

296

Indian History Congress

Souvenir

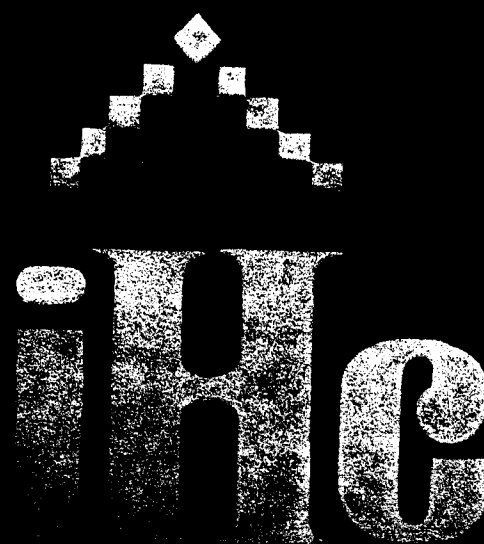
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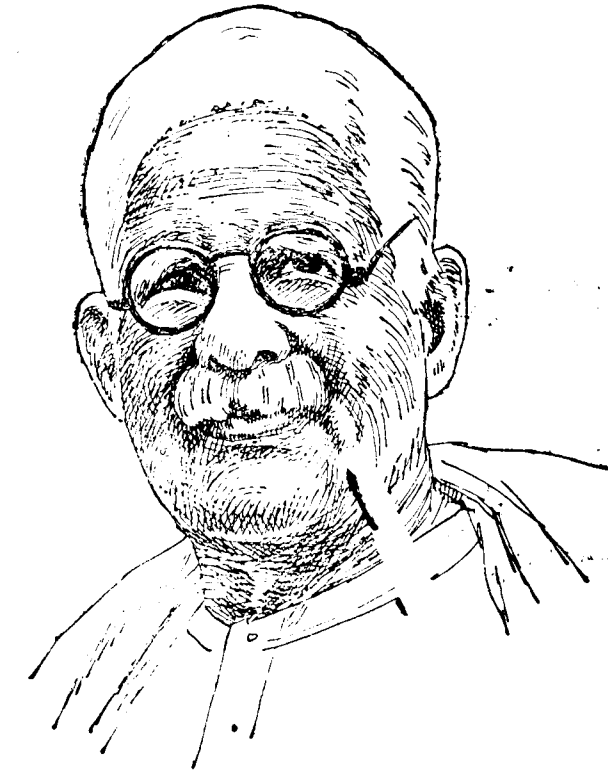
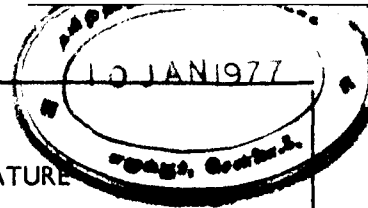
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Where R = reflectance at the surface

R^1 = reflectance of the substrate

X = thickness of the layer

$a = \frac{S+K}{S} = 1 + \frac{K}{S}$ Where K = Kubelka-Munk absorption coefficient

S = Scattering coefficient

putting X equal to ∞ and solving the equation for R

$$R_{\infty} = a - \sqrt{a^2 - 1} = 1 + \frac{K}{S} - \sqrt{\frac{K^2}{S^2} + \frac{2K}{S}}$$

Solving this for K/S ,

$$\frac{K}{S} = \frac{(1-R_{\infty})^2}{2R_{\infty}}$$

That is the Kubelka-Munk Theory

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**XXXVII
INDIAN
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1976**

Department of History, Calicut University

We have sought to honour the Calicut Session of Indian History Congress by making this Souvenir into a convenient handbook recording selected aspects of Kerala's past in such a manner as to reflect the progress of historiography in this region. The University authorities gave us a free hand. Well-wishers helped us with advertisements. Response from the scholarly world was so good that considerations of space alone prevented us from using much of the material that we received in spite of their high quality and relevance.

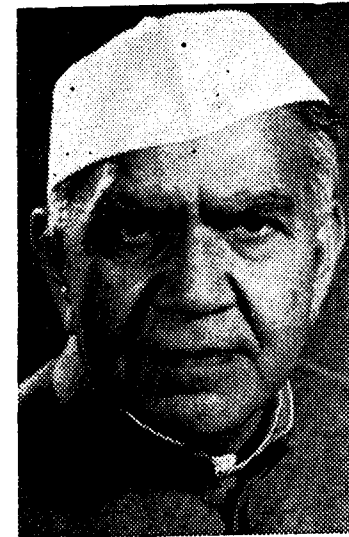
The actual work of editing and proof reading was done mostly by Prof. A. P. Ibrahim Kunju, Mr. M. Gangadhara Menon and Mr. Veluthat Kesavan. Mr. A. C. K. Raja has contributed the cover design and the illustrations which convey the charm and simplicity of village life in Kerala. For all the neatness and elegance of Production we are indebted to the workers of the Calicut University Press under the energetic leadership and expert guidance of Mr. T. Rajendran. This humble offering is placed in the hands of fellow historians in the hope that it will serve them as an introduction to the problems and possibilities of historical research in Kerala.

Dr. M. G. S. NARAYANAN

Dr. K. K. N. KURUP

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Press Secretary to the President
 Rashtrapati Bhavan
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 India.
 December, 1976.

No. F. 2-M/76.

Dear Dr. Narayanan,

The President is glad to know from your letter of the 29th November, 1976 that the Indian History Congress will hold its 37th Annual Meeting from the 29th December, 1976 at Calicut. He offers his greetings to the organisers and participants and sends his best wishes for the success of the Conference.

Yours sincerely,
 Sd.
 A. M. Abdul Hamid

Dr. M. G. S. Narayanan,
 Local Secretary,
 I. H. C. Calicut



Vice-President
India
New Delhi
December 5, 1976.

I am glad to learn that the 37th annual meeting of the Indian History Congress will be held at Calicut from the 29th of this month. I send my best wishes for the success of the meeting.

Sd.
B. D. Jatti



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- o Socialisation of urban and urbanisable land. Ceiling on ownership and possession of vacant land and on plinth area of new dwelling units.
- o Special squads for valuation of conspicuous construction and prevention of tax evasion. Summary trials and deterrent punishment for economic offenders.
- o Special legislation for confiscation of smuggler's properties.
- o Liberalisation of investment procedures. Action against misuse of import licences.
- o New schemes for workers' association in industry.
- o National permit scheme for road transport.
- o Income tax relief to middle class-exemption limit raised to Rs. 8,000.
- o Essential commodities at controlled prices to students in hostels.
- o Books and stationery at controlled prices.
- o New apprenticeship schemes to enlarge employment and training, especially of weaker sections.



Raj Bhavan
Trivandrum
December 6, 1976

Message

I am happy to learn that the 37th Session of the Indian History Congress will be held at the Calicut University premises during this month and that a Souvenir will be published on the occasion. The importance of historical studies in the modern age cannot be over emphasised, for events in one country affect conditions in others. A knowledge of history is also essential for the citizen for properly discharging his duties and responsibilities. I understand that the Indian History Congress has already published a comprehensive history of the country which was a long felt need and a cherished wish of the people. I am sure that an objective and impartial account of the history and culture of the people of India published by the Congress will be very helpful to all. I send my greetings and good wishes for the success of the session of the Congress and for its future endeavours.

Sd.
N. N. Wanchoo



Trivandrum
6th December, 1976

Message

I am happy to note that the 37th Annual meeting of the Indian History Congress, the national forum of Historians in India, is to be held at the Calicut University on 29th, 30th and 31st December, 1976.

I take this opportunity to extend my cordial greetings to all the participants of the History Congress and also I send my good wishes for the success of the function.

Sd.
C. Achutha Menon
Chief Minister, Kerala



Trivandrum
8-12-1976

Message

I am very glad to know that the Calicut University is bringing out a Souvenir in connection with the 37th annual meeting of the Indian History Congress to be held at the Calicut University on 29th to 31st December 1976. I send my greetings and wish the Souvenir all success.

Sd.
Chakkeery Ahmed Kutty
Minister of Education
Kerala

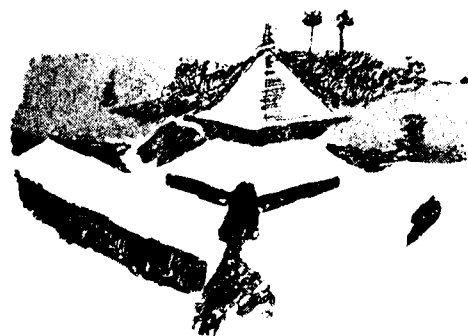
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The writers: —

Dr. K. V. Raman, Professor and Head of the Department of Ancient Indian History and Archaeology, Madras University — served in the Archaeological Survey of India and took a leading part in the excavations at Poompuhar and Kodungalloor.

Prof. P. G. Edwin, Head of the Department of History, Govt. Arts & Science College, Calicut — doing research on 'British Relations with Travancore'.

Velayudhan Panickasseri, writer well-known for his Malayalam translations of historical works by foreigners who visited Kerala in the past

M. Gangadhara Menon, teaches history at the Govt. Arts & Science College, Calicut — doing research on the 'Malabar Rebellion, 1921'.

K. Gopalan Kutty, doing M. Phil. at the J. N. U., New Delhi—working on 'National Movement in Malabar, 1930-42'.

Veluthat Kesavan, teaches history at the Govt. College, Kodungalloor—doing research on 'Power structure of Monarchy in South India'.

Dr. M. G. S. Narayanan, Professor and Head of the Department, Calicut University — has published books and papers on South Indian History, ancient period.

K. V. Krishna Ayyar, retired Professor of History, Zamorin's College, (now Guruvayurappan College), Calicut—author of 'The Zamorins of Calicut'.

Dr. A. P. Ibrahim Kunju, Professor, Department of History, Calicut University — has published books and papers on Kerala History, medieval and modern periods.

Dr. K. K. N. Kurup, teaches history at the Calicut University—has published books and papers on Kerala History and folk-culture of Kerala.

