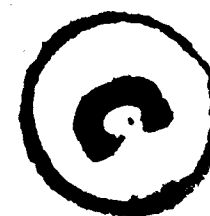


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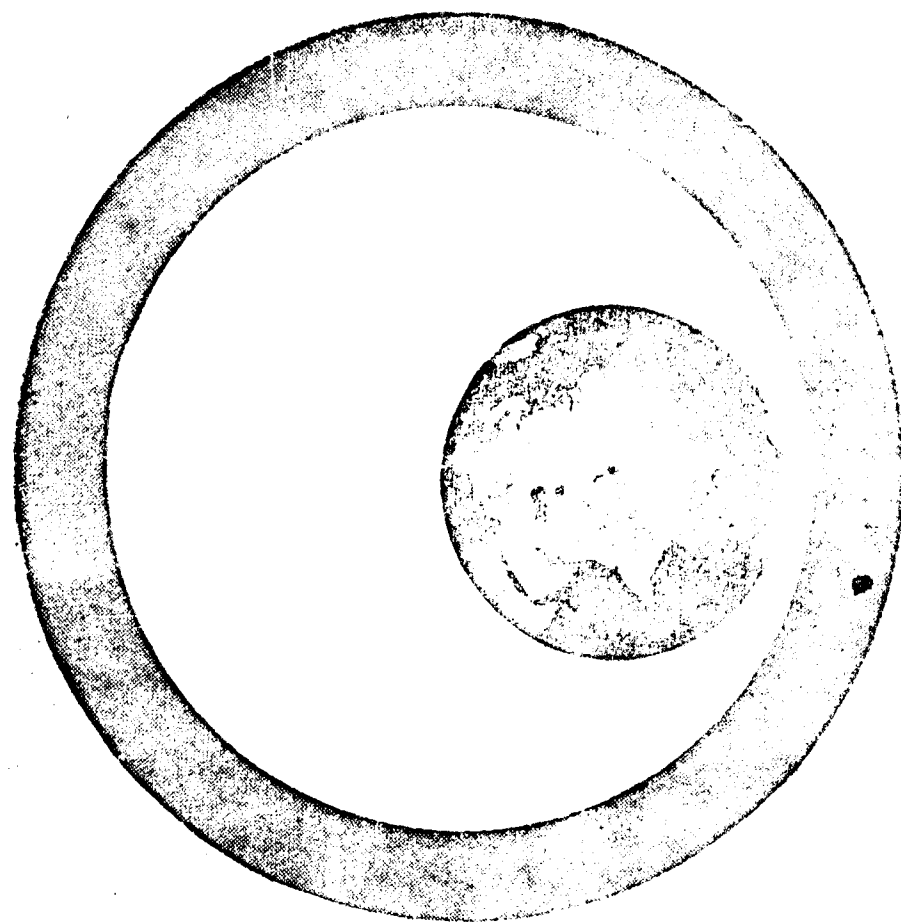
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The month of January revives memories of Mahatma Gandhi. His work in the closing years of his life constituted a classic affirmation of all that he lived for and taught. Armed with nothing but his faith in God, he went to Noakhali in East Bengal (now Bangladesh) with an inflexible will to redeem man from fear on one side and from bestiality on the other. He walked barefoot bringing hope to the forlorn and imparting courage to those cowering in the face of organised communal violence. He planted his followers in places ravaged by arson, murder, loot, rape and forced conversion and made them face and deal with men seething with hatred and lust....

please see page 5



The world had nothing before it got zero

India introduced the concept. The Sanskrit name for the figure was *Sunya* meaning void. India was the first to use it in the modern form. The earliest inscription dates back to 800 A.D. But there is evidence in Indian scriptures that the zero was used centuries before.

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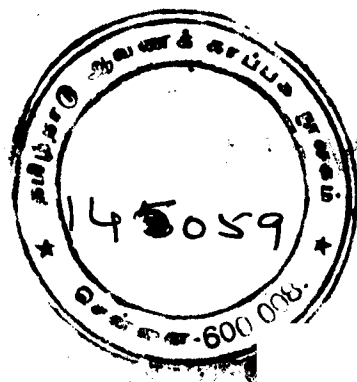
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Readers Write

Some People In Some Situations

Sir,

Radhakrishnan has concluded his labours. How I wish he had dragged on—it was such interesting reading. Jayakanthan's novel is no doubt a long one; but nobody would have felt its length. What a picture of contemporary Tamil society does it portray and with what a ring of authenticity! All praise to Radhakrishnan who has brought out the spirit of the original in his translation.

Gudiyattam

V. R. S. Sekhar

Sir,

I have read Jayakanthan's "Some people in some situations" in Tamil as also its English translation by R. Radhakrishnan. It is an excellent translation of an excellent novel.

Villupuram

V. S. Srinivasan

Sir,

I wish some well-known publisher brought out R. Radhakrishnan's translation

of Jayakanthan's novel in book form. That will give us an opportunity to read it through—it was a tantalisingly long wait all these months.

Madras-10

M. Ravi

Sir,

Now that Radhakrishnan has concluded his fine translation of Jayakanthan's novel, I suggest that he be requested to give us translations of some of the best short stories published in Tamil so far.

Madurai.

V. Ranganathan



Sastri on Sapru

Sir,

Whatever Sastri touched, he embellished. The picture of Sapru that emerges from the sketch by Sastri is of a gracious man of great culture, learning and patriotism. The age that produced men like Sastri and Sapru and respected them too has, alas, vanished:

Madras-4

An old Times

The Indian Review

THE INDIAN REVIEW

A Monthly Periodical devoted
to the Discussion of
all Topics of interest

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Views expressed by Contributors do not necessarily reflect the
views of the INDIAN REVIEW

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N76.10

Sardar Patel

I very much appreciate your reproducing that vintage article on the Sardar. Mr. Sarma's stately style, his allusions providing an idea of his wide reading, his fair assessment—despite the fact that he belonged to the Tilak school of politics—of the Sardar and his achievement and his hailing Bardoli as providing the key for the solution of agrarian problems in the rest of India—all these indicate that politicians and publicists were once fairer and more decent.

Bangalore.

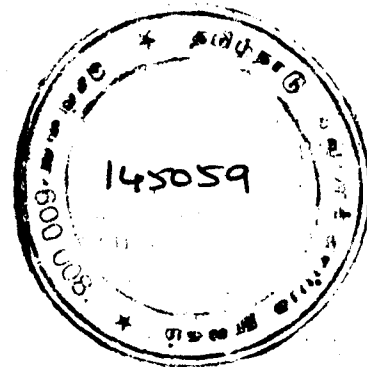
R. Rajagopalan

Off the Cuff

Just a few words on Mr. Padmanabhan's homily to the intellectuals of India. Those who swear by *Vox Populi Vox Dei* do not care for the intellectuals. They need not. They can purchase them when necessary. Those who do not subscribe to the *Vox Populi Vox Dei* theory do not matter. They are a minority and they can be ignored. To be trendy, Mr. Padmanabhan should call on the intellectuals—the still scowling, sulking ones—to get on to the bandwagon and sing the current bhajans, clanging the cymbals hard and loud.

Madras-17

R. Hariharan



The Indian Review

MAHATMA GANDHI

The month of January revives memories of Mahatma Gandhi. His work in the closing years of his life constituted a classic affirmation of all that he lived for and taught. Armed with nothing but his faith in God, he went to Noakhali in East Bengal (now Bangladesh) with an inflexible will to redeem man from fear on one side and from bestiality on the other. He walked barefoot bringing hope to the forlorn and imparting courage to those cowering in the face of organised communal violence. He planted his followers in places ravaged by arson, murder, loot, rape and forced conversion and made them face and deal with men seething with hatred and lust. Sucheta Kripalani, Susheela Nayar, Thakkar Bapa, Pyarelal and others added lustre to this epoch by reflecting the will of the master and radiating the peace, the compassion and the fearlessness that he generated.

It was a task that would have daunted even the Gods. The Congress leadership, then wielding power in the Interim Government at Delhi, was dismayed by the decision of the Mahatma. It was aware of the dangers that the expedition exposed him to and so was very much against his going to Noakhali. The Moslem League was hostile, angry, it

dreaded the success of the mission of this man of God—a fact that would shatter all its hopes and plans. The people of India looked on with trepidation.

All his life he had taught his people to peacefully fight evil entrenched in the soil or emanating from the alien power. He had made them aware of the strength that was sleeping in their consciousness and of the rights they had lost to the foreign government. He made them resist injustice, rebel against slavery. But as dusk was closing in on his life, he was faced with a situation which compelled him to gather all the strength of his will and concentrate it on repairing and revitalising the sadly broken fibre of resistance of the people to oppression, to bestial violence. The one man's indomitable will prevailed. The epic march of this one man across an inferno of inhuman violence is full of stories that would inspire generations. Here are three of them reproduced from that classic, *Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase*, by Pyarelal.

The evening prayer was held at an earlier hour at 4.30 to enable the women who had come to attend the prayer meeting from

January '76

the neighbouring village to return to their homes before dark. Hamiduddin, the Parliamentary Secretary, had in the course of his statement from Calcutta among other things said that the attendance of both Hindus and Muslims in Gandhiji's prayer meetings was dwindling, and one day he would be left without anybody to listen to him at all. Referring to it, Gandhiji remarked that even if that happened it would be no reason for him to give up his mission in despair. He would then roam from village to village, teach the villagers how to clean their tanks and to practise arts and crafts that would enrich their lives. Such labour of love unselfishly undertaken was bound ultimately to overcome all prejudice. "The particular object-lessons which I propose to give you during my tour are how you can keep the village water and yourself clean; what use you can make of the earth, of which your bodies are made; how you can obtain the life-force from the infinite sky over your heads; how you can reinforce your vital-energy from air which surrounds you; and how you can make proper use of sunlight. In other words, I shall try to teach you how we can convert our impoverished country into a land of gold by making right use of the various elements around us."



Even for Noakhali it had been an exceptionally dewy night and the narrow footpath by which Gandhiji was to proceed had been rendered extremely slippery when on the morning of the 19th January he left Badalkot for Atakora. Twice Col. Jiwan Singh accustomed to difficult marches, lost his foothold and rolled over. Everybody enjoyed the fun as his giant figure sprawled at full length on the ground. Laughingly Gandhiji offered him the end of his walking stick to pull himself up the slippery slope!

The footpath was narrow so that the party could walk on it only in single file. All

of a sudden the column came to a dead stop. Gandhiji was removing the excreta from the footpath with the help of some dry leaves! The footpath had again been dirtied by some Muslim urchins.

"Why did you not let me do it? Why do you put us to shame like this?" Manu asked

Gandhiji laughed: "You little know the joy it gives me to do such things."

Lots of village people had stood complacently by while Gandhiji was engaged in cleaning the footpath. Manu felt annoyed. Gandhiji noticed her annoyance. "You will see," he remarked, "from tomorrow they won't let me clean the footpath myself. I have today given them an object-lesson. They now see that scavenging is not derogatory."

"I have no doubt, they will clean the footpath tomorrow," Manu replied. "But suppose they give it up as soon as your back is turned, as very likely they will, what then?"

"I will send you out for inspection. If the path is still dirty, I shall clean it myself. Cleaning up, in the widest sense of the term, is my profession!"



A grand reception awaited Gandhiji at Devipur, the last village to be visited by him in Noakhali district. An equally unforgettable experience was in store for the workers. The route led through the compound of what was once the palatial residence of a rich Hindu landlord but was now a total wreck, a grim remainder of recent happenings. Emerging from it, the path zig-zagged along the lazily meandering Dakatia river. The woods on either side were in full bloom and resonant with the notes of chirping birds, the

fresh morning air was heavily laden with the wild wood scent. Buried deep in the dark green foliage was Gandhiji's hut, looking the picture of beauty and peace. But it brought him no peace.

The village and its approaches had been decorated with flags, buntings, streamers and garlands of yarn intertwined with silver thread. It jarred on Gandhiji. As soon as his weekly silence was over, he sent for the principal worker. Where did they find all that? he asked. Surely it could not be from the village! The poor worker tried to explain. Their village had the good fortune to be hallowed by the Mahatma's sacred presence; so they raised a subscription to accord him a fitting welcome. That put the fat into the fire. "Did you realise that by indulging in this vain display you would acerbate communal passions? This display means nothing to

me...but it will leave a legacy of ill will behind which will continue to poison the communal relations in this village for a long time to come. You are a Congressman. Did not it occur to you, knowing my strong views on Khadi, that ribbons and buntings made of mill cloth would only hurt me?"

In a reflective vein he proceeded: "The day's experience has set me thinking. furiously. Would my colleagues, too, if they ever became ministers, betray the same weakness for garlands and the like? I claim no extraordinary virtue for my workers. But this much I do expect of them that even as ministers they would never forget the ideals that the Congress has professed and fought for all these years. What I have seen today, however, makes me wonder whether I am not living in a fool's paradise. It seems, God has waked me up with a rude shock to enable me to see where I stand."



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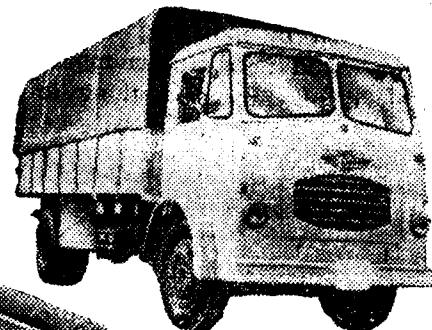
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The humble tram car, many will be surprised to learn, is the father of our much-vaunted railway systems. It is from the humble tram car that the railways were evolved.

How The Tram Car Came To Madras

BY R. A. PADMANABHAN

The Tram Car, they say, is a thing of the past: like the Dinosaur, it is on the way out wherever it is still extant.

I do not fully share this view. I believe that it is a hardy strain and will put up a fight before going down. In South India, it is extinct. I do not know if it survives in Delhi, but in Calcutta, I am told, it is still going strong. As a matter of fact, it is the poorer sections of the public, who benefit by the tramway greatly that seem to be standing between the Tram Car and extinction—or forced extinction—by our various “experts”, from those on noise and traffic to those on ecology. Outside India, I learn that the colorful “street car” (tram) service in San Francisco, a city with many ups and downs, is still a well-cherished adornment-cum-utility proposition. I am not sure about trams in other cities of the world.

The humble Tram Car, many will be surprised to learn, is the father of our much-vaunted railway systems. It is from the humble Tram Car that the railways were evolved.

Not only that. The Tram service running on rail tracks gave place also to the trolley car, a hybrid having the good points of both the tram car and the motor bus. The trolley bus used to run in Delhi in the late nineteen-forties, and continues to serve many big cities in other countries.

The Electric Tram Car came to Madras in 1895, ten years after it was introduced for the first time in the United States, and some thirty-five years after the world's first electric tramway in England.

Its advent, operation, and closure too in Madras were all British achievements. Our

January '76

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interest in the subject is purely from that of recent history.

Travel in the Suburban Electric Service up to Tambaram, and you will still see the ancestor of the Tram and the Railway in the Pallavaram hill side. The trolley cars used there to load and unload quarry stones is the ancestor of the other two services.

In the last century, collieries and stone quarries used horse-drawn trucks on wooden tracks for the conveyance of their produce. The wooden tracks gave way to iron plate-ways, which ultimately developed into iron rail roads and the railway track. The box cars used by the earliest collieries and quarries were called "trams". To reduce the wear and tear of wooden tracks, sheets of iron were placed on them. In the late eighteenth century, these plates were cast L-shaped, an upright portion being added to one side to keep the wheels on the track. Such rails were called "plate rails". The wheels ran on the flat horizontal part of the rail. Later, flanged wheels were used, running on the top or the edge of the rail, and the modern type of edge rail gradually developed.

HORSE TRAMS IN UK

In Great Britain, horse-trams were first used for carrying passengers in the 'Sixties' of the last century. While this tram service was used in the streets, separate rail-roads also came into use. The first public railway line in Britain was the Surrey Iron Railway, from Wandsworth to Croydon, authorised by the British Parliament in 1801. Animal traction was employed, and the first application of steam traction is credited to Richard Trevithick on a plate-way in South Wales in 1804. The Stockton and Darlington Railway, opened in 1825 and later merged in the

L. N. E. R. system (London and North Eastern Railway), is the oldest passenger railway. The original intention was to use animal power, but at the instance of George Stephenson, the steam locomotive was adopted instead. It was, however, the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, opened in 1825, which finally established the supremacy of the steam locomotive.

While the railways were developing thus, about 1882, steam locomotives were introduced in the tramways and remained in use in some sections till 1905. In Paris, steam haulage of trams on the streets continued until 1913.

TWO SYSTEMS OF POWER

In the United States, Van Dapoe and Sprague developed the Electric Trolley Car between the years 1884 and 1887. America's first electric "street railway" was opened on August 10, 1885 in Baltimore.

