enrichment of the language itself. As one of his early admirers has remarked, " readers of Vipulananda's works will soon realize how elegantly and how efficiently the Tamil language could be used to express scientific ideas as well as philosophic concepts ". A passionate champion of the use of mother tongue in education and administration he wanted the national languages to be developed as good as any other. It remains for us to cherish his memory by continuing the work which he had so much at heart, and by building on the firm foundations which he had laid and bequeathed to us.



Swami Sarvatitananda who was in charge of the Madam for a long number of years.



Ramakrishna Mission Madam at Kataragama which was taken over by the State.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION MADAM AT KATHIRKAMAM

Dr. Indra Sivayoham, F.R.C.S. (Eng.)

Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon, Eye Hospital, Colombo, Sri Lanka

It was midday with the sun blazing its fury from the heavens overhead. Having motored over one hundred and fifty miles and weary from the journey, as one took a bend, almost from nowhere appeared an entire range of six imposing hills heavily garbed in jungle vegetation. This was the range of hills containing amongst others the sacred KATHIRAMALAI. One experienced a magnetic lull on the soul and the sensorium. All weariness disappears from that moment and an ecstasy pervades the devotee.

Though this is the sylvan abode of Lord Murugan who is sacred in the Hindu pantheon, people of all faiths trek to Kathirkamam seeking His blessings on their ventures, be it business, political or for reasons of health. Most political parties and members including several Prime Ministers have been known to inaugurate their campaign only after a pilgrimage to this hallowed shrine.

For one and all there was an unique institution—the RAMAKRISHNA MATT that provided shelter and refuge for the weary and the tired. Not only did it provide lodging facilities but also food in plenty and delectably prepared by the band of experienced and dedicated workers with an indefatigable yearning for service and an ever-present smile adorning their faces. This, in spite of serving devotees by their hundreds stooping down to their banana leaves spread before each devotee. What astounded more is that no payment was stipulated even though the groups may have been large. However overwhelmed by the hospitality they receive many a devotee contributed spontaneously sums of money for the upkeep of the Matt at departure. However Swami Prematmananda assisted ably by Mr. Navaratnam erstwhile Registrar of Supreme Court who spared no pains in collecting donations from the affluent, steered remarkably the management of this haven of spiritual splendour with halls floored with Terrazo and enclosed equally comfortable rooms. The day commenced before dawn with the singing of the Hymns of St. Arunagirinathar on the public address system inclusive of Kantharanupoothy, and Kantharalangaram. The hearts of the inspired devotees lift up automatically to the Patharavintham of Lord Murugan. The dip in the Manicka gangai resplendent with shoals of Makara fish and the cooing of the Lord's Peacock and the crowing of cockbird with the intoxicating sweet odour of incense and the repetition by the devotees in their hundreds of "Arohara" and "Muruga" provide a sacrosanct atmosphere that is inimitable. The location of Ramakrishna Matt almost adjoining the entrance to the glorious Sannithy of the Lord could not have been better.

I vividly recall the eventful ceremony of the foundation stone laying in June 1952 where many Hindus were gathered in their hundreds and some leading Hindus amongst them were invited to lay the foundation. One of them was my dear late father Justice P. Sri Skanda Rajah who later headed the All Ceylon Hindu Congress. In the midst of Namasangeerthanams and invocation to Kathirkama Skandan, the most auspicious beginning of an institution that was to provide twenty-three years of incomparable service to seekers of Lord Murugantook place.

It is a great pity that this institution is no longer available to the pious devotees who had kindness and care showered on them by the Ramakrishna Matt authorities. Many were the protests that were made with no avail. The acquiring of the matt by the state has reduced considerably the number of Hindu pilgrims to Kathirkamam which is to be much regretted.

Let it be hoped that in the not too distant future, just as Kaliyugavarathan Lord Subhramanya eliminated evil and restored status quo to the Devas, so also the Ramakrishna Matt will be restored to the Ramakrishna Mission which has an international reputation for selfless service irrespective of caste, creed or colour.

Om ! Shanthi.

SOCIAL SERVICE AND THE CEYLON BRANCH OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

V. Siva Supramaniam

Retired Judge of the Supreme Court and President, All-Ceylon Hindu Congress

In spreading the gospel of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa among his countrymen Swami Vivekananda laid the greatest emphasis on service to man. 'Service to man is service to God' was his clarion call. Down the ages Hinduism had laid stress on social service and had equated service to God's servants with service to God, but Swami Vivekananda made the ideal of service wider in its scope by extending it to cover all mankind.

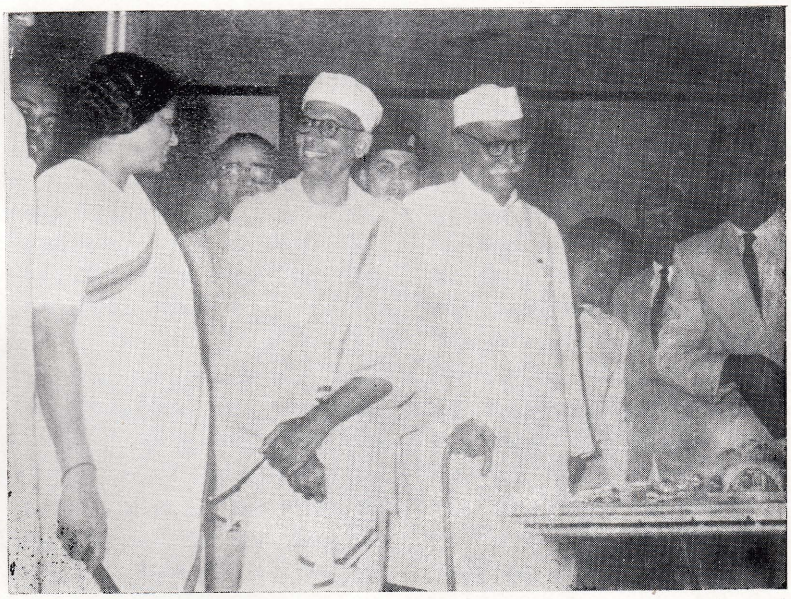
The Ceylon Branch of the Ramakrishna Mission has consistently endeavoured to translate that ideal into action. Although in all its activities that ideal formed an integral part, there have been landmarks which are worthy of mention. A centre of social service of the Mission which evoked the unbounded admiration of all who had the good fortune to visit it was the Madam at Kataragama. Every weary pilgrim seeking spiritual Grace at the feet of Lord Murugan found relief to his tired limbs at this centre where he received free food and lodging. During the festival periods the Centre served tens of thousands of pilgrims each day—men and women, rich and poor, irrespective of race, caste or creed. Those who could afford gave generous donations, which enabled the thousands who could not afford to be looked after. The late Swami Sarvatheethananda of revered memory, who was in charge of this Madam was a noble soul who carried out the objectives of the Mission with rare dedication, even during periods of personal ill-health. It is a great pity that this Centre at which social service was carried out in an exemplary manner for many years and which had earned the gratitude of hundreds of thousands of the sons and daughters of Sri Lanka had to surrender its buildings and close down its activities on the orders of the then Government in the wake of what was described as the development of a Sacred City. Few would agree with the view that the type of social service that was carried on at that Centre has no place within a Sacred City.

Another shining example of the social service work of the Mission in Ceylon is the work done at the Orphanage established at Batticaloa. This Centre is in charge of Swami Jeevanananda whose selfless dedication to his work has rendered the institution a model worthy of emulation by others. The training given to the children, their discipline and the general tone and atmosphere of the place can be described as unique. This service to orphans is undoubtedly one of the noblest forms of social service.

The service rendered to the people by the Colombo Mission under the direct guidance of Swami Prematmanandaji, the local Head, has received high praise from all quarters. For instance, in the years 1958 and 1977 during the communal disturbances, the Mission did yeoman service in rendering relief to the people who had been rendered homeless and robbed of all their possessions. Similarly, in November 1978, when the people of Batticaloa underwent untold hardships as a result of the damage caused by the cyclone, the Colombo Mission organised prompt relief. In addition to such relief work, the Mission carries out welfare work among youthful offenders and prisoners which has been productive of good results and been widely appreciated.

The spirit of dedication shown by the members of the Mission in rendering relief whenever occasions arose has been noteworthy The Swamis attached to the Mission from time to time had all fully imbibed the teaching of the Master that Love of fellowmen and service to them is the essence of all religions and they gave practical expression to those teachings. May that spirit of service continue to illumine the work of the Mission in the years to come!

Sri V. V. Giri then High Commissioner for India in Ceylon with Swami Siddhatmananda (Swami-in-Charge, Ceylon Branch)



Dr. Rajendra Prasad The President of the Republic of India and Shrimathi Lakshmi Menon with Swami Prematmananda, Swami-in-Charge, Ceylon Branch 1959

The Contribution of Ramakrishna Mission to the Religious Life of Sri Lanka

N. Sivapragasam

Editor, Hindu Organ

The contribution of Sri Ramakrishna Mission to the religious life of Sri Lanka has to be traced to the source—the founding of Vivekananda Society even if it be that this organisation is not an off-shoot of the Ramakrishna Mission. The spade work that was so willingly and whole-heartedly done by the admirers of Swami Vivekananda later led to the founding of a branch of the Ramakrishna Mission in Colombo in 1930, a step that has stood the test of time and has been certified to have contributed to the development of this lovely little Isle in the direction of disciplined religious life.

The Swamis of the Ramakrishna Mission belong to a dedicated Sanga working for the resuscitation of the heritage in which Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda glorified themselves. It was said of Sri Ramakrishna that one effect of his life had been the peculiar way in which he had influenced other people who came in contact with him. So influenced, they became his devotees who in turn continued the chain of devoted service and that is the Sri Ramakrishna Mission.

Let us picture in our minds the holy precincts of this Sacred Order. In a salubrious setting on the border of the Southern suburbs of the Metropolitan City of Colombo within ear-shot of the endless echo of the wobbling waves of the Indian Ocean that indicates the mightiness of Mother Nature, the sacred premises at No. 40, Ramakrishna Road, stand aloft in all solemnity as the cornerstone of the spiritual growth of this historic Isle. The Ramakrishna Road has earned the reputation of leading all who care to pass that way to the realities of religion. This is certainly a conspicuous contribution.

The Swamis of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission have been trained to merge their minds in God. Love for all is their lofty ideal. And well did Socrates say that " Hunger of the Human Soul for divine beauty—that is Love". Though it is true that Divine Virtues cannot easily be reached yet the type of instruction that is imparted to students can make a mark on their spiritual progress.

The imparting of knowledge is a divine duty. Fullness in this may not be achieved, but what little, ideal education can obtain, that will serve the learners in good stead. This has been the ideal of the service of Religious Societies in the sphere of education. The Jaffna Hindu College and its affiliated institutions established by the Jaffna Saiva Paripalana Sabhai following the footsteps of the Champion Hindu Reformer Srila Sri Arumuka Navalar, the one hundred and fifty schools of the Hindu Board of Education—a society whose inauguration was inspired by that great Patriot Sir P. Ramanathan and the other educational establishments that owe their existence to the selfless service of the Ramakrishna Mission have a common concept, a particular purpose namely the bringing up of the children of this country in an ideal religious setting.

The Vaidyeshwara Vidyalaya in the Northern Peninsula speaks eloquently interpreting the mind of the Ramakrishna Vidyalayam in the

Eastern Coast where the melody of the Singing Fish is ever sweetening and similarly so, the smaller institutions spread over in this beautiful Isle.

The Mission has acquitted itself as a spiritual Agent following a suitable model in the teaching of the masses by its methodical preaching in the form of forums and felicitous features, discourses and dialogues, talks and treaties, classes and conferences. It has justified its existence as a means to the attainment of the lofty ideals of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. In other words it has been a Sathana Thaanam, a Dharma Peedam. Just as I write these comments the saintly features of Swami Vipulananda of sacred import, sail across my mind and suggest that this Swamiji stands for the substance of the contribution of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission in the religious life of Sri Lanka. And this is exactly so.

Swami Vipulananda like the halo of the heavenly body, the Sun, shed his lustre on all directions permeating through the life of the people, illuminating the entire society of man-He was at once an instructor, a disciple, a Guru, scholar and sage. Swami Vipulananda is Sri Lanka's contribution to the Sri Ramakrishna Mission.

Mingling in the main stream of Sri Lankan life the Mission has yearned for the unification of mankind. Taking its legitimate part in the evolution of the educational system of Sri Lanka, the Mission's efforts have all been to lead the people to the promised land of perfect peace. Every single activity of the Mission has been a symbol of spiritual service. And well may we conclude this contribution by referring to the holy hosts—the Ramakrishna Missionaries as the Messengers of the Master's Message of Real Religion.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION— AN APPRECIATION

Dr. H. W. Tambiah, Q.C.

Retired Judge of the Supreme Court

In my early teens I had the good fortune to read the inspiring lives and works of Sri Ramakrishna and his famous disciple Swami Vivekananda. Thier lives and works brought enlightenment to me. I was able to shake off the narrow dogmas and teachings of the modern Christian church which condemned all non-Christians to eternal hell. My vision was broadened and I began to think that, there is one Deity, the Lord of the Universe, and all religions led to the same goal, although they may differ in their dogmas, doctrines and modes of worship. Just as confluence of rivers ultimately falls into the vast ocean, all religions ultimately lead the soul to God Almighty.

The great religious leaders, such as Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Sai Baba and our Yoga Swamy believed in universality of religion. They saw unity in diversity. Christ did not believe Jewish doctrine that, Jehovah was the patron God of only the Jews. He said, that, the Father of Heaven loved Jews and Gentiles, and all humanity. For His broad views he was crucified. The Church therefore cannot propound a doctrine that only labelled Christians attain salvation.

The Ramakrishna Mission was founded many years ago and it has branches in important cities of the world. True to the teaching of their masters they have carried on a mission of mercy and goodwill to all, irrespective of cast, creed or religion. The Ramakrishna Mission of Sri Lanka was established fifty years ago and it is now celebrating the Golden Jubilee. It has done great service to bring peace and amity between the followers of Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Mohamadanism in Sri Lanka. At its yearly meetings people who profess various religious beliefs are invited by the Mission to deliver lectures. The Ramakrishna Mission has regular poojas and devotional meetings, which Sri Lankans of different religious persuasions often attend.

Apart from the religious activities, the Mission has performed yeomen service to the poor and needy people of this country.

The Mission has centres, namely in Colombo, Batticaloa and Kataragama. The Mission in Batticaloa was inaugurated by Swami Vipulananda—the great scholar monk, who was ordained as a Swami by the Ramakrishna Mission. Mainly it is due to his efforts the Ashrama and School were founded in Batticaloa. Today the school has expanded and it is one of the leading schools in Batticaloa. It has become the cultural centre of the people of the Eastern Province.