Moorkoth Kunhappa, Editor, Malayala Manorama, Calicut — well-known essayist in Malayalam.

P. K. Gopalakrishnan, well-known writer in Malayalam — has published books on the Cultural History of Kerala.

K. P. Kesava Menon, Chief-Editor and founder of 'Mathrubhumi', Calicut—veteran freedom fighter and eminent writer of Kerala.

N. S. Mannadiar, Assistant Secretary, Industries Department, Govt. of Kerala—worked as Census Officer, Laccadives.

N. V. K. Warrier, Ayurvedic physician well-known for his erudition in Ayurveda.

Prof. S. Guptan Nair, Head of the Department of Malayalam, University of Calicut — well-known literary critic in Malayalam.

Rajan Gurukkal, teaches history at U. C. College, Alwaye — now doing M. Phil. at J. N. U., New Delhi, working on 'Temples in Kerala'

Chummar Choondal, Professor, Department of Malayalam, St. Thomas College, Trichur — has published a number of monographs and papers on folk-lore and folk-arts in Kerala.

Dr. N. A. Karim, Dean of Students, Calicut University—Ph. D. in English Literature, known for perceptive essays on literary topics.

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important dates in kerala history

c 300 B. C	Kātyāyana mentions Kērala.	849 A.D.	Tarisappalli Copper Plates of Sthanu Ravi to Syrian Christians.
c 270 B. C.	Aśōkā's Major Rock Edict No. 2 mentions Kēraḷaputras.	869 A. D	Śaṅkaranārāyaṇīyam, a treatise on astronomy by Sankaranārāyaṇa, astronomer in the court of Sthānu Ravi
c 200 B. C.	Patañjali mentions Kēraḷa in his <i>Mahābhāṣya</i>		
45 A. D.	Hippalus' discovery of the monsoon	c 880 A. D.	Cēra conquest of the Mūṣaka Kingdom
52 A. D.	Legend of St. Thomas mission to Kēraḷa.	898 A. D	Grant to Śrīmūlavāsam, the Buddhist monastery by the Āy King Vikramāditya Varaguṇa
75 A. D.	Pliny mentions Kēraḷa in his <i>Natural History</i>		
550. A. D	Cosmas Indicopleustes mentions Kēraḷa products like pepper and <i>Arjellia</i> (large nut=coconut)	949 A. D	Vellān Kumāran and a number of Kēraḷa chieftains participate in the Cōla war at Takkōlam against the Rāshtrakuta forces
c 630 A. D.	Dandin, a court poet of Narasimha Varman Pallava refers to two learned Brahmins from Kēraḷa in his <i>Avantisundari Kathā</i>	962 A. D.	Coronation of Bhāskara Ravi Manukulāditya
788 A. D.	Birth of Sankaracārya	988 A. D.	Capture of Kāntalūr Śāla by Rājarāja Cōla
c 800 A. D.	Coronation of Raja Rajādhirāja Paramēśwara Bhaṭṭāraka Sri Rājaśekhara Dēvar, first known Cēra king of Makōtai (Mahōdayapuram)	1000 A. D.	Copper plate grant of Bhāskara Ravi to Jōseph Rabbān; Chief of the Jews at Cochin
820 A. D	Death of Śankaracārya	1018 A. D.	Rājendra Cōla invades Keraḷa
c 824-25 A.D	Beginning of Kollam Era	1089 A. D	Coronation of Rama Varma Kulaśekhara
844 A. D.	Coronation of Sthānu Ravi Kulaśekhara	1096 A. D.	Conquest of Kollam by Kulōttunga Cōla
845 A. D.	League of Śrikanṭha Cōla and Sthānu Ravi against the Pallavas	1102 A. D.	Recapture of Kollam by Rāma Varma Kulaśekhara

1122 A. D. Disappearance of Rāma Varma Kulāśekhara the last of the Cēraman Perumāls of Makōtai. Disintegration of the Cēra Kingdom.	1695 Anjengo Factory established	20, Oct. 1795 Fall of Dutch Cochin	1866 First Arts College established at Trivandrum
1225 A. D. Grant of Vīra Rāghava to Iravikortan	1696 Proclamation of Kērala Varma abolishing Pulappēḍi and Maṇṇāppēḍi.	1795 Subsidiary Alliance with Travancore	1885-1924 Śrī Mūlam Tirunāl, King of Travancore
c 1293 A. D. Marco Polo refers to Kollam, Kumari and Eḷi	21, April, 1721 Āṅṅinnal outbreak in which 10 Englishmen belonging to the Anjengo Factory massacred	1800-1805 Paḷāśsi Rāja's revolt -- Second Stage.	1885 Establishment of the Legislative Council in Travancore
1341 A. D. Puduvaippu Era	1715-17 Dutch War against the Zāmorin	1801 Transfer of Malabar Province from Bombay Presidency to the Madras Presidency	1st Jan. 1891 Malayāḷi Memorial submitted
1343-45 A. D. Ibn Batūta visits Kērala	1725 Māhe captured by the French.	1805 Travancore accepts British paramountcy. Death of Paḷāśsi Rāja	1904 Establishment of the Śrī Mūlam Praja Sabha
c 1412 A. D. Mā Huan visits Cochin and Calicut.	1729-58 Mārthāṇḍa Varma, King of Travancore	1808-9 Revolt of Vēlu Tampi and Pāliyatt Accan	1911 Deportation of Swadēśabhimāni Rāma Krishna Pillai
1443 A. D. Abdur Razzāk visits Calicut as the Ambassador of the Persian Emperor, Shah Rukh, to the Zāmorin.	1739 First Land Revenue Settlement in Travancore	11, Jan 1809 Kuṇḍara Proclamation of Vēlu Tampi	1921 Malabar Rebellion
May 21, 1498 Vāscō Da Gāma arrives at Calicut	10th Aug 1741 Surrender of the Dutch at Kuḷaccal	1809 Vēlu Tampi commits suicide	1924 Vaikom Satyāgraha
1503 Earliest European forts built in India at Cochin and Cannanore	1750 Trappaḍidanam (Dedication of the Kingdom)	1812 Kuṛicciya Revolt against the British	1924-31 Regency of Sētulakshmi Bai
1508 Battle of Chaul. Portuguese fleet defeated by a combined fleet of Egypt, Gujarat and Calicut	1753 Treaty of Māvēlikkara between Travancore and the Dutch	1812-18 Col: Munro, Resident Dewan of Cochin and Travancore.	1931-49 Sri Cittira Tirunāl Bāla Rāma Varma
1531 The Pōrtuguese build a fort at Cāliyam	1755 Last Māmāka (Māi āmāgha) festival at Tirunāvay	1829-47 Svāti Tirunāl, King of Travancore	1932 Nivarttana (Abstention) Movement started
1571 Cāliyam fort captured by the Zāmorin.	1758-98 Rāma Varma (Dharma Raja), Ruler of Travancore	1834 First English schools established at Trivandrum	1936 Temple Entry proclamation
1599 Synod of Diamper	1761-62 Travancore assisted Cochin to recover Cochin territories from the Zāmorin.	1836 First Census taken in Travancore	1937 Establishment of the Travancore University
1600 Fall of Kōṭṭakkal and murder of Kuṇṇāli IV by the Portuguese	1765 Treaty between Travancore and the Nawab of the Carnātic.	1845 English Ele. School established at Ernakulam	1938 Dyarchy in Cochin
1634 Battle of Kaṇiyāmkūḷam	1766 Haidar Āli invades Malabar Kingdoms	1st Mar., 1858 First English school established at Tellicherry	1942 Punnapra-Vayalār rising
1653 Revolt of the 'Coonan Cross'.	1789 Mysore forces attack Travancore		1946 Praja Maṇḍal in office in Cochin
6, Jan. 1663 Capture of Cochin by the Dutch.	1790-1805 Rāma Varma, Śaktan Tampuran, King of Cochin.		1947 Establishment of Responsible Government in Travancore
1678-84 Umayamma Rāni the first woman ruler of Vēṇāḍ (Travancore)	1791 Treaty between Cochin and the British		1st July, 1949 Travancore and Cochin integrated
1694 Tellicherry factory established	1792 Treaty of Seringapatam; Malabar ceded to the British		1st Nov. 1956 Kerala State formed ☐
	1794-97 Paḷāśsi Rāja's revolt against the British-First stage.		



dr. k. v. raman

archaeological excavations in kerala

In one sense, it is an easy task to write on the excavations in Kerala for the simple reason that they have not been too many. It is strange that while excavation operations are on the increase in the last two decades in almost every corner of India, there has been no large-scale excavations in Kerala. Kerala seems to be holding up her secrets still and is at best giving them in slow dosage to those who strive for it. Geographically, Kerala is considered as an area of "relative isolation" with all the advantages and disadvantages of it. Mainstream culture, it is said, took some-time more to reach Kerala and once it reached, it stayed there for a longer time than elsewhere. For instance, Vatteluttu script which held sway in Tamilnadu and Kerala, stayed for a longer time in Kerala whereas, in Tamilnadu, it had been replaced by the Tamil Grantha script by the 10th century. Similarly, timber architecture held the ground in Kerala for a longer time than elsewhere, partly compelled by the climatic and geological necessities. With regard to the wall-paintings, early examples of which are scanty, the art was cultivated in the later medieval and early modern times to a degree which cannot be matched by any part of South India. Again, in the assimilation of Sanskrit language and influences, Kerala provides a classic example of peaceful penetration and absorption into its fabric. Perhaps, no other South Indian language has taken to Sanskrit with such ease and felicity, for, even an average man's colloquial language contains considerable Sanskrit flavour, which all looks but part of the native fabric. All these are mentioned to show that though the sub-continental influences were comparatively slow in reaching the relatively isolated zone of Kerala, they found a receptive home there. Kerala was not swept off its feet but took to them naturally in course of time.