Two systems were used in the electric tram traction, the Conduit and the Overhead systems. The Conduit included an underground conduit with a continuous slot along the top of it. Inside were two steel rails, which conveyed the current to and from the power source through a "plough" attached to the tram car. The "plough" carried at its lower end two blocks of soft iron or bronze, which were pressed outwards against the conductor rails by springs. One block collected the current, which passed up the "plough" by copper strips to the motors on the tram car, the current being returned through the other block to the return conductor rail.

In the Overhead System, the current is collected by a wheel pressed up against the underside of an overhead conductor wire, and returns through the rails.

A Tram Car consists of a body and a chassis or truck. There are two motors, one at each end, each of which drives one pair of wheels through reduction gear. Tramcars are usually arranged to run either way and controlling apparatus is provided on both the end platforms.

In Madras, sanction to construct the first tram lines was issued by Government in their order dated April 6, 1892 to Messrs. Hutchinson & Co., Ltd. of London. Hutchinsons promoted the first Tramway Company in Madras with a nominal capital of £ 100,000. It was not until 1895 that the first tramway section was completed and opened for the use of the public.

I quote the history of the Madras Tramways, from the excellent "Official Handbook of the Corporation of Madras", 1950 edition, which is a mine of information on many aspects of history and civic life in the City. The Handbook says:

TRAMWAY IN MADRAS

"The original tramways were constructed on the Conduit System, i. e., the live conductor was situated underground, but it was found that owing to the flooding of the streets during heavy rains, the electric current for the tramways could not be maintained and eventually this system was abandoned and the Overhead System was installed.

"In the year 1900, the original company were obliged to sell the undertaking as their capital proved inadequate. The purchasers, the Electric Construction Co., Ltd., England, who were the suppliers of the material for the original tramway company, then operated the tramways in Madras for a period of four years under

the name of the Madras Electric Tramways Trust.

"In 1904, the present Company, known as the Madras Electric Tramways (1904,) Ltd., was formed and has been carrying on business from that date. In the years 1905, 1911 and 1919, extensions were made to the tramway system in Madras with the sanction of the Local Government and the Company has now about 11 miles of double track and about 5½ miles of single track over which their tramcars operate."

FLAGS AND LIGHTS

Since many of Madras roads were not broad enough for two tramcars to run abreast, the single track (two rails embedded in the road) had to be used in many places. Here a system of flag signals during day-time and red and green lights during night-time was operated, to allow trams to pass one way. Here and there, in broader areas of the road, were "islands" of double track, where up and down tramcars passed one another, as in the railway stations. Broadway, the narrow street, was one such bottleneck spot; another, was in Chintadripet, while other such spots existed in Triplicane, Mylapore and Purasawalkam. The Chintadripet street corner near the Market where the tramcar from Ripon Buildings side turned towards Sami Naicken Street became in popular parlance "Jenda maram", the Flag Post corner!

The tramway company also became the pioneer bus operator in the city. The Official Handbook of the Corporation says:

"In the years 1925-27, the Tramway Company operated a fleet of fifty motor buses and were the first to open up the suburban bus routes around the city on which buses now regularly run. This service was

abandoned in 1928 as owing to the low fares charged at this period the scheme was not a financial success."

Fares on the Madras Tramcars were also phenomenally cheap then. The minimum fare was Half Anna (equivalent to present 3 paise), and one could go all the way from Parry's Corner to Purasawalkam for a paltry One Anna and Three Pice (equivalent to 8 paise); monthly passes were also issued at considerably reduced concessional charge. To office-goers and students, womenfolk, vegetable and fruit vendors and petty shopkeepers, the Tramcars were a real boon, as their fares were low and, despite peak hour crowds, one could always get going somehow.

POPULAR SERVICE

Till the late thirties, most of the tram cars were of the old open, bench type. A series of benches, each accomodating five or six persons, were built row behind row, with a closed end on one side and entrance on the other. Two-foot-wide planks fixed along the length of the tramcar provided the steps to get up and get down the benches. Since passengers got down from the side of tramcars thus, they were prone to be hit by vehicles coming from behind, and accidents did occur. This led to the introduction of closed tramcars, which were similar to railway bogies, with long corridor seats or rows of short seats inside, and entrance at either end. These improvements to rolling stock came about around 1939, when improvements were also made to the tramway lines. Many single track lines were doubled and all open type tramcars were taken off the road.

In 1950, the mileage and rolling stock position was this:

Rolling stock: 110 tramcars (all single deck; Madras had no double-deckers). The majority of these were equipped not

only with electric brakes and hand brakes, but also with compressed air brakes.

Mileage: The Tram lines covered about 16½ miles of roads in the City. The daily car mileage totalled approximately 7,383 miles. The number of passenger carried daily approximated to 1,72,252.

ROUTES AND TERMINI

The Tram lines covered almost all the outlying parts of the city. The service routes listed in 1950 were; 1. Between Mylapore and Parry's Corner and Royapuram 2. Between Triplicane and Washermanpet, via China Bazar 3. Between Purasawalkam and Parry's Corner, via Elephant Gate Junction 4. Between Purasawalkam and Central Station, via Elephant Gate and through Wall Tax Road 5. Between Egmore and Parry's Corner and Royapuram 6. Between Parry's Corner and Mount Road, via Chintadripet.

The Mylapore tramline turned into Cutcheri Road and terminated at San Thome Cathedral corner. The Royapuram terminus was located before the Church, the tramline going round it for the return journey. Parry's Corner and Customs House were busy terminals, tramcars rounding up near the High Court wall in Parry's Corner. In Washermanpet, the terminus was a little beyond the railway level crossing. In Triplicane, the tramline went along Triplicane High Road up to Barber's Bridge. The Purasawalkam terminus was opposite Tana Street on the High Road. In Central, the terminus was outside the eastern gate, on Wall Tax Road. The tramline to Egmore went along Poonamalli High Road and turning towards Egmore station at Rundals Road junction, came to a stop east of the station near its northern booking office of the Suburban

Electric railway. The Chintadripet line went along Poonamalli Road up till Ripon Buildings and turned into Chintadripet at the railway level crossing opposite. Passing through Chintadripet, the line terminated opposite Gaiety Talkies.

Overhead electric supply wires hung over tram lines and grooved iron rails embedded on the road surface marked all the streets and roads through which the trams sped. The rattle of the huge tram bodies was also a constant presence on these streets and roads. In many narrow streets traffic jams occurred because of tram traffic upsetting or hindering other traffic. Even on broad thoroughfares, while trams moved on fixed rails, other traffic had to adjust themselves to available space. All these were minus points against the tram service.

SOME CHARACTERS

All along the tram routes, red and blue boards fixed to the tramline posts proclaimed respectively "All Cars Stop Here" and "Cars Stop Here on Request". Human nature being what it is, some drivers of late hour trams would speed past compulsory stopping places or ignoring frenzied stop requests by passengers standing on the road. However, such complaints were not as many as those made against State Transport staff in the city before the "Collection Bonus" era. Tram drivers and conductors wearing khaki uniforms were mostly an obliging lot: even the inspectors were courteous rather than curt.

As it will always happen, there were some "characters" among tram line staff. In an age when beards were not common, there were some bearded patriarchs with broad smiles to boot. One tram driver, with a wide forehead and a "naamam" (the Vaishnavite symbol) covering the entire forehead was a well-known personality. Some of the Inspectors got on to running

trams in style and got off in the same fashion setting examples for young men to emulate.

The Tramway in Madras city came to an abrupt end sometime in the mid-fifties. I do not have the papers concerning the debacle readily, but I recall that labour trouble was the prime cause. The Tramway union led by Communists, up in arms against the British management, started the row and the Tram service was suddenly closed. The union charge was that a sizeable part of the profits was being remitted to shareholders in Britain without giving the staff more pay. The Tramway company pleaded loss in running the service. Appeals were made to the Government to take over the service, but the Kamaraj Ministry then in power, considering all aspects of the case, allowed the tram service to terminate for all time.

With the tram service thus coming to an unexpected end, its main shed on Poonamalli High Road changed hands, to become, I believe, the Periar Thidal of today. The shed on Royapettah High Road has been taken over by the Electricity Board. The overhead wires along tram routes were removed, but it was said that it was unprofitable to remove the tram line rails embedded on the roads. I don't know if these were ultimately removed at all or still remain under ground.

A FADING MEMORY

The closure of the tram service, a cheap mass transportation medium, gave a fillip to bus transport in the city. Hope expressed by some that the overhead tram lines could be used to run a trolley bus service in the city, electrically run buses with rubber tyres, buses that would not be tied to fixed rails on the road surface, did not materialise.

The tram line in Madras is now a thing of the past. While it existed, it served people fairly well, despite inherent drawbacks. Now, it remains a nostalgic memory, for old folk to chew the cud and for researchers of recent history to gloat over.

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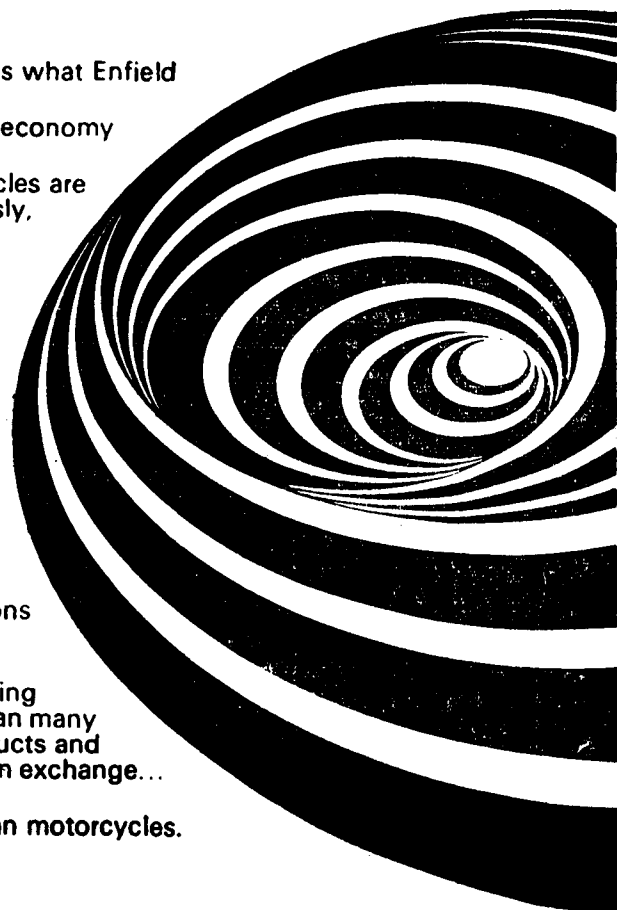
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LAST DAYS OF SARDAR PATEL

BY SUBHASH CHANDRA SARKER

Son of Rai Bahadur Avadh Behari Lal, a flourishing legal practitioner of Pratapgarh (Oudh), U.P., Mr V. Shankar, was an ICS officer under the British Government. He came in touch with Sardar Patel during the last four years of his life. Nearly a quarter century after the death of Sardar, Mr Shankar has written his memoirs which, for understandable reasons, refer mostly to the closing years of Sardar Patel's life, although there are some flashbacks to earlier events. Mr Shankar explains the reasons why this book was not published earlier. "For years I have been wanting to take the public into confidence in regard to what I know of those eventful, momentous and historic times when India's

destiny changed from colonialism to freedom, from unity to partition, from division to integration, and from dominion to republic and when the foundations of its freedom were laid and the process of consolidation of that freedom began in right earnest. But for one reason or another mostly connected with my official position it was not possible to do so."

WRITTEN MEMORY

Mr Shankar has written the reminiscences from memory "Later these were tested against such records as I had kept and tallied with entries" in the diary which the Sardar's daughter Miss Maniben Patel had kept of the daily happenings of those days. Mr Shankar writes that with the publication of the book he feels relieved of having discharged a great responsibilities and an obligation. The

responsibility was that of imparting information and knowledge about Sardar's life and work which he possessed to enable a fair and just assessment of Sardar at work. The obligation was, "speaking in my own humble way for a towering personality which preferred to keep to itself and yet has left an indelible mark on the pages of Indian history".

Mr Shankar became an ardent admirer of Sardar Patel and has remained so till today. This very sympathetic account of the last days of Sardar Patel brings out the tragic fact that a person whose outward authority and stature may be the envy of thousands may, in fact, be under extreme mental suffering because of his inability to control the direction of developments. The last years of Sardar were marred further by his illness. "Those of us

My Reminiscences of Sardar Patel, Volumes I and II, by V. Shankar, The Macmillan Company of India Limited, New Delhi, 1975, pp 205/227 respectively.

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who were close to him were filled with apprehension and anxiety; yet we could not, by overemphasising the need of caution and conservation in matters of health, add to his distress and mental disturbance", Mr Shankar writes.

STRUGGLE FOR POWER

Mr Shankar's account makes sad reading since it brings to the fore the struggle for power among the Congress leaders at the highest level. There were quarrels as to who should become a minister or be elected President of the Indian National Congress and no solution was acceptable to the warring factions. Mr Shankar refers to the schism existing in UP Congress Party in which one faction was led by Purshotomdas Tandon and Govind Ballabh Pant, who had Sardar Patel's support, and the other by Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, who enjoyed Nehru's support. They had personal and ideological differences and were bent on seizing control of the organisation, one group excluding the other. The clashes between the two factions remained at a local level so long as Rafi Ahmed Kidwai was a member of the UP ministry. Following his elevation to the position of a Union Minister this factionalism was transferred to New Delhi. "The result

was a series of allegations and counter-allegations and mutual bickerings which erupted into a crisis more than once", Mr Shankar writes. (p 77 Vol II). "Even in the cabinet meetings the atmosphere was tense; Pandit Nehru used to make a beeline for Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, Neogy and Gadgil; they also provided an opportunity for vicarious attacks on Sardar", he adds. (pp 84-85, Vol II).

But the quarrel was not confined to the Congress leaders in U.P. but was very much to be found among other leaders also. In the confrontation between Sardar Patel and Pandit Nehru Mr Shankar's judgment 'is clearly against Pandit Nehru. He writes, "Pandit Nehru was embittered to the point that he had not been able to set this last issue of difference, serious as it was, against the services which his close and valued colleague, senior in age and definitely at least equal in the hierarchy and length and value of service rendered to the Congress and the country, particularly during the last three years; one who had stood by him through thick and thin, both before and after partition, who had himself sacrificed two clear chances of elevating himself to his own position when he had offered to quit". (p. 116 Vol II).

For a proper evaluation of this criticism it ought to be realised and that Nehru had written to Sardar Patel against Mr. Shankar.

SARDAR'S GESTURE

Mr Shankar recounts an incident which provides an eloquent commentary on the manner in which senior ministers and officials of the Government of India had begun to treat the public services even in those early days of having come to power. "During Pandit Nehru's absence another crisis had cropped up. John Mathai on his leaving the Cabinet was proceeding to Srinagar for a holiday. Only his departmental officers came to see him off. Sardar wanted to go to the airport to bid him farewell but we were held up. In the meantime, John Mathai and Mrs Mathai had boarded the aircraft and the plane began to taxi off. Just then we reached the airport, and the plane was instructed to stop; the ladder was put up again and Sardar then went in and greeted both of them. Mathai was greatly touched by this gesture." (pp 108-109, vol II)

Although there is no startling revelation in Mr Shankar's account, it helps one to understand better the developments in those years. It is not clear, however, why it was necessary to bring out a book of less than 450 pages in two separate volumes.

Anti-Diabetic And Other Medicinal Values Of Cassia Plants

BY T. V. SUBRAHMANYAM, M. A., M. Sc.

Of the several genera of the Indian flora the members of the genus *Cassia* belonging to the family *Leguminosae* have capitalised and enriched the medicinal wealth of this country. *Cassia* plants generally known as *Konnai* and *Avarai* include several species ranging from low shrubs to medium sized trees - all characterised by pinnately compound leaves and papilionaceous flowers arranged in corymbs or racemes. The purgative, purificatory, anti-diabetic and other medicinal properties of *Cassia* plants have been recognised and made use of from the remotest past and they have been judiciously included in the leading Ayurvedic combinations; *Nikumbhadi*, *aragvadhadi*, *shyamadi* and *surasadi* Ganas. It is worthwhile to learn some interesting facts about these plants and therefore the general features and medicinal properties of the common

and outstanding members are described below.

1. *Cassia Alata* is the common ring worm plant. It is called *Dadumardan* or *Dadrughna* in Sanskrit, *Shimagida* in Canarese, *Sima-avarai* or *Sima agathi* in Tamil and *Vandukolli* in Malayalam.

