

[Three-Nation World Tour Stresses Hindu Identity](#)

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In Mauritius they acclaimed the tall, graceful spiritual leader as the return of famed Swami Vivekananda, whose vivid pronouncements catapulted Hinduism to new international heights in the last decade of the 19th century. In India he was received as the 20th century equivalent of saint Tirujnana Sambhandar who aroused South Indian Hindus more than a millenium ago. In Sri Lanka he was lauded as the equal of Arumuga Navalar who single-handedly turned the tide of Hindu history in that country a hundred years ago. The man for whom all these praises were given, white-bearded and dressed in the bright saffron robes of the Hindu swami, modestly told his audiences that he was but one of them, a Saivite, a devotee of the great God Siva, and he then urged them to learn of the greatness of the world's oldest religion and to "return to Siva's Holy Feet."

Gurudeva, Sivaya Subramuniaswami, the Guru Mahasannidhanam of Kauai Aadheenam, America's only Saivite monastery/temple complex, traveled in February and March to Mauritius, India and Sri Lanka on a World Tour that was over a year in the planning stages. Wherever they gathered to hear the American Sat Guru - in temples, schools, ashrams or town halls - he sat cross-legged, flanked by two sannyasin disciples who traveled with him and by his translators. In all, he addressed more than 400,000 people, mostly Hindus, bringing them an age-old message. That message was about love and tolerance, about courage in the face of difficulties, about pride in the Hindu heritage, about putting into practice the mystical, meditative and ceremonial dimensions of the Hindu path. In sum, he simply asked Hindus everywhere to be good Hindus, honest Hindus, faithful Hindus and warned them of the grave consequences of forsaking their religion, which, he emphasized, would bring about the destruction not only matters spiritual, but of their language, their customs, their strong family bonds and more.

On February 9th Gurudeva flew from Bombay to Mauritius, where he was the guest of the Saiva Siddhanta Mandram. For the next four weeks he was taken daily in a chauffeur-driven car, generously provided by the nation's government, to several towns each day. He joined in the Sivaratri celebrations, pilgrimaged along with 300,000 Hindus a sacred lake to bathe a Sivalingam and appeared 3 times on

television. All of Gurudeva's talks were translated into French, the official language of the country.

On February 21st the traveling Sat guru flew back to Bombay and a few days later returned to Madras. In South India's capital the American master was invited to speak before several august institutions, including the C.P. Ramasamy Aiyer Institute, the Philosophy Department of the University of Madras and Nirvan. At the prestigious Yogasana Alayam he formally laid the foundation stone for their new building.

Colombo was the peripatetic swami's next stop, and arrived on March 2nd, fulfilling a plan several years in the making, and made possible through the colossal efforts of hundreds of Sri Lankans under the able direction of Amachar, Rev. Dr. S. Sanmugasundaran. That evening he joined the President of Sri Lanka, His Excellency J.R. Jayewardene, and others on the occasion of a special homam held in a Muruga temple.

Several hundred miles to the north is Jaffna, where Gurudeva has an ashram since 1949. On March 4th arrived there and began a productive and active few weeks, once again visiting literally hundreds of temple, institutions and holy sites. He spent a very special day in Kilinochi, hosted by the Mahadevan Ashram and Kilinochi Gurukulam. In Jaffna he was greeted by the mayor and city fathers, addressed the town from Virasingam Hall, met with the faculties and student bodies of several large Hindu schools, conducted a marriage on Sivaratri night and gave uplifting discourses to tens of thousands at local temples. It was a grand and eventful sojourn.

From Jaffna Gurudeva traveled north to the central highlands of Sri Lanka, the tea estates, spending a couple of days in Kandy and Hatton. Thence, his journey took him east to Batticaloa, the main community on Sri Lanka's eastern seaboard. It was here that he learned of many difficulties facing Hindus due to the aggressive conversion tactics of the Christians, which are so successful that over 50% of Batticaloa, once a Tamil Saivite stronghold, is now Christian. his address at the Batticaloa Town Hall covering these problems is reported on in detail on page nine of this issue.

A few days south of Batticaloa as far as Pottuvil, and the group returned to Colombo, from where he returned to Hawaii on March 24 via Japan. Throughout the journey, the American swami was adamant that the Saivites of the world must now come forward in service to their brothers and sisters, that they must worship Siva as their Supreme God, and not compromise their faith with modern trends which embrace Vishnu, Krishna, Jesus or Ayyappan. Again and again his refrain aroused new devotion among the Hindus: "Worship Siva. Love Siva. Think Siva Serve Siva. Return to the Holy Feet of Siva."