Let us see the pattern of material culture of Kerala in the proto-historic and early historic times as revealed by its monuments and excavations. Here, of course, our purview is limited because the excavations have so far been sporadic and limited; nevertheless, they provide us some random samplings, as it were, of the area's cultural potentialities and material for comparison with the neighbouring tracts. The excavation can be reviewed under two headings (1) proto-historic and (2) historic.

1. Proto-historic phase:

Not much is known about the pre-megalithic cultural vestiges of Kerala. Traces of pre-iron age period have not come to light so far in any appreciable measure. So, the proto-historic antecedents of Kerala practically start with the megalithic times. Kerala is quite rich in this culture, having as it does, quite a spectacular variety of the megalithic monuments, spread over in its different parts. Though it is part of the widespread peninsula megalithic culture that prevailed from Hyderabad to Kanyakumari, yet many of the Kerala types are distinctive and are not to be found elsewhere. Thus, the types like *Topi-kal*, (Hat-stone) *Kudai Kal* (umbrella-stone) and also the rock-cut tombs are peculiar to Kerala, whereas the other usual types like the dolmens, cairne circles, urn-burials, menhirs etc., are also to be found. Thus, in the megalithic culture also, Kerala displays this trend, unity in diversity, even as it does in many other fields.

It is but natural that these monuments should have attracted the investigations and aroused the curiosity of the people. First, the work was sporadic and later a systematic classification of these monuments was made by V. D. Krishnaswami and others in 1945. Similarly, the excavations in these

monuments were done in a rather rough and ready fashion in the early years and later, scientific excavations were done in some select areas. All these have served to give us a fairly good picture of the architectural and the material content of this culture. Some of the more important excavations may be mentioned briefly type-wise.

1. Dolmens:

Dolmens in Pulimattu, north of Trivandrum, were excavated. They were found spread over 2 furlongs. They yielded a bronze bell and iron spearhead. The chambers were constructed of thick undressed granite slabs. In Maraiyūr in the high ranges on the Dēvikuḷam border a number of dolmens having two or three chambers have been found.

2. Urn-burials:

The practice of urn-burials is prevalent in southern districts of Tamilnadu and Ādichanallūr in Tirunelveli is a well-known site. Similar urns are found in Travancore area also. Some of them at Vēḷimalai near Eraṇiel, 40 miles from Trivandrum were excavated. They yielded Black and Red pottery and iron implements. An urn-burial at Panjapalli Parambu near Irinjālakuda was also excavated¹. Systematic work in the urn-burial site was done at Pōrkaḷam by Archaeological Survey of India. It is an extensive site. Excavation revealed the presence of pyriform urns nearly 3 feet high and containing several smaller pots of Black and Red Ware, bones, iron implements like dagger, and carnelian beads. The pit in which the urn was placed was sealed with earth and a capstone. The pottery consisted of Black-and-Red Ware, the All-Black Ware and Red-Slipped Ware. Thus, Kerala urn-burials fall in line with those from other parts of South India with some minor variations².

An extensive urn-burial site is at Sultan's Battery in Wynad on the top of a low hill. Here both round-bottomed and pyriform urns with globular body, flaring neck were found. Urns had capstone slabs, a feature found in Madurai District also³.

Evidence for the prevalence of this practice have been found in many places in the past as well as recent explorations.

3. Rock-cut tombs:

Burials kept in rock-cut chambers or caves is something peculiar to Cochin and Malabar regions of Kerala. This burial mode was practised in the predominantly lateritic coastal plains. Even in the outskirts of Calicut some rock-cut chambers were found accidentally while quarrying the lateritic rock. The chambers were above 6 ft. high from the floor. Pots and iron implements were found inside the chambers. Apart from this regular investigation has been done and a fairly good picture of the architectural set up and funerary contents has now emerged. Many have only one or two chambers, but Eyyāl caves are multi-chambered. They have stepped open court leading to a chamber, circular or rectangular with stone benches on either side and also a central pillar. The roofs of the chambers are usually domical. The benches, the pillar, the top opening are variable features. There are single, double and triple-chambered caves. Some good work in these was done at Pōrkaḷam near Kunnamkuḷam.

The above list is not exhaustive but only selective. It would serve to show that different types of megalithic monuments have been excavated and these have given us a fairly good picture of the material and cultural equipments of these monuments. They have shown how this culture was widely prevalent throughout South India including Kerala and how it was rooted in iron age. But this is not enough. Not only more of these monuments should be subjected to systematic investigation but also the associated habitation sites should be examined. There is a great need to have a fuller picture of these people, their habitation equipment, housings, their religion, etc.

Historic period:

Excavation of historical sites has gained interest in recent years in South India. Kerala, or rather the erstwhile

1. An. Rep. of Cochin State 1933-34 p. 3; 1936-37 pp. 7-10.
2. *Ancient India* No. (1952), Excavation by Sri B. K. Thapar.
3. L. A. Cammiade, *Man*, vol. 30, pp. 183-6.

Cochin state, takes the credit of having conducted one of the earliest excavations in a historical site. It was Sri Anujan Achan's painstaking excavations at Cēramān Parāmbu in 1945-46, soon after Wheeler's excavations at Arikamēdu. In Tamilnadu excavations in the historical habitation sites were done only in 1960. (e.g. Kāvēripattinam, Kanchi, Uraiyūr etc.) But Kerala was one of the first states in the South where attention was paid not only to the megalithic monuments but also to historical site. But, unfortunately, this first work has also remained the last one as it was not followed up by subsequent works until 1969.

Excavation in Cēramān Parāmbu and Tiruvanjikkalam

Anujan Achan did fairly extensive excavations at different spots and published the report in his Annual Report for 1947. He laid five trenches in Cēramān Parāmbu, two within the Church compound and one outside the western gate of Tiruvanjikkalam temple. He did not find anything worthwhile writing about the latter two spots. So, in his report he only deals with the materials found at Cēramān Parāmbu. His report shows that his excavation methods and recording of the evidence were sound and scientific. Though his interpretations and conclusion were defective, he has recorded the evidence in such a way that a later generation with better equipment and experience could look at them and correct the readings. He was obviously handicapped by certain factors. During his time the study of ancient South Indian pottery was still undeveloped. The earliest date he could assign to his finds was the middle of the 14th century A. D. which would be post-Vaippu era or post-Periyār floods of A. D. 1341 (An. Report 1947, p. 2-3). He thought that Vaippu floods was widespread and it covered up all the pre 14th century deposits. This assumption naturally influenced his further assessment of the evidence, though at several places his trained eye did not miss to recognise the pre-14th century antiquities. The low habitation deposit and high level of the sand made him lay rather undue emphasis on the floods.

Cranganore Excavations — 1969 - 70.

Archaeological Survey of India, Southern Circle, in collaboration with the Kerala

State Dept. of Archaeology did excavation in an extensive area around Cranganore in places like Cēramān Parāmbu, Tirukkulaśēkharapuram, Bālaganēsvaram, Mathilakam, Karūppadanna etc. in the seasons 1969-70.⁴ The excavations at Cēramān Parāmbu revealed undoubted evidences of the pre-Vaippu era. Distinctive red-slipped potsherds gave clear clue for the 7th-8th century levels while the occurrence of the Chinese Celadon Ware attested to the 10th century A. D. deposits. The former were made locally and used in profusion by the people. The latter, viz. the Celadon Ware, was imported. It is well-known that the unpainted Celadon Ware was extensively imported into different parts of Asia during Sung and Yuan dynasties, i. e., between A.D. 960 and 1368 when its manufacture centred round Lung and later at other areas. The archaeological evidence is supported by historical notices. Alberuni (A.D. 973-1048) refers to the export of Celadon pottery to India, Ceylon and Persia. Marco Polo (A.D. 1288) also refers to this. In South India all along the east coast it has been found in places like Arikamēdu, Kāvēripūmpattinam (in Cōla country) and Kāyalpattinam (in Pandya-nadu). At Kāvēripūmpattinam, they were found in the excavations along with the coins of Rājaraṣa (A. D. 985 — 1014) a clear evidence of the 10-11th century A. D. context. Now the presence of this pottery at Cēramān Parāmbu, Tirukkulaśēkharapuram and Mathilakam clearly establish its link with the Cōra country as well, during the 10th, 11th Century. This is further conclusively proved by the occurrence of the two Cōla coins of the time of Rājaraṣa I in the Mathilakam excavation. Let us review result of the excavation in greater detail.

1. Cēramān Parāmbu

A trench 3x2 metres was dug right upto the natural sand level. Total cultural deposit was not more than 2 metres. Stamped and decorated pottery in dull red colour found largely in upper layers and less in lower ones. The Celadon Ware in green and blue colours found in the middle and lower levels. Rectangular tiles used for roofing were recovered in all layers. The lowest layers can be dated to 7th-8th century A. D. on the basis of ceramic evidence. Anujan Achan's excavations recorded developed iron and copper

implements from the middle and later levels. Similarly, beads of glass and semiprecious stones and glass bangles were also obtained⁵.

2. Tirukkulaśēkharapuram

Three trenches were laid—two within the temple compound and one outside it on the northern side. The temple is an ancient one, associated by popular belief with Kulaśēkhara, the Vaishnava saint-king of the second Cōra empire. There are also a few old inscriptions in the temple, one of which refers to the foundation of the temple 196 years earlier. The inscription is datable to the 11th century on palaeographical grounds and hence, the foundation of the temple could go back to the 9th century A. D.—a date that may well agree with the date of Kulaśēkhara. So, the temple, as a dated landmark, could provide us with some clues with regard to the deposits that were there earlier to the founding of the temple. With this idea in view, a trench was put up against the temple wall (the inner prakāra). The deposit prior to the foundation of the temple was sterile sand. The contemporary layers yielded the familiar pottery types of Dull Red Ware with an admixture of Bright Red-slipped Ware of the early medieval times. Here also the sturdy rectangular flat tiles were once used for roofing. The trench outside the compound wall repeated more or less the same sequence. The only note-worthy finds were a few fragmentary but massive walls built of laterite blocks. One of this might go well back to the 8th-9th century A. D. Here also Celadon Ware and Red Pottery were found in the middle levels.