BEAUTIFUL SHRUB

It is a large, beautiful shrub with erect stem and spreading branches. Leaves compound, very long with 8 to 14 pairs of leaflets, each leaflet oblong 3 to 4" long. Flowers conspicuous, rich yellow in racemes arranged along a prominent peduncle. Pods are winged, long and many seeded. The shrub is grown in gardens for the showy flowers.

Leaves are mainly used medicinally. They are astringent, expectorant, aperient

and antiparasitic: the last mentioned property being due to the presence of *chrysophanic acid* in the leaf juice. Leaves are therefore made into a paste or ointment for application on ringworms and other parasitic cutaneous affections. It is almost a specific in ringworm treatment and hence the name ringworm plant.

Decoction of the leaves is a good laxative useful to expel worms. It is also given for asthma and bronchial affections, as a mouth gargle for aphthae and to hasten labour pains.

2. *Cassia Auriculata* or the Tanners' Cassia. Known as *Chamaranga* in Sanskrit, *Tarota* or *Turwar* in Upper India and *Avaaram*, *Avara* in Tamil, and *Thangedu* in Telugu.

It is a branching, evergreen shrub growing wild in the jungles and forests of Deccan, Gujarat and South Maharashtra. It is also abundant in the wastelands of Andhrapradesh and Tamilnadu and the eastern forest areas (like Walayar) of Kerala State.

The bark is thin and brown, spotted and pubescent. Leaves about 4" long with 3 to 10 pairs of semi oblong leaflets. Flowers large, yellow in terminal corymbs carrying ear-shaped bracts. Sepals 5

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unequal and tough; petals spoon shaped and wrinkled along the edges. Pods 5" long, flat and strap like.

The plant bark is a commercially important and well-known tanning agent.

Medicinally all the plant parts are useful.

Infusion of leaves is given as a cooling drink to quench thirst, hot feeling in the stomach caused mostly by hyperacidity. To check bleeding and other excessive secretions, decoction of bark is useful as a styptic or astringent as it contains tannic acid. Decoction of the floral parts is useful in diabetes. Cotton Wool soaked in the decoction is used as vaginal plug to stop menorrhagia.

GOLDEN SHOWER

Seeds are ground to a very fine paste and this taken plain in small quantities is good for diabetes. With honey it is refrigerant and cooling. Mixed with castor oil it is used as a collyrium for purulent ophthalmia.

Root bark is also astringent and alterative and is administered in the form of a decoction.

3 Cassia Fistula Popularly known in English as the Indian Laburnum, Purging Cassia or

Golden Shower. In Sanskrit it has various names: *Vyadhinighatam*, *Aragvadhā*, *Nripadruma*, *Rajavrksha*, *Suvarnaka*, *Samyaka*, *Swarnabhushanam*, *Kirthamala*, *Deerghaphala* etc. In Hindi it is called *Sonhali* or *Amollas*, in Gujarati - *Gurmala*, in Marathi - *Bahava*, in Bengali - *Sonali* or *Soon-dali*, in Telugu - *Kondrakay* or *Raelachettu*, in Tamil - *Konnai* or *Sarakonnai* and in Malayalam as *Vishu-konnai* or *Kanikonnai*.

It is an indigenous, medium sized, deciduous tree, with smooth greenish-grey bark when young, but becoming tough and brown when old. Leaves alternate 1 to 2 feet long with 4 to 8 pairs of ovate leaflets each leaflet 3 to 4" long. Flowers golden yellow, very conspicuous in drooping racemes arranged on pendulous peduncles, two feet long. During the flowering season—April to June—the tree has practically no leaves but only drooping bunches of rich yellow flowers emitting a mild fragrance. This tree is therefore much favoured by horticulturists. It is the magnificent and opulent florescence of this tree that has earned for itself various metaphorical appellations like *Golden shower*, *swarnabhushanam* etc. The fruit about 2 ft. long like a pipe, pendulous and black when ripe containing many flat coin-like seeds embedded

in sweet pulp. For this reason the tree is also known as *Pudding Pipe* or *Deerghaphala*.

POPULAR DRUG

Cassia fistula as a vegetable drug has been popular in this country for centuries. As a cure for skin diseases and blood impurities, as a cardiac tonic and as an efficacious and safe intestinal cleanser or purgative the pulp of the fruits has been liberally used in all the Indian systems of medicine. In the Ayurvedic medical work, *Bhava-prakasa*, the properties of *Cassia* fruit-pulp is described thus:

“Thathphalam sramsanam
ruchyam
Kushta pitha kaphaapaham,
Jwarethu Sathatham pathyam,
Koshta sudheekaram
matham”

meaning; the pulp is demulcent and tasty, is a remedy for cutaneous, biliary haematic and mucous affections, an antipyretic and an excellent purgative.

A paste of leaves serves as a palliative dressing for irritation of the skin and rheumatic swellings and pains.

Therapeutically the most valued and useful part is the pulp of the ripe pod. The pulp is compounded with other suitable drugs and car-

minatives and given for many alimentary and intestinal disorders. In Allopathy also the pulp is used for laxative purposes in the name of ‘*Cassiae pulpa*’ of the British Pharmacopoeia. Extraction of the fruit pulp in distilled water is percolated and made into a paste. In Ayurveda, *Aragvadhā* tops all the purgative (*Virechana*) agents. The entire *Virechana Gana* (Combination of purgatives) is topped by *Cassia* and is called *Aragvadhadi Gana*.

Alcoholic extract of the root bark is good for black-water fever or Dengue.

There are several preparations in Ayurveda using *Cassia* as the principal base e.g. *Aragvadhadi Kashaya* for skin troubles and ulcers, *Aragvadhariishtam* for boils, itches and skin diseases.

STIMULATES LIVER

4. Cassia Angustifolia is the common *Senna mukhi* also popular under the names *Senna*, *Tinnevelly Senna*, *Nilavari*, *Nilavakai* etc.

It is a bushy herbaceous plant with small elliptical leaflets and racemose flowers. Pods are oblong and curved.

Decoction of *Sennamukhi* leaves has ever been the most popular, cheapest and safest of all the purgatives adminis-

tered and agreeable to children, weak persons, adults and old people alike. Besides cleansing the bowels, it arrests biliousness, gout and rheumatism, it stimulates the liver and expels worms. To prevent nausea and griping pain the infusion of the leaves is generally mixed with some carminatives and aromatics. Although *Senna* is a safe purgative, in inflammatory conditions of the alimentary canal, during menorrhagia, pregnancy, fever and haemorrhoids, it should not be given without doctor's advice.

FOR BRONCHIAL ILLS

Senna pods are also used just like the leaves as infusion or decoction.

In the Herbo-Mineral preparations *Senna* is an important ingredient in

Taxine for constipation and hepatic insufficiency

Spolax for constipation and piles.

Piparid for worms.

Herbal bitters for

Sluggish liver.

5. Cassia Occidentalis

Known in Sanskrit as *Kasamarda*, in Hindi as *Kasunda*, in Telugu - *Kasinda*, in Tamil - *Nattuthakarai* or *Ponnayirai*, and in Malayalam as *Ponnanthakara* or *Ponnayiram*.

A common undershrub. Leaves pinnate with a prominent oilgland near the base: leaflets 5 to 10 pairs, elliptical, lanceolate 1 to 2" long. Flowers in extremities of branches, yellow. Fruits 4" long, narrow with thickened margins. Seeds many.

The plant is mainly expectorant and hence its name *Kasamarda*. Its decoction is useful in all bronchial affections.

Leaves are purgative, febrifuge, antiparasitic and anthelmintic. They are administered for fevers rheumatic or catarrhal, skin diseases and jaundice in the form of decoction, infusion or juice. Leaf paste is used to dress ringworms, boils and ulcers.

Bark and seeds are cathartic and in the form of an infusion used for diabetes.

According to Dhanwantar Nighandu the plant is described as: “*Viseshathah pithaharam*, *paachanam*, *kantha sodhanam*” meaning it is especially good for biliary affections, digestion and diseases of the throat.

6. Cassia Tora Known in Sanskrit as *Ooranaksham*, *Chakramardan*, *Prapunada* etc. In Upper India it is called *Chakunda* or *Edgaja* and in

the South as *Thagarai*, *Takara* or *Vatalthakara*.

It is a short annual shrub, flourishing during the rainy season. Leaves pinnately compound with three pairs of obovate leaflets. Flowers small, yellow, axillary in pairs. Pods thin and long, curved and with many seeds.

The tender leaves of the fresh plant are cooked and eaten as other leaf vegetables. Leaves possess alternative,

laxative, and anthelmintic properties and therefore in the form of a decoction—in doses of two ounces—it is administered for fevers, worm troubles and for free movements of bowels. Since the leaves contain *chrysophanic* acid they are applied as a paste over ringworm, psoriasis scabies and other skin diseases. The inflammation caused by the corrosive action of the marking nuts (*Semecarpus anacardium*) is cured by applying the juice of *Cassia*

leaves.

The paste of the root bark as also the seeds are efficacious in the treatment of skin diseases. The seeds are also roasted and powdered and a decoction made out of it is taken with milk and sugar like coffee to cure skin diseases.

Infusion or decoction of seeds is also good for the purification of blood, brain affections and eyes, poison and even epilepsy.




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THE WIFE'S BROTHER

BY T. N. VISWANATHAN

It was Hari who started me on the idea. We were having coffee in a local restaurant and Hari had been moody all afternoon. He was now angrily stirring the coffee before him.

"I wish she had had a brother" he suddenly spoke aloud.

"Why not a sister? What difference it would have made?" I asked.

"No, No, No. That would have been two of them, and one of them is bad enough. If it had been a brother—at the proper time—he would have packed her off to me and even if he had been remiss, his wife would not have spared him."

"I am not so sure of that", I riposted. "In addition to living with your wife's parents, you might have had the permanent company of your brother-in-law and his wife also. God only knows, what that would have meant". I paused.

"You are always known for your pessimism". Hari snapped. "Maybe there is some truth in what you say regarding the brother-in-law. But I am sure his wife would never have consented to such permanent arrangement. After all any

sensible woman wants to live her own life and not get cluttered with all sorts of relations".

"Well, that could be equally true of your wife too", I quipped.

"I don't deny that. But as you know my wife has no brother and it is this void which has been the cause of all my misery.

I could not help wondering whether a wife's brother is really such an unmixed blessing. I have myself one and an only one of the species too... But I also know the futility of arguing with my friend when he is in a temper.



Hari was now looking at me. We were talking about his wife. She was an only child to her parents and at the time of their marriage, it had all looked so rosy, not only the wife but even the possible inheritance. But my friend soon discovered that as part of the bargain he had to go and stay with the in-laws and there was no chance of his wife doing the usual thing—come home to him. His parents were naturally angry and upset about it; there was a law suit or two but it was Hari who ultimately had to hoist the white

flag. It therefore made him unwanted in his own home. But what surprised me was, all this happened ages and ages ago and Hari is now fifty and more and so I could not very well follow the train of his thoughts.

"You see, I have never ceased to regret that initial blunder. Ever since I surrendered, she is the one who has been wearing the pants in the house. I will finish fifty two next January and it is now the children who are bossing me, treating me as a sort of unpaid servant of the house. If only she had had a brother all this would not have happened."

Poor Hari was choking.



A wife's brother? What tremendous power and possibilities the relationship implies! Yet even five or six decades back it was an innocent, even innocuous relationship. Those were the days of child marriages, the groom hardly seventeen or eighteen and his bride, a chip of a girl, just around fourteen. Marriage then was a mere betrothal, celebrated spaciouly for four or five days, unlike the present times—when it has shrunk to a mere day or two. In those golden days it took some years before the bride and the groom came to live together. But in the interval there were any number of occasions like the Deepavali and the Aadi which brought the young man to his wife's home. And during these visits, when the rest of the household were blissfully asleep after a heavy feast in honour of the visiting son-in-law, it was the wife's brother who ran errands between the boy and his wife, carrying missives and messages. No doubt his palm had to be greased even in those early days for services rendered, but compared to present times it was a mere flea bite. A box of sweets, a shirting piece,

a fountain pen—nothing really worth mentioning. The boy was pleased and vaunted it to his parents, who in turn were also happy and touched by the solicitude and thoughtfulness of their son-in-law. A relationship which began under such favourable auspices, naturally grew from strength to strength and the wife's brother even in later life continued to occupy a prized and cherished place in his sister's household.



With the passing away of time, the institution of marriage underwent many legal and social changes. Gone were the days of child marriages. The bridegroom today is a man in his thirties taking for good or bad a woman in her late twenties. These two adult spouses have no use for the delicacies and techniques of a previous era and start whispering to one another, even when the marriage ceremony is in progress. If you meet them at the reception later in the evening, you can see them introducing to each other their common friends and behaving generally as if they had known each other all their lives. Perhaps they do. The wife's brother has naturally no place in this battle of the sexes. But only for a time. The moment the elderly bride finds her root in her new home, she loses no time to plant her brother there, as her friend, philosopher and guide. And it is only a question of time before the husband ratifies her choice. And it is this species of the wife's brother one comes across today. And what a colossus he has grown to be, a dome of many-coloured glass, shedding colour and lustre everywhere.



The bigger the man, the more is the power and position of his wife's brother. Let me cite an example. You want admission

for your boy or girl in a school or college. The Principal of the institution is reputed to be a man of principles, rather a hard nut to crack. And your child has just scraped through in the previous school. You know in your heart of hearts that the child has unfortunately taken after his mother's family in the matter of intelligence and aptitude for studies. But it is still your child and you are naturally worried and at your wit's end; how you are going to get the kid admitted in the new place. Someone to whom you casually mention your problem assures you not to worry because he knows the Principal's wife's brother rather well and the admission is therefore as good as in the bag.

"But the man is such a stickler for rules". Your voice sounds your scepticism.

"Not to his wife's brother," comes the pat reply.

And only when you receive the admission card a week later you realise how right your friend had been.

I apologise for the above instance because it hardly does justice to the dynamic role a wife's brother can play and really plays.



Take therefore this other case of X. X is a big industrialist and the chairman and managing director of any number of prosperous and thriving concerns. A friend's son-in-law was not so well-employed and my friend's wife had been nagging him to find the son-in-law a more suitable job, consistent with his own qualification. Not that they were really worth mentioning, because the young man had only a third class commerce degree, without any of the

additional trills like labour management or social psychology. But a son-in-law is a son-in-law and my friend naturally felt that he had to do something about it, if only to buy peace at home. There was an advertisement from one of X's concerns and the son-in-law had sent in his application. And my friend knew X rather well, at least he thought so, in the distant past when they were sweating it together in the village school. On the strength of it, he went to the great man's office, sent his card and was shown in. After some one-sided fraternising, the big man cut short my friend and asked him what he had come for. My friend, completely deflated by this rather rough reception, managed to blurt out his problem—his heart all in flutter and his body profusely bathed in sweat.

"There are no vacancies in any of my concerns, as far as I know," the great man began but my friend showed him the copy of his own advertisement, before he could proceed further.

"Oh that," the Presence continued unabashed. "You see I am only a figurehead here. I cannot recruit even a class four staff bypassing the Union and they naturally want the Employees' sons given the preference for such jobs."

My friend finally walked out of the great Presence in a daze, cursing his own impetuosity and generally angry with everyone at home. While he was later narrating this encounter to the family, glossing over details which were not entirely complimentary to him, his neighbour's son, a college student, who happened to be present burst out, "Why I can swing this for you." This young man was known to be a good samaritan and left my unbelieving friend

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after taking the relevant particulars from him. A week later the son-in-law received the orders of appointment and the young man next door did not fail to taunt my friend with the query, "What did I say?" When pressed the youngster confided that he and the industrialist's wife's only brother were class mates, since their primary school days! My friend was naturally overwhelmed and mentally blessed the wife's brother but for whose timely intercession he would have had no peace at home.



All over the world, wherever democracies function, the people who really matter—a sort of power behind the screen or is it the throne?—are the wives' brothers. And the bigger the politician the greater is the stature of the wife's brother. If the politician happens to be a minister or

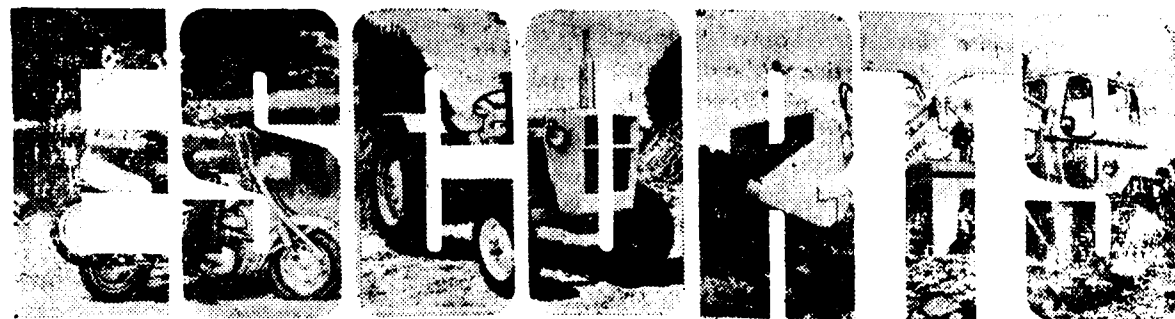
ambassador—heaven forbid—I have no words to describe his brother-in-law's immense potential. Imagination boggles at the many things he can really do.—In short, everything that can sky-rocket you to fame and fortune overnight. Little wonder that more enterprising of us burn incense to this worthy and pray for the increase of his tribe. You certainly can't blame them.

