



**Swami Vivekananda Integrated Rural Health Centre
Shree Sharadadevi Eye Hospital & Research Centre
Sri Ramakrishna Peripheral Heart Centre
Sri Sharadadevi Institute of Vision Management
(Units of Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama)**

Swami Vivekananda Nagar, Puvagada – 561 202

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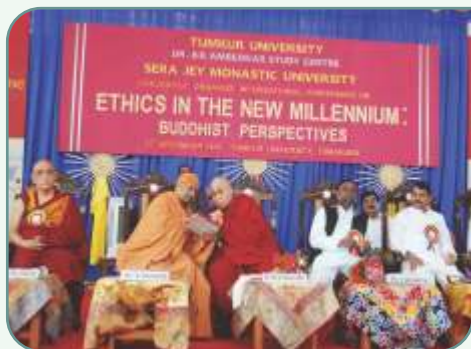
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Priceless Moments with the Prophet of Peace

Swami Japanandaji was among the special guests invited to speak at a conference on **'Ethics in A New Millennium'** hosted by the Tumkur University on 21st December, 2014, by its vice-chancellor Prof. A. H. Rajasab. The conference was one in a series of programmes by the University involving Buddhist literature. The star attraction of the occasion was His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the

tributes to Sri Shivakumara Swamiji, and remarked: "I am standing here as just one of the 700 million human beings on this earth."

Swami Japanandaji says he was thrilled to hear this and sensed that only a man of high realization could be so simple and humble. Japanandaji later summed up his divine experience in an article published in a leading daily:



highest Guru of the Buddhists and a Nobel Peace Prize awardee. Another luminary to grace the occasion was the centenarian 'Walking Shiva', Sri Sri Shivakumara Swamiji of Sri Siddaganga Math.

It would indeed be an honour for anyone to be speaking at a university conference with profound academic undertones, and to share the dais with such leading lights. However, what mattered to Swami Japanandaji, who calls himself just a novice in the realm of scholarship, was the opportunity to be in the presence of a living legend, and receive his blessings.

After the lighting of lamps by all the guests, the Dalai Lama in his inaugural speech offered his

"It was an exciting, unspeakable feeling! His Holiness Dalai Lama, as he entered the hall, bowed to the congregation in a most respectful manner, and he appeared to be a true world-teacher in his humility.

"Later, when I could talk to him and show glimpses of the service activities going on in Puvagada, he expressed his profound pleasure and solidarity, especially about the services being offered to victims of leprosy.

"When I thought with what simplicity this giant of a personality

mingled with me, a junior-most sannyasi, tears welled up at the edge of my eyes. His touch gave me a new experience."

After his speech, H.H. Dalai Lama invited questions from the audience. After three questions had been answered, Swami Japanandaji felt the urge to ask him: "What message would you give to today's youth of the world and of this nation?" The Dalai Lama gave a profound message in a nutshell:

"Help others. Bring happiness to other people. If that's difficult, at least don't do them harm."

Swamiji had another close interaction with H.H. Dalai Lama during refreshment, when the latter sat next to him, talking in intimacy, for another precious hour.

On the whole it was a most memorable experience for life, confides Swami Japanandaji.

Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama

Spiritual Activities :

Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna's temple at our Sevashrama was witness to a number of festivals and Jayantis through this year, **which** was generally marked by puja, special prayer and discourse, followed by prasada distribution. Some of the important ones were as follows:

1-1-14 – Kalpataru Day: The celebration began with Ushah Kirtan in the morning with the chanting of Veda mantras **and** hymns to Sri Ramakrishna, who is worshipped as the 'divine wish-fulfilling tree' on the day. There was a special Bhajan in the evening, with Swami Japanandaji rendering some very touching songs that made a fervent appeal to Sri Gurudev.

11-1-14 – Vaikuntha Ekadashi

23 Jan 2014 – Swami Vivekananda Jayanti

The 152nd birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated at the Sevashrama in a befitting way that included the Ushah Kirtan, a Homa in the names of the Holy Trio, followed by Vivekananda Nama-sankeertan, mangalarati and prasada distribution.

After the ritual tributes to Swamiji, there was more visible activity in the afternoon. As a gesture of implementing Swamiji's teaching of "Seeing Shiva in Man", the civic workers of the town (traditionally belonging to the lowest castes) who had been invited, were ceremonially given free clothes and food at a function, in the Ashrama premises. Swami Japanandaji explained the significance of this act, so as to reach the message of man-making to the special invitees.

Inauguration of Swami Vivekananda Yuvaka Sangha

In the evening, a grand public function was organized at the Sevashrama, with the students and staff of Vivekananda PU College and Sri Venkateshwara Nursing School of Pavagada forming a good part of the audience. Rev Swamiji gave a short talk and called on the youth to delve into the



significance of Vivekananda Jayanti—it must not be limited to external rituals, but the great man's thoughts should be understood properly and put into practice. In his inimitable style he explained how Swami Vivekananda had synthesized the ideals of 'Service to the nation' and 'Service to the God'.

On this auspicious day, Swami Vivekananda Yuvaka Sangha – a character-building organization for the youth to be run by the Sevashrama was inaugurated by Prof. Rajasab, vice-chancellor, Tumkur University. Dr. R S Suryanarayana Setty, MBE, from England was the chief guest. In his speech Prof. Rajasab appreciated the Ashrama's initiatives to spread Swamiji's message, especially in this backward area. He gave his own example of

how he struggled from his remote village to reach the position of a VC, and ascribed it the strength he drew from Swami Vivekananda. Dr. Suryanarayana Setty spoke about the conditions of rural India and how the younger generation should cultivate their culture based on Swamiji's teachings. The programme was concluded with beautiful songs on Swami Vivekananda which included the Song of Sannyasin (Kannada version, translated by Kuvempu).

27-2-2014 – Maha-Shivaratri

This was quite a colourful affair this year. In the evening, alongside special ritual worship to Sri Shiva Bhagavan, chanting of Sri Rudra-prashnah and Shivanama sankeertan were done. Following this was a dance recital by the students of Smt Lakshmi Srinath who presented Shiva Tandava and other dances.

3-3-2014 – Sri Ramakrishna Jayanti

Special events on account of the 179th birthday of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa included Ushah Kirtan; Vishnu Sahasranama and Bhajan at 11 AM; special bhajan in the evening, and discourse on 'Yugavatara Sri Ramakrishna'.

2-3-14 – Lecture by Su. Ramanna

An inspirational talk on Call to the Youth by Sri S Ramanna, a distinguished Pracharak of the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsewaka Sangha), was organized under the auspices of Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Swami Vivekananda Yuvaka Sangha, and Swami Vivekananda Educational Institutions, Pavagada. This was another initiative by Swami Japanandaji who is organizing such community programmes for spreading the ideas of Swami Vivekananda, in his efforts at nation building.

The function got off to a rousing start with the singing of Swami Vivekananda's 'Sannyasi Geethe', led by Swami Japanandaji. Rev Swamiji in his introductory speech painted a vivid picture of the present-day Indian youth and the way it was going. He ruled that the youth was losing its value for patriotism. It was in this background, he said, that the significance of men like Sri Ramanna stood out. Welcoming Ramanna and elaborating on his works, Swamiji said, "It is the good fortune of Pavagada that a patriot and karmayogi like him has come to this neglected corner. Let us all try to emulate him



and do something for our nation. We must leave our footprints! Only then would there be some justification for our living."

Sri Ramanna in his talk impressed upon the gathering of youth and devotees the importance of Swami Vivekananda's ideas of nation building. Describing 'youth' as a state of mind, he said the best example for this was Swami Vivekananda himself. "Though great people like Sri Shankara, Basavanna and Vivekananda lived short lives, their teachings are everlasting. This is because they had attained perfect internal and spiritual maturity. They are forever young because their teachings are ever contemporary."

Contrasting the high ideal of patriotism with the present status of our country, Sri Ramanna exhorted the young listeners to discard all that is negative and take up all that is positive: 'It is our bounden duty to see that our country progresses in all fields. Each home must become a learning centre. Home is a holy place where life blossoms. Family members must have mutual affection and respect. Elders must be respected and loved. We must understand our ancient traditions and ideas and try to adopt them in our daily lives. This has to be done on priority. If each house becomes a university, our ancient religion, our rich heritage could be preserved and spread. Programmes like this definitely help in building a strong nation.'