3. Tiruvanjaikalam

On the south of the temple, on the way to Cēramān Parāmbu, a site was chosen. It is the place where the old Bālaganēsvaram temple stands. It is an old landmark. But here again the ground has been quarried right upto the natural

sand level for extensive coconut plantation. Only a strip of land around the temple has been left alone. Excavation yielded a mixed evidence: 8th-9th century as well as later deposits.

4. Mathilakam

This is to the north of Cranganore town. An elevated spot where an old settlement and a temple are said to have been situated was taken up for excavation. Here, the total cultural deposit was not more than 5 to 6 feet. A number of massive but fragmentary walls of laterite were unearthed datable to the 10th-11th centuries. Copper coins of Rājaraṣa I and his son Rajendra I (11th century) were found at the middle level. We know from other sources that during the time of these two kings there was Cōla expansion into Kerala. Particularly Mahodayapuram was claimed to have been part of the Cōla empire. The occurrence of the Cōla coins should be viewed in that context. The Celadon Ware and the indigenous Red-slipped Pottery available in the same strata can be bracketted with them. The hundreds of small earthen lamps found in the site would help us to identify the structures as part of a temple. There is an epigraphic reference for the existence of a Jain temple in the 10th century at Mathilakam⁶.

Besides these, several other places were examined like the site opposite to the mosque at Cranganore where no cultural deposits were found; Karūppadanna, much speculated upon by Dr S. K. Iyengar merely on the basis of the sound of the name, was devoid of any ancient deposits. Some tentative conclusions can be made on the basis of the excavations.

1. The vicinity of Cranganore, the ancient Mahodayapuram was brimming with life right from 7th-8th century A. D. for which we have rich cultural materials in the excavation. The habitation deposit as a whole, is low but has yielded fairly uniform pattern of cultural equipment all

5. Ann. Rep. of Arch. Dep. Cochin, 112/ME(1945-46) plates III—IV

6. There are four Jain Inscr. 10-11 Cent. A. D. From Talekkavu, Kinalur, Alathur (Godapuram) and Tiruvannur in Kerala which mention the rules of Tirukunavay as a model. See M. G. S. Narayanan 'Tirukunavāy and the Date of Cilappatikāram: Journal of Indian History Vol XLVIII, Sl. No. 144, Dec. 70.

4. Indian Archaeology—A Review 1968-69 & 1969-70.

around Cranganore, clearly indicating a well-developed and integrated cultural stage.

2. Uniform absence of earlier vestiges in the excavations is noticed. Material evidences that usually go with the early periods of South India like the Black and Red Pottery or Rouletted Ware, or Russet-coated Ware which are available in such sites like Kāvēripūmpattinam, Uraiyūr, Karūr, Kāñchi etc. are conspicuous by their absence.

3. The location of Muziri the port of the Cēras has to be looked for. The reference to the Muyirikkōdu in Bhāskara Ravivarman's Copper plate grant to the Jews is important in this connection. There is

an old Jewish settlement of Parur even now and Muyirikkōdu, which was probably the ancient Muziri, can be looked for there. But it is quite strange that the tradition regarding this ancient port has been completely lost, and the scope for archaeological work is severely restricted by the extensive coconut plantation and the removal of soil upto the natural sand level.

In spite of these restrictions, there is scope for some habitation sites associated with the megalithic and later periods being excavated in different parts of Kerala to know more about the cultural sequence and material content. Historical sites like Vīlīnjam, Ēlimalai etc., should also be explored, not to speak of the smaller places mentioned in early literature and inscriptions.



prof. p. g. edwin

some problems relating to historical research in kerala

Despite its hoary past, Kerala still remains largely outside the main stream of Indian history. The landing of Vasco Da Gama at Calicut in 1482 put Kerala on the world map; yet the historians of India have paid but scant attention to the history of this state which is really a fascinating one and affords many opportunities for the diligent student of historical research. Thanks to the selfless efforts of a few scholars, certain areas of Kerala history have been adequately explored; but many aspects still remain untouched. A problem peculiar to Kerala history is that much of the work done by scholars in recent years deals with the modern period. There remain many gaps in the ancient and medieval history of this land. If progress in this field has been slow, it is largely due to a variety of circumstances over which the individual researcher has little control. An attempt is made in this paper to focus attention on certain problems relating to historical research in Kerala.

As regards the use of source materials, historians of ancient Kerala have placed undue reliance on literary evidence. It is true that many literary works of great merit are available in Sanskrit, Tamil and Malayalam. But their historicity is not beyond doubt. There are ample literary materials in them; but it is difficult to distinguish between what is historical and what is legendary. Hence it is not safe to reconstruct the ancient history of Kerala on the basis of literary evidence alone. Inscriptions, coins and monuments should be given due importance in the writing of history because information derived from these sources is often found to be more reliable than literary evidence. Kerala abounds in these non-literary sources. Many

inscriptions were collected and serialised by the archaeological departments of the erstwhile princely states of Travancore and Cochin. Inscriptions and coins form an authentic source of information for the early history of Kerala. The coins issued by the Tamil kingdoms and the rulers of many local dynasties throw considerable light on certain aspects of Kerala history. Being a maritime state with a long sea coast, Kerala had contacts with the outside world from very early times. Roman coins gathered from the different parts of the State testify to the brisk trade that was carried on with Rome in the early centuries of the Christian era. Monuments also furnish useful information to the student of ancient and medieval periods of Kerala history. Temples, churches and mosques through their geographical location, architectural designs and inscriptions, supply the historian with many important clues for the reconstruction of the political, social and cultural history of this land.

In spite of their limitations, literary sources, both indigenous and foreign, are indispensable for the study of ancient and medieval Kerala. There is an abundant supply of indigenous literature available in Sanskrit, Tamil and Malayalam. At one stage a curious blending of Tamil and Malayalam called Malayālma was widely used. There is also difficulty with regard to the script used in many records and inscriptions. The vast majority of the inscriptions discovered from Kerala were written in a peculiar script called Vatteḷuttu. A few scholars alone can read these inscriptions and the student has to seek their help. Unless the researcher is well-trained, he will not be able to make use of those materials written in that script.

Hence adequate facilities must be provided for the student of history engaged in research to acquire skill in these scripts. A more practical approach to the problem will be to undertake a systematic translation of these documents into English so that students can make use of them without help from others.

For the student of the modern period of Kerala history, there is no dearth of literary sources. But he is baffled by the variety of languages in which they are written. In addition to innumerable Malayalam records, copious materials are available in the Portuguese, Dutch, Danish, French, and English languages. All the Europeans who came to trade with Kerala have left valuable records of their transactions here. Some of these writings are in the form of reports and surveys and they are indispensable to the student of Modern Kerala as they throw much light on the political, social and cultural life of the people of the land with whom they came into contact. So long as these sources are not available to the student in a common language like English, he will be put to a lot of unnecessary labour and inconvenience. Proficiency in so many languages should never be a precondition for the prosecution of historical research in the modern period

Inaccessibility to certain types of important source material constitutes another major hurdle for the research scholar. Many precious records dealing with the colonial period of our history are kept in the archives and libraries of European countries like Portugal, Holland, Denmark, France and England. Copies of these documents should be made available to the student at the place of his research. It is too much to expect all of them to go to these countries in search of materials. The Indian Council of Historical Research can solve this problem by arranging with the archives of Europe for supplying microfilm copies of these documents to the research centres in India. Steps should also be taken simultaneously to get these records translated into English. Individuals can do little in such matters.

Even with regard to the source material available in India, there is the problem of their preservation. Many of the records are in bad shape and unless steps are taken promptly to prevent further decay, they will

be lost for ever. The same is the case with old and rare books. Photostat copies or reprints of such books should be made available in order to preserve them for the use of posterity. It is gratifying to note that steps are being taken at the national and state levels to tackle this problem. But there must be better co-ordination if attempts in this direction should produce the desired results. A central organisation like the Indian Council of Historical Research can do much in this matter. They should contact the libraries in our country and get from them a list of books that need urgent care.

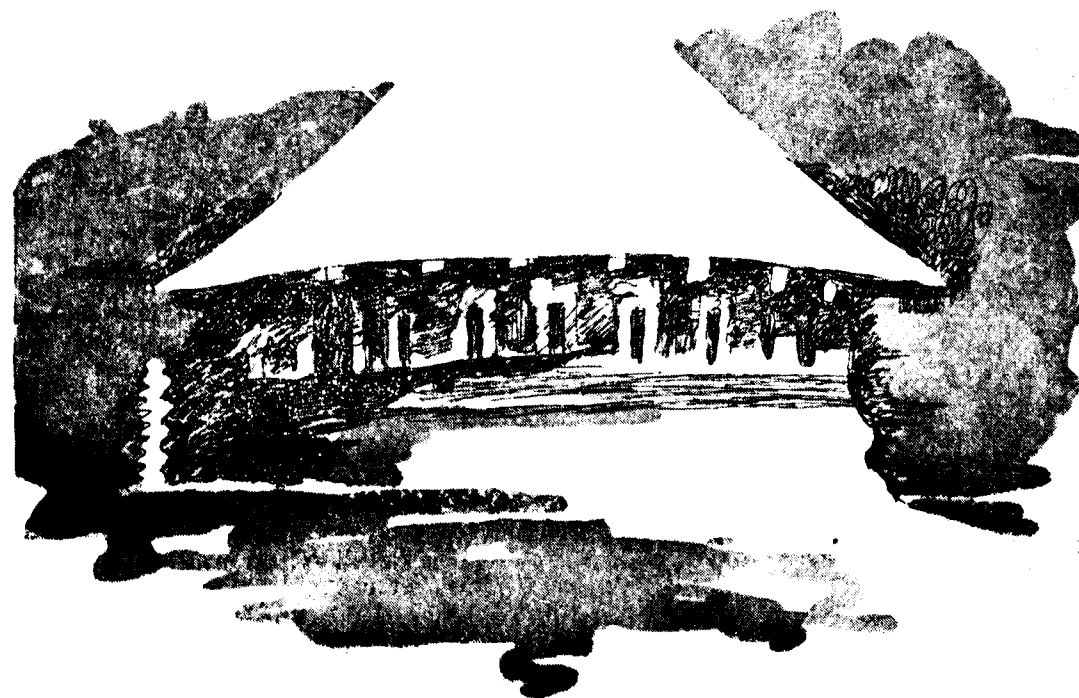
Another problem relating to source material is that many valuable documents relating to Kerala history are still in the hands of private individuals and families. There should be a concerted move to trace such documents and get them transferred to state archives. If the owners are reluctant to part with them, microfilm copies can be taken leaving the original with them. Documents in private possession, if secured for public use, will provide an invaluable aid to the student of history.