Suddenly coming back to the present, I asked "Hari" "What about a husband's brother vis-a vis the wife's brother?"

"Don't mention them in the same breath", Hari snapped. "Why, I have half a dozen of them and I don't even waste a post card over them. Anyway my wife has barred them our home long, long ago."

Hari, as usual, is right.

— Courtesy: AIR, MADRAS



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Off the Cuff

BY K. PADMANABHAN

THE SKILL OF KALIDASA

Not all are fortunate to have a Kalidasa to interpret their words so skilfully and with tact when a silence is broken with strange-sounding messages. Here is an interesting legend woven around Kalidasa—one among many of such a type. I am giving below an English rendering of the story published in the Tamil literary quarterly, *Idaya oli* under the by-line, smt. Jayalakshmi Narasimhan.

Of the nine poets who adorned the court of King Bhoja, the most famous was Kalidasa. One day, while taking a walk he came across an old man, lean and weak because of his poverty. The old man told Kalidasa "It's many days since I have eaten. I do not see any way to rid me of this poverty. I have come to pay obeisance to King Bhoja and seek his aid".

"Then I shall take you to the King. I will arrange for royal favours. But you

THE SKILL OF KALIDASA

SOUL'S END

should agree to do what I tell you to," said Kalidas to the old man, and he agreed.

"When you are in the royal presence, the King will honour you with priceless gifts. You should not speak a word except to say "Subhamasthu." "Right," said the old man. The next day they left in a chariot to the capital. On the way, the old man espied a few camels grazing. He had never seen them before. He asked Kalidasa what these animals were. "Ushtra" said Kalidasa in Sanskrit. The old man who did not know the language thought he was asked to keep quiet. In his distraction he forgot "Subhamastu." Instead, he started committing the word "Ushadara" to memory.

The chariot reached the capital Kalidasa and the old man entered the King's court. Everyone was curious to know about the old man accompanying Kalidasa. Kalidasa introduced him to the court as his guru. Immediately the king heaped many gifts of value on a plate of gold and paid his respects to the Guru of the court poet. The old man then looked at the king and said, "Ushadara". Every one looked surprised

when they heard this. The King became angry.

Kalidasa immediately stepped forward and said. "Great king, please do not think otherwise. My guru is a man of few words. What he has spoken are the first letters of a benedictory verse. He has condensed it into a word comprising of the first letter of each line of the verse. The verse goes as follows:

Umayā sahito devah
Sankaras Chandrasekharah |
Damdamkara vinodena
Rakshatu twam Sadasivah ||

(Let Sadasiva, also hailed as Sankara and Chandrasekhara, the lord who is the consort of Uma, bless you by sounding the drum he holds.)

Every one was agreeably taken in with surprise at the old man's erudition and paid their respects to him. The delighted king showered gifts on him lavishly and respectfully saw him off.



SOUL'S END

The drone of the tampura heard in the annual concerts of the many *sabhas* has hardly died down before local papers have started announcing the impending visits of many a Billy Graham of the Bhagavadgita. Swami Prabhupada has already arrived with his cymbals along with the New Year. Swami Chinmayananda and Swami Poornananda Tirtha would be arriving to lecture during the month. All these programmes are invariably conducted in English, with fanfare and a posh elegance that give them a look of sophistication and a hard Western glitter.

On New Year's day the Rajeswari Kalyana Mandapam reverberated to the fren-

zied clangs of cymbals and resounding thuds on Indian percussion by Prabhupada's disciples, that preceded his discourse. Their vitality and gusto recalled to mind a negro spiritual group except that the entire group of sustained foreigners eloquently sang familiar bhajans in praise of Lord Krishna and moved with abandon, before a huge banner of ISKCON (International Society of Krishna Consciousness), their Guru's staff of renunciation in neat sterility leaning against it, and the Guru himself seated in a lush divan. One of the participating disciple's chest was bare and the Brahmasutra he wore visible (trikala Sandhyavandna and brahmacharya as ordained by scriptures and Sutras?)

When the music stopped the guru was handed his spectacles and Gita with admirable reverence by one of his sishyas.

The sishyas are garbed in the traditional habit of the Sanyasi novice. Their way of life too conforms to such a code. But would such a rigid implantation of an order stand the test of time without being absorbed and transformed by the cultural ethos of the country where it is implanted? Indonesia and Indo-China are examples to recall. Only time can tell. Bakthi Yoga is admirably expounded in the Gita. It is familiar to all practising Hindus. The Namasankeertana is a powerful way of invoking God advocated by Bakthi Yoga. The Alwars and Nayanmars stand eloquent testimony to it in the South. Along with Chaitanya there have been many saints in the North. The month of the Bow (December-January) by tradition is devoted to Bhajans. The Guru's message, though a welcome one to the audience assembled, (a sizeable section of which belonged to northern states) is not a new one, as he admits himself. But the Guru's insistence that it is the only panacea for the soul of modern man was a trifle surprising. The Bhagavadgita

was quoted chapter and verse. The Vaishnavite cult of Shri Chaitanya was advocated.

After his speech he fielded a few questions which he invited from the audience, like a seasoned politician.

Some of the questions and his replies :

Will it do to have an Allah consciousness or a Christ consciousness for salvation? In the many ways to liberation Krishna consciousness belongs to the highest order.

ISKCON is more popular with westerners than in India. Is Krishna consciousness suited only to them, as only they can afford it? Krishna consciousness has existed in India for a long time. It still exists in India, only some have forgotten or are ig-

norant of it, like you for instance. Here the Swami permitted himself a thin sickle of a smile.

Is Krishna black or blue in your consciousness? Become Krishna conscious and find out for yourself (applause)

The questions after a time were terminated and Namasankeertan taken up again but not before announcing a film short on the cult afterwards. I wended my way out, as the hard hitting bhajan was being chanted slightly off-shruti.

I had not gained anything from the ISKCON meet, but there was no sense of loss. The loss is surely not also Lord Krishna's. No loss then is surely no gain anywhere either.



Dr. A. V. Gerasimov of the Institute for Oriental Studies, Moscow had met me nearly three years ago for about an hour and surprised me with his knowledge of Sanskrit and the Tantra literature. We had a fruitful discussion. Last week he wrote to me from Delhi and has now arrived here. He met me immediately on arrival and handed me a manuscript that he has prepared. The subject is: 'Some Remarks on the Content of Sri Kapali Sastirya's *Mahamanustava*'. I am amazed at the range of his scholarship, his sensitivity to Indian values and the facility with which he cites from many lesser known tantric texts. He quotes from *Life Divine*, from *Savitri*, from *Letters* in support of his interpretations. Altogether a delightful work. And more surprises were in store. He can recite all the hundred verses of *Saundaryalahari* and of *Bhagavad Gita*. I tested him by calling out the first words of stray verses and he did not make a single mistake. The pronunciation was faultless. I am to meet him again. Such a warm and genuine man.

— Mr M. P. Pandit in January 1976 issue of Service Letter.

January '76

The Indian Review

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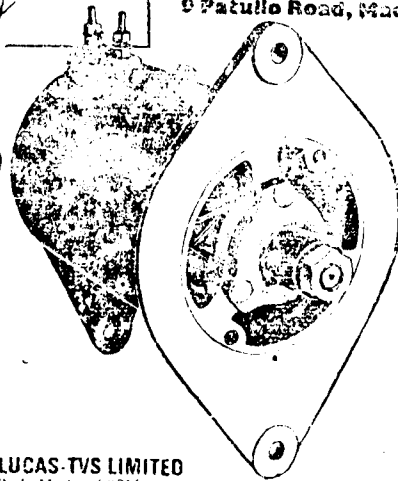
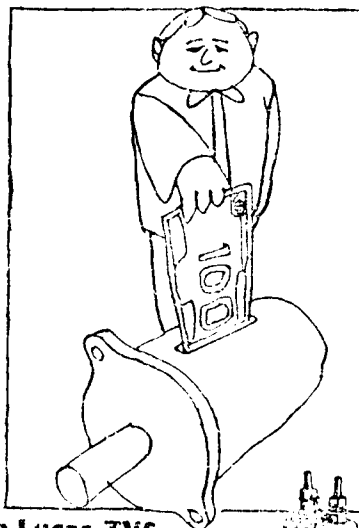
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Just as physical science today is finding the secrets of material Nature, occult science discovers the secrets of other subtler layers and levels of Nature—the life-energy layers, the mental layers, and so on. Each zone, each plane has its own law, its own character, and the business of an occultist is to study the workings of the various dimensions of Nature behind the gross surface, to discover how they operate and how these workings can be put at the service of man. That is true occultism.

Religion, Mysticism Occultism and Spirituality

By M. P. PANDIT

He in Vedanta by the Wise pronounced
Sole Being, who the upper and under world
Pervading encompasses, whom alone
The name of God describes, here
applicable

And pregnant—crippled the of force,
to others

Perverted—and the Yogins who aspire
To rise above the human death, break in
Breath, soul and senses passionately
seeking

The Immutable, and in their own hearts
find—

He, easily by work and faith and love
Attainable, ordain your heavenly weal.

In this classical invocation of Kalidasa,
our present theme is concisely summarised,
for he speaks of religion, mysticism,
occultism and spirituality.

*This is an edited transcription of a talk given
at the Rajnivas, Pondicherry*

First, what is religion? It is described
by many in many ways. But if we look
back upon early human society in all parts
of the world, we see primitive man becoming
aware of presences and forces in nature
around, above, and behind or within him.
Early men had an instinctive feeling that what
is seen by the gross eye is not every-
thing. They felt something acting from
behind. They adopted ways and means to
contact the presences and powers and to make
them real to themselves. They called these
presences behind the powers of nature god-
heads, devatas, gods and goddesses, deities.
Behind the sun, the rain and so on, they saw
a god. To them, all that happened in
nature was not just a naturally occurring
event, but an expression, a movement of
something more behind. Those who were
more given to thought and imagination de-
vised certain means and rituals through which
they could contact and invoke these presences.

Thus has religion originated all the
world over: man becomes aware of some-

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thing more than the gross universe and of the possibility of contacting these subtle presences behind the surface, and he then devises elaborate formulas and rituals to propitiate and summon these gods and goddesses in his favour. Being aware that some of these powers could act to his detriment, he also devised certain formulas and ceremonies to ward off evils. This whole aspect of human activity developed into what was later called religion.

Necessarily, not everyone could devise or use these formulas and ceremonies, so a class of priests sprung up who specialised in these functions. Whenever someone wanted to propitiate the deities he would go to a priest, attend upon him and employ his services. Priests thus held a privileged position in early society. At least initially, priests were also engaged, as in India, in the inner quest. But when these rituals and ceremonies became conventional and developed into an ordinary science or procedure which only specialists could perform, the result was that the bulk of mankind was separated from the living heart or core of religion. Only the externals of religion were open to the laity, and increasingly the priests took care to retain this monopoly. They erected creeds, they built dogmas, they claimed superiority over the old personal ways of religion, and organized religion started taking shape. From what was the first more direct approach of man to God, there developed an institutionalised religion. The apparatus of religion—the Church in the West, the temples, orders of monasteries, and priest class in India—developed, and it served with its institutionalised approach to stifle the individual aspiration to reach God.

Does organised religion have a role to play in the future? The word religion means re-tying man to God. Man has come from God, but in the pro-

cess of the devolution into ignorance he has lost the link with his source. In the reascension, evolution, the role of religion is to re-tie man to God, to reunite him with his source. As long as religion fails to be this that it was, and unless it ceases to be exploited by organised bodies for ulterior purposes, certainly it has no role in the advancing evolutionary development of humanity. But this is not to say that individually religion has no part. This approach to God has played, and will continue to play for some, a remarkable part in controlling the animality in man by introducing the concepts of order, truth, morality and ethics. Religion has promoted the perception that there is in the universe a law and someone who administers it. Religion has awakened the higher faculties in man. We should be able equally, in our somewhat advanced stage of mental awareness, to see what harm institutional religion has done and what helpful role true religion can play.

MYSTIC RELIGION

In the course of its development in history, religion has had two aspects: the exoteric, the outer, and the esoteric, the inner. I have spoken primarily of the exoteric, the rituals and worshipping modes meant for the common man. But by its side, those who were awakened kept close to the original inspiration of religion and went on to further develop the esoteric aspect. Though most of us in India do not know it, also in Christianity there have an esoteric part at the higher level of the hierarchy of the Church where these inner concepts and practices are still carried on. And the esoteric practices in all traditions are concerned with the inner approaches and means like prayer, invocation, meditation and contemplation. Esoteric religion gave birth to what are known as the "Mysteries", such as the Orphic and Eleusinian mysteries in Greece, the Osiric mysteries in Egypt, and the *gupta vidya* in India. These are the parents of the mystic religion.

What is mysticism? Who is a mystic? A mystic is one whose way of inner life is beyond the grasp of the gross physical senses, whose movements are beyond the range of the logical intellect and he approaches the Divine directly through intuitive means. But on that account his experience is not less real. For the person who experiences this inner contact with the higher powers, with the Divinity, it is actually more real than his relations with the ordinary world. The mystic develops an inner light; he thinks, he feels, he pours his emotions in solitude and develops a relation with the higher powers. And this mysticism has external and internal aspects. When one naturally feels the presence of God in the outer universe, that is external or extrovertive mysticism. When one feels the presence, the same oneness of God within himself, ignores the outer universe and goes deep within, that is internal or introvertive mysticism. Whichever way one starts, it is a capital step in the life of a mystic to arrive at a certain awareness, a pure consciousness, that is not involved in the day to day movements which are kept on the surface.

This pure consciousness also has two aspects, the positive and the negative. When that higher consciousness or awareness is realised as joy, harmony, bliss, beauty, it is positive. When the same pure consciousness is realised as a void, a vacancy, as the extinction of nirvana, it is the negative aspect.

A mystic need not necessarily be religious in the usual sense of the term. Wordsworth was a mystic, Tagore, who certainly did not boast of his religiosity, possessed an aesthetic mysticism. But this certainly does not mean that a religious man cannot be a mystic. Most mystics both in India and in Europe have been extraordinarily developed religious men. Religion gave them the spring of life and they developed into mystics.

There are four stages in the development of the life of a mystic. There is first the awakening. One may be an agnostic or an atheist, it does not matter, but somehow one awakens to something higher than oneself, to something larger than one's own little personality. Then comes purgation. The moment one awakens to the existence of this something immense and greater, one feels the dross that is carried in one's personality and nature; that is rigorously shed. One feels unclean, laden, impure and naturally takes pains to shed the dross. Once the clearing operation is over, there is an illumination. The light of God shines on the seeker and illumines his inner self. A serenity and a light appears on his face, whether he considers himself a mystic or not. That light is unmistakable. And the final stage of the mystic's development is unification, union with the higher presence. Whichever reality he seeks he becomes unified with it; he is one with God.

FOUR TYPES OF MYSTICISM

And just as there are four stages, there are also four types of mysticism. There is a contemplative mysticism where one meditates upon the attributes of God, the impersonality of the Divine, the peace and harmony that is radiated. The whole movement proceeds from the mind, one contemplates. Second, there is a personal mysticism in which one establishes an individual relation with God. One may approach him as a father, as a mother, as a brother or friend, or as a child. Just as the Christ spoke of his relation with his Father, everything is centred round the personal relation. There is also a natural mysticism. One feels a pervading presence of God in Nature. Every leaf and river and animal and mountain vibrates with the presence. The beauty of God in manifestation moves one deeply. Wordsworth and Whitman are typical examples of natural mystics. And finally, there is a practical mysticism. Of all the mystics, I personally

revere the practical mystic most. He perceives God's presence not only in himself, or in the heavens above, or in Nature about him, but also in all types of people—and his heart goes out to serve God in them. He sacrifices his life and energies in love, not as a patronising service but as a service to God, a labour of love. These are the minstrels of God who throughout the world continuously go about their service to God through mankind.

Mysticism is open to the criticism and objections of the so-called rationalist because it is based upon subjective feeling and experience with no "objective" reality. But what of anger, desire, or any emotion? Is it less real because it is not seen directly on the outside? Only emotional experiences' effects or repercussions can be seen on the surface; so too with mystical experiences. From a higher point of view, whether something is a subjective or objective experience loses all importance and relevance. A person truly experiences, and that is enough.