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by Smt. Lakshmi Babu.

16-3-14 – Sri Ramakrishna Homa

A special pooja and homa was organized at Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama, through the Viveka Hamsa group, Bengaluru, under the leadership of Sri



R. Suresh. The bhajans by the big band of youths, followed by Homa created an atmosphere of holiness and inspiration in the ashrama.

8th-10th April – Sri Ramanavami Celebration –

On all the three days, Sri Ramnam Sankeertan followed by devotional songs was held till late evening with hundreds of devotees participating.

2-5-14 – Sri Basaveshwara Jayanti

4-5-14 – Sri Ramanuja & Sri Shankara Jayantis

14-5-14 – Sri Buddha Jayanti

12-7-14 – Sri Guru Poornima

15th to 17th August–Sri Krishna Janmashtami

For three days, Sri Krishna Janmashtami was celebrated with great joy, and the Ashrama reverberated with Sri Krishna-nama Sankeertane, praises and Bhajans.

On 18th, a 'Krishna Costume Competition' was held for children. The Ashrama premises were vibrant with the chirpy sweet sounds of little Krishnas and Radhas—about 50 of them aged between 10 months to 12 years. It was a great joy to behold.

After Krishna Nama Sankeertane these little Krishnas and Radhas enthralled the gathering with their varied talents. Some kids were really brilliant. The little Krishna from '**Bhagyalakshmi Nrutyakala Shaale**' enlivened with his excellent performance in the **Vishvaroop Darshana** and **Kalinga Mardana** scenes. The audiences were amused to watch a 10-month old Krishna crawling towards the butter pot. Each participant was given a special prize apart from a prize in one of the three categories. All those parents who involved

themselves in the makeup of the participants were specially thanked. Overall the three-day programme went off wonderfully. Explaining the significance of festivals, Rev Swamiji pointed out that these celebrations were very meaningful and necessary for preserving and spreading of our ancient culture. He reminded them Swami Vivekananda's saying that history is the guide for future.

1st to 4th October – Dasara celebrations

The Navaratri and Durga Pooja were celebrated in the Ashrama with the usual gaiety, and it concluded on the Vijayadashami when hundreds of devotees participated and paid their pushpanjali to the Divine Mother Durga.

On 2nd October, after the singing of Devi-nama sankeertan, a dance recital by reputed danseuse Sri Duttaloori Babu Balaji and his students entertained the devotees. And on the 3rd, children took part in a Devi-costume competition, bringing alive the different forms of the Devi.

25-26 October – Consecration of SSIVM Premises and Spiritual Retreat

The new structure of **Sri Sharadadevi Institute of Vision Management**, built at the plot adjacent to the Ashram, was formally opened with the performance of all the scriptural rituals under the guidance of eminent Pundit Sri Sathyanarayana Bhat of the Kodandashrama Math (Sringeri Math), Hebbur. Hundreds of devotees, including from Bengaluru and Mysuru, as well as prominent citizens of the town, participated in this holy event. While the Vastu Homa and Rakshoghna Homa were performed in the evening of 24th Saturday, on the next morning, Sri Ganapati Homa and Sri Lakshminarayana Hrudaya Homa were done.





On the morning of Sunday, a spiritual retreat was organized in association with the Vivekahamsa team. After the homa, the Bhajan team led by Sri K. N. Murali presented a session of robust devotional music. Smt. Padmini Murali delivered a fluent talk on Holy Mother Sharada Devi's life. In the afternoon, the retreat continued with Bhajan by the devotees' troupe of Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Pavagada.

13-12-2014 – Srimata Sharadadevi Jayanti – The 162nd birthday of the Holy Mother celebrated at the Sevashrama with all the usual features.

Service Activities

6-9-2014 – Re-launch of the Vivekananda Mobile Hospital

The Vivekananda Mobile Hospital which our institution had been running very successfully since 2010 March, had served numerous people of the innermost villages and hamlets. It was one of 110 such mobile clinics financially supported by the state government and maintained by private institutions. However, in June, 2014, the government suddenly withdrew its support to these units, for its own reasons, and the mobile units came to a grinding halt. Swami Japanandaji was a deeply worried man. Our mobile clinic was not just another facility for the thousands of poor villagers in its territory, but had become their very lifeline. It was easy for the government to shed its responsibility, but not for Swamiji! Could he say to these folks, 'Sorry brothers! We are helpless. You better find some other alternative'? Impossible! Swamiji was determined to find a new supporter for this humanitarian mission at the earliest.

Therefore, it seemed like divine intervention, that Smt. Sudha Murthy of Infosys Foundation appeared at this juncture. When she heard about our predicament, Smt Murthy instantly offered her helping hand. Thanks to her altruistic gesture, the project came back to life.

On 6th September, the mobile clinic was re-launched at a grand function in the presence of distinguished personalities, Justice Dr. Y Bhaskar Rao, the honorable Lokayukta of Karnataka, Dy. Commissioner Tumkur Sri Satyamurthy, and Zilla Panchayat CEO Sri Govindaraju. In his welcome



address Rev Swami Japanandaji shared the story of how the 'rebirth' came about, and described how relieved and proud he felt. However, he clarified that there was no question of discontent over government aid or rejecting it. "We must work with the government and take its help, and we have to implement the government's schemes," he asserted. Reason? "The fruits of those schemes must percolate to the last person."

Appreciating the success achieved by SVIRHC in its medical/healthcare service for the common



man, Dr. Y Bhaskara Rao said, "When millions of our countrymen are suffering from various diseases, the topmost priority should be to provide good healthcare services at the earliest. Rural people elsewhere are in dire need of good healthcare facilities—like the one in Pavagada."

His other interesting observations were: "A healthy nation is built only with healthy people. The weak cannot build a strong nation. Hence it is our duty to build a healthy workforce."

"Work must be our top priority. We must build a system of offering social service at the hospitals. With this, many problems may get resolved."

" 'Serve the poor and lowly' is the motto of Ramakrishna Math. Many of its branches are doing wonderful social works. In these parts, Swami Japanandaji is rendering great service to the rural poor, by reaching them excellent health facilities."

Dr. Maiya commended that Swami Japanandaji's work was now being recognized worldwide. "At one time, not too long ago, Pavagada was notorious for 'wolves'. Japanandaji has changed it all, with his relentless work. Pavagada is now synonymous with 'Swamiji' and 'hospital'."

Smt. Aruna Y Bhaskara Rao, Sri Satyamurthi, Dt. Panchayath CEO Sri Govindaraju, Dr. G Venkataramaiah, Sri G S Dharmapal were the other speakers.

26-11-2014: Inauguration of Mobile Health Services at Venkatammanahally

This is the outermost village of Pavagada Taluk, and is covered by the Vivekananda Mobile Hospital in its circuit. To create awareness among the villagers in this region about the mobile clinic being re-launched as well as about all the health



related issues of importance, a function was held in the village. It was inaugurated by the District Panchayat vice-president R C Anjinappa, who spoke about several pressing issues faced by the taluk. About the problem of acute water shortage, he regretted that a padayatra and protests had yielded no results. Farmers were devastated by the loss of crops, but they were not being paid the crop insurance money. "The government must distribute compensation based on the current year's loss, and not hark about 5-year statistics," he insisted. However, in the same breath, he called on the farmers not to lose heart but to be confident, and turn their attention to subsidiary agricultural trades to tide over the financial difficulties.

Sri Govindaraju, the ZP CEO, analysed the problems faced by the health and education departments: "Shortage of teachers is stalling the progress of education in the taluk, but suitable action is being taken to address this issue. Also, because of the shortage of doctors, people are running from pillar to post for medical treatment. Though the government has made it compulsory for doctors to work in rural areas, it is not being properly implemented. We have appealed for filling up of the posts." He pointed out that in spite of acute poverty prevalent, several persons from the Taluk have raised themselves to be IAS/KAS officers and doctors. In these parts, children are keen to learn. Parents have to encourage them by providing necessary educational atmosphere and facilities.