For purpose of historical research Kerala and, for that matter, any other state in India should not be treated as an isolated unit. Local history should always be studied against the national background. In ancient times Kerala had intimate relations with the Tamil Kingdoms. In fact at one stage she was an integral part of the Cēra Empire. Certain parts of Kerala, especially Travancore, had dealings with Vijayanagar in medieval times and, in the recent past, Kerala had to feel the full impact of the Mysorean invasions under Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan. In view of such inter-state relations, at least the whole of South India should be regarded as one unit for purposes of historical research. The reorganisation of the states in India on the linguistic basis also calls for better co-ordination in this field. The erstwhile Malabar district of the Madras Presidency has now become a part of Kerala and the Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu was formerly an integral part of the princely state of Travancore. Hence joint action by the two states is indispensable for the successful implementation of many a research programme. Territorial adjustments dictated by linguistic needs and motivated by political considerations need not and

should not deter scholars in their common pursuit of knowledge.

To promote the study of regional history, institutes for advanced research should be set up in important centres and these institutes should be affiliated to the Indian Council of Historical Research. Each centre must be provided with all relevant documents relating to the history of that particular region. If we proceed on

such lines, we will have a well integrated system of historical research with the Indian Council of Historical Research at the apex and a number of well-equipped regional centres functioning under the guidance and supervision of the central organisation. And when these regional institutes start functioning, Kerala too will be benefited and many of the problems relating to historical research in this part of our country will be solved.



foreign travellers in kerala

From ancient times many travellers from different parts of the world visited Kerala. Many of them have recorded their impressions on Kerala and her society and culture.

The first visitor that has written about Kerala is the Greek ambassador, Megasthenes. But there is no evidence to prove that he has actually visited Kerala. Many historians and men of letters of Greece and Rome have referred to Kerala in their works. It is the anonymous author of the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* that first wrote about Kerala from his own experience in A.D. 80. He had visited all the important harbours of Kerala. They were Naura, Tyndis, Muziris, Nelcynda and Barace. The author of *Periplus* calls the country *Limurike* and the king, *Kerobothras*. He gives us a vivid picture of the trade that was carried on between Kerala and Rome¹. Pliny, the Elder (c. 75 A.D.) and Ptolemy (130 A.D.) describe in detail the export and import trade and also the harbours and towns connected with the trade. They provide us with clear evidence for the extensive trade relations which Kerala had with other countries. Ptolemy mentions that the capital of *Limurike* of *Kerobothras* was *Karonna*.

Next to the author of *Periplus*, the most noteworthy name is that of the Alexandrian monk Cosmas (c. 550 A.D.). He is called *Indikopleustes* which means,

'the Indian Navigator'. His book '*Topographia Christiana*' gives the earliest reference to the spreading of christianity in Kerala.

Arab travellers and Geographers

The Arabian travellers provide much information relating to Kerala from the ninth century A.D. They have given a vivid picture of Kerala from their own experience. Among these travellers the most important man is Merchant Sulaymān. He is believed to have composed his work in the year 825 A.D. His work was supplemented by Abū Zayd of Sirāf in 851 A.D. Quilon was the most important harbour of South India in those days. The Chinese ships plying between Persia and China used to touch at this harbour. The harbour was so spacious and deep that the big Chinese junks could easily enter it. If the weather was favourable, the voyage from Muscat to Quilon could be completed in one month. Sulaymān greatly appreciated the cleanliness of the people of Kerala. Another Muslim traveller of the ninth century was Ibn Khurdadbeh (A.D. 844-848). He has mentioned several harbours of Kerala from where rice is exported to Ceylon².

The travellers Ibn al-Faqih (c. 902), Ibn Rustah (c. 912), Al-Mas'ūdī (d. 956), Al-Bīrūnī (1030), Al-Idrīsī (d. 1156), Al-Kazwīnī (d. 1283), Ibn Sa'īd (1214-86), Yāqūt (1179-1229), Al-Dīnashqī (d. 1327), Abū-l-Fīdā (d. 1331), Ibn Batuta (1342-1347) and Abdur Razzak (1442) have given

details of the several coastal towns of Kerala and the way of life of the people. Among these travellers only Al-Mas'ūdī, Abdur Razzak and Ibn Batuta had actually visited Kerala. Ibn Batuta is the most prominent of the travellers who visited Kerala. He belonged to Tangier in Morocco. He travelled extensively in Africa, Europe and Asia for about 29 years. Three years were spent in Kerala and the Maldives.

Kozhikode and Quilon were the most famous harbours of Kerala. Merchants and sailors from all over the world were seen at these ports³. Severe punishments were meted out even for minor offences. Hence a very calm and peaceful atmosphere prevailed in Kerala then. The sense of justice of the Zamorin of Kozhikode and the honesty and uprightness of the people are very much appreciated by Abdur Razzak,

who came as an ambassador of Shah Rukh, the Persian king, to the Zamorin⁴.

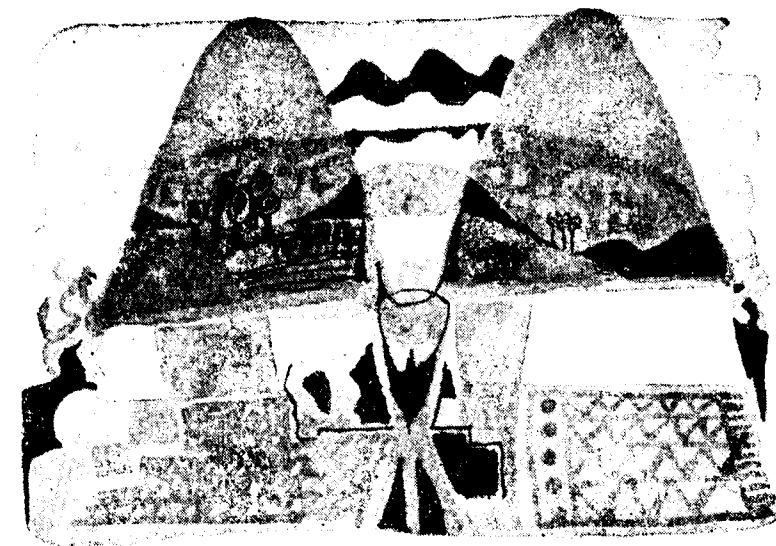
The Chinese travellers

None of the Chinese travellers who came to India via Central Asia visited Kerala. Fa-hien, Yuan Chwang and I-tsing had not come to Kerala. A Chinese merchant, Wang-Ta-Yuan visited a number of countries between 1300 and 1349 for purpose of trade. He wrote a book *Tao-i-chi-liao*, describing in detail the barbarians of the Isles. This contains the description of the important harbours and markets of 99 countries. Kayamkulam, Elī (Mala) and Kozhikode have been described in the book. In the 15th century a traveller Ma Huan visited Cochin and Kozhikode. He is the first traveller to mention the king of Cochin and the Cochin harbour. He also refers to the many things exported from China through the Kozhikode harbour⁵.

3. H. A. R. Gibb, *Ibn Battuta: Travels in Asia and Africa* (Broadway Travellers Series), pp. 234-33.

4. R. H. Major (Ed.) *India in the Fifteenth Century*, p. 14

5. K. A. N. Sastri, *op. cit.*, pp. 304-308



1. "They send large ships to these market-towns on account of the great quantity and bulk of pepper and malabathrum. There are imported here, in the first place, a great quantity of coin; topaz, thin clothing, not much; figured linens, antimony, coral, crude glass, copper, tin, lead; wine.....realgar and orpiment; and wheat enough for the sailors, for this is not dealt in by the merchants here" — K. A. N. Sastri, *Foreign Notices of South India*, pp. 57-58

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 119-121

m. gangadhara menon

the problem of regional bias in indian historical writing

In this paper an attempt will be made to pin-point and examine certain trends discernible in the general Indian Histories written in English.

General Indian History

The history of India as a whole given in a continuous narrative beginning from early pre-historic times to our own times is referred to in this paper as general Indian History. Anyone might have come across dozens of such Indian History books, and in fact this is the only kind of Indian History that the average educated Indian might have known. This kind of general Indian History began to be taught in Indian schools from the second or third decade of this century and with some changes it continues to be taught in Indian schools even now. The Indian History taught in Indian colleges also has been the general Indian History till recent times. However, many Universities have now adopted specialised studies of different periods of Indian History mainly in their post-graduate courses. But upto post-graduate level the study of general Indian History continues to be the normal programme in most of the Indian Universities. This fact about the general Indian History is pointed out here to emphasise the special importance of this kind of history in the educational field in India.

Sometimes the general Indian History is given a different treatment without altering the essential 'general' nature of the subject: a particular aspect, like the cultural, is given importance and the general history is given as a story of Indian cultural evolution or the story of the Indian civilisation. Such evolution stories and surveys also are included among the general Indian Histories referred to in this paper.

At this stage we may note that all kinds of general Indian History books are usually written or published as text-books for the students or with an eye on the requirements of the students, though at times the author or the publisher claims to have produced the book to suit the needs of that most elusive figure—the 'general reader.'