Mysticism at the individual level is a branch of esoteric religion. There is also another branch which is more collective in character, occultism.

Occultism, which has so much fascination for modern man is both the East and West, is really a science which touches the hidden sources of power in Nature. It is the discovery of the inner formulae of the processes of Nature. Just as physical science today is finding the secrets of material Nature, occult science discovers the secrets of other subtler layers and levels of Nature—the life-energy layers, the mental layers, and so on. Each zone, each plane has its own law, its own character, and the business of an occultist is to study the workings of the various dimensions of Nature behind the gross surface, to discover how they operate and how these workings can be put at the service of man. That is true occultism. Not to

exploit the powers for personal aggrandisement, but, as physical science has offered its discoveries for the advancement of humanity, the true occultist with a spiritual conscience aims at establishing rapport with the secret planes of existence so to discover their laws and place them at the service of the earth.

We do not live only on the material or physical plane. We are aware in ourselves that apart from the physical body we have a life-force, an emotional heart, a mind and more. All these different faculties of man correspond to different planes of existence in the universe. They are called the *sapta lokas* in the Indian tradition, the seven planes of existence. And again, each plane has its own law.

HOW MIRACLES TAKE PLACE

Above our physical universe there is what may be called the subtle-physical universe, what the Theosophists call the etheric. Certain things are possible there that are not normally here because the laws of the subtle-physical are supple, not so rigid as on earth. If by some means I discover the secret of transposing those laws of operation here on earth, a "miracle" occurs. For example, if I want to give someone something I don't have, and if I have established a relation with the subtle-physical world and have propitiated certain powers or deities or beings on that plane, by repeating certain formulas, mantras, I can call these powers into operation and they provide the object. How does it come? Just as there is a physical substance on earth, there is subtle-physical substance in that world. The required object is assembled there in an instant and it is precipitated by an occult method on the physical plane. Thus one can produce here anything that one wants. This is what is termed materialisation, bringing something from a higher plane of existence into the material, making it visible and available here. Conversely, one can will it, can

exert a pressure and a thing is de-materialised, it is dissolved into its subtle elements and ceases to physically exist. This does not require any great spiritual achievement.

Occult practices and miracles of this kind are elementary to occult spirituality. Occultism gives power. Whether one utilises it for the good of humanity in the service of God, to further the Divine manifestation, or uses it egoistically to impress others and gain personal power and influence, is left to each individual. Accordingly, it is called in the occult tradition white magic or black magic. Occultism that promotes higher values in the world, helps the divinity to manifest, and lifts man above gross desires and entanglements, is spiritual. Everything contrary is black occultism.

USE OF OCCULT POWERS

People are dazzled by occult miracles. But a spiritual man will only look upon them as a child's play. Is it possible for a spiritual man to perform a miracle when asked to? The natural answer is, he can but he will not. His work is not to produce miracles on order. A spiritual man is moved by different considerations. He will use occult powers only when he is moved by a spiritual will, a spiritual consciousness.

And, finally, what is spirituality and who is a spiritual man? Is spirituality something entirely different from religion, mysticism, or occultism? No. Spirituality is the fine essence that has emerged from the evolution of religion, from the progress of mysticism—the element of occultism may or may not be present. Spirituality has grown on the foundations provided by true religion and mysticism.

The aim of spirituality is the realisation of one's true nature or self. This is its first principle and basis. Man is potentially divine. Within himself he has a spark of divinity.

It is his duty, as he awakens to this presence, whether in himself or in the world without, to so shape his life and so culture his awareness that his consciousness changes—is deepened, widened, and uplifted. His values change from ordinary human extrovert values into ones higher and superior, diviner. It is a long process. A perfect man will be a manifest god.

There was a time when it was thought that the practise of spirituality meant withdrawing to the forest, going into solitude, leaving the world to itself as a field of ignorance. But that was long long ago. Today the human mind has developed to the extent that it has a sufficiently large and comprehensive view so that it knows that if spirituality is to have any meaning it has to be realised in the midst of life. Life and the world are as much the creation of God as I am. Realisation of God in myself is incomplete unless I realise God, unless I awake to and regard the presence of God in others and in the world. My consciousness, once it is linked with the Divine within, has to flow out in torrents of love—practical love as service and assistance, as movements of harmony and sympathy—unasked, spontaneously, naturally. That is spirituality. It is a gradual but radical change of consciousness, sustained and disciplined; it is a rising above selfishness, narrowness, egoism, passions and desires into a state wider and purer. The qualities which we are accustomed in our tradition to associate with God or with the gods are qualities to be cultivated.

MANY TYPES OF SPIRITUALITY

Because it is a matter of consciousness, there is not and cannot be only one type of spirituality. There are as many ways of spirituality as there are men. Vivekananda once said that religion will come to its fulfilment when each man has his own religion. It may be added as a corollary that a real spiritual consummation shall be possible when

each one is both helped to pursue and is left free to pursue his own path. Each person has a unique nature, and his development is at a particular point of evolution—their intersection defines the point at which one has arrived and from which one is to embark anew. This, in the Tantra, is referred to as *adhi-kara bheda*, variation of competence. Accordingly, each person has to choose his line of approach

One person may be born with an attraction to the Divine as the impersonal Reality and another with an attraction toward the personal Divine; each must be free to pursue the way of development which is natural to him. Each of the various types of spirituality is valid for him to whom it is relevant, is true to him for whom it is meant. No one can impose a particular way of spiritual life on another. There are certain broad and fundamental principles like the truth of harmony, oneness, and love which are common. But the precise way of arrival and the ways of expression vary with and must be found by each one.

AIDS TO GOD - REALISATION

Religion is man's awakening to a higher presence, mysticism is the intuitive flower of religion, the direct perception of that presence, occultism is the search for the secrets of subtle Nature, and spirituality is that something total and comprehensive which assimilates into itself the best that religion, mysticism, and occultism have given as aids toward God-realisation.

The questions that were asked by some of those present at the meeting and the answers given follow:

How to invoke the mystic state?

The mystic poise arises spontaneously. It is not invoked. It is a movement that emerges

by itself and extends itself. It absorbs one into its movement.

One may invoke the presence of God or the aid of higher powers in spiritual life—that is a different matter. And in this regard we have spoken of meditation, of prayer, of *japa*, of the karma yoga of the Gita, and of other lines of yoga in the Indian tradition.

Does the occultist need to learn and function by certain laws?

Naturally. Each plane, subtle or patent, has its own law, its own functional procedure. One has to follow that law and procedure. For example, to materialise something from the subtle-physical plane requires a particular knowledge and method, while to do so from a still higher realm like the life or vital plane necessitates quite another knowledge and method. The adepts who practice these are very well conversant with the various laws and modes of functioning. But it is also possible that some are born with these powers and exercise them spontaneously, without having learned or acquired them; they need not cultivate their capacities. Natural occult ability usually indicates that certain beings or entities in the higher worlds are in relation with the individual concerned. The help and sanction of these beings is always present for such an occultist, and his powers come naturally.

How can a rational man be convinced that the occult or spiritual worlds exist?

It has been said that a native of the Sahara desert can never believe that there is such a thing as snow. And unless he sees and experiences snow, how can you expect him to believe it exists? The poor man has not seen water enough, how can he believe in snow? Similarly, we have to make certain allowances for limited minds that refuse to acknowledge

the reality of things that are not thrust before their eyes. But a justifiable, if open, attitude is that one cannot believe a thing until somehow it is a part of one's experience.

Can one say that occultism is on a lower level than spirituality?

Until it is informed by spiritual consciousness, occultism necessarily functions on a lower level of the spiritual gradation. But once it is uplifted and utilised only with a spiritual consciousness, it becomes a spiritual power, it changes its character. It ceases to be occult; it becomes spiritual. Until this change occurs, the occult is not only a lower realm but also a dangerous one.

Are, then, all occult practices dangerous?

Ninety percent of them, as they are practised, are. The glamour of occult working and the admiration excited from others are enough to blind most occultists. And the evil, the adverse forces on earth utilise the practice of occultism to extend their empire on earth. History is replete with instances when occult powers have been prostituted for evil.

But the practice of religion, mysticism and spirituality can bypass the state of occultism?

Absolutely. Occultism was mentioned only because it forms a sort of backyard of mysticism. Most spiritual teachers and spiritual seekers avoid the occult province.

Is hypnotism an occult working?

Yes. Hypnotism is concentrated use of one's will on another. That means the bringing into operation of an unseen, an occult capacity; and, literally, something that is brought into operation but is not seen by the physical eye is an occult working.

Today research in the utilisation of hypnotism—in medicine and in surgery as a substitute for normal anaesthetics, for example—is being made to employ it positively; but by and large the uses of hypnotism are not happy.

What role has morality in the life of a spiritual seeker?

A person who has a spiritual sensitivity feels it unclean to do what is truly immoral. He cannot stoop to that level. He does not desist from an immoral act simply because it is so commanded in a *shastra*, in a scripture, but because such an act is naturally abhorrent and reprehensible to him. His nature will not allow him to act immorally. And unless one has this consciousness spontaneously, one is not spiritual. For example, a spiritual man will refrain from telling a lie not because of the maxim that one must always speak the truth, but because he feels it demeans human dignity, and his personal dignity, to tell a lie; he naturally seeks to speak truly.

Though the two spheres of morality and spirituality are different, a spiritual man is normally what is considered moral unless those values conflict with higher spiritual value, and rarely is an immoral man spiritual.

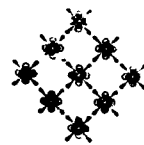
On what basis does one choose either an ascetic or non-ascetic path?

The ideal which one is moved to accept and set for himself depends upon one's temperament and nature. There is a world-negating approach; there is a world-accepting approach. If one feels the world is a snare, is a *maya* illusion, then one has to withdraw from it and seek to ascend into the beatific beyond, into the silence of the *seh*. Thus, naturally, one divests oneself of all worldly

possessions and attachments and strives to live as simply as possible in both soul and body. But if one believes that this earth and life are a manifestation of God, one has to endeavour to realise and express that divine reality. One has to serve God in every way that presents itself. One accepts what comes from God when it is given and lets it go when he takes it away—this is the spiritual attitude regarding all things.

The path depends upon what we seek for, upon what we are moved to seek. There are a hundred ways of spirituality and each individual has to decide what is suited to his aspiration and being. If one does not have or is not confident one has the capacity to know or decide, one may go for guidance to some one who can help in making the choice

—“Service Letter” : Edited and Published by M. P. Pandit, The Ashram, Pondicherry.



—such a one is a guru, a teacher in spiritual life.

What is the Divine's intention regarding the creation?

The universe is a purposive creation. It is to manifest the glory of God that this universe has come into being and is slowly developing into the image of its maker. It is evolving from total ignorance, falsehood, and insentience towards perfect knowledge, truth and bliss. Evolution has arrived at a human, a first self-conscious stage. There will emerge levels of consciousness beyond the human. Higher and higher grades will evolve till an increasingly perfect God-consciousness is manifest on earth. Then the *satya yuga*, the age of truth, shall be manifest.

Under that big banyan tree, a number of girls, like colourful scattered flowers, were chattering—some standing in clusters, some resting. Their terminal agonies of examinations were over that afternoon and the long awaited holidays began from the next day. Some girls were departing home for a short holiday, others were leaving the college for ever. With their clamorous leave-taking, the whole building was buzzing like an offended beehive.

Sumathi was cracking her tired ink-stained fingers. She was not at all concerned with her surrounding or the emotional conflicts of her classmates. Her eyes staring into the void—she was completely indrawn.

All of a sudden, someone covered her eyes tight. Sumathi was all aflutter. When she removed the hand, she saw that it was only her bosom friend, Bala.

Drawn back suddenly to her senses, Sumathi's heart was wildly palpitating. Coming near her and embracing her, Bala asked concerned. 'Why were you so taken aback? What were you thinking of so deeply?'

Recovering herself, Sumathi replied. "Oh, of nothing in particular. Have you done the examinations well?"

Short Story

IN QUEST OF TRUTH

By Mrs. VIJAYA SANKARA NARAYANAN

Translation From Tamil: S. MEERA

Bala: Oh, I may scrape through. What have you decided finally?

Sumathi: I was thinking of only that. Did I show you mamma's letter? She tells me that it would be more than enough if I pass B.Sc. well and I need not study further. The horoscopes seem to agree very well. They are all expecting me eagerly.

Why don't you go and stay with your mother for a while? You have not gone to your place for three years anyway.

No, I think I'll go to my auntie's this year too. After relaxing there for a while and pondering over my future, I will be able to face better my parents. By the by, did you phone up and fix up that appointment?

Oh, yes. I've phoned. He will be free between five and six this evening and said we can come to see him then.

Sumathi heaved a long sigh— 'When I think about it, life itself appears like a puzzle, Bala! Why are we born, why do we lead a stupid life running helter-skelter and where do we go after it is ended suddenly? The more we think about it, the more does it seem, curious, isn't it? Shouldn't we have a lofty ideal in our lives? This is the idea nagging me all through these years.'

'I never give a thought to these things Sumathi, may be that is why life doesn't seem to me so intriguing. Moreover, I look things straight and simple. When I see that way, I see no great hidden significance behind things. All

right now, supposing your Bhishman is ready to accept you into 'Ananda Nilayam', will you spend the whole of your life there? Do you think such things are still possible?"

"Why shouldn't it be? The persons living there are also, after all, fallible human beings like ourselves. Why shouldn't I also dedicate my life to a lofty purpose like them?"

"Oh my! You tire me!" So saying with dejection Bala continued—why don't you take life just simple? Forever deliberating over something! forever some perverted complex!

"What you see as perversion is to me just logic pure and simple. When I see in this logical way, the humdrum life of ordinary people appears so drab to me. The people themselves appear dull and stupid."

"Even your parents?"

"Why—even my parents?" All people like them who lead this stupid life do appear dull and stupid. But take Bhishman and persons like him! How the world is benefited by such persons! How pure is their life! I have been reading his articles continuously for these three years. His way of life has captivated me!"

"If we go on and on like this we have to go without lunch today. Let us make a move now. Otherwise there will be nothing left in the canteen."

Just as Bala said, they could not even find a place to sit there. The combined smell of flowers, new clothes, cosmetics, perfumes, sweat, eatables pervaded the crowded noisy tiny room. They thrust themselves somehow in a corner.

Wherever is Bala there will be no dearth of talk and laughter. She will always be surrounded by ten or twelve girls. Her eyes dart mischievously everywhere for a new juicy bit of gossip. None can equal her in mimicking others. Lecturers or students, no one can escape, from her derisive mimicking skills. Honouring everyone with nicknames, playing practical jokes, surprising everybody, booing the unskilled, teasing timid girls—all these are her favourite pastimes. But if someone is in trouble she will rush to the rescue. She is also not slack in her studies. Due to such attractive, endearing traits she was extremely popular with everybody. But what surprises everybody is how such a bookworm as Sumathi has struck a friendship with this Bala.

Munching the cashewnuts one by one, Bala was looking around her interestedly, her eyes glittering with a mischievous glee. So many types of costumes, dresses, fashionable persons who speak their own language in a strange affected way from the top of the gullet as though they had just now come from abroad—all these entertained her. But these made Sumathi only disgusted. Finishing her lunch soon, she started browsing through the new *Ticchudar* issue, while waiting for Bala.

"Sumathi, Sumathi, oh, are you again immersed in your Bhishman's writings?" Bala shook Sumathi up from her deep study. She didn't rest content with that. She went on. "Who has got the time nowadays to ponder on philosophy and meditate for hours on end? I detest your Bhishman who writes such nonsense which never suits the modern trend."

If I were to give you a romance instead of this *Ticchudar* you would have simply gobbled this up. Isn't that so? Why a novel, even in this same issue, the serials of *Māyan* are delectable to you. But what is the use of blaming you? Nowadays, for people the outer life has edged out and is completely dominating and suppressing the inner life," retorts Sumathi.

"I delight only in small things which are crystal clear to my intellect. I don't have the great talent of yours, Sumathi, the talent of grasping huge issues beyond the intellect!" says Bala.

"Do you know how Bhishman explains the great issues of life in a simple elegant manner? How will you know, unless you read? In this issue while explaining how a man who is a seeker of truth should handle money, he says—even if there is a big tornado outside, a man also breathes, takes only the small amount of air necessary for breathing. Similarly however much wealth may accumulate for us we should use only that much which is essential for ourselves."

"Oh, enough of this! The time is up! Let us go and offer your garland of praise to your idol in person." So saying Bala drags Sumathi from that place.

