



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Love 2 **Sevalaya's News Letter - April 2007** Serve 1 Price-Re.1

Dear Friends,

There is a small temple near my house and I go there almost every morning. One day during such regular visits, a discussion started with other local community people in the temple, about the need to re-lay the floor of the temple. The flooring was in a very bad shape and it was difficult to walk on it, especially on festival days, when the God is carried around the temple. Couple of people volunteered to donate money for the cause. We didn't know how much will be the total cost, but each one of us said that we can contribute some amount. As at Sevalaya, there is always construction going on, I was asked to get a quotation for the job. I asked the Sevalaya building contractor to pay a visit and work out the cost.

The budget was approved by the local people and the work started. The flooring stones arrived from Cuddappa, a small town in Andhra, the neighboring state. This town is well known for natural stones and the stone is named after the town and commonly known as cuddappa stone. Also four workers came from the same town to take up the job.

The entire work went on and on and was completed nearly after a month. The four workers stayed inside the temple. They started the work at 6 in the morning and worked till 9 or even 10 pm on some days. They did not take any weekend breaks. They wanted to finish the work and head back home. They slept inside the temple and made it their home for this period. They were very sincere, very skilled and took extra care to beautify the final touches.

I tried to get their names so that we can call them again if there were similar work coming

up. The head of the group is Sirajudeen. Yes, all four were Muslims. I told the temple priest about this, expecting that there may be some problem from the local people, as Muslims were allowed to stay inside a Hindu temple. But there was no problem. All of us were wonder struck with the kind of devotion they had for their work. In fact, during this one month stay, they ate only vegetarian food. Even when some one offered them meat, they refused stating that as they were doing temple job, they needed to be 'clean'. They also stopped smoking during this period. On chatting with them, we found that they have worked in many temples; in fact in 22 out of the 108 most important Vishnu temples, they have done the stone work. And whenever, they have gone on temple work, whatever may be the length of the period, they have almost lived the life of a priest!

On the final day, fully pleased with their work, the temple priest gave them full temple honors and handed over 'prasad' to them. Also, he invited them to his house for dinner. After the dinner, the workers left for their home town.

Communal riots, breaking mosques, breaking temples are all "newsworthy items" sensationalized by media reports and on political platforms. Fighting, killing, bombings are every day newspaper reports. People like Sirajudeen and his team will never get any media coverage. But then the majority of population don't get any coverage in the media – a proof that majority is still living in peace.

Thanks & Regards

Murali



Eye Camp

Events

Sevalaya arranged a free Seminar on "Committment to Excellence" for college students on March 02/03/2007 at campus. The seminar was conducted by Mr. Muthiah Ramanathan (Director, Mind Dynamics Centre, Chennai). He conducted a lively session on improving one's self confidence to progress towards excellence in one's life. It also created awareness towards social responsibility. Nearly 112 college students participated in it. Certificates were issued to the participants. He conducted a training session for the teachers on the same day.

The birth Centenary of Thirumuruga Kirupananda Variyar, a well known personality in the field of delivering Spiritual Discourses was celebrated at Sevalaya on 07/03/2007. Mr. Pazha. Muthappan, Principal, The Chettiar College, Tiruchirappalli spoke about Variyar Swamigal who was well known for his sense of humour and conveying great spiritual and philosophical thoughts in simple style and making it appealing to the common man. The children came to know more about the life and work of Swamigal.

On 10/03/2007 a free eye camp was conducted by Sankara Nethralaya at Sevalaya. The camp was organized by Madras School of Social Work. Nearly 210 villagers were benefited.



Sri Rama Navami Function



Kirupananda Variyar Centenary Function

Volunteers from Chinmaya Mission conducted a career counseling program for the students of 9th standard of our school on 20/03/2007.