In Kataragama, the Mission erected a spacious building chiefly, with the help of the Hindus of Sri Lanka. In this place the Mission has done great service, not only to the devotees but also to the poor and needy. During all seasons, rooms were allotted for a small payment to any one who came first. The State has now taken over the building, and the Mission is endeavouring to put another building in the vicinity, but, exorbitant cost in putting up the building may prevent the Mission from achieving its objects.

In Colombo a magnificent Hall, a Hostel and Headquarters have been established by the Ramakrishna Mission. Intense activities are carried on by the Mission.

A special mention must be made of Swami Prematmananda, Vice President of the Ramakrishna Mission, Sri Lanka Branch. His unostentatious and saintly life has endeared him to all those who came in contact with him. It is due to his efforts that, the magnificent hall and hostel were erected in Colombo. His activities were confined not only to Colombo but to Batticaloa and Kataragama.

It is strange that although Swami Vipulananda and Swami Prematmananda hail from Jaffna, no branch of the Ramakrishna Mission has been established in Jaffna—the Cultural Religious Centre of the people of the North Province. When I asked as to why a Mission has not been established in Jaffna, Swami Prematmananda said, that, no suitable person in Jaffna is prepared to enter their strict order. It is hoped that, in the near future a branch of the Ramakrishna Mission will be established in Jaffna.

The Ramakrishna Mission celebrates its Golden Jubilee after fifty years of service. It is a coincidence that Swami Prematmananda also completes fifty years of devoted service to to the Mission.

I pray that the Ramakrishna Mission should grow from strength to strength, year by year, and continue to perform its service to the People of Sri Lanka. I also take this opportunity to wish Swami Prematmananda, many more years of useful work, good health and longevity.

Some of the members of the Board of Management, Ramakrishna Mission, Ceylon Branch

THE MISSION AND ITS WORK— SOME IMPRESSIONS

Oliver L. Abeyesekera

General Secretary, Congress of Religions

Ever since the day spiritual values began to exert an influence on man and his actions, service to one's fellow men has been held in high esteem by the adherents of all religions all over the world. Moved by love and compassion and the desire to alleviate human suffering followers of the great world religions have organized themselves in various ways to serve humanity. While some of these organizations have made a mark for themselves over the years others have unfortunately lost direction and purpose and have fallen by the wayside. Standing in a class by itself among those organizations that have made a mark for themselves is the Ramakrishna Mission founded by that great saint Swami Vivekananda, the beloved disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa.

Swami Vivekananda always maintained that to work for others was a form of devotion to the Divine. He said that :—

> " The true life of work is indeed as hard as, if not harder than, the equally true life of renunciation. "(1)

Time and again he urged and goaded his fellow countrymen to rise from the torpor in which they were languishing at that time and show the world the great culture, the great spiritual heritage their mother-land possessed. In one of the most inspiring messages he gave to the youth of Bangal—a message that has much relevance for us even today—Swami Vivekananda said :—

> " Bring all the forces of good together. Do not care under which banner you march. Do not care what be your colour—green, blue or red, but mix all the colours up and produce that intense glow of white, the colour of love. Ours is to work ; the results will take care of themselves. If any social institution stands in your way of becoming God, it will give way before the power of Spirit. I do not see into the future, nor do I care to see. But one vision I see clear as life before me : That the ancient Mother has awakened once more, sitting on Her throne, rejuvenated, more glorious than ever. Proclaim Her to all the world with the voice of peace and benediction. " (2)

Inspired by such words and many others the Ramakrishna Order of monks moved among the people both in India and abroad bringing together all the forces of good and proclaiming with the " voice of peace and benediction" the message of love, of harmony and of selfless service that Sri Ramakrishna and later Swami Vivekananda gave to the world. This dedicated band of holy men showed the world that through love and diligent selfless service man could overcome self-made barriers and indeed transcend the limitations he has imposed upon himself.

We, in Sri Lanka do not have to look beyond the shores of our Island to see for ourselves the manner in which the Ramakrishna Mission gives practical expression to this call for harmony and service. We have but to look at the work the Mission does at its headquarters in the metropolis which, in the course of time, has grown from small beginnings to stand today as a fitting and noble monument to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Swami Vivekananda.

Of the many activities the Mission carries out at its Centre in Colombo it is appropriate to mention the work it does to promote inter-religious dialogue and foster better mutual understanding between the adherents of the different faiths. What needs to be emphasised is that, even at the time when inter-faith dialogue was virtually an unheard of thing and long before the call for religious

harmony became popular in Sri Lanka, and perhaps, even in other parts of the world, the Ramakrishna Mission paid respect to the other religions by celebrating annually certain days of significance of these religions. The Mission invites reputed speakers and clergy of the different religions in the country to speak on these days at the Centre on aspects of their respective religions.

In so far as the Mission is concerned there is nothing extraordinary in displaying this broad outlook towards other faiths for, in doing so, it is only giving expression to the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna for whom religious harmony was of considerable significance and importance. He had occasion to say that :—

> "It is the narrow-minded that abuse religions other than their own, declare their own religion to be the best and form sects. Those whose hearts yearn for the Lord are above sectarian prejudice and quarrel ; they spend their time in devotional exercises." (3)

The atmosphere of peace and tranquility that pervades the precints of the Centre is unique indeed. It has its effect on all who visit the place. In fact, any true seeker of the Truth, of the Divine—irrespective of the religion he professes—has but to spend only a few moments in silent prayer and meditation in the Shrine Room at the Centre to experience for himself the spiritual upliftment the place gives him. An experience which cannot be described adequately in words. Such is the sanctity of the place.

Consider also the great and noble work the Mission performed until a few years back at its Madam at Kataragama. What a tragedy it is that the Ramakrishna Mission was compelled to discontinue this work due to circumstances over which it had no control.

How many thousands upon thousands of people of different races, of different religions would have been the recipients of the loving kindness and the generosity of the Mission at this Madam ? One can indeed say with confidence that it is very unlikely that any other similar organization at Kataragama or elsewhere could ever match the dedication and the devotion with which the workers of the Mission at the Madam served the pilgrims who came there in search of shelter and food, and that too at no expense to themselves.

To these workers who served large masses of people day in and day out, throughout the year, the spirit of selfless service was the only noteworthy factor. They were but giving expression to the ideal of Karma Yoga following in the footsteps of the great Karma Yogin Swami Vivekananda himself who gave them direction and purpose.

No article on the Ramakrishna Mission in Sri Lanka and the work it does is complete without mention been made of the person who directs its operations. The person whose guidance and influence sets the tone and the correct atmosphere in which the many activities are carried out. In this regard, we in Sri Lanka are very fortunate indeed.

Srimat Swami Prematmananda is without doubt the embodiment of that ideal enunciated by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavath Gita who, in reply to a question raised by Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshettira said :—

> "Therefore, who doeth rightfully to do,
> Not seeking gain from work, that man, O Prince !
> Is Sanyasi and Yogi—both in one.
> As he is neither who lights not the flame
> Of sacrifice, nor setteth hand to task.
> Regard as true Renouncer him that makes
> Worship by work, for who renounceth not
> Works not as Yogin. So is that well said :
> " By works the votary doth rise to faith,
> And saintship is the ceasing from all works ; "
> Because the perfect Yogin acts—but acts
> Unmoved by passions and unbound by deeds,
> Setting results aside." (4)

With arms folded across his chest and with a trace of a smile flitting across his lips Swami Prematmananda moves with quite dignity amidst the bustle of activities directing operations when occasion requires him to do so. It is very unlikely that anyone has seen the Swamiji disturbed or flustered by any situation that may have upset the normally smooth arrangement of some programme or another organized by the Mission.

Swamiji's activities of course are not confined to the work of the Mission only. He is indeed truly concerned about the welfare of the people of the country at large. What stands out clearly however in this regard is that, for him, action however small its magnitude may be is far more important than all the hours spent in discussions and deliberations.

One can of course go on eulogising about Swami Prematmananda in this strain, but those who have had the good fortune to associate with him will know that Swamiji would rather prefer to stand away from the glare of the spotlight and work silently and unobtrusively allowing others to benefit from the results of his actions.

In a world torn by strife and turmoil, suspicion and hatred, organizations like the Ramakrishna Mission and people like Swami Prematmananda are very rare indeed. They are beacons of light in a sea of darkness. They show mankind that there is yet hope and the potential to build a better world—a world of peace, harmony, love and understanding.

May the Ramakrishna Mission and Swami Prematmanandaji continue to grow in stature day by day and stand as shining examples worthy of emulation by all mankind.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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3. Words of the Master compiled by Swami Brahmanananda, page 103. Published by the Udbodhan Office, Baghbazar, Calcutta.

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SRI AUROBINDO ON RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHANSA

Selections by : V. Murugesu,

Secretary, Sri Aurobindo Society, Sri Lanka

" And in a recent unique example, in the life of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, we see a colossal spiritual capacity, first driving straight to the divine realisation, taking, as it were, the kingdom of heaven by violence, and then seizing upon one Yogic method after another and extracting the substance out of it with an incredible rapidity, always to return to the heart of the whole matter, the realisation and possession of God by the power of love, by the extension of inborn spirituality into various experience and by the spontaneous play of an intuitive knowledge. "—

(The Synthesis of Yoga, page 36.)

" When scepticism had reached its height, the time had come for spirituality to assert itself and establish the reality of the world as a manifestation of the spirit, the secret of the confusion created by the senses, the magnificent possibilities of man and the ineffable beatitude of God. This is the work whose consummation Sri Ramakrishna came to begin and all the development of the previous two thousand years and more since Buddha appeared had been a preparation for the harmonisation of spiritual teaching and experience by the Avatar of Dakshineshwar. "—

(Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library Edition, Vol. I, page 799.)

" Of all these souls Sri Ramakrishna was the last and greatest, for while others felt God in a single or limited aspect, he felt Him in His illimitable unity as the sum of an illimitable variety. In him the spiritual experiences of the millions of saints who had gone before were renewed and united. Sri Ramakrishna gave to India the final message of Hinduism to the world. A new era dates from his birth, an era in which the peoples of the earth will be lifted for a while into communion with God and spirituality, become " the dominant note of human life. "—

(Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library Edition, Vol. I, pages 800-801.)

" When the soul rises higher, it follows by preference its own ideas, experiences, opinions, temperament, Guru, ' ista ', but it does not turn an ignorant and exclusive eye upon others. ' There are many paths ' it cries, ' and all lead equally to God. All men, even the sinner and the atheist are my brothers in Sadhana and the Beloved is drawing them each in His own way to One without a second.....That is what Ramakrishna taught by His life and Sadhana and therefore is He the Avatar of the Age, the One who prepares the future of humanity. "—

(Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library Edition, Vol. III, page 462.)

SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE EMBODIMENT OF VEDIC CULTURE

Swami Chidbhavananda

(*President, Ramakrishna Tapovanam, Tirupparaithurai*)

Sri Ramakrishna lived in Calcutta in the middle of nineteenth century. This city was then the capital of British India. In every respect Calcutta resembled London. The Western civilization was at its zenith here. The educated Indians had become westernised mentally. In customs and manners also they became the imitators of the west. It was in this setting Sri Ramakrishna was thriving in his own way. He refused to be educated in modern lines, because it did not suit his native genius. Neither did he follow the Indian tradition totally. He lived according to the promptings of his heart. One of his teachings is 'Be in the world but be not of the world.' He was himself an embodiment of his own teaching. He lived in the British regime, but he was not of the British regime. He was not conscious even for a moment that he was a British subject. In customs and manners he belonged more to the ancient India than to the modern. He was imbued with the Vedic tenets Satyam Vada, Dharmam Chara—speak the truth, conform to the right path. In giving effect to these two pithy tenets, he followed not the tradition in the land. But he followed the promptings of his own heart.

For a few centuries together the elite of the land practised what they called untouchability. They segregated a section of the community as the defiled and polluted. What they practised was not in conformity with truth. There is no sanction for it in any of our sacred books. Sri Ramakrishna was not a party to this belief and practice. Even as a slip of tongue he never called anybody an untouchable. That thought did not emanate in his heart. In other words he was constituted of Satyam, what he thought was Satyam; what he spoke was Satyam ; what he practised was Satyam. His prayer to his chosen deity, Kali the Cosmic Mother emanated this wise ; "Mother! these people also are your children. My neglecting them and my slighting them amount to neglecting and slighting you. Mother! vouchsafe the wisdom to behold them as your children and to serve them as I serve you. He acted as he prayed. So that he might not wound the feelings of the others concerned, he stole at night to a slum near Dakshineswar and cleansed it at the dead of night unnoticed by the others. He did not do it for self-advertisement, but for self-purification. This Sadhana of self-purification he continued for a few months. He felt purified at heart and recognised the presence of the Mother in the persons banished by the others. This was how he practised the virtue of Satyam and got himself purified thereby.

Satyam and Dharmam are inter-related. Knowing the cosmic structure and conforming one's life in tune with it is Satyam. Dharma varies from person to person, Dharma is one's duty. Karma and Dharma are inter-changeable. Whatever act or Karma elevates one's stature and growth is one's Dharma. The Dharma of the student is to study his lessons. The Dharma of the teachers is to teach efficiently. By adhering to Dharma one expands in life. By deviating from Dharma one deteriorates. Human beings are inter-related as limbs are in the human body. Human beings are the limbs of society. If one acts in such a way as to weaken one's limbs he deviates from Dharma. Even so if one section of society acts in such a way as to weaken or cripple another section of the society, that act is Adharma. Unconsciously the Indian society drifted towards sectional interest. Thereby there was in the nineteenth century a general national set back.

Uneducated though Sri Ramakrishna was uninitiated though he was, through his inborn genius he adhered to social solidarity. Thereby he established Dharma. He did not go about teaching and preaching to people pointing out the defects in their social life. He simply corrected himself in his dealings with

people. He closely associated with the good not taking into consideration, their birth and social rank. He treated all good people as his own. He kept aloof from the bad without condemning them. This was how silently and effectively he brought about a social restoration.

By the practice of Dharma man elevates himself and creates a wholesome contact with the world outside. This was exactly what Sri Ramakrishna did in the middle of the nineteenth century. He simply practised these two tenets—Speak the truth; conform to Dharma. What he practised was the true import. The world is today slowly but surely coming to know of the correct practice of these tenets by the Paramahamsa.

His further conviction was that the man who evolves in right lines is the greatest benefactor of the world and that he verily is.

ENJOY THE VARIETY, UNDERSTAND THE UNITY

Sri Swami Satchidananda

Ecumenism is real Yoga. Though we follow one teacher, we learn to respect all other teachers. The teachings may vary, but the central Teaching is always the same—to know our True Self. That is the first and foremost goal. Once we know the Self, it is easy to know all other things.

The same Teaching is presented in many ways. There is a famous, often-quoted Hindu saying: "Ekam sat vidprah bhavutah vadanti." or "Truth is one. Those who have realized that Truth expressed it in many ways, in many languages." It is the presentation that differed; but the thing that was presented by all those great people is the same, whether it is the great ancient sages of the East or of the West. They all presented the Truth as they realized it, in their own language and to suit the people who were listening.

