

# The Story of Vivekananda Rock Memorial

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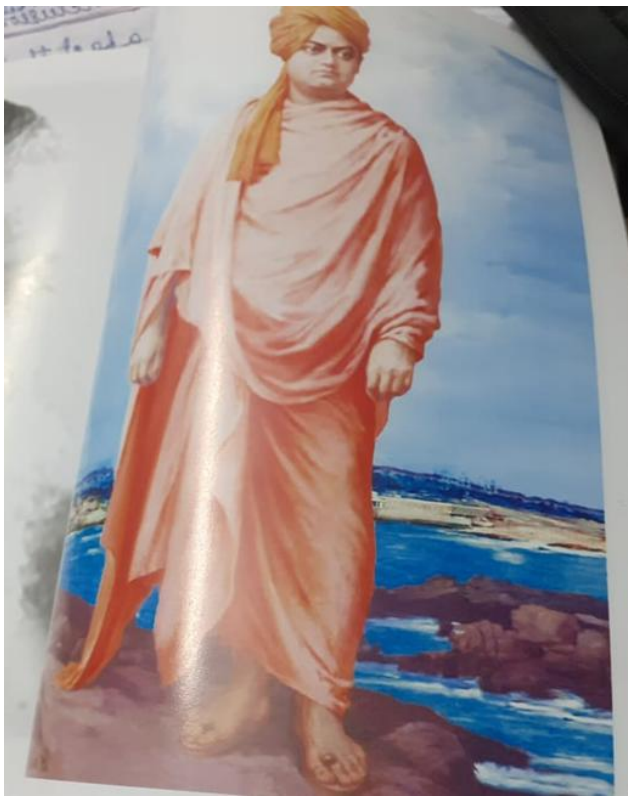
**Abstract:** Swami Vivekananda, with intense love in his heart for the motherland undertook wanderings all over India. He came to Kanya Kumari and sat on 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> December, 1982 on the mid-sea rock meditating on India's past, present and future. It was on this Rock that he discovered the mission for Glorious India and later shook the world by India's spirituality. On this sanctified place Mananecya Sri Eknath ji Ranade, with the participation of millions of people in India constructed in Vivekananda Rock Memorial which symbolizes the Glorious Mission of India as seen by Swami Vivekananda in his Meditation. Millions of people visit the monument of Kanya Kumari and the permanent Exhibitions "Arise Awake". The wandering Monk and Gangotri are based on the life and message of Swami Vivekananda.

**Keywords:** Glorious mission, Rock Memorial, Arise Awake, Kanya Kumari, Monk, Gangotri.

## Research Methods

Research Methods are well claimed by claims and counter claims in the article.

## Vivekananda Kendra



## Swamiji on the Rock Memorial

Eknathji Ranade founded Vivekananda Kendra, a "spirituality oriented service Mission" to translate Swami Vivekananda mission of glorious India into action. Vivekananda Kendra called upon those youth to be the life workers and dedicate their life in the service of the nation.

For actualizing this vision, the Kendra has over 1005 Branch Centre and service projects spread over 25 states and three Union Territories of India to work for all sections of the society to rebuild the nation. To achieve this, Life workers and the local workers of the Kendra, carry out various service activities through yoga, organizing youth and Women, Rural Development, Education, Development of

Natural Resources, and Publications based on the life and message of Swami Vivekananda. The Kendra urges all to join in the task of national regeneration.

The famous Vivekananda Rock Memorial at Kanya Kumari was inaugurated the year 1970. Marking the 25<sup>th</sup> year of the event, in 1995, the first edition of the book was released. Considering the intrinsic value of the book, the need to preserve the true story for the posterity and the increasing demand for it, a revised edition of the book has been brought out with several multi-coloured plates.

Given below are the excerpts from the reviews of the first edition of the book.

The book depicts Eknathji plan and its meticulous execution. There had been obstacles from unexpected quarters but Eknathji put in Herculean task to surmount them. In his struggle he demonstrated that every strategy of the opponent has a counter strategy and every weapon has a counter weapon and that no obstacle is insurmountable for a man of determination.

Tattva Loka, June/July 1996 – 1.

"The Vivekananda Memorial as it stands today, is as much a memorial to Swamiji as to Sri Eknath Ranade who devotion to the work he had undertaken was inspired not by mere faith but by intellectual conviction. His work necessarily involved much physical exertion, but much more in demand were his gift of intellectual persuasion, preservation and fact.

Bhavan's Journal, Nov 30, 1995 – 2.

## Teething's Troubles The Beginnings

In January 1962, the people of Kanya Kumari thought that as Swamiji's birth century was being celebrated, it would in the fitness of things if they put up some memorial on the rock where he meditated and discovered the mission of his life. That was the wish of all those who visited Kanya Kumari and saw the Vivekananda Rock. It occurred naturally to everybody that there must be access to the place especially as it was known as "Sripada Parai" where goddess Kanya Kumari meditated, did her Sadhana to obtain the hand of Lord Shiva as they also could go and sit at the sacred spot.

