

# KALANITHI PONRAJAH ANANDARAJAH 1935-2018

By  
**Agnes Padmini Francis Thambynayagam**

"All the world's a stage; all the men and women merely players; they have their exits and their entrances; one man in his time plays many parts" William Shakespeare

Kalanithi Nadaha Kalai Chelvan P A C Anandarajah was a Teacher, Principal, Writer, Poet, Actor and a Social Worker. He was the beloved husband of Devamani (teacher), adored father of Niranjana, Pratheepan,

Suky and the cherished grandfather of his grandchildren. He was the treasured brother to his only sister Anandarane. Anandarajah was born at Manipay Memorial Green Hospital, Northern Sri Lanka on 21 March 1935 to my mother's brother Vanderkoen Ponrajah of Rambaikulam, Vavuniya and Pakiam of Karampon, Kayts, (a relative of

Thaninayagam Adigal.) My cousin whom I lovingly called Anandarajah Machchan passed away peacefully on June 4, 2018.

Anandarajah began his education at St Thomas, Mt Lavana while his father Vanderkoen Ponrajah worked for the British Civil Service in Colombo. During World War II, the family moved to their home in Rambaikulam, Vavuniya where his sister Anandarane was born. Rambaikulam had been the home for Vanderkoen family since early nineteenth century after Van Goens junior's youngest great great grandson Manuel, who was well known as 'Pariyari Vidanaiyar' (meaning Physician and Village Headman), settled there from Mantai, Mannar with his wife. Anandarajah, a great great grandson of Pariyari Vidanaiyar of Rambaikulam, continued his primary schooling at Holy Family Convent (a mixed primary school), in the premises of St Anthony's Church in Rambaikulam, Vavunia. Anandarajah attended many schools for his secondary education. He studied at St Aloysius College, Galle; St Michael's College, Batticaloa; and St. Joseph's College,

Anuradhapura while his father moved around working for the civil service. After leaving school Anandarajah took position in a bank as a cashier and then secretariat in Anuradhapura.

Anandarajah showed much interest in acting and writing plays like his grandfather Saverimuthu Mudaliyar Vanderkoen who staged many plays with his relatives at Rambaikulam, Vavunia. But his father Ponrajah sent his son to Stella Maris College, Madras (Chennai) to pursue a degree in Science. Anandarajah spent his College life in Madras

between 1958 and 1962. After graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree with honors in Bio Science, Anandarajah continued to learn Social Science and Theater art to obtain a diploma in Social Science. Anandarajah took the teaching post as a Science teacher at St Henry's College, Illavalai, Northern Sri Lanka in 1963. At St Henry's he actively staged passion play and Shakespeare's plays. During that time he married his beloved wife Devamani, a teacher at Holy Family Convent, Illavalai. Devamani's father Devasahayam Master was a Principal and mother Kunamani was a teacher. Anandarajah master and Devamani teacher were blessed with two daughters and a son. In 1969 Anandarajah was selected to do post graduate studies in Education at the University of Peradeniya. Having completed postgraduate studies, he became the Principal of Palaly Catholic School and later, Principal at

St John's School, Periya Vilan in Jaffna district.

During war times in Jaffna, in 1988, Anandarajah took counseling training at the University of Jaffna and at the University of Netherlands. Prof Thurairajah, Vice Chancellor of Jaffna University and Her Highness

Ambassador, Netherlands awarded him the certification when he completed his counseling training. In 1990, he took early retirement from teaching and became the Clinical Director for 'Shanthiyaham,' an association that dealt with war victims for health and counseling in Jaffna. Anandarajah Master enjoyed every minute of the time he spent in counseling. Counseling was his vocation; he loved what he did-- it was the peak of his career.

In 1995, Anandarajah family became a statistics of the spoils-of-war.

During the horrendous exodus of the population caused by the gruesome war in Jaffna, Anandarajah family lost all their possessions. Destitute, they moved back to their home in Rambaikulam, Vavuniya to start life again. In Vavuniya, Anandarajah Master and his wife Devamani teacher plunged into humanitarian work for the NGO (Non Governmental Organization). They provided counseling for the destitute and tormented. On March 8, 1999, Devamani teacher received the 'Women's Day' award for her services in the welfare camps from Honorable President Chandrika Kumaratunga at Badulla.

Anandarajah Master was sent to do stint of Training on Torture at Copenhagen-Denmark in 1990. He came back and joined the first full time training project in Vavuniya on International war Trauma-Psychosocial Support (I.W.T.P.S.). Between 2000 and 2002 he went to Netherlands to study Trauma Counseling. After 2002, while counseling, Anandarajah Master dedicated more time writing and staging plays in Vavuniya. For displaced people acting and watching plays became therapy; people were happy in getting involved in acting.

Anandarajah master published five books in Tamil language and three books in English language in the field of counseling and theater. The Publication & Patronage of books came under the Purview of the Vavuniya Hindu Board—Art Circle. The board conferred Anandarajah Master with the title "Nadaha Kalai Chelvan" for his work in the field of Theatre in 2011. Prof. S Rajadurai, Dean of the Jaffna University, Vavuniya Campus and President of "Thamil Mani" Ahalangan, honored him as Nadaha Kalai Chelvan. The Department of Education and Psychosocial sectors honored Anandarajah Master with the title 'Kalanithy' (Doctor) for his services in 2012. Kalanithy and Nadaha Kalai Chelvan Anandarajah Master continued his volunteer services in Vavuniya, Sri Lanka until his time arrived for him to leave this world. Anandarajah Master's legacy will remain in the hearts of many who cherish

## BOOKS PUBLISHED BY KALANITHI P A C ANANDARAJAH MASTER

- 1) Communication Skills in Counseling (Tamil)
- 2) Collection of short stories & essays (Tamil)
- 3) Collection of Dramas in Tamil (Plays that were Written, Directed & Staged by Anandarajah Master)
- 4) Me to Us: "Namaku Naam" (Tamil) (Essays on Counseling)
- 5) The Dawn of A New song (Tamil)
- 6) Training Manuel for Teachers on Child Care (English)



**1) Anandarajah Master with his wife Devamani**  
**2) Mr & Mrs Anandarajah with Agnes Thambynayagam**  
**Teacher at Rambaikulam, Vavunia in 2012 (behind: security guard and Red Cross driver)**