Soon the two friends, well-dressed, had started. As though to console the earth scorched throughout the day, there was a sudden shower. Bala delights in drenching herself in the rain. When they reached the 'Parna Kuti' of Bhishman, it was already five. Her heart brimming with joy and expectation, Sumathi glanced at

the house. Instead of the easy austere abode of epic days its name suggested, she saw an opulent though modest bungalow.

When they entered, the veranda appeared deserted. Knocking timidly, they peeped in. In the front room, there was no showy furniture. There was a mat spread in a corner; there was also a desk nearby. These appeared definitely out of place in the posh surroundings. The person writing intently upon the desk turned immediately on hearing the slight knock. He welcomed them affably—"come in, are you then the students who phoned just now?"

"Yes, Bhishman, the editor of *Ticchudar*—"

"That's me. Please sit down." He pointed the mat.

They sat facing him. Sumathi was lost in contemplating him. The Bhishma of her reveries was a tall sturdy man with flowing robes, thickly bearded and moustached, with eyes serene and calm. But the real Bhishman was a disappointing 5'3", with an ordinary short dhoti and a slack shirt. His face was clean-shaven.

"This is Sumathi, she has been very eager all these days

to meet you". Thus Bala introduced her friend.

Sumathi began, "I'm so very much enchanted by your writings. I firmly believed that such a person should be a great soul. I am aspiring to join your Ananda Nilayam after education. I want your guidance and help in this matter."

"Did you have this tendency spontaneously or were you merely titillated by the books you read?" demanded Bhishman.

Before Sumathi could reply Bala ventured: "No, No, I know Sumathi right from the time when we were toddlers; we studied in school together. Even then she was rather peculiar. She will be always aloof, reading something all alone, never mix with us for play, or getting involved with us in any way. We used to tease her calling her a Sanyasi (monk)!"

"Who told you that a Sanyasi is aloof? Shouldn't he be more involved in everything, more so than all the rest?" So interrupted Bhishman.

"I don't quite understand you" says Sumathi,

"Being aloof or indifferent can never be the qualities of a Sanyasi. They may be temperamental. They can't

be called characteristics of a Sanyasi. Actually it is the man who has renounced who ought to be more involved with people, because he has renounced his selfish desires and well-being for the sake of the well-being of the society. Take the great leaders of our nation, hasn't a great movement started around them because of their selflessness? Aren't such movements symbols of their great love for humanity?

'I also want to live like them with a lofty ideal. I do not like the drab commonplace life'.

On hearing Sumati, Bhishman smiled and said - 'The ideal is within ourselves. Mind is more important for its execution rather than outward things like body or way of life. Nowadays just like wealth and education which are for everybody regardless of the barriers of caste and creed, spirituality also is getting to be the common property of mankind. The way of humanity is changing without its very knowledge. We only need patience and the right perspective and attitude to see that. That's all.'

While Sumati ventured to ask him something more on the topic, she noticed somebody moving about at the far end of the house. Shortly a

lady came with lime squash and offered it to the three with pleasant affability.

As soon as they saw her, our two friends couldn't contain their curiosity. They glanced at each other with unsuppressed wonder.

As though he hadn't noticed that, Bhishman went on to Sumati, 'Weren't you about to ask something?'

But Sumati had by now forgotten all else. The only question drilling in her mind was: 'Who is this woman?' Have we then been terribly mistaken in all our lofty reveries about him?

Even before she could think about this completely, the unrestrainable Bala asked him with impudence, 'Who is the lady who came just now?'

'She is my friend, replied Bhishman calmly.

'Has she come here to see you?'

'No, she lives here. Rather, I should say, I live in her house'.

'Excuse me, may we know who else lives in this house? We dare to ask because we have come here eagerly to know completely about you. That is why Bala left it unfinished among them. My own form

'Oh, that's all right. What great indiscretion have you committed? Madhuri, who came just now and myself, we are the only people living here'. Having said so, with the same impeccable calmness he regarded the two friends seriously.

Sumati's face went dark. Her eyes brimmed with tears and dismay. But Bala's eyes were dancing with eager curiosity about the whole affair.

'You two have come here to know about me, isn't that so?' Having asked thus Bhishman sat still for a while closing his eyes. Then slowly opening them again he continued: 'I was under spiritual training right from an early age. When I was young, soon after finishing education, I joined a math. When I was young, I was really a wild cat. My mother could not stand my pranks. As I was her only child, she could never bring herself to beat me. So, when she could stand my mischiefs no more, she would lock me in the prayer room. During such periods, I was under a kind of trance. We can't even say trance. Maybe a 'heavy silence'. The images and pictures of deities and the rest of the things in the room used to grow suddenly gigantic and engulf me among them. My own form

would be becoming huger and huger. At the end, by the time my mother opened the room, I would've been under a kind of slumber. That slumber.....' suddenly he kept quiet. The quietness endured for minutes. Sumati regarded him reverently. Bala egged him on audaciously, 'then what happened?'

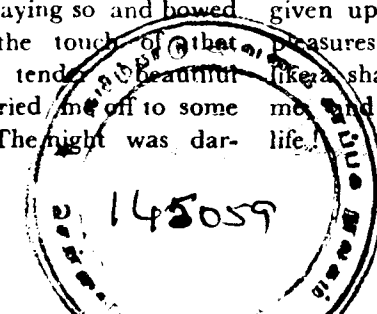
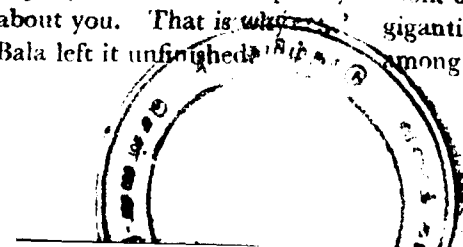
Bhishman awoke with a start. 'What was I saying? Oh Yes, I joined the mutt after college. There we were self-sufficient. But the mutt dispensary was not yet complete. To collect funds for this, we staged plays. We staged devotional plays like Dhruva, Prahlada etc. We also used to camp in neighbouring villages for this. We went once to Pazhaiyanur. That was ten years before. I used to be interested in literature. I had been suggesting to our master that we could stage plays like Sakuntala or Svapnavasavadatta which would be even more successful. But the master used to object saying that others were ready to stage such plays. But at that time he relented and agreed that Sakuntalam could be staged. The other members also gladly agreed. Pazhaiyanur is surrounded by beautiful groves. There was a torrent running at the edge of the village. As it was rainy season everywhere, there was verdure. An orphanage in the place offered

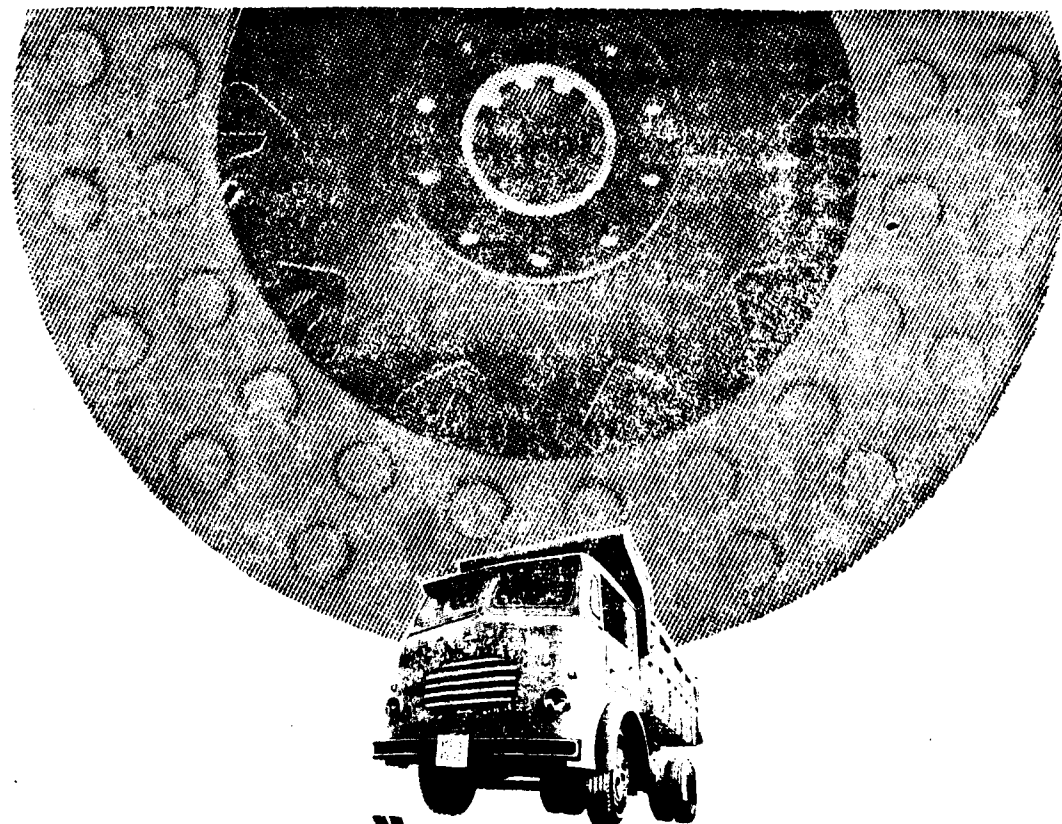
us hospitality. Our plays there attracted crowds for more than ten days. People from neighbouring hamlets flocked to see our play. The profits were enormous and unforeseen. I played Dushyanta. Sakuntala was played by another male inmate. We had no women then at the mutt. I had already a robust physique. My celibate life had added to the charm. May be attracted by my winning personality, many people came to meet me. Madhuri was one of them.

'She is the daughter of the head of an ancient petty state. She had lost her parents. She looked after her properties with the help of a distant relative. She was often donating to the orphanage. She had come to give me also a huge donation. When she came to see me in my room, there was a rain as we have today. The fragrance of jasmines was wafted by the cool breeze and pervaded the chamber. Our talk sidetracked from orphans to the play. She praised me to the skies about my skill in acting and portrayal. She told me that I had captivated her heart. When she approached me saying so and bowed to me, the touch of that opulent tender beautiful body carried me off to some region. The night was dar-

kening outside. The same darkness which spread outside appeared to pervade my mind too. We lost ourselves. When I jerked myself back from that, I was overwhelmed by bitter grief. I cried with abandon. The next day everyone got ready to return to the mutt. I announced that I won't be going with them. I also gave up the very day my sacred ochre robes and adopted usual white clothes. Puzzled and perturbed, without having understood what had happened, they left me. When they left, Madhuri came home. 'I interrupted your calm sacred life, unknowingly or knowingly, please don't forsake me now. You mean everything to me.' So saying she cried pitifully.

'I took her along with me and saw the master, I told him frankly all that has passed and asked him to exempt me from the sacred mutt. I asked him to permit me to serve the mutt throughout my life residing out of it. He consented. The magazine *Ticchudar*, this house, all this belongs to Madhuri. For having made me lose my equilibrium once during these forty years, she has given up all her wealth and stays here like a shadow; looking after me and leads her sacred life.'





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When Bhishman finished, a long silence weighed there. After that Bala ventured: 'You could've married her, why didn't you?'

I told her so. But she refused. She didn't want to involve me in family life for her sake. I also didn't dare to do anything opposed to her wishes'.

Sumati starts 'It beats me the way you are. You are deeply immersed in philosophy and yet...' Bhishman interrupts her with a smile. 'A seeker after truth should under all circumstances, be deeply immersed in philosophy. Moreover, as some immature minds think, God is not hiding in the sky or in scriptures. In the various big and small incidentals of our daily life, we can see His stamp. In the smile of a baby, in the fresh bloom of a flower, in the kindness of a woman, in the courage of a man—wherever there is beauty and excellence, there we may see Him!' Bhishman declared so in an ecstatic state.

'We are small kids. Acquainted with you just for the past few hours. Still you tell us everything frankly straight away without any reserve!' says Bala in a voice melting with gratefulness.

Bhishman laughed. 'You are straightforward people. You wanted me to be frank. Then isn't it but proper that I should reply equally frankly?'

Sumati looked at her watch. 'It is two minutes past six now.'

Both of them got up. Bhishman also got up. Opening her bag, Bala gave her a cover—'You should accept this as our small contribution to your humanitarian work.'

'Had it been planned before?' asked he. 'No, my father had sent me this for train fare. I had kept it inside this purse. Accidentally it was used for this.'

'Then for train fare?'

'If I write to my father explaining it to him, he will, surely send some more'.

Opening the built-in almirah, Bhishman took out two books. Writing something in each, he preseeded it to the girls. In Sumati's collection of essays was written: 'There is nothing to be rejected in life. But there are plenty to be changed. And seeing this Bala opened her book. It was the novel called '*Radha's Lament*'. 'Let auspiciousness pervade and multiply! Having written this he had signed. 'But, isn't this book written by Mayan?' exclaimed Bala.

'Well, it is written by me'.

'Then is Mayan...'

'That is my another pseudonym'.

When Bala was lost in wonder, Sumati asked somewhat with disgust 'so for religious things alone you

have the pseudonym Bhishman'.

"That was the name given to me by the master. When I asked for a pen name, he gave me this name. I also started writing novels. The master appreciated them very much. He said I should not suppress an inborn talent and encouraged me very much. The sales of *Ticchudar* are also promoted by secular stuff! Thus the mutt also benefits.' So saying he laughed.

'Will the name Bhishma...' having started thus Bala gave an innocent cherubic smile without finishing it.

I think that the name is suitable to me. Since apart from that particular instance, both before and afterwards, I led a life similar to that of Bhishma. There is no need that you should believe. But that is the truth'. He also laughed.

'Then we will be going', Sumati folded her hands.

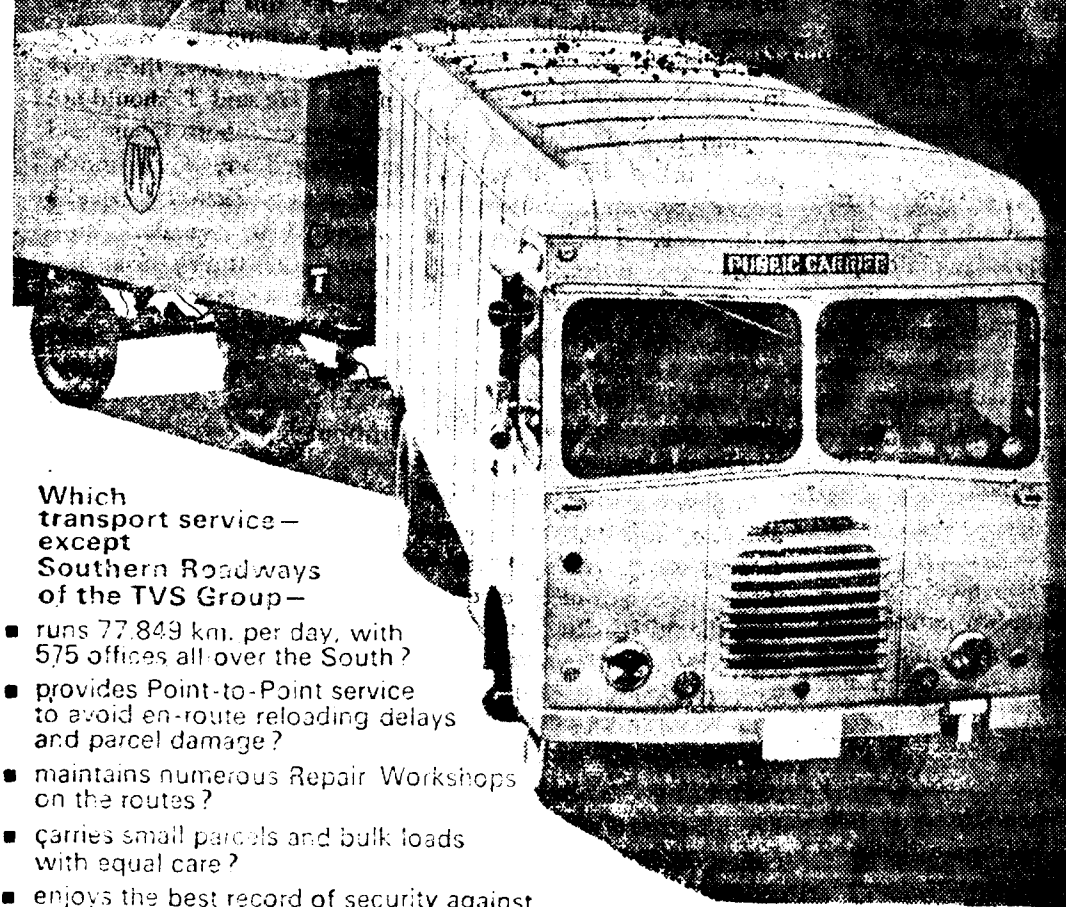
'We are very happy to have met you' said Bala.