The paths should be many to cater to the various tastes, temperaments, capacities, the culture of the individuals. It is terrible to see some of the people who talk of religion, who follow religion, who propogate religion, denying other paths and fighting among themselves. Particularly in this age when the world has shrunk so much, every individual is really nothing but a cell in this cosmic body. We can't afford to divide ourselves and die.

We want a good garden to have multifarious flowers, just as we appreciate the many languages and cultures, varieties of dance and music. If you have only chrysanthemums for acres and acres, you wouldn't even call it a garden; you would call it a farm. The garden may be smaller and not have that many flowers, but because it has a variety, you call it beautiful. So variety is needed and wanted. We are not all alike. Imagine what it would be if we all became like each other. It would be terrible. I can't even imagine how the world would be.

The purpose of ecumenism is not to have only one flag or one religion. When things become uniform, we become bored and don't appreciate life anymore. But, while enjoying the variety, we can try to understand the unity. However, if we don't know the unity, we won't enjoy the variety. Instead, we will always be fighting. The true purpose of ecumenism is to stop the fighting.

The individual is free to choose whatever symbol or image he prefers. We should respect the various signs, symbols, and approaches. Eventually all bring the Light. You are in Light, and you are called enlightened.

In the Hindu philosophy, you can see various approaches, not only one. Sometimes we even see one great saint seemingly contradicting another saint. But if we go deeply into that, to find out why they contradict each other, we can easily understand they are both talking about the same goal and showing different approaches.

Ultimately we are all aiming for the same thing. We all walk toward the same goal. All the rivers eventually flow into the same sea. Why should someone claim, "Only my river and not yours?" He has never seen my river flowing into the sea; he has only seen his river. So without even seeing my river, he says only his river flows into to sea.

We should remember that after flowing to the sea, all the rivers become the same seawater. All the different rivers are running toward the same sea, and all the teachings of the various traditions point toward the same goal. This is the Truth.

Sri Ramakrishna was a herald for that new consciousness which is coming more and more to the world at this time, the need for that ecumenical spirit which embraces all religions. His own life exemplified that. He proved in his very life that all paths are efficacious in the pursuit of that common goal. His teachings have the simplicity and clarity of all the great masters, and his way of teaching through stories and parables helps the modern mind to grasp these truths.

We know a tree by its fruits, and Sri Ramakrishna has given to the world so many great teachers as well as the Ramakrishna Mission which continues to show the world his teachings in action.

SELFLESS SERVICE

Dr. Nissanka Wijeyeratne

Minister of Justice, Sri Lanka

It has been a cardinal principle of the great religions that arose in the world that selfishness has to be eliminated if life is to be enriched. All noble philosophies of the World extol this central theme.

An identification of the highest virtues in such service to others rather than self is exemplified in the lives of all great teachers to whom individual effort and sometimes supreme sacrifice as in the case of the Christ and Saint Guru Tej Bahadur or even more recently the Bab, indicate how martyrdom was the price they paid for their unremitting and solicitious commitment to the welfare and freedom of their followers. Buddha, Mohamed and other great religious leaders have had to face persecution and insult, but they never wavered from what they considered their path of duty in bringing solace to their followers.

All of them encouraged those whom they led to display consideration and kindness to others. They were willing to share what they had and to extend succour to those who needed assistance. The parable of the good Samaritan is well known and right through the history we have innumerable examples of good persons even at great risk to themselves helping others. We know how during the last War a Buddhist Monk risked his own life to save a Pilot whose plane had crashed and whom enemy planes were trying to strafe. Only a few days ago we heard of the heroism of searchers for victims of the capsized Floating Platforms in the North Seas of Europe endangering their own lives to help their stricken and drowning brothers. They reflected through their efforts that eternal verity spelt out in the Bhagavat Gita " Thine is the duty not the fruits thereof ".

In the story of the Ramakrishna Mission we see this whole range of noble human endeavour. At Dakshineshwar Sri Ramakrishna spent hours and days and years at great personal sacrifice trying to realise the ultimate for himself so that he could use the power so gained for the regeneration of other human beings. He was traduced as a mad-man but in the end the efforts he made and the goodwill he showed to all the worshippers who came to the temple so impressed every visitor that they came to realise that continued and dedicated commitment to one's fellow beings was the path of virtue that had to be admired and respected.

Among the great disciples of Sri Ramakrishna was Swami Vivekananda, one who enjoyed by birth, opportunity and personal qualities, the highest possible position in the contemporary society of Bengal of his day. He too made this unique sacrifice by accepting the fact that in selfless spiritual life lay the highest standard that man could aspire to seek. He embarked, under the guidance of Sri Ramakrishna, a life devoted to the improvement of the religious, cultural and social standards of his countrymen, and sought finally to reach thereby all human beings. In his writings he expressed this clearly. He wanted his countrymen to derive the best in their heritage as well of the World for the improvement of themselves and through themselves to other human beings.

He consistently pointed out that selfishness was the bane of society and that it arose in individuals, and that every individual should consciously seek to eliminate it since it corrupts the essence of human life. Those who were fortunate enough to have knowledge and possessions should share them with other human beings ; power did not belong to an individual for self-gratification but aught to be held in trust for the benefit of others ; that ceaseless endeavour to be of service to others should be the guiding stuff of human life. Unintelligent imitation would not help the fulfilment of this service ; one should draw from one's own and other traditions all that was good and useful ; they should be refined as instruments for the betterment of all human lives and that these values should be constant ; that one should not be deflected from these ideals by temporary set backs.

This eclectical attitude was reflected by him in every contact he had with persons of different cultural worlds. It shone through all his speeches before Western audiences, whom he felt belonged to one great human race. These virtues in the ruler of Rameshwaram were extolled by Vivekananda and adorn the walls of the Ashram where he sojourned when he visited that island. The large number of disciples he built up were guided by these same principles. Some of them engaged in the spiritual life for their own benefit and through clarified views helped, as they still do, to improve the thought of other human beings who came within the influence of their Mission. Many others gave up comfortable lives to become teachers and educate their fellow citizens to grow up to a better world, while others devoted themselves to social service so that their less fortunate brethren could lead fuller and happier lives.

There is no doubt that these flowers of the human race have beautified the human scene. Man has the choice to accept or reject the example. By selfish rejection one could only add to the unsatisfactoriness of one's own life, but by accepting the examples and extending it through one's own efforts one can enrich society and make oneself and others happier. The choice therefore lies with each individual and it therefore behoves all, whatever religion they may belong to, to realise this truth as the prelude to one's own happiness.

Human beings can only do so in varying degrees depending on their own capacities, but it is perhaps the only way out of the torments of an imperfect World. Every individual should make one's own effort along this truly noble way just as much as every State should ensure the pre-conditions which will enable individuals to function with responsibility to each other, working for the collective good and not to act in a manner as if he were an island unto himself.

On this occasion it is well to remember these fundamentals and also by an awareness of the work of this movement to realise that its example should be an inspiration in ones own life.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND GOD REALISATION

N. Manicka-Idaikkadar

United Nations Consultant

" If you have come to the orchard to eat mangoes, go ahead and eat the mangoes. Do not waste your time in counting the number of trees, branches, fruits and other details of the orchard ". This in essence has been Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa's advice to the lovers of God who visited him at Dakshineshvar on God-realisation. Swami Vivekananda following the Master remarked :

" Religion is neither in books, nor in intellectual consent, nor in reason. Reason, theories, documents, doctrines, books, religious ceremonies are all helps to religion ; religion itself consists in realisation ".

In the pursuit of realisation, non-essentials are discarded like head and tail in fish. Like the proverbial swan's ability to separate the milk from the water, we should be able to discard the non-essentials and go only for the essentials (realisation).

" Pray to God with a longing heart. He will surely listen to your prayer if it is sincere. Perhaps He will direct you to holy men with whom you can keep company and that will help you on your spiritual path. Perhaps someone will tell you ' Do this and you will attain God ' ".—This has been the advice to a householder disciple which applies to most of us.

For realisation, the Paramahamsa does not prescribe any strict rules. Any method will do. Whenever a devotee inquired about a particular method of worship, he would reply 'this is a way, (and never the way)'. He however advocated that somehow or other you must start with the worship. He illustrated this with the story of a pilgrim who wanted to visit Puri Jaganath without knowing the road to Puri. He however made a start. He inquired for the road all along the way. Whenever he strayed away from the right road, it was rectified by inquiring from people around. Eventually he got to Puri.

When Sri Ramakrishna was asked by a devotee whether he should concentrate on the personal or impersonal aspects of God, his answer was to concentrate on that aspect that suited him best. The Saivites, Vaishnavites and the Saktas all flocked to seek his advice on religious matters as he was able to guide them in their respective ways.

He harmonized all aspects of worship in Hinduism by quoting Hanuman as saying :- "O, Rama, sometimes I think that you are the whole and I am a part, and sometimes that you are the Master and I am your servant. But when I have the knowledge of Reality, I see that you are I and I am You ". He thus showed that the approach made by each one of those great saints Sankarachcharya, Ramanuja and Madhva was a way and there was no contradiction between them in the path for one's realisation of God. The Paramahamsa said on many occasions that if people felt sincere longing, they would find that all paths led to God.

Sri Ramakrishna never encouraged too much reasoning. ' One needs faith ' was his motto. One must be restless for God and learn to love Him. Reason, mere intellectual Knowledge, is like a man who can go only as far as the outer court of a house. But Bakti is like a woman who goes into the inner court. Whenever he found his disciples argue, he would stop them and instead encourage them to go to the Panchavadi of Dakshineswar Temple for meditation. Once he even extracted a promise from his disciple Mahendranath Gupta (author of the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna) that he would not reason any more. However with his natural way of harmonizing many things in religion, for a question whether one should not reason any more, he replied, " I am asking you not to indulge in futile reasoning. But reason, by all means, about the Real and the unreal, about what is permanent and what is transitory. You must reason when you

are overcome by lust, anger or grief ". In short what Paramahamsa was trying to impress on his disciples and devotees was that through too much reasoning, the spiritual life would be injured and retard the process to realisation.

Whichever method is adopted for the path to realisation, Sri Ramakrishna has asked for single-mindedness and concentration. He says you do not succeed in realising God unless your soul becomes restless for Him. For concentration, the Paramahamsa gives the example of Arjuna aiming his arrow at the eye of a bird. Arjuna's guru Drona asked " Arjuna, what do you see. Do you see these kings ". " No, sir " replied Arjuna. Drona asked ' Do you see me ' — no was the answer. " Do you see the tree " — the answer was ' no ' again. Drona further asked ' Do you see the bird on the tree ' — the answer was again ' no '. Drona finally asked 'what do you see'— the reply was ' only the birds ' eye '. This is the single-minded concentration needed for realisation.

The best service we can do to ourselves and the Ramakrishna Mission which is celebrating its Golden Jubilee in Sri Lanka this year (1980) is to follow the message of this great Avatar who embraced all faiths and followed many paths for God realisation during his short sojourn in this world.

SRI AUROBINDO ON SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Selections by : V. Murugesu,

Secretary, Sri Aurobindo Society, Sri Lanka

" It was in religion first that the soul of India awoke and triumphed. There were always indications, always great forerunners, but it was when the flower of the educated youth of Calcutta bowed down at the feet of an illiterate Hindu ascetic, a self-illuminated ecstatic and ' mystic ' without a single trace and touch of the alien thought or education upon him that the battle was won. The going forth of Vivekananda, marked out by the Master as the heroic soul destined to take the world between his two hands and change it, was the first visible sign to the world that India was awake not only to survive but to conquer. "—

(Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library Edition, Vol. 2, page 37.)

" It is such a synthesis embracing all life and action in its scope that the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda have been preparing. What is dimly beginning now is a repetition on a wider stage of what happened once before in India, more rapidly but to smaller issues, when the Buddha lived and taught his philosophy and ethics to the Aryan nations. "—

(Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library Edition, Vol. 3, page 344.)

" It was to give mukti that Ramakrishna came, not to impose a new bondage. Therefore was Vivekananda His Apostle to the Gentiles, a man who in all things asserted freedom. "—

(Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library Edition, Vol. 3, page 463).

" It is that which inspires a remarkable passage in a letter of Swami Vivekananda, ' I have lost all wish for my salvation, ' wrote the great Vedantin, ' may I be born again and again and suffer thousands of miseries so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum-total of " all souls,—and above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species is the special object of my worship. He who is the high and low, the saint and the sinner, the god and the worm, Him worship, the visible, the knowable, the real, the omnipresent ; break all other idols. In whom there is neither past life nor future birth, nor death, nor going, nor coming, in whom we always have been and always will be one, Him worship ; break all other idols.' "—

(Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library Edition, Vol. 20, pages 257-258.)

" What was Ramakrishna ? God manifest in a human being ; but behind there is God in His infinite impersonality and His universal Personality. And what was Vivekananda ? A radiant glance from the eye of Shiva ; but behind him is the divine gaze from which he came and Shiva himself and Brahma and Vishnu and OM all-exceeding. "—

(Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library Edition, Vol. 17, page 98.)

" Vivekananda was a soul of puissance if ever there was one, a very lion among men, but the definite work he has left behind is quite incommensurate with our impression of his creative might and energy. We perceive his influence still working gigantically, we know not well how, we know not well where, in something that is not yet formed, something leonine, grand, intuitive, upheaving that has entered the soul of India and we say, ' Behold Vivekananda still lives in the soul of his Mother and in the souls of her children. ' So it is with all. Not only are the men greater than their definite works, but their influence is so wide and formless that it has little relation to any formal work that they have left behind them. "—

(Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library Edition, Vol. 17, page 332.)

" Remember also that we derive from Ramakrishna. For myself it was Ramakrishna who personally came and first turned me to this Yoga. Vivekananda in the Alipore Jail gave me the foundations of that knowledge which is the basis of our Sadhana. "—

(Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library Edition, Vol. 27, page 435.)

Swami Vivekananda's Historic Home-Coming After His Triumphal Mission in the West

Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan

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Colombo was especially privileged to be the first city that received Swami Vivekananda after his spectacular mission in the West. He had gone to the United States of America not knowing how he would manage to approach the Parliament of Religions and address the illustrious audience. All he knew was that he was at the mercy of the Divine Mother and that She would fulfil Her wish through his devoted service. Difficulties presented themselves to him in rapid succession yet by Her grace and by his unstinted faith he overcame all obstacles and glorified Her as also his Master Sri Ramakrishna. After winning over the sophisticated assembly by speaking simply and powerfully from the heart he was recognized as a great spiritual hero and was acclaimed everywhere. Now he was returning victorious and triumphant, and Colombo received this great youth with deep emotion. As the Swami disembarked, he was greeted by a great ovation rising from the crowd which covered the quays. The excited people vied with each other to prostrate and touch his feet. It was evident that the Swami was moved by this powerful demonstration of mass-affection. He was taken out in a glorious procession and many addresses of welcome were voiced. From Colombo to Almora this was repeated.