Sri S Shivaprasad, the BJP State Unit Secretary, said there are many progressive farmers. Several children have risen above poverty to high positions and have brought good name to both the taluk and their native places. Officials and People's representatives must show more interest towards the border villages.

Sri Sambasadashiva Reddy, Media Consultant, SVIRHC, leading doctors of Pavagada including Dr. Narayana, Dr. Shashikiran and Dr. G Venkataramaiah, farmer leader Nagabhushana Reddy, Dr. Naveen Reddy and others were present.

26-5-2014 : Inauguration of Sri Ramakrishna Peripheral Heart Centre

In its constant efforts to widen the scope of its essential medical services, our hospital in Pavagada started a new permanent facility, named as Sri Ramakrishna Peripheral Heart Care Unit, with the kind hand of cooperation extended by the renowned cardiac surgeon Dr. Deviprasad Shetty, founder, Narayana Hrudayalaya. Under this project, a specialists' team from his hospital would camp at Pavagada every month on the last Monday, screen patients, and address their heart related problems.

The unit was inaugurated by veteran surgeon and our chief medical advisor Dr. M. Maiya, in the presence of eminent medical professionals like pathologist T. Prabhu, surgeon B. Mariyappa, and Dr. Vijai Singh, COO, Narayana Hrudayalaya, as well as others. The function was held at the Swami Vivekananda Auditorium in our hospital.



Swami Japanandaji Maharaj in his welcome speech recalled with gratitude Narayana Hrudayalaya's decade-long and most fruitful association with SVIRHC. He praised the efforts of Dr. Deviprasad Shetty who has helped conduct about 80 heart related procedures / open heart surgeries on needy children from Pavagada.

Dr. P. Krishnamurthy, President, DFIT, Chennai, highlighted the negligence of public health systems by the government. He said, the government must allot more funds for community health. He pointed

out that in India just 1% of the budget is reserved for this vital sector, compared with 2% in the neighbouring Bangladesh, a country considered far more backward.

Dr. Maiya said rural people are more prone to certain diseases than their urban counterparts. Pointing out the difference between communicable and non-communicable diseases, he said the new lifestyle diseases were non-communicable, but had become deadlier. In India 8 crore people have heart related issues, out of whom 18 lakh would die. Only 12% patients overcome the disease through medicines. "Swami Japanandaji Maharaj has been rendering a great service towards this end, which even the government has not. He has pledged to permanently free Pavagada from the clutches of Leprosy and Tuberculosis. He has been organizing free eye camps and providing free fodder to the cattle for many years now and his efforts are indeed great."

Dr. Vijay Singh of Narayana Hrudayalaya said, "During the last 10 years we have conducted several cardiac camps in association with SVIRHC. And we are very happy that now with Swamiji's consent, we are establishing a permanent heart centre in Pavagada. Narayana Hrudayalaya will extend every support to this."

At the cardiac check up camp that followed, the team of Dr. Harender Chaudhary, Dr. Puneet Mahajan, Dr. Pratibha Gangineni, and Dr. Vivek examined over 150 patients. Nine of them were referred to Bengaluru for further investigations.

Fodder Distribution Programme – 2014

The prevailing situation of severe drought and its effect on livestock in the neighbourhood kept Swami Japanandaji worried about it. The plight of the dumb animals continued to be very pitiable. The helpless ryots, unable to feed and water their cows and bulls, were seen selling them in distress, to butchers from across the border. The cattle numbers shrank by hundreds. Swamiji felt that it was his bounden duty to take up the cause of the ryots and their live stock. So, plans were drawn to start drought relief operations immediately and to open a free fodder distribution project.

The most important chunk of financial backing for this project came from none other than Smt.



Sudha Murthy, one of our steadfast supporters. And divine help came from another quarter most unexpectedly in the form of a reassuring phone call by Sri Sri Vishwesha Theertha Sripada Swamiji of Pejawar Mutt, who has provided invaluable help – both moral and financial – in the past also.



Call for Cattle Protection: The fodder distribution programme's inaugural function was held in our SV Hall on 24th May, 2014. Rev Swami Japanandaji

gave a shocking picture of the reality, saying that the number of cattle head in the taluk had shrunk from 2,50,00 about two decades back, to just a lakh today. What happened to them? Where had they disappeared, and why? And what about milk for our children – the only source of nutrition for a majority of them? It was the duty of both the farmers and the government to protect the cow, considered the holiest animal in our heritage. He pleaded for government's active intervention by opening cowsheds based on the ground situation and also for a milk chilling facility to help and encourage milk farmers.

Sri Kasanappa Nayka, Civil Judge, Madhugiri, said, "Every living being on this earth has a right to live. Providing food and water to these animals is the bounden duty of man. It is highly commendable that Swami Japanandaji is providing free fodder and water to animals, in this draught hit area."

Dr. G Venkataramaiah blamed the wastage of manpower for the desperate situation. He said, today's youth's hands are full—with a mobile phone and the cricket bat. If they could rather work the fields, apart from every other benefit, the poor cattle would also be saved. Scarcity of rains has failed crops and the anxious farmers are running away – to the cities. This must be stopped.

Altaf Pasha, Tahasildar, assured that if the drought situation continued the government would step in to open cowsheds.

Hanumantaiah, Grade-2 Tahasildar, leader P H Subbarayappa, CMO Dr. Chandrakala, Dr. Raghavendra, were present at the function.

Shree Sharadadevi Eye Hospital & Research Centre

Darshan gets back his vision – Thanks to SSEH & RC

Master Darshan is the six-year old son of Kantaraju and Nagaratna of Kenchappanahalli, Sira Taluk. When the young boy started complaining that he could not read the writings on the blackboard, and most of the things for that matter, his poor parents were naturally perturbed and baffled. The doctors at Sira gave the shocking news – Darshan had developed cataract in both the eyes! Cataract at such a young age certainly is cause for worry. Though this is found in children sometimes, the cure is neither easy or nor affordable, especially for a

poor family. The condition would lead to permanent blindness if not treated, and it can only be corrected surgically by specialists with high-tech support. All these are way beyond the reach or dream of a poor family in an interior village.

However, Kantaraju and Nagaratna found a ray of hope when they were directed to the Sri Sharada Devi Eye Hospital and Research



Centre, Pavagada. The hospital staff welcomed them, and listened to them with great compassion. Darshan was examined with the latest equipment at the Centre, the treatment decided on and all arrangements made for its treatment. On Friday, 4th July 2014, a team comprising Dr. Raghavendra, ophthalmologist, Dr. Subramanya, children's eye surgeon, Dr. Sudheer, anesthetist, Dr. Chandrakala and Dr. Payal (both SSEHRC staffers) conducted this extremely delicate surgery at our hospital. The operation was a great success and Master Darshan was restored his Darshan!

This procedure would have cost at least Rs. 60,000/- elsewhere; however, our centre conducted this surgery totally free of charge. It was one more triumph over blindness for our team, which has over 17300 surgeries to its credit.

Health Camps:

2-11-14 – Inauguration of Second OT; Mega Eye Camp

It is a matter of great joy and pride for Team Vivekananda that we were able to commission a state-of-the-art equipment – an **Opmi Visu 140 Surgical Microscope** donated by **Infosys Foundation** that would further strengthen our expertise in ophthalmic surgery. It is noteworthy that this is only the 15th such advanced machine to have been installed in the state of Karnataka. This new microscope, along with the second operation theater which houses it at SSEHRC, was inaugurated by Dr. K Bhujanga Shetty, founder of Narayana Netralaya, Bengaluru, on the day a mega eye camp was also organized.

Sri Bhujanga Shetty, who has played a vital role in the acquisition of the new equipment, was all praise for the great amount of work going under

SVIRHC, and particularly for its driving force, Rev. Swami Japanandaji. He remarked that finding and winning over the best doctors of Bengaluru and bringing them to Pavagada was nothing short of a miracle. That is how Rev Swamiji was able to avail the best treatment for thousands of leprosy and disabled patients, he said.