The Obvious Trend

Even a cursory examination of our general Indian Histories would reveal that they all give disproportionately greater attention to the history of North India or the Indo-Gangetic valley. Other areas like the Deccan, the region south of the Deccan, Bengal and Assam are given limited treatment which at times borders on complete neglect. To realise the extent of this biased treatment we may note a few instances. 'An Advanced History of India' by three eminent historians of Bengal—R. C. Majumdar, H. C. Raychaudhuri and K. K. Datta—can be considered as a typical volume of general Indian History.¹ For more than two decades it has been in constant use as a text book of Indian History by the students of almost all the Universities of India and as a basic book of reference even by the post-graduate students. Indian History teachers in colleges have found it as a reliable book to base their notes upon and it still continues to give assistance to teachers and students of Indian History in our colleges. The State Institute of Languages in Kerala has arranged for a translation of that book into Malayalam so as to be of help to the Indian History students in degree classes whose medium of instruction is expected to be changed to the regional language in the near future. Most probably the Institutes of Languages in other States might also have started such translation of the book. This

book which has been so much the basis of teaching and learning of Indian History in India gives the first account of the early history of the region of Bengal only in page 164. Even here only a brief account of the ascendancy of the Pala dynasty is given. It would appear as if the region of Bengal had no history proper before the rise of the Palas in the 8th century, except for some stray references in 'early literature' and a few names of 'powerful' rulers, all of which could be compressed into less than one page. No account is given of the first settlements in that region, nor is there anything about the early social organisations, cultural developments or economic evolution of that most fertile area of Indian peninsula. Similar is the case in regard to the Deccan. A brief account, not exceeding one page, of a few dynasties in the Deccan like the Satavahanas, is given after a detailed examination, in more than a hundred pages of the political history of the region of the Indo-Gangetic plain upto the decline of the Mauryan empire. Nothing is given about the early social, cultural or economic conditions of the Deccan. Worse is the treatment of the region of the Far South. The Tamil country is mentioned for the first time in page 116 where the whole early history of that region is compressed into one paragraph of 13 lines. Then that area is not mentioned for another four score pages. In page 190 the Tamil country is mentioned just to point out that it was conquered by Vira Ballala II, the Hoysala ruler. Hereafter, the only mention of Tamil country in the first part of the book dealing with the history upto early medieval period is in one or two sentences about the Alvars, the Tamil Vaishnava saints. Nothing is given about the great Sangam works in Tamil or the Tamil culture of early centuries which produced works like Tirukkural by Tiruvalluvar. The region of Kerala in the South West of India, where a social life and culture with many distinct features grew up, never finds any mention in the first part of the book except to indicate that Sankaracharya was born there in the 8th century. The circumstances which produced a great scholar and leader like Sankara never get attention. Though the origin and growth of Jainism and Buddhism are examined in some detail, nothing much is given about the spread of Buddhism and Jainism to South India and their influence on the early life and culture of the South.

It should be remembered that composing Indian History in this manner is not

the peculiar method of 'An Advanced History of India'. That book is examined here only because it is typical of the usual and the most common approach to Indian History. The intention is not a criticism of that particular work. Instances of the same approach can be found in different kinds of books on Indian History. For example, 'The Making of Indian Nation' by that brilliant scholar B. G. Gokhale² which has been acclaimed as a "new approach to Indian History.....which seeks to interpret Indian History in terms of culture rather than of politics"³ adopts the same approach as far as various regions of India are concerned. In this book the early history of Bengal is contained in one sentence in page 40 mentioning the rule of the Pala dynasty. Early political social or cultural developments in the South, including the cultural growth of early Tamilakam, or for that matter, of any part of India other than the region of the Indo-Gangetic valley of northern and western India, do not find any place in the book. It would appear as if the early developments in those regions including the gradual evolution of various regional languages and literature had nothing to contribute towards the making of the Indian Nation.

Even the works of such eminent historians from the South like K. M. Panikkar and K. A. Nilakanta Sastry have been so much influenced by the usual pattern of composing general Indian Histories that they do not offer a balanced approach as far as the various regions of the sub-continent are concerned. The seventh chapter on South India in Panikkar's 'Survey of Indian History'⁴ gives a more detailed examination of the early history of the South than in any other book of Indian history of the same size. But it is significant that an examination of the early history including pre-history of South India has been taken up by Panikkar only after completing a survey of North Indian history upto and including Gupta administration covering the period upto the 6th century A. D. In the matter of treating early histories of other regions of India like Bengal and Assam Panikkar's 'Survey' follows the same pattern as other general histories of India.

The recently published "Advanced History of India" by K. A. Nilakanta Sastry and G. Srinivasachari⁵ marks an attempt to incorporate the pre-history and early history of the South—especially of the

Tamil region—in the general history of India. The authors have stated in the Preface that “a comprehensive view of the history of North India, the Deccan and South India is given in dealing with the ages that preceded British supremacy in India”.⁶ But the early history of some other regions like the region of Bengal, Assam, Maharashtra and even Kerala suffers comparative neglect in this volume. The fact is that a comprehensive approach to Indian History has not yet emerged and the influence of the old approach in which too much importance and space were given to events of the Indo-Gangetic valley still remains most decisive in shaping the works on general Indian History.

The North Indian bias in Indian History is so common that it is taken for granted by many as the only possible way of writing general history of India. It is reflected even in text-books prepared by ‘expert’ committees for school classes. The present text-book for Social Studies in X standard in the Kerala State gives a brief account, hardly covering fifteen pages of the history of South India after a narration, in sixty four pages, of history almost entirely devoted to North India, down to the decline of Delhi Sultanate.⁷

Nature of the Bias

Any attempt to change the North Indian bias in general Indian Histories should be preceded by an understanding of the real nature of this bias. It is significant that it is not a regional bias in the sense in which regional bias is the result of the author’s or publisher’s preference for one’s own region. It has been shown above how the early history of Bengal suffers in ‘An Advanced History of India’ prepared by three scholars all belonging to Bengal. And this trend is obvious in the works of South Indians as well as of others.

It should also be noted that though generally this is not the result of regional bias of authors or publishers it results in regionally-biased Indian Histories. Such regionally biased histories tend to create regional bias in two ways—by inculcating consciously or unconsciously held conviction that Indian History proper is the history of the Indo-Gangetic region and also by creating a violent reaction against such a bias which usually finds expression in biases favouring other regions like the Tamil region or Bengal.

We may also note that the regionally-biased nature of general Indian histories has already been noticed by eminent authorities on the subject and some of them have expressed themselves strongly against such distortion of Indian History. In a Seminar on ‘Problems of Historical Writing in India’ conducted in 1963 Prof. K. V. Narain expressed the view that “the pattern of our history must bear an all-India character and we must at every stage produce the total picture even though the light and shades may differ in contrast.”⁸ He also suggested that “if in a given chronological period or phase of history we are unable to give an account of a particular area due to lack of evidence we should not pass it over in silence as if that part did not exist.”⁹ Ten years have passed since that Seminar and nothing much has been done to give effect to that valuable suggestion regarding writing of general histories of India. All the old works of general Indian history with pronounced North Indian bias brought out in the paper back and student’s editions still going through series of reprints without any alteration in content or method of presentation.

It has been suggested that early European historians were responsible for setting the present pattern of writing general Indian history and that they should be blamed for history of the Indo-Gangetic valley being paraded as Indian history. It is true that the pattern was set by the European historians but there is little sense in blaming them for the continued existence of that trend in our general histories.¹⁰ Further, to be fair to Dr Vincent Smith, who more than anyone set the pattern of the general Indian History in the second and third decades of this century, we should note the following statement in the Introduction to ‘The Oxford History of India’: “The historian’s attention necessarily must be directed chiefly to the Indo-Aryan institutions of the north which are much more fully recorded than those of the south. An enthusiastic southern scholar has expressed the opinion that ‘the scientific historian of India . . . ought to begin his study with the basin of the Krishna, of the Cauvery of the Vaigai (in Madurai and the Pāndya country) rather than with the Gangetic plain, as it has been now long, too long, the fashion’. That advice however sound it may be in principle, cannot be followed in practice at the presents and, so far as I can see, it is not likely that for the present it

will be practicable to begin writing Indian history in the manner suggested”¹¹

If that ‘Indo-Aryan approach’ persists even now it can no longer be defended, as Dr. Smith did, by pointing out the paucity of source materials for the history of the South and other regions of India. In fact the most astonishing feature of the present writing of general Indian Histories is the complete absence of the influence of the large amount of source materials for regional histories that have been made available by researchers, on them. The findings of historical research simply do not find their way into general histories and show a tendency to remain ossified in research papers and grave compilations of such papers.

Towards a Comprehensive Indian History

The real reason for the persistence of the North Indian bias in general Indian Histories is that they are solidly based on the requirements of thousands of students whose needs are determined by the history syllabus prescribed for college courses of the various Universities of India. A change in the syllabus to include portions from a comprehensive history of India would be the most effective step towards eradication of our present biased general histories.

Attempts to evolve a comprehensive general history giving proper attention to the growth of the various regions of this sub-continent may be opposed by arguments expressing fear of disintegration of our nation. Even those who may in theory stand by the concept of history bearing an all-India character may make all practical

realisation of that concept impossible by dragging in this fear of the divisive tendencies arising in the nation as a result of giving more attention to regional histories. Only a clear realisation of the real nature of the unity of Indian nation would enable us to dismiss such fears as irrelevant. It is a fact that Indian unity is not based on territorial contiguity alone. A cultural unity which finds its expression in a way of life and general outlook bearing the stamp of a composite civilisation has emerged in India through centuries. This is a reality which cannot be made to disappear through any proper consideration of the development of the various regions of this country. On the other hand the regional histories will only enhance the development of the consciousness of that unity persisting through all diversities.

Bias in Histories of National Movement

Before concluding this paper we may note the existence of a biased trend in the histories of our National Movement. To an extent this is the reflection of the biased trend in the general histories of India. Anyone can notice a tendency to treat the history of Indian National Movement as the history of Indian National Congress with its centre of activities in North India.¹² Developments in the South are generally glossed over especially where such developments have origins unconnected with the Congress movement. This tendency also, unless checked now itself, may grow into a net-work of vested interests in text-books and general books on the Indian National movement and may become entrenched to create various complications in our national life.