At every place he did not spare himself but made impassioned speeches filled with spiritual power appealing to the people to get themselves organized so as to become strong, the only way to become a nation once more. He implored them to feel and realize their own greatness and be proud of their much maligned heritage.

The central message of India he delivered at Madras, the city which had discovered him and had sent him to America. Here he disclosed his " Plan of Campaign ". He exhorted his people to rise up with courage and to understand wherein their strength lay. namely in the undying spirit of India. " My India arise ! Where is your vital force ? In your immortal Soul..... "

" Each nation, like each individual, has one theme in this life, which is its centre, the principal note around which every other note comes to form the harmony. In one nation political power is its vitality as in England. Artistic life in another and so on. In India religious life forms the centre, the keynote of the whole music of national life. If any one nation attempts to throw off its national vitality, the direction which has become its own through the transmission of centuries, that nation dies. And, therefore if you succeed in the attempt to throw off your religion and take up either politics or society the result will be that you will become extinct. Social reform and politics have to be preached through that vitality of your religion. Every man has to make his own choice ; so has every nation. We made our choice ages ago. And it is the faith in an immortal Soul. I challenge anyone to give it up. How can you change your nature ?

" What our country now wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel ", declared the Swami, " gigantic wills, which nothing can resist, which will accomplish their purpose in any fashion, even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean and meeting death face to face. That is what we want, and that can only be created, established and strengthened by understanding and realizing the ideal of the Advaita, that ideal of the oneness of all. "

The patriotic fervour that must have been aroused in the hearts of those who heard the Swami can be easily imagined.

He went on, " Feel therefore my would-be reformers, my would-be patriots Do you feel ? Do you feel that millions of the descendants of gods and sages have become next-

door neighbours to brutes? Do you feel that millions are starving today, millions have been starving for ages? Do you feel that ignorance has come over the land as a dark cloud? Does it make you restless? Does it make you sleepless? Has it made you mad? Are you seized with that one idea of the misery of ruin, and have you forgotten all about your name, your fame, your wives, your children, your property, and even your bodies? That is the first step to become a patriot."

The Swami told his listeners that his plan was to start institutions in the country wherein young men would be trained to be preachers of the truths of Hindu scriptures in India and outside also. He told them that he wanted strong vigorous believing young men who would be sincere to the utmost. Even if only a hundred would come forward he said, the world would see a revolution.

After the Swami reached Calcutta this plan of his was put into practice withintensity. Calcutta, as the cities before her, was all afire with moving enthusiasm to receive the young monk. All classes of citizens rose united to acclaim their hero. Calcutta had a special reason to be proud because it was one of her own citizens who was coming home as the famous Swami Vivekananda. As soon as the public functions were over the Swami got down to the earnest work of organizing the institutions that would give birth to the kind of young men he wanted. Much of his time he spent talking to young boys many of whom became his disciples. The Swami succeeded in converting even his brother disciples who were then living in the monastery near Alambazar. He persuaded them that no matter how valuable their personal salvation may be the general welfare of all the people was of equal importance and that helping them and uplifting them would be beneficial to their own spiritual progress even. He made them understand that this had been the core of the Master's teaching. Overcome and persuaded, his holy brothers were now willing to implicitly obey the commands of their beloved leader. For instance, Swami Ramakrishnananda who had never left the monastery for twelve years since it had come into being just after the passing of Sri Ramakrishna, went to Madras to start a centre there. Swami Akhandananda went to the District of Murshidabad to work for the relief of the famine stricken people there. Many young men responded to the call of Swami Vivekananda and devoted their lives to renunciation and service. In this moving manner came into existence an organized order of dedicated monks who put into practice the ideals of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. To this day we can see the wonderful effect of the noble wishes of these great Spiritual Luminaries.

EDUCATION FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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Swami Vivekananda has said that the neglect of the masses has been our national sin and the reason for our downfall and no amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses are once more well educated, well nourished and well cared for.

The World Bank Reports have pointed out that nearly forty per cent of the world's population are living in absolute poverty, living in conditions degraded by disease, illiteracy, malnutrition and squalor, as to deny its victims basic human necessities and most of those people concentrated in the developing nations of Asia and South America. Experience has proved that a right type of education has made people politically and socially conscious, economically more productive and culturally more active in the nation building process. In many of the developing countries the poor people have been by-passed by education and so to evolve an education for their development is very essential for the progress of the respective countries.

Till quite recently by our leaders, it was assumed that expansion of education will build the human capital, and once a satisfactory level of education has been reached, development would follow automatically. In fact, expenses on education have been described as " Investment in man ". But the questions, " What kind of education ? ". " What values should it inculcate ? " were never raised. Experience now indicates that educational expansion in many countries has taken the educated out of development rather than into the process. Instead of promoting social responsibility it has stimulated selfishness and self-aggrandisement and has misguided the educated to gravitate towards the elite, who are the custodians of " status and prestige ".

Therefore it is important to integrate all the vital elements of the development processes into a mutually sustaining relationship. Economic growth must raise the productivity and the saving capacity of people and ensure a satisfactory rate of growth over time. Growth needs to acquire the qualitative dimensions of social justice, people's participation and human values. The efficacy of growth must be judged by these qualitative criteria. Does the process of production result in a net addition to social welfare or to social cost ? Is its objective simply an increase in the aggregate of goods and services, or of such goods which stimulate self-reliant development ?. This is the dynamic and integral concept of growth. We must plan for a type of education which will help this development process.

It is good to recall what the basic human needs are. According to the 'Ode of an Asian humanist," they are :

1. " While in my mother's womb, I want her to have good nutrition and access to maternal and child welfare care.
2. I want good nutrition for my mother and for me in my first two to three years, when my capacity for future mental and physical development is determined.
3. I want to be able to go to school, together with my sister, and to learn a usable trade, and to have the school impart social values to me.
4. When I leave school I want a job, meaningful one in which I can feel the satisfaction of making a contribution.
5. I want to live in a society of law and order without molestation.
6. I want my country to relate itself effectively and equitably to the outside world' so that I can have access to the intellectual, cultural and technical knowledge of all mankind, as well as to capital from overseas.

7. As a farmer, I would like to have my own plot of land, with a system which gives me easy access to credit, to new agricultural technology, and to markets, and a fair price for my product.

8. As a worker, I would want to have some share, some sense of participation, in the factory in which I work.

9. As a human being, I would like inexpensive newspapers and paperback books, plus access to radio and television.

10. I need some leisure time for myself, and to enjoy with my family would want access to some green parks, and to the arts, and my cultural heritage.

11. I would like to have the security of co-operative mechanisms in which I join with others to do things which we cannot do alone.

12. I want clean air to breathe and clean water to drink.

13. I need the opportunity to participate in the society around me and to be able to help to shape the decisions of the economic, social, and political institutions that affect my life.

14. I want women to have equal opportunity with men."

These are the fundamental needs of life. Development should seek to achieve these for all and education should accelerate the development process particularly in rural areas where poverty is concentrated.

Rural Development work is admittedly a difficult task. But this has to be done with devotion and dedication if we are to serve the poor and rise as a nation. Let us remember the words of Swami Vivekananda, "Three things are necessary for great achievements. First feel from the heart, what is in the intellect or reason ?. It goes a few steps and there it stops. But through the heart comes inspiration. Love opens the most impossible gates. Feel, therefore, my would-be patriots. Do you feel ?. Do yo feel that millions and millions of the descendants of Gods and sages have become next door neighbours to brutes ?. Do you feel that millions are starving today ?. Does it make you restless ?. Does it make you sleepless ?. Has it made you almost mad ?. Are you seized with the one idea of their misery and ruin and have you forgotten all about your name, your fame, your wives, your children, your property, even your own bodies ?. Have you done that ?. That is the very first step.

You may feel then ; but instead of spending your energies in frothy talk, have you found any way out, any practical solution, to soothe their miseries to bring them out of this living death ? Yet that is not all. Have you got the will to surmount mountain-high obstructions ?. If the whole world stands against you with sword in hand, would you still dare to do what you think is right ?. If your wives and children are against you, if all your name dies, your wealth vanishes, would you still stick to it ?.

Would you still pursue it and go on steadily towards your own goal ?. As the great king Bhartrihari says, "Let the sages blame or let them praise ; let the Goddess of Fortune come or let Her go wherever she likes, let death come today or let it come in hundreds of years, he indeed is the steady man who does not move one inch from the way of truth". Have you got that steadfastness ? "If you have these three things, each one of you will work miracles. Let these people be your God ; think of them, work for them, pray for them incessantly ; the Lord will show you the way".

To work for and amongst the poor who live in squalor, dirt and ignorance is by no means easy. But to us the children of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and The Holy Mother, who have dedicated ourselves to a life of voluntary poverty and service, nothing is difficult. Let us gird up our loins and take up this great challenge with strength, and faith. For if we don't do it, who else will do ?. In the words of Swamiji again, "Let us arise and march ahead with love and courage."

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA—THE ESSENCE OF HIS TEACHINGS

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"All power is within you, you can do anything and everything. Believe in that; do not believe that you are weak; all power is there. Stand up and express the divinity within you." These words uttered by Swami Vivekananda gave a rude shaking to all men, women and children of India and pulled them out of a defeatist feeling prevalent in the country at that time. He defined religion as, the manifestation of the Divinity in man, and education as the manifestation of the perfection in man. Man and woman were made to realise that they were not second to anybody in the world. It is no exaggeration to state that Swami Vivekananda laid the foundation for the independence of India.

He tells stationmaster Sarath "On the request of my Guru, Ramakrishna, I am dedicating my life to the regeneration of my motherland. Spirituality at present is at a low ebb and a starvation stalks the land. India must become dynamic again and earn the respect of the world through her spiritual power". Thus declaring his mission, Swami moves on and remains pure like water that flows. Swami realises that the distinctive characteristics of Oriental civilization lies in renunciation of the finite and communion with the infinite. He knows full well that he is to dedicate his life to the service of the people instead of himself experiencing the bliss of samadhi. He feels an urge to learn at first hand the sufferings of the people to serve whom is the one mission of his life. He seeks and obtains the blessings of the Holy Mother.

Swami wanted his workers to be "men of muscles of iron and nerves of steel". He said that the whole secret of existence is to have no fear. All misery comes from fear, from unsatisfied desire. Man will find that he never dies and then he will have no more fear of death. When he knows that he is perfect, he will have no more vain desires, and both these causes being absent, there will be no more misery—there will be perfect bliss even while in this body. He said that his mission in life was to make MEN of the Indians, and his ideal was to make the divinity in men to manifest itself.

At a meeting in India Swami said "What makes a man stand up and work? Strength. Strength is goodness, weakness is sin. If there is one word that you find coming out like a bomb from the Upanishads, bursting like a bomb shell upon masses of ignorance, it is the word "fearlessness" and the only religion that ought to be taught is the religion of fearlessness."

"The sum total of all the cells in an organism is one person; so each soul is one cell and the sum of them is God, and beyond that is the Absolute. God is Mother and has two natures, the conditioned and the unconditioned. As the former She is God, nature and man. As the latter She is unknown, and unknowable. Out of the unconditioned came the Trinity —God, Nature and Soul, the triangle of existence."

Swami said "We are lamps and our burning is what is called "Life". It is better to die seeking a God than as a dog seeking only carrion. Choose the highest ideal and give up your life to that. The Vedas cannot show you Brahman. You are that already; they can only help to take away the veil that hides the truth from your eyes."

Further the Swami said "I preach only the Upanishads. If you look, you will find that I have never quoted anything but the Upanishads, and of the Upanishads it is only that one idea strength. The quintessence of Vedas and Vedanta and all lies in that one word."

In another context Swami said "The history of the world is the history of a few men who had faith in themselves. That faith calls out the Divinity within. You can do anything... as soon as a man or nation loses faith in himself, death comes. Believe first in yourself and then in God."

"The older I grow" said Swami Vivekananda "The more everything seems to me to be in the manliness."

The religion that Swami preached is a MAN-MAKING religion. Our young men and women should be helped to get inspired by the words of Swami Vivekananda. That is the greatest help that the Ramakrishna Mission can give to the world today.

Let me conclude with the prayer of Swami Madhavananda—"May the spirit of the great Swami, who awakened India and united the East and the West, inspire us all to live and work to this end in the light of the life-giving motto: Atmano Mokshartham Jagaddhitaya cha—For one's own liberation and welfare of the world."

MESSAGE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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Swami Vivekananda was born in India. His life was short and he attained God consciousness at an early age. He departed from this earth at the age of 39 in 1902. According to Sister Christine, Swami Vivekananda was beyond all comparison for he transcended all ordinary standards and ideals.

Swami Vivekananda awakened in every Hindu a sense of honour and pride by recalling his past glorious heritage. Yet he wanted the Hindus not to dwell in the past but build a strong modern India. He wanted truth and strength to be the foundation of modern India. Anything that led to weakness was to be rejected. To realise this Swami Vivekananda wanted India to be spiritual.

Whilst Swami Vivekananda wanted material advancement in India and opportunities for his countrymen to flower in the active world of living nevertheless he wanted Hindus and Indians rooted in truth and morality so that material advancement would not lead to their spiritual degeneration as is evidenced in many parts of the world today.

Swami Vivekananda was born at a time when India was under foreign subjugation and domination. Many Indians at this time became depressed and demoralised. Some Indians were even ashamed of their ancestry and began to imitate blindly the West. Swami Vivekananda descended like a whirl-wind to shatter such blind imitation and called upon the Indians to be proud of their heritage and cherish the eternal values of Hinduism which had been the bedrock of their civilization.

Swami Vivekananda spoke thus to inspire his countrymen.

> "Imitation, cowardly imitation never makes for progress. It is verily the sign of awful degradation in man. When a man has begun to be ashamed of himself the last blow has come. When a man has begun to be ashamed of his ancestors the end has come. Here am I one of the least of the Hindu race, yet proud of my race, proud of my ancestors. I am proud to call myself a Hindu. I am proud that I am a countryman of yours".

He reminded his countrymen that they were the descendants of the sages and the most glorious rishis the world ever saw. Therefore he called upon them to have faith in themselves and to be proud of their ancestors. Contemporary India owes a great debt of gratitude to Swami Vivekananda. The Indian national leaders themselves who fought for India's independence and liberation drew inspiration from him.

The late Jawarhalal Nehru says this of Swami Vivekananda :

> " He was a powerful orator in Bengali and English and a graceful writer of Bengali prose and poetry. He was a fine figure of a man, imposing, full of poise and dignity, sure of himself and his mission and at the same time full of a dynamic and fiery energy and a passion to push India forward. He came as a tonic to the depressed and demoralised Hindu mind and gave it self-reliance and some roots in the past. "

Again Nehru says " Vivekananda together with his brother disciples, founded the non-sectarian Ramakrishna Mission of Service. Rooted in the past and full of pride in India's prestige, Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach to life's problems and was a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present ".