'I am also very happy. It is very rare nowadays to see students like you'. Bhishman bid farewell to them with real friendly feeling.

The two of them started homewards. Sumati looked at Bala's face. In that child-like face, there was a new clarity. There was no rain now. Looking at the dark clouds dispersing in the sky Sumati walked on.

Translation from Tamil: S. Mira.

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Discoveries that gave a new turn to History

The Sun Temple at Konarak

BY SANJAYA

It has been said that, if the early European visitors had seen the Sun Temple at Konarak, they would have regarded it, and not the Taj Mahal, as the building of India. Certainly there is a superb magnificence about Konarak, even in its damaged condition that must extort admiration.

The great monument was built by the Eastern Gangas. These were one of the longest enduring Indian dynasties, ruling over the northern parts of Andhra Pradesh and many areas in modern Orissa for quite a thousand years. At the height of their power, their dominion extended from the Ganga to the Godavari, mainly along the seacoast.

THREE GREAT TEMPLES

Historians make a distinction between the early Gangas and the later Gangas. The main difference is that the former ruled from Kalingapatna, and the latter from what is now called Cuttack. The first capital of the dynasty, in the centuries before the Christian era and a little later, was Dantapura, where, according to tradition, a corporeal relic of Lord Buddha was enshrined.

The identification of Kalingapatna has been a problem. But most probably it was Mukhalingam, now in Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh, but hardly twenty miles from Parlakimedi, now in Orissa. There are three temples in Mukhalingam. The Madhukesvara is one of the greatest of India's

temples. The Somesvara, even in its truncated form, glows with superb sculpture. The Bhimesvara is a comparatively plain structure.

The Madhukesvara was built by King Damarnava in the second half of the tenth century, and the other two not long after. In the next century, the eleventh, Anantavarman Chodaganga, who was a grandson of a Chola king, and a contemporary of Kulothunga I, removed his capital to Cuttack. Soon after he built the historic temple at Puri.

When exactly Konarak, which forms a kind of topographical triangle with Bhubaneswar and Puri, received the great Sun Temple cannot be stated. It was certainly built by one of the Gangas, named Narasimha. There were many kings of this name. It is likely that the builder of Konarak was the same as the renovator, or rather the re-builder, of Simhachalam.

Some scholars believe that Konarak was built by one of the Kesari kings, the immediate predecessors of the Gangas, in the latter half of the ninth century, and that what Narasimha, the Ganga, did was only to add the "natmandir" the hall in front of the sanctum.

For some centuries the great temple glowed in all its splendour. Today the site is rather barren and sandy. But it can be

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easily supposed that, in the heyday of the monument's fortunes, it must have been a great and populous city. But the monument fell on evil times when Orissa was conquered by the Muslims. There is a record dated 1628 which suggests that the plinth of the temple was hidden under its debris, the temple itself in ruins and deserted.

There is a reference to Konarak earlier than this. Abul Fazl, the celebrated historian of Akbar's times, has a long account of it in his "Ain-i-Akbari" or "The Institutes of Akbar". Konarak cast its spell on this early visitor for all that he was not a Hindu. He says:

ABUL FAZL'S ACCOUNT

"Also near Jaganath (Puri) is a temple dedicated to the Sun. Twelve years' revenue of that country (Utkal) was spent on it. Experts, difficult to please, are struck with amazement on seeing it".

Fazl then describes the temple minutely, "The height of its walls is a hundred and fifty hands and their thickness nineteen. It has three doorways. On the eastern one are figures of two elephants nicely carved, each catching hold of a man in its trunk; on the

western door figures of two horsemen have been set up with all equipment and splendour; and on the northern there are likenesses of two lions making prey of an elephant and standing rampant on it. In front (of the temple) is an octagonal pillar of black stone, fifty yards in height".

The historian continues. "On ascending the nine flights of steps (which lead to the temple) one sees a spacious enclosure and a large niche, built in stone, in which has been carved the Sun with other planets".

Then occurs a description of the celebrated relief sculptures on the walls. "All round (the temple) are represented a variety of human figures in different moods, some with their heads on the ground, others standing, sitting, or lying, some laughing, some weeping, and some wondering (at something). Besides, there are different sorts of minstrels, a number of strange animals which do not exist except in imagination."

That the monument was already in ruins when Fazl saw it in the second half of the sixteenth century, is clear from the fact he makes no mention of what is undoubtedly Konarak's most striking part, the huge, wonderful wheels of the simulated chariot of the Sun God. On the other hand, the sculptural groups of lion and elephant, which are now placed separately, each on its pedestal, at a little distance from the temple, were then in position.

RAZED DOWN BY MUSLIMS

The temple had been deserted when Fazl saw it because in 1565 the Muslims, under Kalapahar, attempted to raze it down. In this they failed, but they succeeded in desecrating it. They carried away the copper finial and the upper part of the "rekha deul", that portion of the "Vimana" which in southern phraseology is the "griva". This must have been followed by the slow and gradual collapse of the walls.

There is no further notice of the temple until 1824, when a British official saw it. He was struck by its extreme stage of dilapidation, and began speculating about the reasons. He wrote, "The origin of the dilapidation may obviously be ascribed either to an earthquake or to lightning, but many causes have concurred to accelerate the progress of destruction when once a beginning had been made".

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These causes were "the effects of weather on a deserted building" and of the "vegetation that always takes root under such circumstances". The local people also made free with some of the materials for their building purposes. The Mahrattas, who ruled Orissa for a time in the eighteenth century, also made a contribution. It is said that they "actually broke down a part of the walls to procure materials for building some insignificant temples at Puri". The magnificent pillar, perhaps the one which Abul Fazl mentions, now stands in front of the Jagannath temple at Puri.

SAVED IN TIME

In 1838 James Fergusson, the magisterial but largely unsympathetic, historian of Indian art visited the temple. His account may be read in his "History of Indian and Eastern Architecture". Not long after came Rajendralal Mitra, with whom Fergusson chose to quarrel and whom he lost no opportunity of slighting. There is a full account of the temple in William Stirling, an honoured name in Orissa annals.

A storm further damaged the monument in 1848. A report written that year states, "Having surveyed and examined the wonderful ruins of the temple of the Sun, we turned towards the north The tall, narrow shaft of a part of the tower of Black Pagoda has been blown entirely down, and nothing now remains but the 'Mooksala' or entrance chamber... The stone roof of the 'Mooksala' has also fallen in, and that splendid specimen is not destined to survive many years".

The writer came to the conclusion, "Konarak will soon be a simple heap of stones". Fortunately it has not, but there can be little doubt that it was saved in the nick of time. A few more decades of neglect and Konarak would certainly have become a

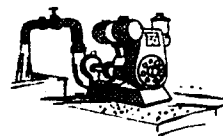
"heap of stones". It was in the first year of the twentieth century, 1901, that the first serious attempt to restore the monument began. This fact is curious. By the beginning of the present century a number of monuments in other parts of the country were, as I have indicated in my previous articles, discovered and conserved. Konarak had to wait a long time, a perilously long time. This was probably because the classic land of early Indian archaeology was western and northern India. The eastern coast was apt to be neglected apart, of course, from Mahabalipuram.

The restoration of the monument began in 1901 and the task continued for full nine years. What was a large amount of money for those days, a lakh of rupees, was spent. By stages the buried parts of the temple appeared to view again, first the wheels of the chariot and the horses. The "Jagamohan" was restored by 1905. Next came the "natamandir" the hall in front of the former. (A typical Orissa temple contains, in its axial part, the sanctum the "Jagamohan" and the "natamandir"). The superb image of the Sun God was discovered in the debris and placed in position.

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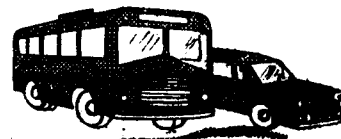
The monument continues to receive attention and it has been completely refurbished. When I saw it some ten years ago, I could hardly tell that what I saw was the result of a restoration. Though many parts of the temple are lost, the rest have, under the influence of time, become mellow and a kind of monument by themselves. That the conservation has been judicious may be judged from the fact that the names of two Britons, one of them Macmillan, scrawled on walls (a practice which dates back from Roman centurions on Egyptian monuments) could still be seen. The date given below was, if I remember aright, 1840.

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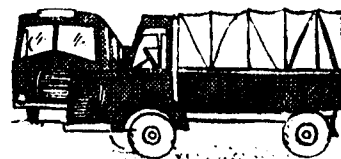


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Burial Ceremony Among the Aboriginals of Chotanagpur

By P. C. ROY CHAUDHURY.

Those who have visited the land of the Khasis in Assam must have noticed occasional cluster of massive stones buried longitudinally on the ground. These cromlechs are somewhat like the stone hinges at Devonshire in England. The cromlechs in Chotanagpur are quite common and are usually located in the outskirts of the aboriginal villages. The cromlechs represent the burial ground of the non-christian Adibasis or the animistic aboriginals.

They are called **sasandiris** in common parlance. The **sasandiris** have particular stoneslabs for particular families and the village elders know the import of the peculiar markings on the cromlechs identifying the families.

The **sasandiris** are held highly sacrosanct as the **Jantopa** ceremony or the burial of some bones of the dead man is a must in the **sasandiri** and under the particular

slab of the family. Even if a dead body has been buried or cremated elsewhere some bones have to be dug up, brought to the original **sasandiri** of the clan and buried there with some religious ceremonies. The group-mind and the sense of comradeship so very prominent among the Adibasis of Chotanagpur find a satisfaction by this ceremony.

SCENE OF ANIMATION

About 45 years back while camping in the interior of Ranchi district for Survey and Settlement work I had the privilege of observing a **Jantopa** ceremony. Time had stood still in that village by the side of a streamlet and there were about fifty Adibasi families in it.

I found the deserted **Sasandiri** was the scene of some animation and on enquiry my adibasi peon told me there would be the observance of a **Jantopa** ceremony of a

man who had died about year back and was buried in a distant village. I took permission of the village **Pahan** or spiritual head for being present as the Adibasis are very sensitive at times. Permission was not only given but there was some excitement that a **Hakim** will be witnessing the ceremony.

I was told that a piece of the scalp had been dug out on the previous evening and kept in a new earthen pot. Rice and some liquor had been put in the pit of the grave that was filled up. The rice had been cooked in turmeric. The earthen pot had been taken home and was kept under the eaves at the back of the house. In the morning before the earthen pot with the piece of bone was brought to the **sasandiri** a wizard had made some calculations and dug two pits in the **angan** (court-yard) of the hut where some

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sacrificial meat, some mustard
seeds, cotton seeds, iron rust
and some puffed rice were
put in and the pits were filled
up.

The earthenpot was
brought to the **sasandir**
with great solemnity. A re-
lative walked in front with
the pot and he was followed
by others carrying a grey
fowl, a quantity of **illi**
(home brewed rice beer), red
lead, oil, puffed rice, mustard
and cotton seeds. The
women mourners were scatter-
ing mustard and cotton seeds
while wailing. The **sasandir**
was washed and anointed
with oil and turmeric. The
grey fowl was killed. A goat
was slaughtered and the severed
head was rubbed against the
stones in the **diri**. The
family slab was slightly raised
slantingly, the earthen pot
was put in along with some
illi and then the slab was put
in its original place. A prayer
was chanted to the dead
spirit that all that was due to
him had been done and now
that he was in the family
sasandiri he should see that
the family be relieved of
the great obligation and
there should be no more of
epidemics, drought and ill-
ness of the cattle. There
should not be any more of
belly-aches and headaches
and with this the liquor was
distributed and drunk. A
ceremonial bath at the nearby
spring, followed and the

mourners went to the
village. There was further
slaughter of goats and birds
and a general feast for the
whole village was held with
plenty of **illi**.

The **sasandiri** and the
stone slabs therein determine
the **khunt** or the family tree
and the villagers would will-
ingly give up their lives
for the upkeep of the
sasandiris. The settlement
officers have to be very care-
ful in their records to mention
the **sasandiris**.

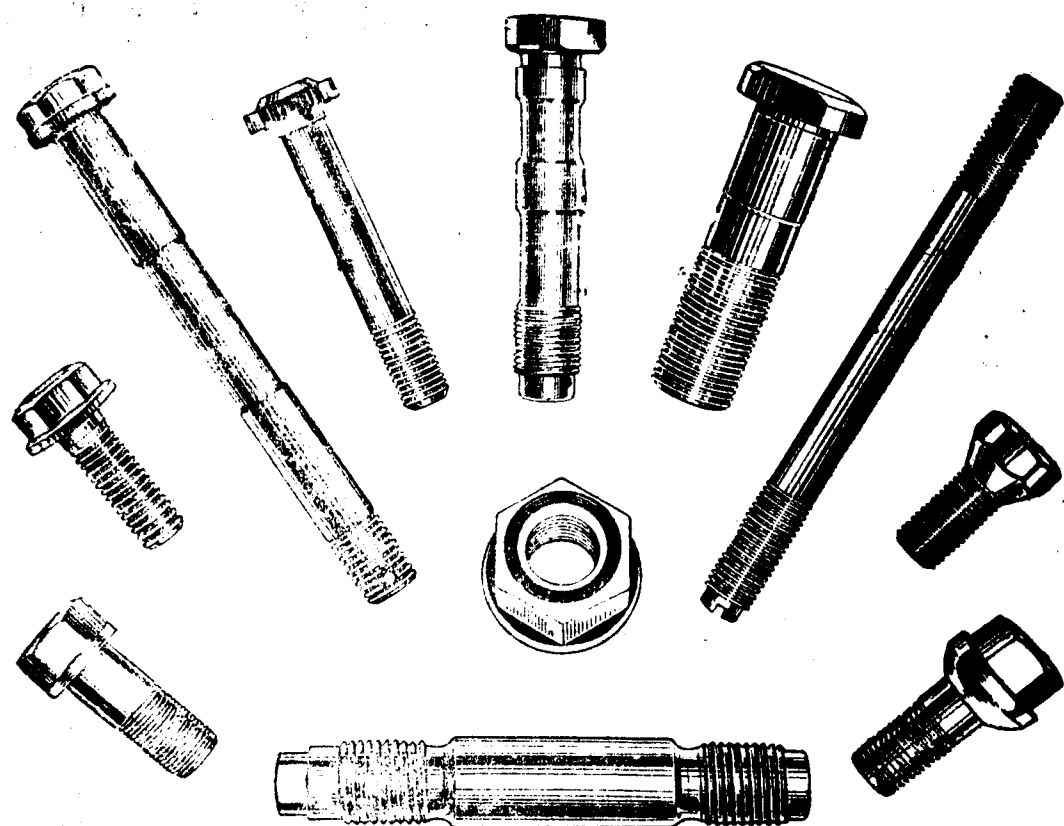
MANY RITUALS

The various rituals have
their particular significance.
A tribe is very strongly knit
and the belief is strong that
even death does not separate
the deceased from the family.
The Chotanagpur tribals
along with the tribals of other
areas in India believe that
the departed spirit lingers in
the **ora** (household) for a
pretty long time and guides
the sorrows and joys of the
family. After a child birth
a common ceremony for the
Pahan is to go on reciting
the names of the departed
persons of the family and
when the baby stops crying
at a particular name it is
held that the departed has
been reborn in that baby and
that name is given to the
newborn baby. That is why
the ceremony of **Jantopa**
and the idea is that the depar-
ted spirit is brought home.
To a tribal the **gotias** (reala-

tives) may not be all invited
to a marriage but they must
be brought together at the
funerary ceremony. That is
why the **Jantopa** ceremony is
widely participated in. Rice
and liquor are important
factors in their life-style and
without them hardly any
ceremony. They want a
large progeny for cultivating
the land, look after the pigs
and cattle and the fowls and
for snaring or killing the wild
animals. That is why the
scattering of the mustard and
cotton seeds. This is analo-
gous to the Hindu ceremony
of doing **ashirbad** (blessing)
to the bride with paddy and
nub grass which really ex-
press the wish that the bride
may raise a large family.
Ploughshare and the few iron
instruments are very vital to
them and that is why they
invoke the blessings of the
departed spirit by offering
iron-rust.

TRIBAL LIFE-STYLE

It is customary to use a
particular kind of fowl for a
particular ceremony. If a
ceremony is to be held to stop
a cattle epidemic, fowls of
grey feather will not be used.
By rubbing the gory head of
the slaughtered goat on every
slab at the **sasandiri** all the
dead spirits of those whose
bones are buried are propita-
ted. A communal feast,
where the sacrificial meat
and **illi** are taken profusely is
a must in tribal life-style.