Dr Shetty also highlighted the facts that here, for the very first time in the State, TB diagnosing machines have been installed, and that every week 5 kgs of Ragi is being distributed to the TB patients, that too at their doorsteps. "It is our good fortune that Narayana Netralaya is associated with such an institution," he said.

Dr. Venkataramaiah, Secretary, S.V. Educational Institutions said that Swami Japanandaji's service to these border villages was nonpareil. He appealed to the Narayana Netralaya, Bengaluru, to treat the patients sent for further treatments from Sri Sharadadevi Eye Hospital, free of cost.



As a mark of the gratitude and affection on behalf of the numerous beneficiaries, Dr. K Bhujanga Shetty was warmly felicitated by Swami Japanandaji.

Expert surgeons including Dr. Ashwin Mallipatna, Dr. Dhawal, Dr. Poornachandra, Dr. Parvathi,



MEETINGS



Dr. Mannan and Dr. Subramanya of the Centre, handled the Mega Eye Camp that followed.

Distinguished visitors:

6th & 7th Jan 14-DFIT officials— **Dr. Rajamohan**, Medical Officer of St. Mary's Leprosy Centre, Arisipalayam, Salem project, and Mr. Piet Paul, physiotherapist, Nellore project, visited our hospital for an evaluation. They interviewed the inpatients, outpatients and DFIT staff, and verified the records and reports related to TB and Leprosy. Suggestions and guidance were provided by Dr. Rajamohan where needed.

13 Jan – **Dr. Venkatesh, DLO**, Tumkur

27th & 28th Jan – **DFIT officials – Dr. Tine Demeulenaere**, Medical Advisor, DF, Belgium and **Dr. Santhosh Kumar**, Medical Advisor, DFIT, Chennai, inspected our hospital and the facilities available. Field visit was focused on MDR TB patients and other TB HIV co-infection and Leprosy patients. They were satisfied with the DOTS system of MDR patients in Pavagada TU. Separate wards for TB patients and female patients was discussed.



29-1-14 - Dr. Purushotham, District Surveillance Officer and team

7-4-14 – Smt. Parvathi Kumar (Australia) and family members

22nd to 24th May - Dr. M. Shivakumar, Secy., and Dr. P. Krishnamurthy, DFIT

16th to 19th June - Smt. Parameshwari and Sri Ramesh, DFIT Accountants

15th Aug – Smt. Sudha Murthy, Chairperson, Infosys Foundation

This Independence Day turned out to be very special for Team Vivekananda, as Smt. Sudha Murthy chose to spend the whole day with us and our patients, and visiting the project areas of slums and nearby villages. The inspiring presence of this rare lady of substance brought a lot of enthusiasm and positivity to the entire group.

Our association with Infosys Foundation and Smt. Sudha Murthy dates back to 1998. From then on the partnership has built up very strongly to meet the common goal of serving the most deserving pockets of people deprived of basic health facilities. It was she who initiated and supported the Sharadadevi Eye Hospital & Research Centre. For a long time she had expressed the desire to visit the institution, it finally came true on this day.



Smt. Sudha Murthy arrived at Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama and spent much time discussing the Food for Patients, Blindness Control and other projects. Later, at the hospital complex she interacted with a number of patients and visitors. It was then that the subject of the plight of sightless children, whose lives were doomed, deprived as



they were of all facilities including food and education, came up. As Swami Japanandaji bared his desire to do his mite for these unfortunate children through an institution, Smt. Murthy pressed him to go ahead with the concept of Sharadadevi Institute of Vision Management. She promised all the necessary assistance and facilities from Infosys Foundation. And, as described on page 23 of this Newsletter, it did not take long after that for the Institute to take birth.

Smt. Sudha Murthy sitting next to cured Leprosy, TB and HIV/AIDS patients – who always carry a stigma and are kept away by the majority in the society – and discussing their problems, was a sight to behold. Only someone as wealthy as her in heart might be expected to do it! She also distributed clothes, food packets and other useful things to the patients who were in large numbers. Later, she went to visit another parched, remote area where a glass of water is a luxury. Her Trust has helped reach 16000 ltrs of water daily to these pockets. She witnessed the plight of the people vying for a pitcher of water. It was a moving sight, but she was much satisfied to see the dedicated Team Vivekananda at work, day and night. She was also briefed about the working of the Infosys Foundation-supported Mobile Hospital.

After she was back at the peaceful abode of Sri Ramakrishna at the Sevashrama, Smt Sudha Murthy sat in the shrine and spent some serene moments, listening to the celestial devotional music rendered by Rev. Swamiji.

16-7-14 - Dr. Chandrashekhar Shetty, PMJF, Chief Technical Advisor—Sight First, India & Sri Lanka, and Advisor, National Program for Control of Blindness, Karnataka visited the eye hospital and reviewed our blindness control programmes.

17th & 18th August - Australian team headed by Dr. Ashwin, Narayana Nethralaya, Mr. James and Mrs. Mina.

18-8-14 - A Satsanga team (from V.V. Puram, Bengaluru) led by Mrs. Menaka Ranganath; special Satsanga organized at Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama

19-8-14 - Dr. Anil, JD-TB and Dr. Sanath Kumar, DTO

26-9-14 - Dr. P.K. Srinivas, Project Director RCH (Rtd), Consultant – IEC (JnNURM & RAY) and BMCRI professor Dr. Shobha.

1-11-14 - Smt. Prabhavathi & family members; Satsanga at Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama.

12-11-14 – Smt. Meenakshi Maiya and group—Satsanga at Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama.

Dooradarshana Live Programmes of Swami Japanandaji

30-5-14 – Chandana TV – “Jeevana Darshana”

11-7-14 – Chandana TV – Programme on the occasion of Gurupoornima

31-10-14 – Chandana TV – “Jeevana Darshana”

21-11-14 – Chandana TV – “Jeevana Darshana”

Meetings / Seminars:

30-1-14 – Project Holders' meeting, DFIT, Chennai

8-3-14 - Tumkur – CME and workshop on RNTCP

Sri Swami Japanandaji inaugurated a CME and RNTCP workshop held at Sridevi Institute of Medical Sciences, Tumkur, and involving senior resource persons from STDC, NTI, medical colleges, WHO consultants, and the government. All the government doctors and private practitioners of the district were invited. The goal was mainly to enlighten on the importance of proper diagnosis of Tuberculosis and provide treatment guidelines. Private practitioners were asked to report monthly TB cases treated by them to the government. Various topics related to RNTCP were discussed in detail.



On **28th March 2014** the district health authorities organized a PCPNDT (Pre-conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques [prohibition of sex determination] Act 1994) programme in cooperation with SVIRHC at Swami Vivekananda Hall. Private as well as government doctors, paramedics, and Asha/Anganawadi workers attended the meet, which was inaugurated by Sri Swami Japanandaji. Hon'ble Sri Kasanappa Naik, Prl. Sr. Civil Judge and JMFC, presided over the function. Sri B. Varadaraj, Civil Judge and JMFC, Pavagada, Dr. V. K. Chowdri, President, IMA were the chief guests. Dr. Rahate Jan Shekh, Dr. P. K. Srinivas, Retd Project Director, HFW Services, and Smt. P. Rajeshwari Devi, Consultant, PC&PNDT programme, gave the talks, building opinion against prenatal sex determination and female foeticide.



16.08.2014 – Seminar for Primary School Teachers

At a first of its kind event, over 400 primary school teachers of Pavagada and the surrounding rural belt were brought together for a seminar on education at the S.V. Auditorium, SVIRHC, under the aegis of Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama and Vivekahamsa, Bengaluru. Issues relating to the merits of present education and lacunae therein, teaching methods, and teacher-student relation were to be addressed. Eminent educationist Prof. A. H. Rajasab, VC, Tumakuru University, was the key speaker. The Primary School Teachers' Association and the education department had lent their full support to this initiative by Swami Japanandaji, who has strongly felt the need for such a programme.

The seminar began at 10.30 Am., with Bhajan and Vedic chanting by Vivekahamsa. Inspiring and melodious songs were sung, mainly on Swami Vivekananda, led by Sri Murali. Swami Japanandaji himself sang a few on Sri Ramakrishna and some folksongs in his rich voice that had an electrifying effect on the audience.

