



## FOMSO Affiliate Visit to Ceylonese Association Muar (CAM)

(Persatuan Kaum Ceylon Muar)  
03-10-2011

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October 2011, FOMSO members comprising Deputy President Mr Gnanarajah, Vice President Mr Satgunarajah, Chairperson-Women's Welfare Madam Sarojini, myself - Networking Chairman, my wife Ms Thana, and a friend of FOMSO Dr Thillagavathy left for Muar to visit our affiliate members in a rather enlightening and holy manner.

We left Kuala Lumpur at around 5.00 pm and arrived in Muar at around 7.15 pm. Our President Dato Kulasegaran, though he could not accompany us as he was in the United States, was kind enough to offer his MPV along with his driver for the this trip.

In the past, FOMSO President Dato S Kulasegaran proposed a few dates to visit CAM, but somehow it did not materialise as the dates proposed were not convenient to them to receive us, but this time we were invited



officially by President Mr Jayasingam of CAM for their temple's yearly Navarathri Prayers at the Sri Maha Muthu Mariamman Temple (Muar). He is also the Deputy President of the temple.

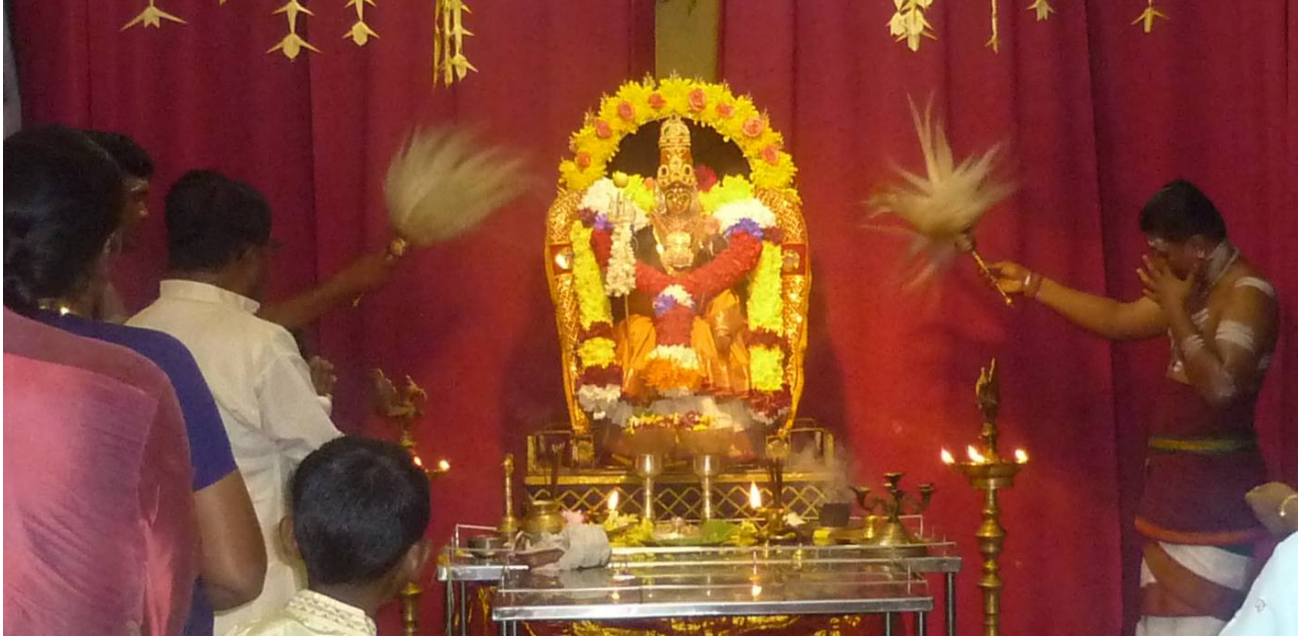
Navarathri Prayers goes on for 9 days, and one of the days is allocated for the Ceylonese community known as the "Ceylonese Ubayam". Mr Jayasingam is also the Chairman of the Ceylonese Ubayam Committee. I was glad to note that they had a lighted signage made out of premium quality to display the same (permanent type).