Sri Rama Navami was celebrated on 24/03/2007. The Special Guests for the occasion were **Mr. Muniyasekar** (Revenue Inspector, Thiruvallur), **Mr. K.Rajendran** (Village Administrative Officer, Theruur), **Mr. Thiruverkulam** (Village Administrative Officer, Pakkam), **Mr. E.Srinivasan** (Panchayat president, Thottikalai), **Mr. E.R.Kesavan** (Panchayat President, Ayathur) and **Mr. Vengatesa Mudhaliyar** (Puliyur).

A Career Guidance Programme for the students who had appeared for 12th Standard Board examinations was conducted at Sevalaya on 25/03/2007. The programme was conducted by Mr. Kennet and Mr. Muthu from an organization DROP.

The students and the staff gave a Farewell Party for the XII Standard students on 25/03/2007. The students presented a Cultural Programme. The Managing Trustee, V.Muralidharan, Sevalaya Advisor Mr. J.Muralikrishnan and Mr. Kennet and Mr. Muthu from DROP spoke to the students. They conveyed their Best wishes to them to achieve greater heights in life and asked them to stay in touch with Sevalaya wherever they go. The teachers also addressed the students. They recalled their



Mahavir Jayanthi Function



Farewell to +2 Students

student days and told the students that as years pass by they will remember their school days more and more vividly, of the friends they had, the good times they spent, the teachers who taught them etc., Some students of the XII Standard spoke on the occasion gratefully recollecting that but for Sevalaya they would not have been able to complete XII Std. They assured that they will remember Sevalaya all through their life and will contribute once they achieve good position in life. The cook Mr. Madhavan had prepared special sweets and snacks for the occasion which was enjoyed by all. Mr. V.Muralidharan held a lit candle, from whom the teachers lit many candles and passed it on to the students. There was a Candle Light Prayer at the end of the meeting.

A Kidney Awareness Programme was conducted by a team of Doctors from the Porur Ramachandra Hospital on 29/03/2007. The doctors spoke on "Care of Kidneys". The residents of Sevalaya's Old Age Home and local villagers participated. The session was an interactive one with the doctors providing clarifications for the doubts asked by the participants. The programme was organized by the Madras School of Social Work.

Mahavir Jayanthi was celebrated on 31/03/2007. The Chief Guest was Lion. M.Dharmachand Jain, Trustee of Sri Digambar Jain Temple, Arungulam Jain Sangh, Thiruvallur.

Sevalaya is proud that one of the students who was trained under the tailoring programme, Ms. R. Vijaya, has been selected as teacher to conduct tailoring classes at Chinmaya Mission.

Programmes where we participated....

The Managing Trustee Mr. V.Muralidharan was an invitee to the dinner hosted by the US Consul General, Mr. David Hopper at his residence for the delegates of the members from Community Colleges in USA on 22/03/2007.

School Clubs

The Social Science Club met on 15/03/2007.



**Sevalaya's Tailoring Student
Ms. R. Vijaya**

Ms. K.Sneha from the Madras School of Social Work spoke to the students about "Social Service and Social Work". A essay competition on "India 2020" was conducted for the students on 18/03/2007 by Social Science Club. The students played Word Games in the English Club Meet on 20/03/2007.

Sports

Sevalaya students were the District level Inter School Winners in the game Kho – Kho conducted by Seven Star Sports Club, Thiruninravur at Dasar School, Thiruninravur on 03/03/2007.

Staff Book Review:

Mr. N. Ravichandran reviewed the book "Effective ways to earn More Money" (Tamil) by Mr. Lena Tamilvanan on 03/03/2007. On 10/03/2007 Mr. P. Dhomodharan spoke on the book "Arise Awake" by Mr. R. Gopalan. Mr. V. Muralidharan reviewed the book "The road less travelled", by Mr. M. Scott Peck on 17/03/2007. Ms. Meenakshi spoke on "Forerunners of Gandhi" by Mr. Avinasilingam, on 24/03/2007. On 31/03/2007 Mr. C. Saravana Moorthy reviewed the book, "Gnana Deepam - Sudar 7" (Tamil) by Swami Vivekananda.