After extending a warm welcome to Prof. Rajasab and other speakers including Smt Padmini





Murali of Vivekahamsa and Dr Venkataramaiah, Swami Japanandaji made a passionate speech, pointing out why character-building education, as enunciated by Swami Vivekananda, is the need of the hour. "The future of India lies with the primary-school children; the very foundation for a bright India is to be laid in the primary schools. Hence your responsibility as the teachers is very high. We have huge resources and a rich heritage. The schools can play a great role in preserving and utilizing them" – Swamiji's words, spoken with such force and conviction, left the teachers inspired and ready for more.

Smt Padmini Murali, a lecturer and a distinguished writer, drew from her rich experiences and explained in detail the intricacies and sanctity of teacher-student relationship. Through many interesting and apt illustrations she drew the attention of the teachers towards their prime responsibilities in the present-day. Her oratory skills impressed and inspired the teachers very well, which was also evident from the many written responses received later.

Dr. Venkataramaiah, founder of the SV Educational Institutions in Pavagada, narrated some of his own experiences. On behalf of the audience, he requested Swamiji to take up educational activities in the backward villages.

Delivering the keynote address Prof. Rajasab remarked: "For me to be in this position today, the foundation was laid way back – in my backward village primary school." The sincerity and significance of these words instantly prompted a long applause from the audience. He narrated many examples from his own life; the difficulties he had to face. He went on to describe threadbare the present-day education system and its loopholes. He expressed his vision that education, particularly at primary level, must be exemplary. All along, he quoted from the teachings of Shiva-sharanas, particularly Allama Prabhu. The learned professor brought out the commonalities between Bhagawan Buddha's and Allama's teachings. He lamented that people, instead of trying to grasp the essence of their teachings, elevated these personalities to Godhood and escaped the trouble of following them. Prof. Rajasab won the hearts of the audience with his captivating speech. He gave a call to root out caste, creed, and poor-rich discriminations and provide equal educational opportunities to all. This must be our ideal, he exhorted.

As the sessions came to a close, a feeling of achievement among the participants was palpable. In his closing speech, Rev. Swamiji thanked the speakers, the Vivekahamsa group and the agencies that supported the seminar. He added that the education department had proposed to hold such programmes in every taluk, echoing the sentiments of all those who were witness to the first one.

Each of the delegates was presented a booklet on Swami Vivekananda's life and a photograph, and sent off after serving light meals.

27-8-14 – Rev Swami Japanandaji participated in the **Project Holders meeting at DFIT, Chennai:**

Social service activities

02.10.2014: Meaningful Jayanti of the Mahatma

Swami Vivekananda Integrated Rural Health Centre, Pavagada, had organized Mahatma Gandhi's 145th birthday celebrations in a special way at the Leprosy Eradication Hospital, Magadi Road, Bengaluru. The honourable Mayor of BBMP Smt. N Shantakumari graced the occasion and inaugurated it in the presence of chief guest Sri S.



Sureshkumar, MLA, Sri P Krishnamurthy, President, DFIT, Chennai and Dr. B. C. Venu, RMO of the Leprosy Hospital, and about 150 inpatients, a majority of them from very poor sections.



Though this was a public function with political and bureaucratic personages in presence, uncharacteristically, there were no speeches, sloganeering or other usual rituals. The dignitaries silently offered their floral tributes to the Mahatma and went up to the patients (men and women seated separately) to personally hand them a set of new clothes, fruits and sweets. The simple gesture conveyed everything they had to say.

Smt. Shantakumari who inaugurated the function, expressed her hearty thanks to Rev. Swami Japanandaji for being given this opportunity. She said she was very impressed and happy with this novel idea of Gandhi Jayanti celebration. After the Mayor, Sri Sureshkumar, MLA, also did likewise giving clothes and fruits to the male patients. He said that personally he felt this to be the best way of observing Gandhi Jayanti, and should be an eye opener for others.



The honourable Mayor happened to notice that the premises were not clean and garbage was lying



uncleared for a long time. She immediately instructed the concerned officials to set things right. When Rev. Swamiji and the hospital staff brought other shortcomings in the hospital to the notice of the Mayor, she responded readily and assured of corrective measures.

SVIRHC – The ready friend in need

Anjanappa, a daily wager, makes a living with his family in a thatched hutment, near Macharajanahalli Gate, about 35 kms from Pavagada. The entire assets of the family, including some cash and materials bought for the daughter's wedding, were inside. On the night of 27.07.2014, fate heaped misery on this family – an accidental fire burnt down everything inside – sparing just the lives. All the belongings were gone in no time.

In this hour of despair, there was no one in whom Anjanappa could find any succour or solace. Therefore, the family approached Swami Japananadaji, about whom they had heard, seeking help on grounds of compassion. Moved by their plight, Rev Swamiji took the decision to support them, without delay. He arranged for the purchase of essential utensils, food grains and clothes worth several thousand rupees and personally went with his assistants to Anjanappa's place. He handed over the materials to the family and consoled them.





This is an open secret among the villagers (as well as the needy Sadhus who have taken shelter under Sri Ramakrishna) that the untiring Swami Japanandaji is ever (24x7x365) available for the distressed and needy people, who flock to him seeking various favours. And none of them is ever turned back empty handed.

"This is the gist of all worship — to be pure and to do good to others. He who sees Shiva in the poor, in the weak, and in the diseased, really worships Shiva; and if he sees Shiva only in the image, his worship is but preliminary. He who has served and helped one poor man seeing Shiva in him, without thinking of his caste, or creed, or race, or anything, with him Shiva is more pleased than with the man who sees Him only in temples."

— Swami Vivekananda

"DVG Remembrance" Lecture Series – The Juggernaut Rolls On

As our readers are aware, Swami Japanandaji has been delivering a series of monthly talks in Tumkur on Dr. D. V. Gundappa – the great writer, philosopher and prophet of Karnataka. Myriad aspects of DVG'S wisdom and vision, passion and satire, concern and love of life are expressed through his works, including the poetic masterpieces of 'Mankutimmana Kagga' and 'Maralamuniyana Kagga', and the gloss on Bhagavad-gita. Saras Media Link, a cultural organization of Tumkur, is hosting the event, and the series has entered the third year, attracting a steady audience. Rev. Swamiji has verily set himself on a literary-intellectual adventure, by steadily diving deeper into

the realm of DVG's philosophy and knowledge, taking his audiences along.

The programme is held during the last week of every month. Along with Swami Japanandaji, the main speaker, a well known social/literary person is also invited to share the dais at every talk. The event has been witnessing even vice-chancellors and academicians participating, along with commoners.

Rev. Swamiji sees this as another opportunity to do the bidding of the Divine Trio, by highlighting their message, and relating them with those of other seers and the scriptures.

The topics for the talks are sometimes gems from DVG's "Kagga". Some of those covered in the last year include "Nation's debt, not service" ["You are only repaying the nation's debt, not doing any charity"], "Dharma is but working for the good of all", "Take it all in your stride", "Freedom means responsibility", "Everyone has a face, but few have a halo". And among the luminaries to light up the dais with Swamiji were, Dr. Gururaj Karjagi, Dr. Babu Krishnamurthy, and Prof. K. Natarajan (DVG's grandson).

Functions / meetings graced by Swami Japanandaji

7-1-2014 – Programme at Indian Medical Association at Pavagada.

12-1-14 – Vivekananda Jayanti at Bala Bhavan, Tumkur

16-1-14 - Swami Vivekananda Jayanti at Bangalore Advocates' Association

Sri K. N. Subbareddy, senior advocate, High Court, had organized Swami Vivekananda's Jayanti in the premises of the prestigious Bangalore Advocates' Association hall, inviting Rev. Swami Japanandaji to address the lawyers' fraternity. The programme was attended by more than 300 advocates, and presided over by Justice Chandrashekar, Judge, Karnataka High Court, while Justice H. Billappa, Judge, Karnataka High Court was the Chief Guest. As the main guest speaker Swami Japanandaji spoke about Swami Vivekananda and his vision of future India. Swamiji's inspiring

talk was well appreciated by the community of intellectuals.