Swami Vivekananda visited many land- and it is undisputed that his dynamic persons ality influenced world society. He raised the image of India in the eyes of the world and helped to destroy the false impression given of India and Hindu society to the rest of the world. In America he was called the 'Cyclonic Hindu'.

Vivekananda wanted reformation in Hindu society in accordance with the basic tenets of Hinduism itself. He wanted superstition shattered and the caste-system wiped out which were destructive of Hindu society. He stressed on reason (for the Hindu mind) on which Hindu philosophy relied.

As for the caste-system he wanted Hindus not to confuse the core of our religion with the caste system a social evil which got mixed up with religion.

Swami Vivekananda said—

"Religion is the manifestation of the divinity already within man".

Therefore to speak of high caste and low caste is not only contradictory but also repugnant to Hindu concept and Hindu soul.

Vivekananda said—

"Education is the manifestation of the perfection already within man".

If so then man can in terms of his intellect transform his total personality to realise that mankind is one and rise above all apparent differences between man and man, communities and races. Vivekananda wanted us to realise that in God's creation we should be able to appreciate unity in diversity and diversity in unity and this appreciation is needed even in greater measure in the contemporary world if we are to attain peace and live as enlightened beings on this earth.

Swami Vivekananda made much impress in this direction when he addressed the Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893. He impressed upon world society that whilst we can in terms of spirit and mind achieve oneness and the realisation of one God nevertheless the paths that lead to the One Almighty could be different and made a bold bid for tolerance and universal acceptance. He proclaimed in no uncertain terms that he was proud to belong to a nation which had sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth. He quoted thus: "As the different streams having their source in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee".

All Hindus will enjoy a sense of legitimate pride that we belong to this tradition, the ocean of universal tolerance. The world must accept this universal toleration or, the alternative would be strife and clash, in ignorance and bigotry leading to destruction. Again and again Indian leaders of the calibre of Ghandhi and Nehru have emphasised on the Indian tradition of tolerance.

In this spirit, the traditional Hindu tolerance and catholicity is enshrined in the Indian Constitution respecting all religions and cultures in India. The Indian Constitution makes it possible for any Indian whether he be Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or Christian to enjoy the highest position and honour in India. The Hindus can well be proud that the Indian national leaders who were inspired by the lofty ideals of men of the calibre of Swami Vivekananda, the Chief disciple of Saint Ramakrishna, are opposed to all sectarianism. What we require in the world today is more of tolerance and universal acceptance. This message of Swami Vivekananda at the Parliament of Religions is needed even in greater measure in the world today. It is also increasingly realised by world society that materialism is beginning to crack up and there is greater need to build and sustain spiritual and moral values. This is what Vivekananda told the Indians during his day. He asserted that there could be no regeneration for India until and unless India became spiritual. Not only so but upon it depends the welfare of the whole world he said and quoted the history of the world as his witness. Swami Vivekananda spoke thus on this topic of materialism.

" Nation after nation has arisen and based its greatness upon materialism declaring that man was all matter. All such civilizations as have been based upon such loose sand foundations as material comfort and all that have all disappeared one after another from the face of the world but the civilization of India and of the other nations that have stood at India's feet to listen and learn live even to the present day. Their lives are like that of the phoenix a thousand times destroyed but ready to spring up again more glorious. But a materialistic civilization once dashed down never can come up again ". Materialism has led nations to produce atomic and nuclear weapons. It is certain that man has become helpless. This is the danger of materialism. Man and society devoid of spiritual values cannot build peace and progress. Such a society is bound to become degenerate and finally perish.

Swami Vivekananda's message is eternal. It is important for the world to understand, realise and put into practice his proclamation of tolerance and universal acceptance. It s also important for the world to realise that any civilization which is purely materialistic and devoid of any spiritual and moral values must necessarily perish.

THE HOLY MOTHER

SISTER NIVEDITA ON HOLY MOTHER

" In her one sees realised that wisdom and sweetness to which the simplest of women may attain. And yet, to myself, the stateliness of her courtesy and her great open mind are almost as wonderful as her Sainthood. I have never known her to hesitate in giving utterances to large and generous judgement, however new or complex, might be the question put before her. Her life is one long stillness of prayer. Her whole experience is of theocratic civilisation. Yet she rises to the height of every situation. Does one carry to her some perplexity or mortification born of social developments beyond her ken ? With unerring intuition she goes straight to the heart of the matter and sets the questioner in the true attitude to the difficulty."

SAYINGS OF HOLY MOTHER

" One should not hurt others even by words. One must not speak even an unpleasant truth unnecessarily. By indulging in rude words one's nature becomes rude.

One's sensitivity is lost if one has no control over one's speech. The master used to say, ' one should not ask a lame person how he became lame , '.

" If you want peace of mind, do not look for faults in others. Rather look out to discover your own weaknesses. Learn to make the whole world your own. No one here is an alien or a stranger, my child. The whole world is your own ".

" What else does one obtain by the realisation of God ? Does one grow a pair of horns ? No. One's mind becomes pure, and through the pure mind, knowledge and illumination are awakened. "'

SRI RAMAKRISHNA SARADA SAMITI

In the glorious name of the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi, a Samiti to serve the people, to educate the people and to awaken the people was an ideal that found fulfilment in the foundation of Sri Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti in the year 1970, by a group of devoted women. The Sarada group expanded to fifty and hundred and is reaching two hundred women members at the completion of its tenth year of service. The Samiti has taken unbrage under the benign wings of the Ramakrishna Mission, Colombo, in carrying out its activities and in achieving its ideals of service. Foremost among the aims was the urge to create an awakening and awareness among fellow women in Sri Lanka and to render organised voluntary service to the Society in the firm faith and belief that Service to mankind is the true worship of God.

The Samiti has functioned for a decade though not in a spectacular manner, in a spirit of steady and unremitting fervour to promote, encourage and assist the religious, educational, Social and Cultural advancement of women.

The Samiti also carries relief services to the distressed, rendering spiritual and material assistance to the needy, the afflicted, the handicapped and the underpriviledged. It serves children through free voluntary classes, teaching vocational skills and conducting pre-school classes and through distribution of protenised food.

With an abiding faith in Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Sri Sarada Devi whose holy names the Samiti is blessed to wear, it is the fervent hope of the Samiti to work unceasingly towards the achievement of its cherished goals.

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(බළන්ගොඩ ආනන්ද මෛත්‍රෙය මහානායක ස්ථවිරයන් වහන්සේ විසිනි)

කලින් කල ලොවැ ආගම ප්‍රතිපත්තියෙන් ඇත් වෙයි. ඊර්ෂ්‍යා ක්‍රෝධ අක්ෂාන්ති අශාම ආදී අධර්ම පැතිරෙයි. එහෙත් ග්‍රීෂ්මකාලය ළඟට ශීත සෘතුව ඇති වන්නාක් මෙන් සියලු අධර්මය බිඳීමට ධර්මයද නැඟ එන අවස්ථාවෙක් එළැඹෙයි. මෙය ලෝකයේ ධර්මතාවෙකි. ඒ ඒ ආගමවල පොත පත දෙස බැලුවත් ඉතිහාසය දෙස බැලුවත් මේ සත්‍යය දැක්ක හැකිය. කලින් කලැ ශාස්තෘවරු පහළ වෙති. මහර්ෂිවරු පහළ වෙති. චක්‍රවර්තීහු පහළ වෙති. ඔවුන්ගේ පහළ වීමෙන් එතෙක් නැගී ආ අධර්මය යට පත් වෙයි. යලින් ධර්මය ජයග්‍රහනය කෙරෙයි.

මෙයින් සියවස් හතකට පමණ පෙර මොගල්වරුන් ඉන්දියාව අත් පත් කැරැගැනීමෙන් පසු එතෙක් එහි පැවැති සත් චාරිත්‍රයනට, ආර්ය සදාචාරයට මහත් පහරෙක් වැදිණ. මහාජනයා වේගයෙන් දුසිරිත් පැත්තට ඇදෙන්නට වන. ආර්ය සදාචාරය පිරිහෙන්නට වූන. කලින් කල කිසියම් ආචාර්යවරු පහළවැ දහම් මගට ජනයා ගේ සිත් යොමු කරවන්නට වූහ. එහෙත් පෘතුගීසීන් ඉන්දියාව තමන් අත යටතට ගැන්මෙන් පසු එහි දශාව ඉතා නරක අතට හැරිණ. ගෝඝාතන මද්‍යපාන ආදී දුසිරිත් අනාර්ය ධර්ම වඩාත් පැතිරෙන්නට වන. ඉංගිලිසීන් ඉන්දියාව අත් කැරැ ගැන්මෙන් මුලින් කී පක්ෂ දෙකෙන් තරම සංස්කෘතික විනාශයක් ඇති නොවුවද ගුණධර්ම අතේ විශෙෂ අභිවෘද්ධියෙන් නොවීය. මෙ සමයේ රටේ පෙර පැවති සදාචාර ධර්ම පිරිහීගෙන යන සැටි දුටු බොහෝ දෙනා පිබිදෙන්නට වූහ.

මේ කාලයේ බෙංගාලයේ කමරපුකුර් ගමේ බමුණු පවුලෙක ඉපිද ළදරු වියේ සිටම භක්ති මාර්ගයට බැස යෝග වැඩීමෙහි ඇලී අන්තිමේදී යෝග සිද්ධි ලැබූ ආශ්චර්ය මහත්මයාන කෙනෙක් ඇති වූහ. එ තුමෝ ශ්‍රී රාමකෘෂ්ණපරම හංස නමින් ප්‍රකට වූහ. පෙරැ දිගැ පැරැණි දහමට ගරු නොකළ යුරෝපීය කාමසුඛල්ලිකානුයෝගයට ඇබ්බැහි වූ එදා නවීන අධ්‍යාපනය ලැබූ බොහෝ දෙනා රාමකෘෂ්ණ පරමහංසයන් වෙත පැමිණ කතා බස් කිරීමෙන් ගිහි සැප පවා රජයේ උසස් තනතුරු පවා අත හැර සන්‍යාසත්වයට පැවිද්දට පවා අභිරුචිය දැක්වූහ. විශ්වවිද්‍යාලයීය අධ්‍යාපනය ලබන අතරම රාමකෘෂ්ණ පරමහංසතුමාගේ ආශ්‍රයය ලැබීමෙන් ගිහි සැප හැර දමා පැවිද්දට නැඹුරු වූ තරුණයන් අතර ගිහිකාලයෙහි නොරේන් (නාරායණ) යන නමින් සිටි පසුව විවේකා නමින් ප්‍රකට වූ ස්වාමීතුමා ප්‍රමුඛ ස්ථානය ගත්තේය.

ශ්‍රී රාමකෘෂ්ණ පරමහංසතුමා උපන්නේ ක්‍රි. ව. 1836 යේය. එතුමන් මහාසමාධියට පත් වූයේ ක්‍රි. ව. 1886 දීය. එයින් පසු නොරේන් (ස්වාමී විවේකානන්ද) රාඛල් (ස්වාමී බ්‍රහ්මානන්ද) ආදී පැවිදි ශ්‍රාවක පිරිස එක්ම සමාජයක් වැ ධර්මප්‍රචාර කාර්යයෙහි යෙදුනහ. ගිහියන්ගෙන් යැපෙමින් පූජාවිධි මාත්‍රයෙහිම ඇලුණු ආදානගාහී ඉතා වැඩි දෙනෙක් පූජාරිහු මේ තරුණ පැවිදි මඩුල්ලේ ක්‍රියාමාර්ගය නොඉවැසූහ. ඔවුන් විවේචනය කළහ. දොස් නැගූහ. තරුණ පැවිදි පිරිසට ඉන්නට ස්ථිර තැනෙක්ද නොවීය. එහෙත් ඔහු නොපසුබට වූහ. උගත් තරුණයෝ මේ නව පැවිදි සමාජයට ගෞරව දැක්වූහ. වර්ෂ 1893 දී ඇමෙරිකාවේ චිකාගෝ නුවර පැවැති මහා දෘෂ්ටි සම්මේලනයට ගිය ස්වාමීවිවේකානන්ද තුමා භාරතීය දර්ශනයන්හි මහත්ත්වය එහි රැස්වූවනට මැනැවින් පෙන්වා දුන්නෝය. බොහෝදෙනා පැහැදුනහ. එයින් පසුව 1879 දීද ඇමරිකාවට ගියහ. ඇමෙරිකාවේ රාමකෘෂ්ණ සමාජයේ ප්‍රබල ශාඛාවක්ද ඇරඹිණ. ටික කලක් එහි කටයුතු කොට තමා වෙනුවට විත් කටයුතු කිරීමට ස්වාමී බ්‍රහ්මානන්දතුමාට පණිවුඩයක් එවා ස්වාමීවිවේකානන්ද තුමා ඉන්දියාවට ආවේ වර්ෂ 1897 දීය. මේ ගමන අභිශය සාර්ථක විය. එයට පසු ස්වාමීවිවේකානන්ද තුමාගේ කීර්තිය ඉන්දියාවේද පැතිරෙන්නට විය. පැවිදි සමාජයේ මෙහෙය දියුණු කිරීමට ඇමෙරිකාවෙන් බොහෝ ආධාරෝපකාර ලැබිණ. කල්කටාවට නොදුරෙහි බෙලූර්හි ප්‍රධාන මධය නැංවිණ. ක්‍රමානුකූලවත් සාර්ථක ලෙසත් රාමකෘෂ්ණ සමාජයේ මහජන සේවාව පැතිර ගියේය. ස්වාමීවිවේකානන්ද තුමා රට රටවල සංචාරය කරමින් වේදාන්තධර්මය පතළ කෙළේය. ඇමෙරිකාවේ පමණක් නොව එංගලන්නාදි බටහිර දිග රට වලද රාමකෘෂ්ණ සමාජ ශාඛා ඇරැඹිණ.

ස්වාමීවිවේකානන්ද තුමෝ වර්ෂ 1902 දී සිය උපතින් තිස්නව වැන්නෙහි දී දිවංගත වූහ. එහෙත් මේ ස්වල්ප කාලය තුළදී එතුමන් කළ සේවය ඉතා මහත්ය. ආශ්චර්ය ය. එ තුමන්ගේ ආවැමෙන් රාමකෘෂ්ණ සමාජයේ එතුමන්ගේ සහෝදර පැවිදි පිරිස සියලු කාර්යභාරය වඩාත් උනන්දුවෙන් කරට ගෙන දියුණු කිරීමෙහි නියැලුණහ. අදත් එහි නියැලී මැනැවින් කැරැගෙන යෙත්.