The desire of almost everybody who visited Kanya Kumari being the same, that there would be a memorial, the people of Kanya Kumari being very near this Rock thought they should take a lead in the matter, and informal talks begin. Some people in Kanya Kumari come together, Sri Velayudhan Pillai, President of Haindava Seva Sangh, took the lead, and he with some others, thought of forming a committee for the purpose, Sri Parmeshvaran Pillai, one of our whole timers, Shri S. Venkataraman in charge, public relations and Sri S. P. Pandian Nadar, founder of the Vivekananda College Agasteeswaram, were the persons associated with the Kanya Kumari committee. They came together and thought "Let us have a memorial and also put up pedestrian bridge so that people can commute across" 3. As that time they could not define what sort of memorial would be fitting. All they thought of was a memorial and access to the rock.

Almost simultaneously, there was a public meeting at Madras with a lead by the Ramkrishna Mission. Swami Shuddha Satananda was then in charge of the Ram Krishna Mission. They also thought on the same lines as the people from Kanya Kumari District. Thus, at the same time, identical thoughts entered the minds of the people of Madras and of Kanya Kumari you may be knowing Swami Chidbhavanda. He is intimately associated with our work and he will be visiting our camps and you will have the benefit of hearing a series of his discourses on various subjects. He is an old associate of Ram Krishna Mission, though now a days he has no official connections with it. He has his own mission in Tiruchirapalli and has done a laudable work in the south. He has written a number of books on the Gita, the Upanishads etc. He was also present at the meeting.

#### **Abstract / Observation**

#### **Some Divergent Views**

When the committee members at Kanya Kumari and the people of Madras joined together, news spread that some memorial on the Vivekananda Rock was being contemplated. A section of the people in Madras joined together, news spread that some memorial on the Vivekananda Rock was being contemplated. A section of the Catholics at Kanya Kumari did not take kindly to the contemplated scheme and thought something should be done to thwart in you may be knowing that in Kanya Kumari there is quite a sizeable population of Christian fisherman. They are all Catholics. Ofcourse, they were Hindus earlier, 400 years ago. But they claim that St. Xavier converted their ancestors when he went there. So, when the whole atmosphere was surcharged with the idea of a memorial, under the instigation of a local priest who was a bit of a fanatic, a section of the Catholics put up a Rock with a big cross which was visible from the shore and even from a greater distance. This was in April, perhaps on the 4<sup>th</sup>. Of course it had its natural repercussions. The people here immediately convened protest meetings and sent telegrams to the collector, the Chief Minister, the President and to the Prime Minister that this Rock where the Sripadam is printed, is a place of worship for Hindus and putting up a cross here was a trespass.

At that time, the Kanya Kumari temple Devaswom claimed that the Rock was its property because of the Sripadam impressed on it. Perhaps long age, the Rock was a part of the mainland. If Goddess Kanya Kumari did her Sadhana on the Rock there must have been a connection between the temple and the Rock. On the basis of this legend the Devaswom staked its claim. The Kanya Kumari District Committee was formally formed in August with Sri Velayudham Pillai as the President, and Shri Venkataraman as Secretaries. The first thing that it did was to apply on 19.08.1962 to the Dewaswom Board for permission to put up a memorial on the Rock and to have a pedestrian bridge joining the mainland to the Rock. It also sought permission to start a free boat service till a bridge was built so that all who wanted to go to the Rock by it. Now there is a first class ferry service. At that time there was no ferry service. If anyone wishes to go to the Rock he had to go by a catamaran made up of three wooden logs tied together. It was not a safe and convenient boat, and only a few people could go by it.

#### **The Tablet Installation Issue 4**

With the Government permission a tablet was installed on the Rock on 17<sup>th</sup> January, 1963. Sri Mannath Padmanavan came all the way from Kerala and there was a big function, procession and public meeting and a number of people spoke on that day. But in that meeting itself some people said that this sort of tablet alone would not suffice and there should be a statue and they had therefore, their own plans about the memorial. And they gave vent to their feelings in that public meeting. In February, 1963 the General body of the All India Committee at Madras. In that General body, were Swami Chinmayananda Guruji Golwakar, Sri Manmath Padmanabhan and also a number of notable persons like Dr. T. T. Mahadevan. After the Committee meeting, there was a public meeting and all in one voice demanded that there should be a fully fledged memorial on the Rock and not just a tablet put up there and the memorial on the shore as suggested. In that meeting, Swami Chinmayananda made the first donation of Rs. 10,000/- from Chinmay Mission. By and by, a number of important persons came to be intimately connected with the work. Now it became a bit difficult.