19-1-14 – Rev. Swamiji took part in a Symposium on Adolescent Health Integrating Yoga and Science at R.V. Dental College Auditorium, J.P. Nagar, Bangalore.



26-1-14 – Swami Vivekananda Jayanti at Ramakrishna Vivekananda Satsanga Kendra, Srividyanagara, Bangalore.

11-3-14 – Programme at Vivekananda Vichara Vedike, Jayanagar, Bangalore

24-3-14 – World Tuberculosis Day

Sri Swami Japanandaji was among the chief guests at the World TB Day celebration held at the District TB Centre, Tumkur, along with Dr. Eshwaraiah, District Surgeon, Sri T. M. Swamy, Secretary, Indian Red Cross Society (Tumkur), Smt. Sujatha, Dy. Director, Women & Child Welfare Dept., and Dr. Deepak K. G., WHO consultant. The event



was chaired by Sri Govindaraju, CEO, Dt. ZP, and Sri K. S. Satyamurthy, Dy. Commissioner and chairman, District Health Society inaugurated it.



In his speech, Rev. Swamiji emphasized on the community's role in TB control. While he lauded the proactive roles being played by the government officers in this onerous task, he called for more private involvement. "Instead of depending passively on the government, we should participate actively as citizens of the society to control the dreaded disease. NGOs have a very important role to play here – they must avail of the training facility offered by the department to improve their skills, and handle the TB programme in an effective manner," he said. Based on a wealth of field experience gained over two decades handling RNTCP, he had many a word of advice. "This should become a people's programme. It is the duty of every citizen to involve himself voluntarily in raising awareness about RNTCP and the facilities freely available at all the recognized institutions and hospitals," he urged.

Sri G. S. Thippeswamy who serves under our organization won the Best STLS award in Tumkur District. Dr. Somashekhar of Medigeshe PHC, Pavagada TU, was named the Best Ayush Medical Officer supporting RNTCP. Sri Babu from Hosakere was recognized as the best patient to have taken DOTS treatment regularly.

5-4-14 - Diamond Jubilee Celebrations, Sri Rama Mandira, N. R. Colony, Bengaluru.

2-6-14 – Holy presence at the Consecration of Sri Sita-Rama-Lakshmana Temple at Bheemanakunte, Pavagada Tk.

5-6-14 – Inauguration of the new premises of Sri Vasavi Souhardha Cooperative, Y.N. Hosakote, Pavagada Tk.

13-7-14 – Sri Gurupoornima at Gokhale institute, Bangalore (morning)

13-7-14 – Sri Gurupoornima – Sri Ramakrishna Seva Trust, Girinagar, Bangalore (evening)

13-8-14 – Function at Government PU College, Tumkur

13-8-14 – PDO's workshop at Devarayanadurga, Tumkur Taluk.

14-9-14 – Monthly discourse at Gokhale Institute.

17-10-14 – Ashtalakshmi Satsanga Kendra, Malleshwaram, Bangalore.

December 12, 13, 14: The 12th Global Gita Conference Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bengaluru

Ever since its inception of the International Gita Foundation Trust (2003) by Dr. P. V. Nath, UK, Rev. Swami Japanandaji has been a guide and mentor of the Trust, and kindly graced all its annual conferences so far, held in the USA, UK and India. The twelfth Gita Conference this year was organized in Bengaluru in association with the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, at the Bhavan's auditorium, as a three-day semina. As in the previous years, the 12th chapter of the Gita (matching the year number 12 since founding), that is Bhakti Yoga was chosen as its focal theme. H.H. Sri Swami Japanandaji was invited to address the conference on the inaugural day on the subject of "Bhakti & Swami Vivekananda". The conference was inaugurated by H.H. Sri Ganapati Sachchiidananda Swamiji in the august presence of Justice Sri Rama Jois, Founder Dr. P. V. Nath, Mr. Ramanuja – Director of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, and Mr. H. N. Suresh. The various sessions of the conference attracted sizable numbers of audience including those from abroad.

Swami Japanandaji, in his discourse brought out some striking aspects of the topic with his



insightful interpretation of Swamiji's personality and teachings. He also quoted Swamiji's most relevant and authentic sayings on the subject, to bring out the practical side of true devotion. "The Gita Jayanti is not to be celebrated by worshipping Bhagavad Gita outwardly by offering flowers! No, that is not the way. To show devotion for the holiest of our scriptures, rather, we must get into the Gita and try



to understand its philosophy... The Gita should become part of our life in such a way that its great messages are brought into our day-to-day life." The real life anecdotes he quoted from the lives of Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda effectively drove the essence of his thoughts into the minds of the audience.



Swami Vivekananda Integrated Rural Health Centre

Hospital Activity Report

As on 30-4-2015

	2015	Cumulative Figures
General outpatients treated	1850	226253
General Health camps conducted	5	255
Inpatients treated :		
Number	632	2368
Bed-days	19990	95401

Leprosy :		
Cases registered for treatment	5	3752
Released from Treatment (Cured)	5	3661
No. of patients on treatment	7	-
No. of Reconstructive surgeries done - PAVAGADA	6	388
BANGALORE	-	20

Livelihood Enhancement Programme for Leprosy patients:

	No. of beneficiaries - Financial assistance for				
Year	Education	Live stock	Petty Shops	House renovation	Total
2009 to 2014	2	25	17	8	52
2014	Provided Sewing Machine under Self Employment Scheme				1
Total					53

Tuberculosis	Registered	Cured & Completed Treatment
1993 - 1997 – Under National Tuberculosis System	2767	1115
1998 - 2002 – Under SCC DOTS system	1432	1109
Under Revised National TB Control Programme (RNTCP) Pavagada & Madhugiri Taluks		
From 6-1-2003	7393	5476
GRAND TOTAL	11592	7700
TB cases as on 31-3-2015	417	

As on 30-4-2015

Eye Hospital :	2015	Cumulative total
No. of eye camps conducted	28	998
No. of outpatients treated	4579	150591
No. of surgeries done	597	17189

Eye Project : School Survey programme

Schools Surveyed	No. of Students			
	Screened	Treated for Vit. A deficiency	Treated for Visual defects	Other eye problems
560	83609	1659	740	269
485 students provided with free spectacles during this period				

No. of Pediatric Cataract, Squint, DCR probing etc Surgeries done since 2002: 145

Children surveyed for eye check-up under Pavagada Pediatric Eye Disease Study

Pavagada Taluk	11678
Madhugiri Taluk	11589
TOTAL	23267

No. of children who underwent treatment/surgery at Narayana Hrudayalaya, Bangalore, for their heart problems = 80

Primary Health Centre, Venkatapura	2015	Cumulative total
General outpatients treated	9399	309213
No. of Institutional Deliveries	37	1335

MOBILE HEALTH CLINIC (KHSDRP)	Cumulative total
(2010 to 2014 June) Outpatients treated	91140
MOBILE HOSPITAL (SVIRHC) (2014 Sept to Apr 2015)	7458
TOTAL	98598

Reconstructive Surgeries (RCS) by Dr. Pramod

The RCS project for treating victims of leprosy, is going forward steadily at our facility in Pavagada with support from Damien Foundation. So far 414 cases have been handled, 41 new in 2014. It is to be noted that this specialized surgery and treatment are available nowhere else in Karnataka.

Reconstructive Surgery for Hansen's patients with deformity demands hospital care for two months. The patients get free boarding and lodging, medicine etc during treatment. During the post-surgical care specialized exercises and other supportive issues are handled by a team of experts.

The Central Government provides an assistance of Rs. 8,000 to each patient for family maintenance during hospital stay.



We wish to specially acknowledge with gratitude the service being rendered by **Dr. Pramod Mahesh, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon, DFIT**, with assistance from Dr. Chandrakala G.R., CMO/MOTC.

Livelihood Enhancement Programme

Livelihood Enhancement Programme (LEP), supported by the Damien Foundation to rehabilitate the cured Leprosy patients, provides them the





necessary monetary, material or vocational support, turning them into independent and proud individuals.