රාමකෘෂ්ණ සමාජය පිහිටි හැම පළාතෙක ම එයින් කැරෙන සේවාව ඉතා මහත්ය. පාඨශාලා පිහිටුවීම, ආරෝග්‍යශාලා පිහිටුවීම තවත් නා නා විධ ජනෝපකාරී මෙහෙයන්හි යෙදීම එයින් හැමදාම කැරෙයි. ඉන්දියාවේ නොයෙක් තන්හි මේ සමාජයෙන් පිහිටුවන ලද නොමිලේ රෝගීනට සංග්‍රහ කරන ආරෝග්‍යශාලා බොහෝ ඇත. රජයෙන් පැවැත්වෙන ආරෝග්‍යශාලාවලට වඩා රාමකෘෂ්ණ සමජයේ ස්වාමීවරුන් ගේ ආරෝග්‍යශාලා සේවාව ශ්‍රේෂ්ඨය යනු

ඉන්දියාවේ ප්‍රසිද්ධ කාරණයෙකි. රාමකෘෂ්ණ සමාජයට අයත් පාඨශාලාවලද ශිෂ්‍යනිවාසවල ද පැරණි යහපත් පිරිසිදු ආර්ය චාරිත්‍ර මැනැවින් පුරුදු කරනු ලැබේ යන්නද ප්‍රකට කාරණයෙකි. "ඒ ශිෂ්‍ය නිවාසයෙක ආශ්‍රය ලැබූ හැම ශිෂ්‍යයෙක්ම යහපත් ගුණවත් ධර්මිෂ්ඨ පුරවැසියෙක් වෙයි." යන්නද ප්‍රකට කාරණයෙකි.

ස්වාමීවිවේකානන්ද තුමෝ තුන් වරක් ලක්දිවට පැමිණ දේශනා පැවැත් වූහ. එයින් පලමුවන ගමන ඇමෙරිකාවට යන අතර 1893 දිද දෙවෙනි ගමන 1897 දීද තුන්වනගමන 1899 දිද විය. මෙතුමන්ගෙන් පසුව ස්වාමීශිවානන්ද, ස්වාමීඅභේදානන්ද, ස්වාමීරාමකෘෂ්ණානන්ද ආදී නව සන්දෙනෙක් ශ්‍රී රාමකෘෂ්ණ පරමහංස තුමන් ගේ සම්ප්‍රදායාවක ස්වාමීවරු ලක්දිවට කලින් කල පැමිණියහ. මේ ගමන් වලදී කල කථාන් ලැබූ ආශ්‍රයන් ආදර්ශයන් නිසා බොහෝ භක්තිමත්හු ඇති වූහ. එහි ප්‍රතිඵල වශයෙන් වර්ෂ 1902 ජූලි 13 වැනිද කොළඹ විවේකානන්ද සභාව ඇරඹිණ. ජපානය ආදි නවත් පෙදෙස්වල ද විවේකානන්ද සභාවෝ පහල වූහ. මේ කාලයේ ස්වාමී සර්වානන්ද තුමෝ විටින් විට පැමිණ සාමාජිකයනට අනුශාසන කළහ. එතුමන්ගේ ආශ්‍රයයෙන් ජපානයේ ශාන්ත පැට්රික් කොලීජියේ ආචාර්යවරයෙක් වූ පණ්ඩිත මයිල්වාහනම් මහතා ගිහි සැප හැර රාමකෘෂ්ණ සමාජයේ පැවිදි වීමට අදහස් කෙළේය. වර්ෂ 1922 දී එතුමා මදුරාසියේ රාමකෘෂ්ණමඨයට බැඳි වර්ෂ 1924 දී ස්වාමී විපුලානන්ද නමින් පැවිදි විය. එ තුමෝ ජපානයේ විවේකානන්ද සමාජයෙන් ඇරැඹී පැවැතුනු වෛදෙශ්වර විද්‍යාලයේ කෘත්‍යාධිකාරිධුරයට 1926 දී පත්වූහ. මෙහි කටයුතුවලට ස්වාමී අවිනාශනන්ද තුමන්ගේ සහායත්ව මහත් සේ ලැබිණ. මෙසේ කටයුතු කැරෙන අතර මඩකලපුවේ සිටි රාමකෘෂ්ණ සමජයානුගාමී සැදැහැවත්හු විවේකානන්ද සමාජ ශාඛාවක් එහි ද පිහිට වූහ. පාසල් ද කිහිපයක් ඇරැඹූහ. 1906 දී ත්‍රිකුණාමලයේත් විවේකානන්ද සමාජ ශාඛාවක් ඇරැඹූහ.

මෙසේ කල් යන අතර කෙළොඹ වැසි හින්දු බැතිමතුන්ගේ ඉල්ලීම පරිදි 1930 වසැ ඔක්තෝබර මසැ 22 වැනි දින වැල්ලවත්තේ හාමර්ස් ඇවනියු (Hamer's Avernue) හි රාමකෘෂ්ණ මිසමේ ලංකා ශාඛාව ආරම්භ විය.

එදා අපද පැමිණ සිටි බැවින් ස්වාමී විපුලානන්ද තුමන්ගේ කෘත්‍යාධිකාරිත්වයෙන් එය ඇරැඹුණ බව දනිමු. වැල්ලවත්තේ රාමකෘෂ්ණ මඨයේ මුල්ම අධිකාරී වූයේ ස්වාමිඝනානන්ද තුමාය. එයට පසුව ස්වාමී අසංගානන්ද තුමා ද ස්වාමී සිද්ධාත්මානන්ද තුමා ද ස්වාමී ප්‍රේමාත්මානන්ද තුමා ද මෙහි අධිකාරී වූහ.

කොළඹ වැල්ලවත්තේ සභාවේ ආරම්භයේ සිට ම මෙහි තොරතුරු හොඳට දනිමු. නිතර පාහේ අප එහි යන බැවිනි. මෙයින් පළාතට කැරෙන සේවාව මහත් බැවින් වර්ෂ 1935 දී වැල්ලවත්තේ 44 වන පවුවනෙහි වූ ඉඩම් කැබැල්ලක් සැදැහැවතුන් එක්ව මිළයට ගෙන ගොඩනැගිලි පිහිටුවා 1936 දී දැන් පවත්නා රාමකෘෂ්ණමඨයෙහි කටයුතු පටන් ගැනිණ 1953 දී කතරගමද රාමකෘෂ්ණමඩම ඇරැඹිණ. දැන් වැල්ලවත්තේ රාමකෘෂ්ණමඨය කේන්ද්‍රස්ථානය කොට ගෙන ජාපනේ, ත්‍රිකුණාමලේ, මඩකලපුව, කතරගම ආදි ස්ථානවල මහත්ම මහජන සේවාවෙක් කැරෙයි. අධ්‍යාපනය, අනාථජන සේවාව ආදි වශයෙන් මෙයින් කැරෙන මෙහෙයමහත්ය. ශ්‍රී රාමකෘෂ්ණ පරමහංස තුමෝ ආගම් භේදයක් නො තැකූ සැම ආගමයකටම ගරු කළ කෙනෙකි. එතුමන් අනුව ගිය රාමකෘෂ්ණ සමාජයද එසේමය. වැල්ලවත්තේ රාමකෘෂ්ණමඨයේ මන්දිරයට ගිය විට එහි තුළ සියලු ශාස්තෘවරුන් ගේ චිත්‍ර රූප දක්නා ලැබේ. බෞද්ධයන්ගේ වෙසක් පෝහෝ දිනද ක්‍රිස්තු ලබ්ධිකයන්ගේ නත්තල් දින ද යන ආදී වශයෙන් ඒ ඒ ශාස්තෘන් පිළිබඳ ශ්‍රේෂ්ඨ දිනයන්හි එ තුමන් නමින් මහත් ගෞරවාකාරයෙන් පුද පූජා පැවැත්වීම්, දේශනා පැවැත්වීම් ද සෑම වර්ෂයෙකම පැවැත්වෙයි. කොටින් කියතොත් රාමකෘෂ්ණ සමාජය සෑම ආගමකටම ගරු කරන, භේදයක් නැතිව හැම දෙනාටම සේවාව කරන පොදු මහා සමාජයෙකි. හැම දෙනා වීසින්ම එහි අභිවෘද්ධිය අපේක්ෂා කළ යුතුය.

Swami Prematmananda (*Vice President, Ceylon Branch*)

Flanked by :

Swami Samagrananda (*L*) **& Swami Chidghanananda** (*R*)

SWAMI PREMATMANANDA

Swami Chidbhavananda

President, Ramakrishna Tapovanam, Tirupparaithurai

Swami Prematmananda is a senior Sannyasin of the Ramakrishna Order. In his early days as a Brahmacharin and as Sannyasin he was attached to the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, the Himalayas. Then for a few years he was the President of the Ramakrishna Ashrama at Ootacamund in South India. Now for the past number of years he functions as the President of the Ramakrishna centres in Sri Lanka.

This Swami is popularly known as Mahavir Maharaj in the Brother-hood. In this usage of having two names he is not a solitary figure. Almost all the Sannyasins of the Ramakrishna Order have two names. The Purvasrama name with the term Maharaj added to it is his first name. When he is ordained into the Order, he is given the Sannyasin name. But this is only a formality. The Swami continues to be called by the old name only with the additional "Maharaj" added to it. In tune with this usage this Swami is known as Mahavir Maharaj. But strangely the name Mahavir was not given to him by his parents. Accidentally he stumbled on it. In his case it is a very significant name. His qualities are in tune with the name.

The word Mahavir refers to Anjaneya or Hanuman or Maruti of the Ramayana fame. Among the Jains the word Mahavira refers to the Thirthangara of that religion. Among the Buddhist the word Mahavira refers to the Goutama Buddha.

True to this name this Mahavir Maharaj is a hero to the core. Mahavira means the great hero. All through his monastic carrier the Swami proves to be a determined hero. He is fairly tall and slim. An inviting smile eternally dwells on his face. His broad lips indicate both love and determination. His eyes are sharp and bewitching. His ears are a bit broad almost resembling the ears of the monkey group of which Anjaneya is the leader. This Swami is a stranger to lethargy. Morning to night his activities are well balanced in him. It cannot be said that the Swami enjoys robust health all through. Occasionally he falls ill to a severe type of headache. When he falls victim to it he does not change his congenial attitude. The same joviality he maintains even in ill-health. Invariably when he falls ill he takes to fasting. For two or three days he abstains from food of all kind. That is his effective way of driving away the disease.

Swami Prematmananda is a man of humour. It is not given to all to be humorous in all trying circumstances. But this Swami comes out with the best humour in strained situations.

While travelling here and there with the other Swamies occasionally they come across a group of monkeys invariably. The accompaning Swamies will point out to him "his retinue is there". With a characteristic smile he will start addressing his fellow creatures invariably in Bengali. It would prove a sight for enjoyment to the others.

Here is a specimen of his inborn humour. While he was staying in the Advaita Ashrama branch in Calcutta a Swami from South India was selected to go to Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama at Colombo in Ceylon. In a month or two he was to leave India and proceed to Ceylon. During that interval Swami Prematmananda addressed a letter to the Swami concerned in the following manner :—

My dear Swami,

What is the matter ? I am told you are to proceed to Ceylon very soon. When Sri Ramachandra had to go to Ceylon he sought my help (the help of Hanuman). I mobilized the land force, the sea force, the air force, the moral force, the spiritual force, and all other forces available. The result was Sri Rama could rescue Sita and bring her back safe to India. Whereas you are going alone. Beware ! ! There is danger ahead.

Marvellous is the spirit of adaptability in Swami Prematmananda. He has the power to get on smoothly with one and all. Men of renunciation are of temperaments varying from that of Rudra to that of Baby Krishna. Their attitude towards team work may be team spirited or explosion spirited. Anything may come out of the man of renunciation. Swami Prematmananda is capable of handling and making use of any and every anti social element. He knows how to break the unbreakable.

Ashramas are the places of consolation, reconciliation, pacification and sympathy. People who come to Swami Prematmananda return, rebuilt and pacified in mind. Worldly life is no smooth sailing. All sorts of cross currents are in it. People are torn to pieces by disappointments, tragedies and failures in life. Such people resort to the Swami Prematmananda seeking tonic to the soul. What they are in need of is supplied to them abundantly by the all-loving and affectionate Swami. His purity and devotion to God are the sources of the tonic that he supplies. May this Swami live long to heal the wounds of the earth-bound people.

SWAMI PREMATMANANDA MAHARAJ

In the footprints of Sivayoga Swamigal-Ma Ratna Navaratnam

Ma Ratna Navaratnam

Enlightment it is to see the Guru's Holy form,

Enlightment it is to chant the Guru's Holy Name,

Enlightment it is to hear the Guru's Holy Word,

Enlightment it is to muse the Guru's Holy Being.

Tirumantiram—139.

Such was our first impression of Swami Prematmananda, when we met him for the first time in the early fifties, twenty-eight years ago at the Howrah station in Calcutta. At Swami Avinashanandaji and Swami Asanganandaji's introduction, the management of the Belur Matt Headquarters had sent Mahavir Maharaj, as he was called by his brother monks, to be our Guide in our pilgrimage to visit the main Ashrams of Guru Maharaj and Swamiji and other associated places connected with their life and work.

Swami Prematmanandaji was beaming with the gleam of Guru-Bakthi and his tall, erect figure, the cap of distinction on his head, the smiling yet serene face and an ethereal detachment made us feel that he was radiating light on the Path, and yet in a paradoxical way, was not a helpful guide in that our enthusiasm to rush here and there, and take a dip in the Ganges and pay our worshipful homage at the Main Shrines at the Belur Matt before the doors closed, met with neutral response from our so-called guide.

Thereupon, we expressed our dissatisfaction at the calm composure of our Guide and spoke in Tamil unkind words as we were quite sure that the "Bengali Swami" would not understand our discourtesy and anxiety. Ultimately the seeming aloofness of our Guide melted into genial warmth, and by nightfall, we became friends. After a week's sojourn which included our boat trip to Dakshineswar, Cassipore Gardens and the Kalighat Temple, we went to bid Au Revoir to the President Maharaj. We did not forget to thank him for all the loving attention and hospitality and of the indelible impression that our guide had made in our hearts.

To our utter amazement, the President Maharaj revealed what had hitherto been a secret, that our guide was "one of us", from the sunny isle of Lanka, and that true to his name "he had qualified himself in the Guru's Chamber of Premai—Love and selfless Service".

That is Swami Prematmananda an intensely faithful follower of the creed of Love and Service that characterised the Order of the Ramakrishna Mission throughout the world. Reticent to a remarkable degree, selfless and humble, practical and filled with a refreshing sense of humour that can brush aside all unpleasant vapours Swamiji took over from Swami Asanganandaji and became the Presiding Head of the Ceylon Ramakrishna Mission, at a significant period in its history, in the year 1954.