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6. *Ibid*, Preface.

7. *Social Studies* (Malayalam) Standard IX, Government of Kerala, 1968—An account of Indian history begins in page 82 of the book. North Indian History down to the decline of the Delhi Sultanate is dealt with in pages 82 to 145. South Indian history from early times to end of the Vijayanagar empire is dealt with in pages 145 to 160.
8. A. K. Narain, "Writing a New History of Ancient India — A Study in Problems Sources and Methods" *Problems of Historical Writing in India*, India International Centre, New Delhi, 1963 p. 4.
9. Ibid.
10. In fact the Indian authors of Indian histories can scarcely escape the criticism contained in A. K. Warder's following observation in the Preface to his excellent monograph on Indian Historiography: "Practically all existing 'Indian history' written in English can in fact be adequately characterised as 'imperialist' historiography, in the sense that it reflects the outlook of foreign and alien invaders as conquerors of India. The standard imperialist version of Indian history, worked out during the colonial period, is now, most remarkably, taken for granted among modern Indian historians of almost all persuasions, not least among them the 'Marxists' . . . , as well as among academic historians in all other countries, again regardless of political persuasions" — A. K. Warder, *An Introduction to Indian Historiography* (Monograph of the Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies, University of Toronto) Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1972, Preface, p-IX.
It is a revealing comment on the quality of our nationalistic enthusiasm that this should be the outcome of all our criticism of European historians from the early years of this century.
11. V. A. Smith, *The Oxford History of India*, First Edition, 1919, Introduction, P-XI
12. Even the portion dealing with Indian Independence Movement in '*Modern India*' (a textbook of history for secondary schools), prepared by Bipin Chandra and published by the N. C. E. R. T. contains very little information about the freedom movement in the South. And it is found that in one of the rare references in that book to an event connected with the National movement in South India factual errors have crept in indicating vague ideas about events in the South. In page 274 of the book the Moplah Rebellion which occurred in Malabar in 1921 is thus referred to; "In Malabar (Northern Kerala) the Moplahs or Muslim peasants created a powerful anti-Zamindari movement". This sentence contains more than one error. Firstly, all Moplahs were not peasants as indicated in the sentence. Secondly, the Moplahs never created an anti-Zamindari movement for the simple reason that there never existed Zamindari system in Malabar.



k. gopalankutty

influence of geography on kerala history

the palghat gap: a case study

The drama of human activity is played on the stage set up by nature. Geography the invariable factor in history, does not however, hold a sovereign influence on human beings. Nature determines the plan of development. Man being the agent proceeds along the lines of this plan. If nature determines the route, man determines the style and stage of development. This interaction of the forces of geography and of human will shapes the history of a country.

The two important geographical factors which have influenced Kerala history are the mountains and the sea. The country was known as the land made impenetrable by the mountains and the sea. The Western Ghats situated along the West Coast have acted as a protective barrier providing relative isolation to Kerala from the rest of South India. The only major break in the long chain of the Western Ghats running for a thousand miles along the triangular plateau, is between the Nilgiris and the cardamom hills. This is known as the Palghat Gap. It is nearly 20 miles wide and about 1100 feet on its broad sill. The Palghat Gap is apparently of tectonic origin. It has been regarded as the ancient valley of a river flowing either from east or before the assumed Arabian subsidence from the west. The front of the Gap is remarkably steep and in the East remarkably straight.

This peculiar geographical phenomenon has played an important part in the history of Kerala. The climatic conditions both of Kerala and Tamil Nad are affected by this Gap. The plains of Coimbatore gets the benefit of the South West Monsoon rains and central Kerala gets the benefit of the North East Monsoon rains mainly

because of this mountain pass. The Monsoons coupled with the numerous rivers that flow through the land has made Palghat a very fertile area and, in fact, the granary of Kerala.

This mountain pass was instrumental in promoting a number of harbour towns on the Western Coast between places like Calicut and Cochin. These harbours could be sustained by a constant supply of agricultural and industrial products from the interior through the Gap. Other parts along the coast because of the barrier presented by the Western Ghats, lacked access to merchandise from places in the interior. During the first centuries of the Christian era a trade route existed between the interior and the port towns of Tondi and Muciri. The existence of this route is evident from the hoard of Roman coins, belonging to the 1st century A. D., obtained from various places in and out of the Palghat Gap. This may be explained partly by the Beryl mines in Coimbatore district. But it is more significant that the valley of Ponnani carries a natural trans-penisular highway through the gap. This highway must have provided a useful alternative to the long coastal route between Kerala and the Coromandel Coast.

During the Sangam period Kerala's political map was different from what it is today. It extended to the present Tamil Nad across the gap. The Cēras probably had their original home in Central Kerala and later expanded into Tamil Nad as far as Karūr in the Tiruccirapalli district and Kollimalai. A passage in Patirrupattu hails Palyānai Śēlkelukuttuvan as the conqueror of Koṅgudēsa. There is reference to Karuvūrēriya Perumcēral Irumporai

who, as is evident from the title might have captured Karuvur. Another passage in Patirrupattu mentions the capture of Taka-dūr by Perumcēral Irumporai. From these it may be inferred that the Cēra expansion into the interior was accomplished in different stages and that the Palghat Gap played an important role in the process.

If during the Sangam period the Gap was instrumental in the expansion of Cēra power into Koṅgudēśa, it exposed Malabar to military invasions from the Carnatic in the 18th century. The mastery over Palghat was imperative for the execution of the economic and political designs which Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan had in their minds. Realising the strategic importance of Palghat, Haider Ali constructed a fort there in 1776. For the next 30 years many military commanders—Haider Ali, Srinivasa Rao, Makhdum Ali, Tipu Sultan, Fullarton and Stuarts—carried arms to Malabar across the Gap. The attack of Stuart was the last and it established British supremacy over Palghat, Calicut and other parts of Malabar. The Mysorean invasions produced far-reaching consequences in the political, social and economic spheres. The means of communication improved very much as an extensive chain of roads connecting different parts of Malabar with Dindigul, Coimbatore and other places were constructed by Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan.

Acting as a gateway of communication and contact the Gap facilitated the influx of people from other parts of South India to Kerala in search of commercial gain and military adventure. In course of time some such groups settled down in Palghat resulting in a conglomeration of different social groups.

The Jains were probably the first Aryan religious group to settle down in Palghat. There is a small Jain temple in a place called Jainimēḍu near Palghat town and the ruined foundations of another in Alathur. It is interesting to note that three of the four dominant social groups of non-Kerala origin found in Palghat—the Tamil Brahmanās, the Mūttāns, the Rāvuttans and the Cēttis—are engaged in trade and commerce. The other groups are the Āṇḍis and Paṇḍārams, the Oddēs and the Vaḍu-gās. These heterogeneous groups, evidently non-Kerala in origin, constitute, together with the natives, the population of

Palghat. The merchant communities—the Cēttis and the Mūttāns—emphasise the importance of the role played by the Gap in promoting trade. It is significant that the majority of Rāvuttans (the term literally means horsemen) probably descendents of Haider's and Tipu's cavalry men became merchants later. At the same time the fertility of the land, itself the result of the Gap, must have prompted some Cēttis to take to agriculture even though this practice was against their tradition.

The culture of Palghat has been a product of the synthesis of these manifold social groups. The influence of Tamil can be seen in the various festivals and folklores of Palghat. Among the festivals the most notable is the Koṅṇan Pada celebrated in Cīrūr during February-March. The festival purports to be the reenactment of an alleged invasion by a Koṅgu chief and the heroic resistance organised by the natives and their victory. The unique feature of the festival is the war proclamation of Koṅṇan, the note sent by him to the people of Cīrūr threatening invasion and destruction unless compensation is paid for the alleged plunder of valuables belonging to merchants of his country. The Koṅṇan Pada provides a rare example of a temple festival which is collectively organised by all the resident communities in the area, in memory of a local war. It is different from all other temple festivals in Kerala and unique as a war memorial. A mixture of Tamil and Malayalee customs, costumes and language can be noticed in the different aspects of this institution. The folklore of Palghat also shows close affinity with Tamil culture, the most important expression of it being found in Pāvakkūttu. This is the shadow-play of dolls found throughout the Tamil country and in Palghat and certain other places in Malabar. The "Rathōlsava" or car-festival, another typical Tamil institution, is celebrated in a number of places in Palghat district, the biggest and the most popular being the Kalpāthy Rathōlsava. Another festival celebrated in Palghat which shows Tamil influence is the "Śūrānpōr". It is celebrated in commemoration of the destruction of four Asurās by lord Subramanya.

It is significant that these festivals are celebrated and enjoyed not only by the Tamilian social groups but even the native population take to it as their own. The

prevalence of festivals and folklore which are Tamilian in origin, the adoption of various Tamilian practices by the native population and the adoption of the prevailing local customs by the social groups of non-Kerala origin—all these may be attributed to the influence of the Palghat Gap which opened the way through centuries for conflict as well as co-operation.

The above survey highlights the role of the Palghat Gap (a) in modifying the climate of Kerala so as to promote agricultural prosperity (b) in increasing political, commercial and cultural contacts between Kerala and other parts of South India and (c) in introducing new social groups in central Kerala.



aryan brahman settlements of ancient kerala

The role of the Aryans in transforming Indian society cannot be exaggerated and this is more true of South India. For the purpose of the study, the term 'Aryan' is applied to the groups of people who came from the North with the Sanskrit language and the Sanskrit way of life. Although they included traders, chieftains and missionaries of heterodox sects like Jainism and Buddhism, for practical consideration of space and time, the study is limited to the problem with regard to Brahmins.