In the meantime, to wreck vengeance on the people particular incident for removal of the cross some of the Catholics decided that the tablet also should be removed. One fine monsoon morning (16.5.1963) when the sea was rough and our boats could not ply, they demolished the tablet and threw it into the sea. Still it is untraceable. Naturally, there was a great row and agitation, procession and telegrams etc.

#### **Stalwarts Involved 5**

Eknath Ranade became the organizing secretary of the Vivekananda Rock Memorial committee on 11<sup>th</sup> August, 1963. At that time Professor P. Mahadevan was the secretary and Mannath Padmanabhan was the President and Shri R. Sankaran was the joint Secretary. Professor Mahadevan said, come on, or if you want some place in the organization, you become the secretary, I said, No, No, I don't want to become a Secretary. In the constitution there was no place for Additional Secretary besides the Secretary Assistant

Secretary and joint Secretary. Then what to do ? I do not want that any one should be replaced by me. So at that time Sri V. Rajagopal Achari, one of the advocates said that we should change the constitution and can have an Additional Secretary. So the post of an organizing secretary was created and I was co-opted as an organizing secretary, in the working committee in August, 1963.

I began to meet all the press people personally, I met and befriended all the correspondents all the journalists all the editors of the Ananda Bazar Patrika Jugantar, Hindustan Standard the statesman and all other papers there. After having prepared the field, I addressed a crowded press conference on 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 1963 in the office premises of that International centenary committee. Swamiji had agreed to this. I stated what Sri Humayun Kabir had expressed. The effect was as expected. Ananda Bazar patrika wrote two editorials against Sri Humayun Kabir. Two column headings and three column headings appeared. All the papers condemned Sri Humayun Kabir, Calcutta was his constituency.

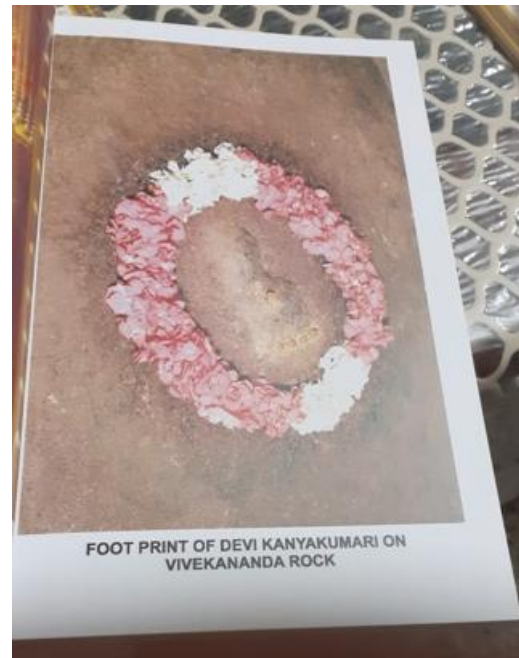
### Summary

From the details furnished above we find that how it took with intense love in his heart for the motherland Vivekananda he undertook wanderings all over India and at last sat on the 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> December, 1982 on the mid sea rock meditating on India's past, present and future. It was on this rock he discovered his mission of glorious India and later shook the world of India spirituality and where millions of people visit the monomer and the permanent exhibitions "Arise, Awake". Through there were many obstructions but at last after taking permission to put up a memorial on the rock and to have a pedestrian bridge joining the mainland to the rock was set up. Many ups and downs were there but nothing could be done to install the same.

### Conclusion

It is a fact that the Vivekananda Rock Memorial does exist at Kanya Kumari where Vivekananda sat in the mid sea meditating on India's past, present and future and later shook the world by India's spirituality millions of people visit the Rock memorial. Where I had been personally and offered Puja etc and saw the Library where books written by Vivekananda were kept. At a distance a Malarlam's poet's memorial also exist where too, I had been The sight of the ocean was wonderful to see. A free service tourist car was always at the service. But only one thing struck my mind that Kanya Kumari is a place in the ocean how can there be the imprint of the foot of Goddess Kanya Kumari. When did she alight there from the heavens is not known to anyone.

The foot print 7 is given below:



### Foot print of Goddess Kanya Kumari

Also people who visit the Airabat mountain at Sri Lanka have found the foot print of Sita where Hanuman left her for Safety reasons. It is bedecked with fresh flowers every day kept by the visitors. After that if the epic is to be believed then it can be stated as in the Ramayan that the whole place was destroyed by Ram. One thing looks funny that if Hanuman kept Sita there why Hanuman's foot prints are not there.

These are all religious beliefs but it also cannot also be denied. Foot prints of Sita at Sri Lanka could not be procured.

### References

- [1] Tattva Loke – June, July 1996
- [2] Bhavan's journal Nov. 20, 1995
- [3] Pedestrian Bridge
- [4] The Tablet Installation Issue
- [5] Stalwarts Involved.
- [6] Organizing working Secretary in the working Committee 1963.
- [7] Foot Prints of Goddess Kanya Kumari