The Kathirgamam Pilgrim's Centre was opened, but it fell to Swami Prematmananda with the assistance of the late much-loved Swami Nishkamanandaji to enlarge its varied activities and sustain the high water mark of Nishkamya service. His frequent visits to Kathirgamam, and especially his untiring vigilance to keep the supplies flowing from Colombo to Kathirgamam uninterruptedly during the main festival seasons, with N. Navaratnam and K. Kanagaratnam acting as his main aides, his equanimity and firm sense of responsibility to serve all God's children without distinction of caste, creed or race, endeared him to one and all devotees who frequented the Mission Centres.

" Service to the Guru is service to the needy and the distressed ", was his hall mark and he proved by his inspiring life that he was indeed one of the delectable spiritual sons of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, and his worthy representative in Sri Lanka—a land where Hindus, Buddhists, Christians and Muslims lived, moved and had their being in harmony down the ages.

The crowning achievement of his period of " Sevai " (service) was the opening of the Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Hall and the International Guest House in 1970. This was a stupendous task and Swamiji had to battle against severe odds and financial hardships, but his sincere conviction and the vision of the great Swami Vivekananda to translate ideals into fulfilled acts in the service of humanity, enabled him to encounter successfully the many obstacles till the goal of bringing the varying and diverse sects under one roof was an accomplished reality.

The many S.O.S. calls from the Batticaloa Ramakrishna Mission Swamis to assist in their expansionist programmes of constructive activities in the field of Agriculture, vocational pursuits and Orphanage centres, always met with prompt response from Swami Prematmananda.

In many conferences and Committees which dealt with religious development plans and implementation, both at State and voluntary levels, Swamiji's views and findings were respectfully accepted by all religious dignitaries in Sri Lanka and sanatana dharma gained in stature under his passive guidance.

In ways too numerous to recount Swami Prematmanandaji's acts of Premai (love) revealed the strength of the enlightenment he had received from his Sat Guru. He constantly remembered the light shed on his Path by Guru Maharaj and perfomed duty with an unwavering mind, even in the most trying circumstances. Discrimination (Viveka) and non-attachment (vairagya) are his two outstanding qualities and even though he has been now and then misunderstood by his colleagues and fellow workers, it is to the undying calibre of his Guru-bakthi, that he has never swerved from the goal of self-knowledge and surrender at the feet of his Guru.

Fifty years of renunciation and service in the Ramakrishna Mission, in various parts of India, Malaysia, Burma and Ceylon still finds him a blessed seeker, and that is his unique charm.

Many in Ceylon and India have been the blessed inheritors of his spiritual legacy, and may the strength of his devotion, dispassion and discrimination inspire many aspirants to reach the goal of self-realisation in the years to come.

கடமையின் திருவுரு

ஓர் அன்பன்.

கடமையின் திருவுருவாக, அனுபவ முதிர்ச்சியின் சிகரமாக, உறுதியின் உறைவிடமாக உள்ள அருளுயர் சுவாமி பிரேமாத்மானந்தாஜி மகராஜ் அவர்கள் ஸ்ரீ ராமகிருஷ்ண மிஷனின் இலங்கைக் கிளையின் நான்காவது தலைவராகக் கடந்த கால் நூற்ருண்டுகளுக்கு மேலாக அருட்பணியாற்றி வருகிருர்கள். சுவாமிகள் கர்மவீரர்; குணசீலர்; ஒழுக்கம் நிறைந்தவர்கள்; உள்ளத்தின் வலுவே உடலின் வலி என்பவர்; தனித்து நிற்கும் சுபாவம் தன்னம்பிக்கை அதிகம் உள்ளவர்; தன்கையே தனக்கு உதவி என்று எண்ணுபவர்; ஏற்ற காரியத்தை அடிமுதல் நுனி வரையில் குருநாதரே துணை என்று முழுமனதுடன் தானே செய்து முடிக்கும் வல்லமை உள்ளவர்கள்.

வாய் வேதாந்தத்தைச் செயல் வேதாந்தமாக மாற்றிய செயல் துறவி சுவாமி விவேகானந்தர் ''சொல்லல்ல பேச்சல்ல தூய சேவைதான் இன்று தேவை, என்றும் தேவை'' என்றுணர்த்தியதைச் சிரமேற் கொண்டு சேவை செய்து வருபவர்; ஜீவனுக்குச் செய்யும் சேவையே சிவனுக்குத் செய்யும் மெய்யான பூஜை என்பதைச் செயல் மூலம் உணர்த்திக் கொண்டிருப்பவர்.

ஈழம் தந்த தவப்புதல்வர்; எல்லோருக்கும் எளியவர்; இனியவர்; யாரும் எளிதில் அணுகக் கூடியவர்; தன்னலம் பாராதவர்; மக்களுக்காகவே வாழ்பவர்.

கோலாலம்பூரில் பிரமச்சரியம் அநுஷ்டித்துப் பேலூரில் சன்யாசம் பெற்று அத்வைத ஆச்ரமம் - கல்கத்தா, காஞ்சிபுரம், உதகமண்டலம் கங்கல், ஹரித்வார், இரங்கூன் எல்லா இடங்களிலும் தலைமை தாங்கி அரும்பணி ஆற்றியதுடன் ஸ்ரீ ராமகிருஷ்ண மடத்தின் தலைமைப் பீடமாகிய பேலூர் மடத்தில் ராமகிருஷ்ண இயக்கத்தை நடத்துதற்கு நியமிக்கப்பட்டிருந்த நிர்வாகக் குழுவில் சிலகாலம் அங்கத்தினராக இருந்து அருட்பணி ஆற்றியவர்.

இங்கு கதிர்காம மடம் திறப்பு விழாவுக்கு இலங்கைக்கிளையின் அழைப்பை ஏற்று வருகைதந்து திறப்பு விழாவில் கலந்து சிறப்பித்தார்கள்.

அப்போது இங்கு தலைமை வகித்த அருளுயர் சுவாமி அசங்கானந்தாஜி அவர்கள் மாற்றம் பெற்றதால் அருளுயர் சுவாமி பிரேமாத்மானந்தஜி அவர்கள் தலைமைப் பொறுப்பை 1954 இல் ஏற்ருர்கள். இது எம் எல்லோருடைய பாக்கியமுமே. சுவாமிகள் இனிய புன்முறுவலுடன் எப்பொழுதும் சுறுசுறுப்பாயிருப்பவர்.

அன்றிலிருந்து இன்று வரை அயராது உழைத்து வருபவர்; பசி நோக்காமலும் கண் துஞ்சாமலும் கருமமே கண்ணுயிருந்து திறம்பட கருமங்கள் ஆற்றி வருபவர்; எளிமையையே விரும்புபவர், ஸ்ரீ ராமகிருஷ்ண மிஷனின் இலங்கைக்கிளையின் அரை நூற்ருண்டு பொன்விழா எடுக்கும் இவ் வேளையில், சுவாமிகளின் துறவு வாழ்க்கையின் அரை நூற்ருண்டு நிறைவுப் பொன் விழாவும் சுவாமிகள் ஸ்ரீ லங்காவில் சேவையாற்றிய கால் நூற்ருண்டு வெள்ளிவிழாவும் தற்செயலாக அமைந்திருப்பது மகிழ்ச்சியளிக்கிறது.

அவர்களுக்கு எல்லோருடைய வாழ்த்துகளும் உரியனவாகட்டும்.

சுவாமிகள் கதிர்காம மட நிர்வாகத்தைத் தொடக்கத்திலிருந்து அரசாங்கம் எடுக்கும் வரை (1953 ஜூனிலிருந்து) சுமார் கால் நூற்ருண்டு எல்லோரும் வியக்கத்தக்க வகையில் திறம்பட நடத்தியவர்.

1953 இல் குழந்தைப் பருவமாக இருந்த ஞாயிறு சமய பாடசாலையைக் கையேற்று அதற்கு வேண்டுவன செய்து நன்கு மேலும் மேலும் வளர ஆசீர்வதித்து வருபவர்.

கொழும்பில் கலாசார நிலையத்தையும், தங்கும் விடுதியையும் மாணவர் விடுதியையும் சுவாமி விவேகானந்தர் நூற்ருண்டு ஞாபகார்த்த மாபெரும் மண்டபத்தையும் விடாமுயற்சியுடன் பெரும் சிரமங்கள் மத்தியில் மக்களின் நலன் கருதி வருங்காலத் தேவையறிந்து ராமகிருஷ்ண மிஷன் சபை ஒத்துழைப்புடனும் பொதுஜன நிதி உதவியுடனும் இந்திய இலங்கை அரசாங்க உதவியுடனும் கட்டி முடித்தவர். இது என்றும் எல்லோருக்கும் உபயோகமாகவும் மிகுந்த பிரயோஜனமாகவும் இருக்கும்.

சேவைகளுக்கெல்லாம் சிறந்த சேவையாக 1958 இனக்கலவரத்தின் போது உடனடியாக அளவிட முடியாத இன்னல்களுக்கு நடுவில் (காலம் சென்ற) திரு. நவரத்தினத்தின் துணையுடன் சுவாமி அவர்கள் தானே முன் நின்று விபரிக்க முடியாத அளப்பரிய சேவையாற்றியதை ஒரு போதும் யாரும் மறக்க முடியாது. அவர்களுக்கு நன்றி சொல்ல வார்த்தைகள் இல்லை.

அவர்கள் பல்லாண்டு பல்லாண்டு, சிறப்புற வாழ்ந்து வைரவிழா, நூற்ருண்டு விழாக்களை எல்லாம் கொண்டாடிச் சிறப்புற எல்லாம் வல்ல குருநாதர் அருள்புரியப் பிரார்த்திக்கிறேன்

வணக்கம்

IN THE COMPANY OF THE CHOSEN ONES

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Since 1928 as a school boy at the Vaidyeshwara Vidyalaya in Jaffna, I have been closely associated with this great Ramakrishna Mission. The Students' Home in Batticaloa, now under the loving and parental care of Swami Jivanananandaji 'Maharaj, has been to me a half-way home to our ultimate Home—God, It is here that the seed " to manifest the divinity in Man ' is planted. This institution has already had its Golden Jubilee Celebrations in 1976. The great Shivananda Vidyalaya, then under the dynamic principalship of the late Swami Vipulanandaji and succeeded by the able Mr. S. Ambalavaner—where the seed to manifest the perfection already in man ' is sown, has also had its Golden Jubilee Celebrations in 1979. The most revered and respected Swami Prematmanandaji Maharaj's Golden Jubilee as a monk of the Ramakrishna Order was observed unostentatiously in silence. Now the Golden Jubilee of the Ramakrishna Mission, Colombo Centre, is to be celebrated in a very big way in September 1980. Swami Prematmanandaji is an institution by himself having served in the Ramakrishna Mission as a monk for 50 years and is the Swami-in-charge of our Colombo Centre and Vice President of the Ramakrishna Mission in Sri Lanka. With Sri Ramakrishna's Grace he is still young in spirits and is going strong. May he be spared longer to raise still higher and bigger all institutions affiliated to this Colombo Centre, which has already assumed an international stature.

Lives of great men, who leave their footprints on the sands of time, remind us how we too can make our lives sublime. Late Swami Vipulanandaji is one such great soul. It was he who gave the initial blessings which inspired me to start my dynamic life. Distinctions in my academic and public career are entirely due to the sound and fatherly advice given by him and wherever I had been in his name, I was marked and chosen among the many. I have never failed him. It is due to the training at his feet and the Swamis in succession, I was able to steer clear, being above board, in the various departments of the Ministry of Education, from which I retired with dignity and honour with an unblemished record unscathed. Character and the disciplined life has been my wealth. Association with many Swamis of the Mission, the company of the good and the wise, has protected me and promoted my spiritual career. From each one of them, the chosen ones of Sri Guru Maharaj, did I emulate the good, which has been the basic ingredient of an evolving personality that is mine today. The good wishes of the chosen ones, whoever, whatever and wherever they be, has been my acquired wealth.

Thanks to the association with this great Mission—perhaps due to Vasanas—this ascent in life has been very smooth and gradual in the right direction, of course, subject to retardation due to the mental level, in which most of us get stuck and are being pulled down to the objects, emotions and thoughts of the material world. With the descending grace of Guru Maharaj which has all along been my ascending strength, I did break through to get on to the Intellectual level of discrimination, determination and detachment. I wish every one of us blessed with contacts with this great Mission excercize this intellectual discrimination and live in harmony and poise, developing in us a sense of universal love. Finally it is in the last and very steep ascent of the progress, a pilgrim requires the dynamic force of a spiritual giant to thrust him up into that spiritual orbit to move round and round and finally soar up to God who is our Home. With the benign blessings of that ever present and unseen spiritual giant my spiritual Guru His Holiness Swami Virajanandaji Maharaj I am trying very hard indeed to get into to that orbit to move round and round and go

deeper and deeper into the recesses of the spiritual core ' to manifest the divinity already in man '.

I am deeply conscious and convinced that Guru Maharaj watches with care and concern the PRANAMS offered at the Holy Feet of the chosen ones. He is a silent listener of our conversations. He gives us whatever we want, solves our problems and the challenges in life. He never fails us. With purity of thought, word and deed, with dauntless courage and implicit faith in Him, let us surrender at his Feet. He will look after us. Therefore let us make good our associations with these great dedicated Swamijis who lead us on to His feet. Let us learn from them what our mission in life is, and with their unfailing advice and assistance let us work up to that ideal.

Let us on this memorable occasion remember with gratitude the yeoman services rendered by the late Swami Vipulanandaji as pioneer Secretary in 1930 to inaugurate and establish this Mission, the Golden Jubilee of which we are celebrating now. Let us meditate with all humility and reverence on what His Holiness Swami Vijnananandaji Maharaj, one of the direct disciples of Sri Paramahamsa Ramakrishna Deva prophetically said, of each one of our institutions in 1934, in the then Ceylon " I wish it expands more and more and becomes a success in this land of Sri Lanka. " True to the prophetic words of His Holiness, the then Ceylon is Sri Lanka now. The Students' Home a straggle of structures which have been suffering in splendid isolation then, under the energetic and meticulously careful Swami Jivanandaji now, has transformed itself into a self-contained palatial edifice enjoying an Island-wide reputation. The great Shivananda Vidyalaya which is the most popular institution in the Eastern region has risen up to an All Island level ; this Colombo Centre with the living presence of Sri Paramahamsa Ramakrishna Deva in the Ashrama, on the Eastern side, as base, gradually has expanded to world recognition with its latest imposing International Cultural Centre and Swami Vivekananda Memorial Hall bustling with cultural, social and religious activities under the dynamic silence of Swami Prematmanandaji Maharaj. May this Centre with its affiliated institutions expand more and more and be a source of light and delight to all. May all beings be happy. May all beings be cheerful. May all beings be peaceful.