Students Book Review:

On 03/03/2007 Dhinakaran shared about what he read in the book "Life history of Newton". M. Umamaheshwari spoke on "Stories of Geniuses" by Mr. C. Muthupillai on 10/03/2007. "Useful Stories of Life" was I. Bhuvaneshwari's choice for the meeting on 24/03/2007.

Tours

The students of Standard XII were taken on a one day trip to Chennai where they visited Bharathiyar's House, Sri Parthasarathy Temple at Triplicane and the Marina Beach on 21/03/2007.

Temple Visit

On 02/03/2007, 16/03/2007 and 23/03/2007 hostel girls went to the Vinayagar Temple at Ramanatahapuram. On 09/03/2007 and 31/03/2007 hostel boys went to Vinayagar Temple at Ramanatahapuram.

India is immortal...

Romain Rolland, the great French savant (1866-1944) has written biographies of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda. He was also an ardent admirer of Mahatma Gandhi. In his work, "The life of Vivekananda-and the Universal gospel" he "presents a fascinating and graphic account of Swami Vivekananda's life and message" as the blurb says.

One of the chapters in the volume entitled "The departure" gives a vivid account of the last days of Swami Vivekananda.

Swamiji shed his mortal coil at Varanasi on 4th July 1902 at the age of 39. But he was fully conscious of what he had achieved for humanity within this short span. He was aware that his life was ending soon. He said proudly, "What does it matter? I have done enough for fifteen hundred years." Generally people look for their end at Varanasi so that they could readily reach heaven. Swami Vivekananda's creed has been "Service to the poor and liberation for the soul." Having achieved "fifteen hundred years' work" during his life time, naturally as a sanyasi, he must have been thinking of his own liberation in his sun-set phase. A sannyasi with a difference that he was, he was thinking only of the poor and the distressed even as he was facing death..

During this period, he served a beautiful feast to some Santal workmen, and told them, "You are Narayanas. Today I have entertained Narayana himself..." Then turning towards his disciples, he said, "see how simple hearted these poor illiterate people are! Will you be able to relieve their miseries to some extent at least? Otherwise, what is the use of our wearing the ocre robe? .. How can we have the heart to put a morsel into our mouths, when our countrymen do not have enough wherewith to feed or clothe themselves? Some times I think... "let us throw away all the paraphernalia of worship, let us throw away all the pride of learning and study of Shastras, and all the sadhanas for personal Mukthi- and going from village to village devote our lives to the service of

the poor by convincing the rich men about their duty to the masses, through the force of our austere living....You are continually telling them, "Don't touch me" "Don't touch this or that" Is there any fellow feeling in this country? There is only Don't touchism! I wish to demolish the barriers and bring them all together, crying, "Come, all ye that are poor and destitute, fallen and downtrodden! We are one in the name of Ramakrishna!"

In his last days, he spoke of his plan for a Vedic College. Why? "It will kill superstition" he said.

His last words, according to Romain Rolland were "India is immortal-if she persists in her search for God. But if she goes in for politics and social conflict, she will die". Swami Vivekananda is a prophet and his words are to come true. Then we shudder to imagine the future of the country due to the mess we are creating of this land. Is it possible to bring unity and harmony in India? One of his disciples put this question to Swamiji. He replied with irritation, "Don't come here anymore if you think any task is too difficult. Through the grace of the Lord, everything becomes easy of achievement. Your duty is to serve the poor and the distressed without the distinction of caste and creed. What business you have to consider the fruits of your action? Your duty is to go on working, and everything will set itself right in time and work by itself..."

To Sister Nivedita, lying in his bed, Swamiji spoke of "Humble heroic life" "As I grow older, I find that I look for more and more greatness in little things... and anyone will be great in a great position. Even the coward will grow brave in the glare of floodlights. The world looks on! More and more the true greatness seems to me that of the worm doing its duty silently, steadily from moment to moment and hour to hour"

The story of such "worms" working silently and steadily has been reported elsewhere in this issue. We are confident that India will not die. She is immortal.

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