Under this programme, 53 cured leprosy patients have been covered so far. In 2014 four persons were provided with goats, and one person was given a sewing machine.

Inauguration of

*** Sri Sharadadevi Institute of Vision Management**

*** Vatsalya Sudha * Swami Vivekananda Mobile Hospital (donated by Canara Bank)**

*** Swami Vivekananda Pure Drinking Water Project**

Friday, 26th December, 2014 marked an important milestone for Team Vivekananda with a host of new initiatives being launched.

The first of them was the opening of 'Sri Sharadadevi Institute of Vision Management' – a **Daycare Centre** for blind/partially blind children.

Another smaller initiative but with much socio-religious significance was the launch of 'Vatsalya Sudha' programme of engaging and feeding the neighbourhood children with milk and biscuits.

The launch of our second mobile hospital, generously donated by Canara Bank, marked substantial expansion of our reach.

A drinking water supply scheme for some pockets of Pavagada town, a much appreciated humanitarian mission, was also formally launched on the day.

The function was held in the SVIRHC complex, complete with the presence of several important personalities. However, the absence of Honourable Governor H.E. Sri Vajubhai Vala, who was scheduled to inaugurate all these but had to miss because of an urgent call from the Prime Minister, caused some disappointment. Among the special guests were Sri T.B. Jayachandra, hon'ble State minister (in charge of several ministries as well as Tumkur Dt.), Sri U.T. Khader, hon'ble minister for H&FW, Sri S. Suresh Kumar, former minister, Sri V.S. Ugrappa, MLC, Sri K.M. Thimmarayappa, MLA (Pavagada), Sri Venkataravanappa, former minister, Sri S.S. Bhat, Chief GM, Canara Bank, Ms. Madhu Singhal, Mg. Trustee – Mitra Jyothi, Sri G.S. Dharmapal and G. Venkataramaiah.



Sri Sharadadevi Institute of Vision Management (SSIVM) was indeed a big stride in our humanitarian mission of serving the blind, and a fulfillment of Swami Japanandaji's intense concern for them. There are scores of such children especially in these poverty ridden areas. They are just left to themselves on the roadside – among the cattle and the fowl – and taken back home at dusk. The parents, struggling every day for a square meal, are too constrained to do anything for these unfortunate souls. Their plight should bring tears in the eyes of any witness. However, whenever he sighted one, Swami Japanandaji felt his conscience deeply pricked. He **had** to do something for them. He wanted to make **men** out of them, give them a new life; provide specialized skills training, as well as academic education. And of course, he wanted them to be given the loving care that each life needs and deserves, in abundance.

All these dreams of his are now being realized through SSIVM.

The Institute is housed in a specially renovated building adjacent to the Sevashrama. (The plot itself came into our possession quite providentially, with the owner persisting on selling it only to the Ashrama, though there were any number of eager bidders). It was another blessing that several eminent persons came forward and joined hands with us at the right time to make this dream come

true. Among them were **Kum. Madhu Singhal**, organizing trustee, Mitrajyothi, Bangalore, and our close associate **Smt. Rajyashree Satish**, an expert in blind rehabilitation work at "Matruchhaya". And **Smt. Vani**, an experienced teacher with specializations in music and Sanskrit, has taken over as the Director of the centre. Our old friends **Dr. Vasudha Naresha**, **Dr. Narendra**, **Dr. Subhash Chandra**, **Dr. Ashwin**, **Dr. Naresh** and Narayana Netralaya's chiefs **Dr. Bhujanga Shetty** and **Dr. Rohit Shetty**, have extended their unstinted personal support for this noble cause.

Children of 5-12 years age from nearby villages, with various degrees of vision loss, arrive at the daycare centre in the morning, many picked up by our own vehicles. The centre shelters them between 9 am and 3.30 pm, round the year, serving the basic needs including clean clothes. Every day, on arrival they get a light breakfast. Depending on each one's abilities and needs, they are given training in various trades like tailoring, paper cover making, and life skills. Music training is another gift they receive. They are served lunch in the afternoon, and milk & biscuits before departure.

This institution is bound to be a boon not just for those few unfortunate kids, but for the whole community. The families are encouraged and supported to play an active role in the kids' upbringing, and a sense of responsibility inculcated.



Health Minister Sri Khader, who inaugurated SSIVM, in his speech said, "The task of creating sound citizens is not to be done sitting in airconditioned rooms or the Parliament/Vidhana Sabha; the children playing in the school grounds and village fields have to be groomed into healthy youths and worthy citizens.

We all, including the government, need to reorient ourselves towards this mission... We all need to extend our cooperation to Swamiji who has founded a most modern hospital in such a rural pocket as this and has been offering hi-tech facilities... Revered Swamiji, we at the health department are always with you. Whatever your demands, we are here to fulfill them... Well, people's representatives ought to talk less, and work more."

The Law & Parliamentary Affairs minister Sri T.B. Jayachandra went a step ahead in expressing his pleasure with Team Vivekananda and its work. "Rev Swami Japanandaji who has done unparalleled work in the field of service richly deserves a national award." "Whenever we asked him, 'Swamiji, do you require any aid from the government? Is there something I can do?' he will say, 'No please, we don't need any help. You just stay with us'. He is the only Swami who's said so!.. Rev. Swamiji, I am a 'shishya' of yours from today. I will involve myself in your development activities."

'Vatsalya Sudha' ("the nectar of motherly love") is a programme of providing nutritious snack/milk in the morning for the deprived children of the surroundings. It is, very aptly, being sponsored by Smt. Sudha Murthy through her Infosys Foundation,

The idea took shape in the mind of Swami Japanandaji who used to watch impoverished children from the neighbourhoods going for begging, to support their parents' earnings. He felt the urge to do something for their nutrition, and devised the plan.





The programme is simple. Now, there are about 120 enrolled children who come in the morning. (Some are from Muslim families, but there's no discrimination.) At about 7 AM they walk in quietly – usually Swamiji is there in his bright ochre robes to greet them. They wash their hands and sit down; say a simple prayer taught to them. Each one receives a packet or two of gluco biscuit. Usually there are other goodies brought by the devotee-volunteers. The kids can take them home, if they like. They are also served hot milk – as much as they can drink. Then they wash up and parade out gracefully! No moral lessons, no sermons.



Rev Swamiji believes this is a natural way of mingling with the community, making them feel one with the Ashrama and the mainstream. 'Vatsalya Sudha' is a small step towards the building of a healthy community – not just in terms of its physical health, but in terms of its social, economic and spiritual wellbeing. "Sudha" is more than milk – it's the Amritha of motherly love, which should enliven the child, and help acquire humanitarian virtues. A child that is also immune to the diseases of communalism, casteism and anti-nationalism.

The **new mobile hospital** was donated in a fully equipped condition by Canara Bank, and it greatly enhances the reach of our medical service mission. In a way, it's a daily Rath-Yatra of Swami Vivekananda himself, reaching the pockets of backwardness. Apart from drugs and medical care, it also delivers the message that the rest of the world cares for them, treats them as their own. Indirectly, it serves the cause of national integration in a humble but practical way.

Sri V. S. Ugrappa, MLC, talked about water related issues, the harm being caused by fluoride-polluted water in the taluk, and said the water struggle should be handed over to Swami Japanandaji. "The way this religious organization is carrying on its service activities in rural India, Swami Japanandaji reminds us of Swami Vivekananda," he exclaimed.

Rev Swamiji in his closing talk thanked all the illustrious persons who have helped in the execution of the health projects.



(Shri S S Bhat, Chief General Manager, Priority Credit & Financial Inclusion Wing, Canara Bank, handing over the mobile unit's key)

In the forefront of people's struggle for water – to a successful culmination **Vivekananda Banner leads to Victory**

It is a well known fact that the Pavagada taluk is perennially drought-prone, with very scanty rains; it has no river or stream flowing through it, and any ground water is seen as a miracle. This is a major reason for its backwardness. Another curse that has afflicted the region is, even the available water in many parts is unfit for drinking because of high fluoride content, which corrodes the bones and joints, reducing men and animals to worthless creatures. Hundreds of families continue to suffer this wretched condition, but since there is no alternative, they consume the same water and suffer. Their cries have fallen on deaf ears.