THE LATE MR. N. NAVARATNAM

V. Sathasivam, B.A., M. Litt.

Absence makes the heart grow fonder. Many are called but few are chosen and even in the chosen few, very few stand the rigorous test of selfless service. Late Mr. N. Navaratnam, a householder was such a chosen one. He was one of the founder members of the Ramakrishna Mission in 1930 and he grew up with it upto his death on Friday, 4th June, 1976. He was always ready but never was in the way. He was at the beck and call of the Vice President Swamies starting from Swami Ghanananda. Whether in matters connected with internal administration or external contacts with the State, Social Organisations or Commercial Establishments, Mr. Navaratnam has been very willingly in the forefront, himself digesting the matters and speaking up as the Missions voice. He never thrust himself to the front but has been at the back—a live wire—a silent dynamo shedding light on problems extremely complex. If Swami Prematmanandaji was a Generator, Mr. Navaratnam has been a transformer. As is always the case with very big institutions no one goes direct to the First in Command. Likewise one has been going through Mr. Navaratnam to obtain the Swami's approval to get things done. In finding avenues for spiritual development, Mr. Navaratnam along with the Swamies put his heart and soul and tirelessly worked, organising various activities for the devotees participation. In organising public functions, Mr. Navaratnam was an adept. As a Supreme Court Registrar, he was so influential that he commanded the services of the departments of the State, Commercial Establishments, mainly the Pettah merchants who were profuse in their donations in cash and kind, which were channelled to the Birthday Celebrations of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda and the festivals at Kataragama.

At Kataragama Swami Asanganandaji Maharaj, Vice President (1933-1941) started the humanitarian activities which have been growing and expanding into a gigantic service with the opening of the magnificent Madam in 1953. It is here that Mr. Navaratnam with Mr. Kanagaratnam as his able Jt. Secretary had always been at his best especially during the festival seasons. He was the leader of the devotees and volunteers who followed him from Colombo. They rallied round him to do the service in any capacity at the Madam during the annual festival, for 15 days, when 10,000 pilgrims per day were served with meals in the morning, noon and night. Organising this stupendous undertaking with provisions brought from Colombo was next to impossibility—a Herculean task but Mr. Navaratnam with the grace of Sri Ramakrishna stood the test and made it a success. Success had been his habit. He was a tower of strength, both to the Vice President Swami in Colombo, and to the Resident Swami in Kataragama. But now, with the takeover of this Madam in 1976 by the State, the divine buzzle is no more. The Ramakrishna Mission Madam is no more a centre of the Mission's activities in Kataragama. Mr. Navaratnam is no more and the Resident Swami Sarvatitananda too is no more. If Mr. Navaratnam had been spared for some more years, there would have sprung up another magnificent edifice to carry on the activities without a big break and without allowing the devotees feel the absence of the valuable Madam. But no one of the calibre of Navaratnam, has so far sighted. Is the loss irreparable ? If the need is urgent Sri Ramakrishna will certainly choose one. All in His Hands. He has His plans.

It was during the days of the communal riots of 1956. We, along with other families in the area were driven away to safety to the Police Station in Mount Lavinia where hundreds of families from other areas had come and continued coming. Excepting for the security and safety neither shelter nor food could have been expected. After 3 days of struggle for breathing space in a small Police Station we were despatched in Convoys to Saraswathie Hall ; but for the shelter, hardly any food was given. After four days our third place of rest was the Royal College,

where in its spacious grounds thousands of victims and refugees from all over Sri Lanka had been brought. At a time when everyone was famishing and languishing, the food and water mixed with the living kindness and compassion given by the great Ramakrishna Mission was indeed life giving, calling for the gratitude, of the tens of thousands, through eternity, and this is the strength of the Ramakrishna Mission. Here too, the man of the hour was Mr. Navaratnam ; the lieutenant of the Vice President Maharaj, Swami Prematmananda, fearlessly spear-heading this organisation that was set up for this dedicated service, the service to the suffering, being the worship of the Gods. The Swamiji was always there at the spot doling out the money non-stop for procuring provisions for the daily cooking for the big mass of humanity in the camp ; giving plenty of moral courage and strength to the dedicated volunteers sagging in enthusiasm due to physical exhaustion as days passed by; patiently listening to the pathetic tales of worries and woes of the mutilated and the maimed, distressed and the depressed and inspiring and enlivening them with hopeful words of consolation and solace. The entire atmosphere was dismal, charged with solemn stillness, suspense, tension and anxiety, nobody knowing what would happen next. The deserted and desolate roads were in possession of the Army, Navy and the mounted Police patrolling and parading about. With hardly any civilian movements on the roads, with the grilled permits given only to the very restricted volunteers of the Ramakrishna Mission and the like, the Military sentinels with their machine guns pointed at, stopping and challenging every one at every point, but Swamiji and Navaratnam with an inner strength and equipoise plied about, their sole concern being the amelioration of the many thousands suffering in anguish in the camp. It is in this grim, very sensitive and explosive back-ground one has to assess and appreciate the magnitude of the colossal and the courageous undertaking of the Ramakrishna Mission (Ceylon Branch) whose live wire has been the great N. Navaratnam. The difficulties in organising this massive humanitarian service, naturally should have given never ending headaches ; yet the Swamiji, Navaratnam and his volunteers did this marvellous job of work quite calmly and most successfully. Why should Mr. Navaratnam and party, instead of resting in peace quite safe and secure at home worry their lives undergoing hazards and the harrowing experiences. In the true ideals of the Ramakrishna Mission to which the volunteers were tenaciously clung one finds the inspiring answer. At the start when someone magnified a very trivial difficulty of serving meals with cut leaves or plates, Navaratnam the leader who strained every nerve to organise this humanitarian service raised his voice and shouted saying " Why worry, serve on cut pieces of Newspapers. " That was Navaratnam who does not take ' no ' for an answer. For him impossibility is what is found in the dictionary of the fools. Navaratnam throughout has been such, rising upto occasions too many to mention. The dogs bark, the caravan moves on. The cowards with damaging criticism ceaselessly talk useless things but do very little indeed. They die a hundred deaths but the valiant Navaratnam died only once !

The Bee settles down in flowers and collects honey to build its attractive and unimitable hive. Likewise Navaratnam did patiently collect money from the opulent organisations and wealthy individuals to build the massive and lovely International Cultural Centre, the foundation of which was laid by the late great Dr. Rajendra Prasad the President of the Republic of India and the opening done by the first ever statesman, Prime Minister of India, the great luminous late Jawaharlal Nehru. In keeping with its name, this International Cultural Centre has been touched, blessed and raised to this high pedestal by these two world figures. This is now a hive of activity accommodating the Guests and Tourists from all over the world specially now with the great boost given to Tourism in Sri Lanka. The other magnificent building, the Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Hall built to commemorate the Birth Centenary of Swami Vivekananda is equipped to accommodate 1,230 people. These two edifices were planned and executed with a vision, under the personal supervison of Mr. Navaratnam. At the outset, as is usual in ventures of this magnitude running to lakhs of rupees diffident and destructive criticisms did come up, to damage Navaratnam's enthusiasm. Even the Vice President Maharaj held out his hand in exasperation asking Navaratnam " Where to find the money " to

which Navaratnam confidently and calmly replied " That's nothing ! I shall find it ; only give me your approval. " With his good wishes, the Swami gave the green signal and with the Grace of Sri Ramakrishna and led by His kindly light he knocked at the doors : they opened ; whatever he asked, was given. Just in ten years time with the grants from the Ceylon Government and Indian Government and the very large donations collected locally these two massive structures were completed in the shortest possible time on the land bought by the late Swami Siddhatmanandaji Maharaj, the Vice President from 1941-1951. The buildings came up in quick time as it were with the magic touch of Aladdin's Wonderful lamp.

Navaratnam was a far-sighted visionary with never failing zeal of the missionary, with his unassailable enthusiasm, tenacious perseverance, unflinching confidence, fearless courage, and tremendous faith in himself, Navaratnam towers a Man among men ; and the International Cultural Centre and the Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Hall which hails the Mission to an International Stature, are monuments silently perpetuating his memory. Who can deny the honours due to him ? Not even the winter wind which is not so unkind as man's ingratitude. The Mission's voice, the Captain at Kataragama, the dare devil in the midst of dangers, the visionary and the missionary is no more. His is a name that cannot perish with the passage of time. Let Mr. N. Navaratnam's name find a place in the annals of the Ramakrishna movement in Sri Lanka. May his soul rest in peace for ever at His Holy Feet.

SOME IMPORTANT EVENTS

1893 First visit of Swami Vivekananda on his way to the West.

1897 Second and important visit of Swami Vivekananda, during which he stayed for ten days in Ceylon visiting several places, including Matale, Kandy, Anuradhapura and Jaffna.

1897 Visit of Swami Niranjananda a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

1897 Visit of Swami Shivananda a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

1899 Third visit of Swami Vivekananda.

1899 Visit of Swami Turiyananda a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

1902 On July 13, First Vivekananda Society in the island formed in Colombo. Subsequently there were Vivekananda Societies formed in some other cities also.

1903 Visit of Swami Trigunatitananda a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

1906 Visit of Swami Abhedananda, Swami Ramakrishnananda and Swami Paramananda direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna.

1910 Visit of Sister Avabhamia a western disciple of Swami Vivekananda.

1915 Visit of Swami Sharvananda head of Madras Matt.

1917 Vaidyeshwara Vidyalayam came under the Mission being the first school to come under the management of the Mission.

1922 Pandit Mylwaganam joins Ramakrishna Order and was subsequently known as Swami Vipulananda.

1925 First Ramakrishna Ashrama in Ceylon opened at Trincomalee.

1925 Trincomalee Hindu College handed over to the Mission.

1925 Foundation stone for Shivananda Vidyalayam at Kalladi Uppodai laid by Swami Vipulananda.

1925 Management of many Hindu Tamil Schools in EP handed over to RKM.

1926 Visit of Swami Avinasananda.

1926 Home for Boys started in Jaffna.

1928 Arrival of Swami Yatiswarananda and Swami Anandananda.

1929 Home for Boys shifted from Jaffna to Batticaloa.

1929 The Ordinance incorporating the RKM Ceylon branch received assent of the Governor.

Contd...

1929 Shivananda Vidyalayam at Kalladi Uppodai opened by Swami Vipulananda.

1930 Swami Sharvananda inaugurates Ramakrishna Ashrama at 48, Hamer's Avenue, Wellawatte, Colombo.

1931 Swami Gananda becomes first Swami-in-charge.

1932 Ashrama shifted to 49, Sri Wickrama Road (now known as International Buddhist Centre Road).

1933 Swami Asangananda becomes Swami-in-charge.

1933 Visit of Swami Vigyananda a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

1935 Ramakrishna Mission began functioning at the present premises.

1940 Visit of Swami Madhavananda, General Secretary of the RK Matt and Mission Headquarters, Calcutta.

1941 Swami Siddhatmananda becomes Swami-in-charge.

1942 Colombo Ashrama shifted out of Colombo due to World War II.

1943 Swami Vipulananda appointed First Professor of Tamil at the University, Ceylon.

1944 Colombo Ashrama back at its premises.

1948 Library and Reading Room opened at Colombo Centre, by Hon. D. S. Senanayake.

1951 Swami Asangananda becomes Swami-in-charge.

1951 Visit of Dr. C. V. Raman the famous Indian Scientist and Noble Prize winner.

1951 Visit of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan then Vice President, India.

1952 Sunday School inaugurated at Colombo Centre.

1952 43rd and 44th lanes of Wellawatte renamed as Vivekananda Road and Ramakrishna Road, respectively.

1953 Kathirgama Madam declared open by Hon. Dudley Senanayake.

1954 Swami Prematmananda becomes Swami-in-charge.

1954 Visit of Madam Vijayalakshmi Pandit, President UNO General Assembly to inaugurate the Holy Mother Centenary Celebrations.

1959 Foundation stone laid by Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of the Republic of India, for the International Cultural Centre at Colombo.

1960 All the Schools run by the Mission taken over by the Government.

1962 International Cultural Centre opened by Sri Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India.

Contd...

1967 Visit of Srimathi Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India.

1968 38 acres of land given by Government to Boys' Home, Kalladi Uppodai.

1968 Home for disabled labourers at Ampitiya taken over by the Mission.

1968 Visit of Pravrajika Alma Praner and Pravrajitta Mukti Prana of Sarada Matt Calcutta in connection with Sister Nivedita's Centenary Celebrations in Colombo.

1968 Visit of Swami Vireswaranandaji, President, Ramakrishna Mission and Matt, Calcutta.

1969 Opening of Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Hall.

1970 Sri Ramakrishna Sarada Samiti formed.

1972 New building of Boys' Home at Kalladi Uppodai opened by Swami Prematmananda

1976 Kathirgama Madam taken over by Government.

1976 Golden Jubilee Celebrations of Boys' Home at Kallady Uppodai.

1980 Golden Jubilee Celebrations at Colombo Centre.

SOME PUBLICATIONS CONNECTED WITH THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

Published in Sri Lanka

English

	Title	*Author/Publisher*	*Year*
1.	Swami Vivekananda's Visit to Ceylon	V. Iyampulle Chettiar	1897
2.	Religion and Philosophy of Gita	Swami Sharvananda	1933
3.	Kataragama	Swami Asangananda	1935
4.	Souvenir of Sri Ramakrishna Mission Educational Institutions in Ceylon	Swami Natarajananda	1957
5.	Souvenir for the Benefit Music Recital by M. S. Subbulakshmi in aid of Ramakrishna Mission, Colombo Centre		1957
6.	Vivekananda Prophet of the New Age of India and the World	T. Muttucumaru	1963
7.	The Vaidyeshwara Golden Jubilee umber	Vaidyeshwara Vidyalayam	1963
8.	Sister Nivedita Birth Centenary Souvenir	Sister Nivedita Centenary Committee	1968
9.	The Ramakrishna Mission Boys' Home Golden Jubilee Souvenir	Swami Jivanananda	1977
10.	The Ramakrishna Movement in Sri Lanka	Swami Virupakshananda	1978

Tamil

1.	Bajanavali (12,000 copies printed up todate)	Ramakrishna Mission, Colombo	1960 (First edition)
2.	Swami Vivekananda in Ceylon	S. Ambikaipakan	1963
3.	The Thoughts of Vipulananda	S. Ambikaipakan	1963
4.	Swami Vivekananda Memorial Issue by Anuradhapura Vivekananda Society		1963
5.	Anuradhapura Vivekananda Society Golden Jubilee Souvenir	Anuradhapura Vivekananda Society	1975

Sinhala

1.	Swami Vivekanandage Upadesa	Ramakrishna Mission	1955
2.	Sri Ramakrishna Charitaya	Piyasiri Liyanaratne	1962
3.	Swami Vivekananda (Hetti Jeevitha Kathawa)	Amarakirthi	1963
4.	Kataragama	Welikala	(not given)

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It protects you and promotes your spiritual
career—

Sri Ramakrishna