

On 25th July 1896 Swamiji wrote to Mrs. Ole Bull from Saas-Grund, an Alpine village in Switzerland: "I want to forget the world entirely at least for the next two months and practise hard. That is my rest. . . The mountains and snow have a beautifully quieting influence on me, and I am getting better sleep here than for a long time."



In 1896 Swamiji arrived in Switzerland to take rest. Three of his disciples accompanied Swamiji during the trip. He was not giving lectures in Switzerland, instead was travelling around for seven weeks, living at different places: Geneva, Montreux, Lucerne, Zermatt, Saas-Grund and Saas-Fee, etc. He stayed 14 days at Grand Hotel (now is called as Hotel Metropol) in the last-named Alpine resort.



Last year on the 30th of August a bust of Swamiji was unveiled at Saas-Fee as part of the celebrations for the 150th birthday of Swamiji at the initiative of Swami Amaranandaji Maharaj of Centre Vedantique of Geneva; a commemorative granite plaque was also put on Hotel Metropol with the support of the Indian Embassy in Bern.

This year again a ceremony was organised by Amaranandaji at Saas-Fee on 30th August to remember Swamiji's stay there. The celebration started on the afternoon of Saturday, the 30th August, with a procession from the bus terminal at Saas-Fee to a small road-side chapel, dedicated to Mother Mary, singing some hymns, and chanting the names of Sri Ramakrishna and Swamiji.

The chapel is linked with a memorable event in Swamiji's life. One day, he was walking alone in the vicinity of this church, and narrowly escaped the jaws of death; he slipped and was about to fall in a gorge. While running back to his

disciples to report what had happened, he picked some wild flowers from the road side. On his behalf, Mrs. Sevier offered them to Mother Mary. Swamiji told his disciples that it was the Divine Mother who had saved his life that day. On 30th August this year, the participants offered some flowers to the Mother Mary in the said church. The song "Nahi surya nahi jyoti" was sung. In the leading singer group, five persons were there: Mrs. Bijayashree Samal, Mrs. Rama Jonnalgedda, Mr. Venkat Ramanan, Mr. Bimal Dey and Mrs. Devi Dey. After that the group went for a short meditation inside the chapel.



Next, the procession headed towards the bust of Swamiji located at a higher level. There was the chanting of Vivekananda-related hymns. A short description of the background of the ceremony was given by Mr. Ardhendu Ganguli. The participants regretted that Mrs. Ganguli, the director of the ceremony, could not be physically present. A functionary of the local tourism office also expressed happiness to be a part of the programme. At the end of the ceremony, a participant read a few pages from *Sri Ramakrishna The Great Master*.