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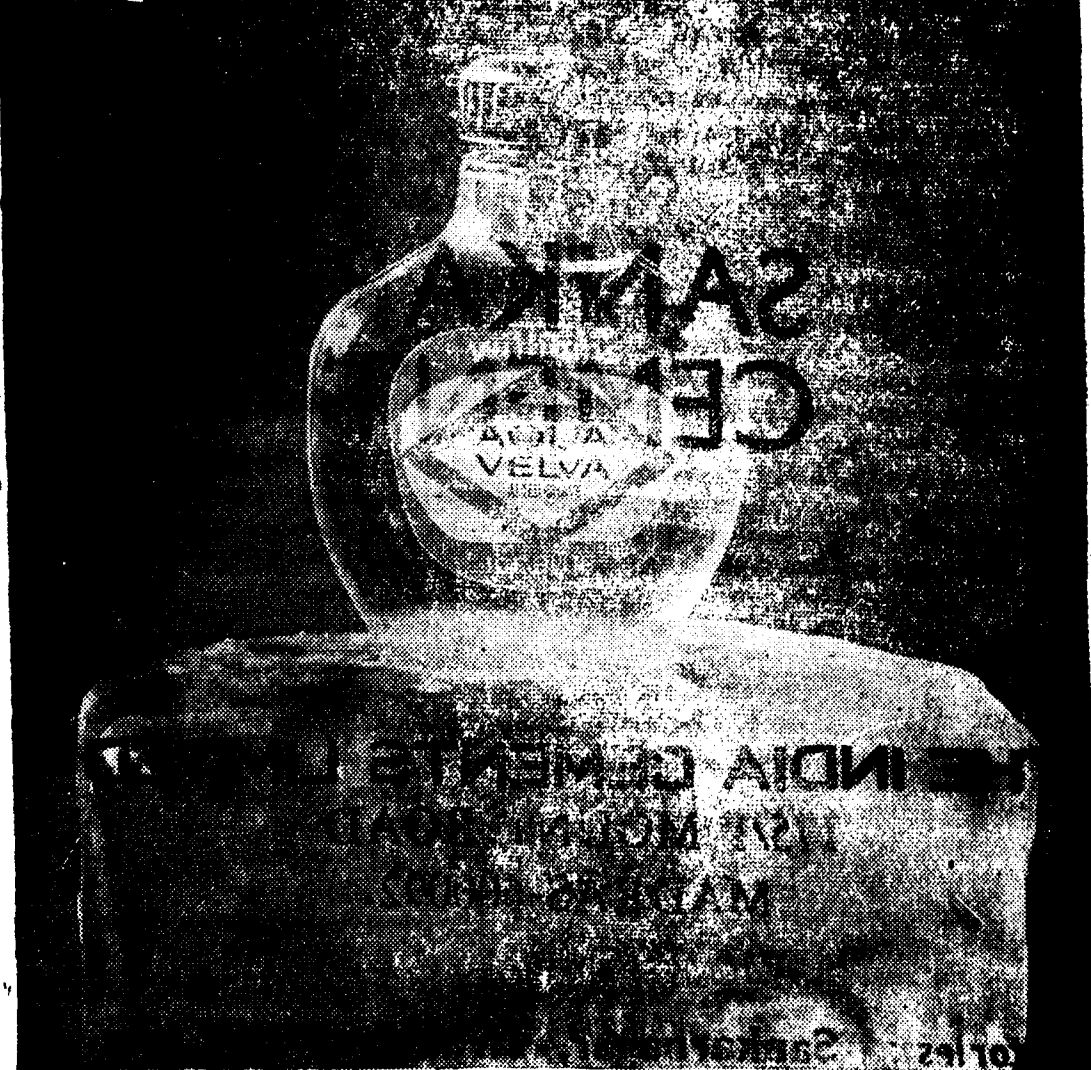
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Forgotten Heroes of Kerala II

Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja The Lion of Kerala

BY T. P. SANKARANKUTTY NAIR, M. A.

Even as early as the last decade of the 18th century, resistance to British authority in Malabar was started by Kottayam Kerala Varma, popularly known as Pazhassi Raja of North Malabar. Kerala Varma belonged to the lineage of the Patinjare Kovilagam Rajas of the Zamorin family who asserted their independence in the last quarter of the 18th century and mobilised the people in rebellion against the British. The importance of these early revolts lies in the fact that the India of those days was not politically awake and Indians were practically strangers to nationalism and democracy. Again, these Malabar revolts took place almost half a century before

the outbreak of 1857. For his heroic resistance, Kerala Varma secured a place equal to Maharana Pratap Singh or Chhattrasal Bundela in Indian history. Sardar K. M. Panikkar has rightly named Pazhassi Raja as the Lion of Kerala, "**Kerala-simha**".

PAZHASSI'S HERITAGE

Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja of the Kottayam Royal family had his headquarters at Pazhassi, a place 6 kilometers South of Mattannur in the Mattanur — Koothuparambu road of the present Cannanore district of the State of Kerala. This young prince of sterling patriotism, courage and honesty resided in a

palace inside the famous Pazhassi Fort at Pazhassi. So he came to be called the Raja of Pazhassi. According to tradition, the ancestry of Pazhassi can be traced back to the well-known Harischandra Perumal of Kottayam. Kottayam, the central taluk of North Malabar included in the Tellicherry division is an area of forest clad hills, rich in pepper and other spices. Even as a young man Pazhassi Kerala Varma was very dynamic, adventurous and daring. These qualities together with his dedication to lost causes made him the hero of the land. He was also a great literary figure of the period. Sardar Panikkar assigns the authorship of **Kottayam stories** to Kerala Varma of Pazhassi, of which the four **Attakathas** form great literary compositions.

The Pazhassi family lent powerful support to the East India company in the beginning. In fact Kerala Varma was better known as an ally of the British at the close of the third quarter of the first century. When the French Governor General came to Malabar with the intention of uprooting the British from the Malabar

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coast, Pazhassi family came to the help of the British and is said to have sent 6000 Nayers with whose help, the British secured many French settlements. When Hyder Subdued all kingdoms from Chirakkal to Cochin in 1766, Pazhassi Kerala Varma fought bravely at Kottayam instead of seeking asylum in Travancore. When Hyder decided to secure Tellicherry with the assistance of the Rajas of **Kolathunad** and **Kolatiri**, he was on the side of the British. Pazhassi's support of the British forced **Sardar Khan** of the Mysore army to give up his plan of conquest. The advent of **Tippu** in Malabar forced the British authorities to seek the support of the native chieftains by guaranteeing rights and privileges of the native states through a proclamation issued from Tellicherry in 1790. Relying on the assurances of the British authorities, Kerala Varma and his forces fought whole-heartedly for them. But for Pazhassi's help, the defeat of **Tippu** might not have been brought about. The fall of **Seringapatam** and the treaty signed in 1792 form a great landmark in the establishment of British supremacy in Malabar. But, thereafter Britain did not care for the native rulers and showed no great keenness to fulfill their promises. Not only that, they even began to consider the native chieftains

as their subordinate officers. This duplicity of the British enraged Pazhassi and this was the begining of the eruption of hostilities.

FIRST REVOLT

Pazhassi stood firm and asserted his independence. The proclamation of the British in 1792, that they were the virtual rulers of Malabar and that its people as well as the chiefs and princes were their subjects further worsened the already strained relationship between the two. Meanwhile, **Veera Varma**, the **Raja of Kurumbranad** and uncle of Pazhassi Kerala Varma, laid claim to the rich pepper district of Kottayam. The joint Commissioners, ignoring the claims of the nephew Kerala Varma and in contravention of previous agreement entered into by the company, leased Kottayam to the Raja of Kurumbranad in 1793 for one year. Kerala Varma strongly objected to this and promptly showed his contempt for the alleged authority of his uncle as well as the regulations of the Company by stopping all collection of revenue in the district and by taking action against the erring Mappillas. In 1794 the lease was renewed for another five years and this led to open hostilities. British troops were stationed at Kottayam and Manattana in 1795 to protect the **Kurum-**

branad tax-gatherers. But the tactics adopted by Pazhassi foiled all collection of revenue. In April 1795 British forces tried in vain to arrest the Raja and his supporters. Pazhassi Kerala Varma retired to the jungles of **Wynad** and started guerilla warfare. The nature of the terrain and the difficulties of transport rendered the company's military operations a failure. On the 18th December 1795, the British Commissioners issued a proclamation for-bidding the people to co-operate with therebels. The impenetrable forests of **Wynad** gave them protection from the British and also secured for them the assistance of faithful aboriginal tribes, the **Kurichyars** and the **Kurumbas** over whom Kerala Varma exerted great influence and who acted as the guerilla squads of Pazhassi. By January 1797, a series of clashes took place in which numerous Britishers lost their lives. In March 1797, battles were fought on three consecutive days from the 9th to the 11th and the British forces were over-powered by thousands of Nayers and **Kurichyars**, who rallied round the Raja of Pazhassi.

Another clash occurred on the 18th of March 1797 when a British detachment of 1100 men was surprised and cut to pieces in the **Periya Pass** in **Wynad**. The British

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then sued for a peace. To effect a settlement, Jonathan Duncan, Governor of Bombay and his Commander-in-chief visited Malabar, for they knew Pazhassi's stubbornness. A record dated 9th May 1797 indicated that a combination of France with Mysore and other contumacious Chiefs of India against the British was about to take shape. A settlement with Kerala Varma was therefore considered a political necessity for the existence of British empire in India. Under the mediation of the Raja of Chirakkal, an agreement was reached by which the lease to the Raja of **Kurumbranad** was cancelled and it was renewed in favour of Kottayam Royal family. Thus the first revolt of Pazhassi Raja was brought to an end. Kerala Varma was pardoned for all his misdeeds and granted a pension of Rs. 8000 per annum.

SECOND REVOLT

The truce arranged between the English East India Company and the Raja of Pazhassi Kerala Varma in 1792 was not destined to last long. The irrepressible Kerala Varma again raised the standard of revolt in 1800. If the reason for the first revolt of Pazhassi was the mistaken revenue policy of the British authorities, the second revolt was due to the move of the

British to take possession of Wynad. The district of Wynad had been ceded to the British after the fall of Mysore under the Partition Treaty of 1799. Kerala Varma of Pazhassi raised his claim to the district on the ground that it was not formally ceded to the British by Tippu. Pazhassi resisted all attempts of the Amildars of the Mysore commission to take possession of it. He organised a large army of Nayars, Mappillas and Mussalmans, the last for the most part disbanded soldiers of Tippu Sultan, to fight the forces of the British. Kerala Varma was only served by loyal lieutenants such as **Kannavath Sankaran Nambiar**, Kaiteri Ambu Nair, Edachanna Kungan Nair, Vellur Emen Nair and Kuricheyar leader Talakkal Chandu.

Pazhassi gave good training to the new recruits in the art of guerilla warfare and prepared them to fight in the Wynad jungles. Himself a brilliant strategist, Pazhassi's training resulted in the organisation of an efficient force to meet any eventuality.

Col Arthur Wellesley decreed that Pazhassi's insolence should not go unpunished. The challenge posed by Pazhassi Raja was taken so seriously by the British government that they appointed in 1800, Col Arthur Wellesley, later the Duke of Wellington,

as the Commander of the forces in Malabar, South Canara and Mysore. The military control of the province of Malabar was transferred to the Madras government in the same year. The challenge of Kerala Varma gave Wellesley sufficient experience in the art of war, which helped him in later years to defeat Napoleon. Wellesley for the first time introduced in Malabar the "Block house system" after constructing small forts here and there. The Duke, as Logan writes, had to struggle relentlessly from 1800 to 1804 to put down Pazhassi and his adherents.

TURBULENT BY NATURE

In a despatch dated 7th April 1800, addressed to Lt. Col. Kirk Patrick, Wellesley revealed his strategy: "The annihilation of the Pazhassi Raja will have a great effect on the minds of the disaffected, with which this province abounds. There never was a country which from its nature, its situation, the manners of its people and its government was so well calculated for turbulence; but, the fall of Pazhassi Rajah and the reduction of Wynaad will curb it considerably." Wellesley in many of his despatches gave expression to the military superiority of Kerala Varma. In his despatch to Col. Sarton dated 18th September 1800, Wellesley said,

"The most difficult problem facing us is the question of resisting Pazhassi Raja- If he is defeated everything will be quiet." In another letter dated 18th Feb 1803 to Major Macleod, he had written, "Disaffection, disturbance and rebellion exist in Malabar... The rebellion could not be considered at an end so long as Pazhassi was alive..." All these despatches of Duke Wellington showed that Kerala Varma Pazhassi was a terror to them. The target of the British was the head of Pazhassi.

CAPTURED & HANGED

The epic resistance of Kerala Varma began during the monsoon of June-July, 1800. Wellesley's elaborate plan of campaign came to nothing though the army under Col. Stevenson entered Wynad in 1801. He constructed a line of military posts from Edathara to Tamaras-
seri pass which would help him cut off Pazhassi from his followers in South Malabar. By May 1802 every important place of Wynad fell into his hands and Pazhassi Raja with his consort **Kunjani Kettilamma** and his followers became wanderers in the jungle of Wynad. Some of the followers of the Raja like **Chuzhali Nambiar** and **Peruvayal Nambiar** were captured and hanged. It seemed as though the resis-

tance movement was almost crushed. Another serious blow to the Raja of Pazhassi came in November 1801 when **Kannavath Sankaran Nambiar** was captured and hanged.

The injudicious policy of Major Macleod, the new collector of Malabar, gave a new turn to the situation. In January 1802, he issued orders disarming the district. His sharp enhancement of the land revenue in September 1802 fanned into flame the dying embers of revolt.

In October 1802, the rebels under the leadership of **Edachanna Kungan Nair** and **Kurichyar** leader **Talakkal Chandu**, captured the Panamaram fort in Wynad and massacred its garrison of 70 soldiers. This was followed by the capture of Kottiyur, Periya Passes and the spice plantations of Anjarakkandi. In 1803, the whole province was in ferment; rebellion had spread in all directions and armed bands openly took the field against government troops.

By January 1803 the rebels began to fight openly in Kurumbranad. Having failed to deal with the situation, Major Macleod resigned handing over charge to Mr. Richards of the Court of Fon-dari Adalat at Mahé who

did much by timely concessions to allay the storm in South Malabar. Early in 1801, Thomas Harvey Baher, a young energetic British officer came as Sub-Collector of Tellicherry. Baher initiated a policy of holding local people responsible for the maintenance of peace. Captain Watson organised a police force called **Kolkars**, 1200 in number to deal with Pazhassi troops. The rebels now withdrew to the forests of Wynad. A general amnesty was proclaimed except to the chief rebels. By the end of 1804, Madras troops came and by April 1805, all appearance of opposition had died out. On the 16th June 1805 a proclamation was issued offering rewards for the apprehension of the Rajah of Pazhassi and his close lieutenants. The reward for Pazhassi and his close lieutenants, The reward for Pazhassi apprehension was 3000 Pagodas and others 1000 Pagodas each. Many encounters followed between **Kolkars** and Pazhassi troops and in one of such encounters **Talakkal Chandu**, the hero of Kurichyas was captured.

PAZHASSI SHOT DEAD

The British now enforced a strict blockade of Pazhassi Raja in his jungle retreat. Baher and his troops followed the Raja into the jungle and



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on the 30th of November 1805, Kerala Varma's body was taken. One version is that, when the enemies surrounded the Raja, he swallowed diamond out of his ring and ended his life while Collector Baher in his report stated that Kerala Varma was shot dead. Four of his chief lieutenants were killed and two others, including Pazhassi's consort were captured. The Raja's dead body was taken in a planquin to Manantaddy with customary honours, on the consideration that "although a rebel, he was one of the natural chieftains of the country and might be considered on that account rather as a fallen enemy".

HIS PLACE IN HISTORY

The story of Kerala Varma, the Raja of Pazhassi, is an epic of heroic opposition to British supremacy in India,

though we can't say the extent to which he was inspired by the modern sentiments of nationalism. Again it is difficult to state whether Pazhassi might have risen at all against the Company if he had been originally vested with the direct management of Kottayam. But the circumstances so shaped themselves that he had to take to arms to become the first fighter for freedom in Malabar.

THE LION OF KERALA

Collector Baher observed that the movement of Pazhassi was supported by the Chettier, a wealthy section of the populace as well as the coastal merchants. Baher wrote, "In all classes, I observed a decided interest in Pazhassi Raja towards whom the inhabitants entertained a regard and respect bordering

on veneration which, not even his death can efface". He had rendered great service to the Company in the infancy of their government in Malabar. But later he attempted to check the growing British power and his precious life was sacrificed at the altar of liberty. The revolt was in a true sense a popular struggle for national liberation and all classes of people, irrespective of class, creed or religion, actively participated in it. This extraordinary genius, the most intractable of the Rajas, had won for himself an everlasting place in the hearts of his countrymen.

Pazhassi Raja who lives in the memory of the people of Kerala as Keralasimham is one of the earliest fighters for freedom and his name will find a prominent place in the annals of India's struggle for independence.

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