A majority of people, both the sufferers and onlookers, have just resigned themselves to this situation, believing that nothing would ever change. However, some people like Swami Japanandaji thought otherwise. It was crystal clear to Swamiji's compassionate eyes that the situation CAN and MUST change. It was never impossible or too expensive to make alternative arrangements for drinking water, or to create a channel system to bring water to every habitation in the taluk. The only thing lacking, he knew, was imagination and the will power.

In fact, several plans were announced and assurances showered by leaders, but water remained just a pipe dream, even while the surrounding villages of Andhra Pradesh came out of a similar situation and began to enjoy their drink of water. Then what has prevented our hapless people on the wrong side of the border from getting their elixir of life? It was quite obvious: Pavagada's needs have never been a pressing priority for the governments.

This awareness spread among the masses, and murmurs grew into a chorus. During the last five years, people came together to demand their due, and rallied around Swamiji to take their fight to the decisive stage. It was a very tricky situation! Even though he wanted to remain aloof from any activity outside his own sphere, he could not do that in the face of immense popular pressure. Cutting across party lines, people chose him as their leader in their

struggle for water. Indeed, Swami Japanandaji's mission in Pavagada over the 25 years has always been emancipation of the masses from poverty, disease and starvation, and to awaken them—as Swami Vivekananda mandated to every Sannyasin. But he did not have to confront or rub against the government, or get involved in anything political. However, the evolving situation in the region demanded that a selfless, apolitical and no-nonsense leader should hold the reins. Finally, Swamiji bowed to the collective wish of all the different sub groups, and agreed to lead them. On one condition—this must remain a non-political movement, and be in the name and spirit of Swami Vivekananda.

In 2012, people's forums of Pavagada organized a long march to Bengaluru, with Swami Japanandaji leading from the front. Hundreds of men walked those 180 kms all the way to the capital, met the then Chief Minister Sri D. V. Sadananda Gowda and the concerned ministers and officials, argued their case strongly and made known their determination to 'Stop not till the goal is reached'.

The organization kept meeting regularly to watch the developments and work out strategies. During the last two years, with the rains playing truant, drought continued to cause hardship to the people. And in 2014, as described earlier in this Newsletter, Rev Swamiji arranged for free distribution of fodder to farmers as well as supply of drinking water, in our own humble ways.



Swamiji's 'Bhageeratha Prayatna' results in 'Tungaavatarana'

Early this year (2015), as the time for preparation of the state Budget neared, the Pavagada group decided to give a decisive push and again meet the CM. A huge band of volunteers and farmers joined Japanandaji and some other leaders at Bengaluru on 2nd March 2015. Over 1000 men and women assembled at the Freedom Park from where a procession was proposed to be taken to meet the CM. However, the administration did not allow it, but a handful of leaders were asked to meet the CM at his office.



The honorable CM did accord a warm welcome to Swami Japanandaji and team and offered all the courtesies. (Needless to say, the government had by now totally assured itself of the non-political nature of this movement, and verified Swami Japanandaji's bona fides!) However, when it came to a commitment to the cause of Pavagada's drinking water, the CM was non-committal, and just said he would be 'considerate and do all that he could.' Rev Swamiji, at this juncture, took a firm stance not to let go of this golden moment, and made a passionate appeal to the CM. He said that all the previous CMs had been parroting the same words all these years, but it was NOW for Sri Siddaramaiah, who was known to be a pro-poor CM with sympathy for backward peoples, to make this happen. Rev Swamiji's appeal had a telling effect – as was evident later.





Thousands of people from Pavagada thronged Bangalore in a show of solidarity before the Chief Minister

Swami Japanandaji interacts with the media at the Chief Minister's residence.

When the State Budget for 2015-16 was presented a week later, on the 13th of March, the promise had indeed been kept! **A massive and ambitious project to bring the Tungabhadra waters from Bellary district, down to Tumkur District, through a huge pipeline, was announced, supplying water to the parched towns of Kudlagi, Molakalmuru, Challakere and Pavagada, at a cost of Rs. 1400 crores.** The drinking water project also has the provision to be turned into an irrigation project, subsequently.

After this announcement was made, the Pavagada people's delegation again met the honorable CM, to thank him and to know the modalities of the project. At the CM's behest, a meeting of the delegates lead by Swami Japanandaji with the Chief Engineer (Irrigation) was arranged. It proved to be a very fruitful meeting, with the chief engineer handing over the official plan of action wherein it is specified that the project shall be completed in three year's time. The C.E. also assured that he would personally ensure the timely progress and completion of the project.



Rev. Swamiji speaks up before the Chief Minister Sri Siddaramaiah

Further details on the project have indicated the government's resolve to fast track this project. Work is proposed to be begun at both ends of the pipeline, and adequate amounts are being sanctioned.

For all of us, devotees and followers of the Holy Trinity, here is a satisfying feature, which was also an important precondition laid by Japanandaji: To commemorate Vivekananda's role in the whole project that would benefit millions of poor peasants for eons to come, this project is to be named after Swami Vivekananda, the great son of the motherland.

Naturally, the entire Pavagada Taluk is ecstatic and grateful, crediting Team Vivekananda headed by Swami Japanandaji for this historic success. For us, however, the gratification lies in completing another mission in the name of Swamiji, and spreading the glory of the Holy Trinity.

Swamiji's Majestic Statue Comes Up at Yashwanthpur : Another Landmark for Bengaluru

When the SVPPS Trust under the Chairmanship of Swami Japanandaji succeeded in installing a very impressive statue of Swami Vivekananda in front of the Ramakrishna Math, Basavanagudi, Bengaluru in 2009, and turned it into a landmark, it was hailed as a tremendous achievement against many odds. Although the statue installation was considered a task complete by itself, the Samithi has continually hosted activities to see that Swamiji's words keep the youth motivated.

Six years later, the Trust has repeated its glorious success by erecting another magnificent statue of Swamiji at an important entrance point to the Capital





City — in Yashwanthpur, on the Tumkur Road. Swami Vivekananda stands here in the Chicago pose, inspiring patriotic and devotional fervour in the numerous men and women who catch his glimpse. This statue was unveiled on 12th January, 2015, the National Youth Day.

This major project was commissioned with the close association of the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike, which readily acceded to Swami Japanandaji's proposal on behalf of the Samithi. Dr. C N Ashwathnarayana, the Malleshwaram MLA, played a pivotal role in the entire project, procuring full official support, and ensured that it was completed smoothly.

The nine & half feet tall bronze statue was made to order by the famous sculptors Pal & Co of Kolkatta, under the directions and supervision of Swami Japanandaji, at a cost of Rs. 10 lakhs, while the whole project including the infrastructure cost about Rs. 50 lakhs. On the occasion, the spot of the statue was renamed as Swami Vivekananda Junction.

BBMP had organized a grand function to celebrate the event, involving several important leaders and officials, requesting Swami Japanandaji to lend his holy presence. Sri DV Sadananda Gowda, the hon'ble Central minister for Law & Justice,



inaugurated the function, which Dr. Ashwathnarayana presided over. Sri Ananth Kumar, hon'ble minister for Chemicals & Fertilizers, lighted the lamp. Among the chief guests were Sri Ramalinga Reddy, hon'ble minister for Transport, Smt. N. Shantha Kumari, the hon'ble Mayor of BBMP, and Sri S. Suresh Kumar, former minister and MLA, Rajajinagar. Also present were Sri K. Ranganna, deputy mayor BBMP, Smt. Shashikala Krishnegowda, corporator, Subramanya Nagara, Sri Lakshminarayana, IAS, Commissioner, BBMP, and Sri Lakshminarasiah, Jt. Commissioner (W), BBMP as well as other officials and representatives. A youth rally was also organized on the occasion, with thousands of college students taking part, that converged at the venue.

Rev Swami Japanandaji in his introductory speech focused on his passionate theme of Swamiji's call to the youth, giving a rousing call to adopt his teachings to build a strong nation. He described how Swamiji's words have great relevance for today's times.

Songs rendered by the Vivekahamsa team created the right background for the occasion.

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