Please allow me to give you a little insight on how the Ubayam is being conducted there:- It's a whole day affair, prayers begin early in the morning with a Homa being performed. The lady committee members and their family members gather at the temple to make Mothaham, they make about 1000 mothahams to be given to the devotees throughout the day. They prepare the stuffing's and hand roll them with passion in the temple premises, this has been their tradition all throughout the temple history which dates back to about 80 years or so.



Apart from making these mothahams, they serve breakfast for about 350 to 400 devotees who will be present for the morning prayers. The Abishegam is conducted at around 10.00 am and followed by a Pooja at around noon and followed by lunch offered to the devotees present.





In the evening, the prayers begin at around 5 pm starting with a Abishegam and followed by Pooja at around 7.30 pm. We arrived just in time to witness this part of the ceremony. Mr Jayasingam, his wife and his committee members greeted and welcomed us upon arrival.

The Pooja began moments after we arrived; it was a grand affair I must say. There were close to about 400 devotees present when we arrived and later it have increased. Soon as the Pooja was over, they brought out the deity for an “oorvallam” (procession) within the temple compound.



The temple is built in such a way that the procession be carried out within the temple; there were ample space for the procession to go around. This is when I looked up to see what happens if it rains! Well, all eventualities have been taken into account! They have covered the entire temple in such a way that the devotees will be at ease be it rain or shine.

Mr Gnanarajah had a pleasant surprise, his sister from KL was there with her daughter and grandson attending the prayers; He was overwhelmed in seeing them there as he least expected them to be there, he was carrying the cute little boy whenever possible.

When I had a light moment with Mr. Jayasingam, I complemented on the superb upkeep of the temple to him. This is when he modestly mentioned, that ever since he got involved in the temple management, he brought numerous changes to the then depleted condition of temple, and he carried out numerous fund raising and brought about many changes uplifting the temple's facilities and upkeep of the temple in general.



Coming back to the prayers, soon as the procession was over, they brought back the deity to its original place and the prayers came to an end followed by the recognition for the Ceylonese Ubayam Committee by the temple management.

Mr Jayasingam and his wife were honoured by the temple President by way of tying a “Pattu” on the head, followed by a “Ponnadai” (unfurling of a piece of rich silk material) and followed by Garlanding. (Garlanding is an integral part of our tradition).



Mr. Gnanarajah was honoured by Mr. Jayasingam in a similar fashion, this is the highest form of honour bestowed in a temple for a respectful or an important person in the community in any Hindu temple around the globe.

Mr. Jayasingam went on to invite all of us from FOMSO and got the chief priest of the temple to offer us special blessings and presented us with an “Archanai” (a half coconut filled with betel leaf and sliced betel nuts bananas and flowers inside it) which has been blessed.

Soon after this ceremony was over, we were in a rush to head back home as it was already close to 9.00 pm by then, but Mr Jayasingam insisted that we have dinner in the temple with him before we depart.

We obliged and it was truly marvelous and never to regret. It was a simple dinner, but food cooked with love and passion, we had a fantastic vegetarian meal in the temple. All of us over indulged ourselves!!! As the food was lip smacking good!

Mr Jayasingam was sitting next to me during dinner, I managed to get more insight on how this prayers were funded, he said the cost for the whole



days event is around RM 6000.00 + -, and he said the members of CAM collect the funds from family and friends and the rest is subsidised by CAM.



He added by saying that the Ceylonese community in Muar are so united that year in year out they are more than willing to come forward and assist in this event in all areas from the beginning to the end, and he praised the women folks who usually go out of their way to get things done.

Soon after dinner, which was around 9.30 pm, we left Muar and arrived in Kuala Lumpur at around midnight. We had a pleasant experience visiting an affiliate in a different fashion but it was a memorable one.

Mr. Jayasingam, his wife and their committee members thanked us for being there with them on an auspicious day more so a day that they look forward to year in year out. They were so happy that we took the trouble to be there with them. Mr. Jayasingam said he would invite us for this event every year from here on.