Historiography

Till recently legend was enshrined in the sanctum sanctorum of history in Kerala. It was Logan who, for the first time, attempted to differentiate "Traditional History" from "History from other sources". Yet, he had no access to the many unpublished and unnoticed inscriptions and literary works. K.P. Padmanabha Menon, in his four volume *History of Kerala* (completed in 1916), has tried to pursue the question further; but he too suffered from the limitations of Logan. Many traditional scholars have tackled the problem in their fashion, and have reduced to writing many living traditions. At the same time, the princely states of Travancore and Cochin started the archaeological departments, and their *Annual Reports* brought fresh materials to the notice of students: So also, the *Travancore Archaeological Series* and the *Bulletins of the Ramavarma Research Institute* brought to light many inscriptions, literary works and photographs of historical monuments. Simultaneously, the relevance of the so-called *Sangam* literature to the history of Kerala was appreciated. Many *Maṇipravāḷam* works were discovered and published. Making use of all these materials, Prof. Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai went far ahead of earlier scholars. But he also failed to realise the crux of the present problem and his way of judging the past in

the light of present-day social values has marred his objectivity. Dr. M. G. S. Narayanan has gone further, by discovering more evidences and by appreciating the social function of tradition. He too has not taken up the question in sufficient detail, and has missed some crucial evidences in the *Sangam*, *Maṇipravāḷam* and Sanskrit literary works. A reappraisal of the question, therefore, would not be out of place.

Sources: Inscriptions form the first category of sources. Many of them have been deciphered, interpreted and published. Some of them, recently discovered and deciphered by Dr. Narayanan, Mr. Raghava Varier and the present author have also been made use of. The corpus of *Sangam* literature, Sanskrit works like the *Avantisundarī* of Dandin (c. 7th century) the *Mūṣakavamsākāvyā* of Atula (c. 11th century), the *Śukasandēśa* of Lakṣmīdāsa and the *Kokilasandēśa* of Uddanda (c. 15th century), and *Maṇipravāḷam* works like the *Uṇṇiyāṭṭicāritam* *Uṇṇivaccāritam*, *Uṇṇicirūtēvīcaritam*, *Kōkasandēśam*, *Uṇṇinīlīsandēśam* etc. (c. 14th–15th centuries) etc. are useful. Monuments have been renovated from time to time; still they are also useful as they retain the basic plan and some of the old form. Some family records also have been consulted. Legends, not as *prima facie* history, but as an index to the strength of the memory of human group experience have been examined; and in this respect, those references, which are corroborated by the more concrete evidence and which supplement and clarify the existing body of knowledge have been employed.

It is well-known, from Puranic references, Asokan Edicts, Graeco-Roman literature, Tamil-Brahmi cave labels, etc. that Kerala was not a *terra incognita* to the North even before the Christian era. The literature of the *Sangam* was almost

contemporaneous, and in it Kerala is an integral part of the socio-cultural unit called *Tamilakam*. The society depicted in that literature is one based on geography and occupation. The four-fold division of society based on birth, though not unknown had not percolated to the lower strata of society. But the presence of Brahmins at least in the courts of chieftains and their influence upon them are evidenced by that literature. Many of the poets who composed that literature were either Brahmins or natives with Aryan Brahman names and culture. At least one of the famous Brahman settlements of Kerala, viz. Cellūr, celebrated in tradition as one of the northernmost and, therefore, possibly among the earliest, could be identified in the *Sangam* literature as a centre of Vedic religion and with a strong tradition of *Paraśurāma*. This would suggest that the process of Aryan Brahman migration to, and settlement in, Kerala had begun as early as the age of the *Sangam*.

By the ninth century, the Cēra kingdom was revived with Mahōdayapuram as its new capital. Many inscriptions dating from that period have come down to us, and the Vāḷappalli copper plate of Rājāśekhara is the earliest known among them (c. 830. D.) Vāḷappalli is an upagrāma (subsidiary village settlement) of Tiruvalla, one of the southernmost and probably latest Brahman settlements reputed in tradition. This shows that by the beginning of the ninth century, even the latest of the traditional Brahman settlements of Kerala was so well-established and prosperous as to have upagrāmas. Similarly, twenty-two Brahmins of the same settlement, Tiruvalla, are recorded to have been established in Trpparappu (in Kanyakumari district) as early as the close of the ninth century. The affiliations of Trpparappu with Tiruvalla are endorsed by survival. This also shows the antiquity and prosperity of Tiruvalla as early as the ninth century. Daṇḍin, the famous poet who lived in the Pallava court at Kāñcīpuram during the 7th century was full of praise for two Brahmins from Kerala. This shows that orthodox Brahmanical culture

had taken deep roots in Kerala by the seventh century, A. D. On the whole, therefore, it may be assumed that the more important Brahman settlements of Kerala took shape between the closing years of the *Sangam* age and the seventh century, A. D.¹

Inscriptions and literary evidences show that it was immediately before the establishment of these settlements in Kerala that they occupied the Karnataka region. This in its turn, was a continuation of similar settlements in the Konkan and Saurāṣṭra coasts. All these settlers cherish the belief that their land was created and donated to them by *Paraśurāma*. The *Paraśurāma* legend originated in Gujarat more specifically in the peninsula called Śūrpāraka and it is likely that this legend also moved along with the moving people. In other words, the Brahman settlements of Kerala constituted the last links of a long chain of migration moving along the west-coast and carrying with them the tradition of *Paraśurāma*.

It is well-known that the Cālūkyas have claimed to have conquered the Keralas and Kadambas and that they were zealous patrons of Brahmanical Hinduism. An inscription of Kirtivarman II discovered from Kerala shows that the Cālūkyan claim was not altogether an empty boast. Further the tradition that Mayuravarman Kadamba who figures prominently in inscriptions in the establishment of the Brahman settlements in Karnataka, together with the evidence of Kadamba influence over Kerala afforded by the Edakkal cave inscription of Visnuvardhana Kadamba, testifies to the assumption that it may have been under the Cālūkyas-Kadamba influence that the Brahman settlements of Kerala came into existence.

In the traditional accounts of the early Brahman settlements embodied in the *Keralōlpatti*, it is related that 36000 of them were presented with arms (śāstrabikṣā) by *Paraśurāma*, in order to enable them to "protect and rule Kerala, the 160 *katams*

¹ In this, the author differs from earlier scholars. Logan precludes the existence of Brahmins in Kerala prior to the 7th century, A. D.; Padmanabha Menon assigns a date for the Brahman colonisation of Kerala to the years immediately before or after Christ; the Elrmkulam suggests that it was only by the tenth century that the establishment of the Brahman *gramas* took place; and Dr. Narayanan has lost sight of the Brahman settlement of Cellur in the *Sangam* literature, thereby believing that the earliest Brahman settlements of Kerala took shape after the *Sangam* age.

land between Gokarṇam and Kanyākumari. Epigraphic and literary evidence show that there was an armed militia of the Brahmans in the South, which had its origin probably in the North as early as the Gupta period or even before. In the South, they had a peculiar educational-military-missionary organisation known as the ghatika or Śālai. In fact, Mayūravarma himself is described to have been originally a Brahman disciple of the famous ghatikañ of Kāñci who realised the necessity of muscular power. It is quite possible that to the political vacuum that was Kerala came the Brahmans with their peculiar para-military organisation. This would suggest that it was not only by the "art of peace" but also by "force of arms", that they expanded to this part of the country.

The Settlements:— Tradition has it that the Brahmans were established in Kerala in sixty-four villages. However, in this context Kerala means the land between Gōkarṇam and Kanyākumāri. Thirty-two of them are said to have been north of river Perumpuḷa in Tuḷunāḍu and they have been identified by Saletore. In seeking to identify the remaining thirty-two to the South of Perumpuḷa in Kerala proper, it could be seen that eighteen have yielded inscriptions from the locality itself mentioning the village settlement, four figure prominently in inscriptions from other places, three are mentioned in contemporary literature and the remaining seven have survived with their continuing Brahmanical traditions and structural temples. In fact, twenty-three of them survive today. All the thirty-two could, therefore, be identified satisfactorily. Apart from these original thirty-two villages there came into being several others, by fusing together elements from the already existing ones. Thus, many upagrāmas and other independent settlements developed, constituting a network of them throughout the length and breadth of Kerala with command over land and a large number of tenants and the entailing feudal privileges.

It could be seen that it is on the fertile plains rather than on the hilly regions or the coastal tract that the original settlements took shape. Moreover, most settlements are on the banks of rivers; and many of them are found clustered in the more fertile regions. Thus, nine settlements out of the thirty-two are found on the Pampā valley, thirteen on the greater Periyār and five on

the Pērār. This explains the sudden emergence of a number of inscriptions recording either land grants or settlements had been established. In other words, agriculture registered a rapid increase. This can be better appreciated against the background of the fact that the settled regions described in the *Saṅgam* literature are mainly on the hills. That calendar and possibly iron ploughshare were introduced by them to South India. This further explains the need for the well-knit fabric of administration they had in the village assemblies which worked as an efficient entrepreneur in the field of agriculture.

A case study — A very important fact about the Brahman settlements about Kerala is that they were essentially temple-centred and that the temple was synonymous with the Brahman settlement and *vice versa*. The temple committee was the village assembly and it looked after the affairs of the property belonging to the temple and the Brahman settlers. However, for reasons of space and for want of sufficient sources, a detailed study of the process of the growth of the brahman settlements by which they claimed superiority over the rest of society and managed to re-orient the semi-tribal, semi-nomadic society into a temple-centred, agrarian, caste-society, cannot be made. But a lengthy copper plate inscription, pertaining to one of them, namely Tiruvalla, offers a case study. It runs into 630 lines and is ascribed to c 12th century A. D. It is seen that the temple possessed a literally fabulous extent of land. Donors from very distant places including Ceylon had made donations to the temple. In addition to land, the temple possessed wealth in the form of quantities of gold. The temple used to grant loans and acted as a bank. Often, the right to exact taxes from certain villages was made entirely over to the temple and in one case, the temple committee was placed above the "wrath of kings and feudatories". The different daily and seasonal ceremonies of the temple are described at length. In describing the Ōnam festival the share due to each functionary is given, indicating thereby the position of each in society, and thereby pointing to the level of social stratification. It is also seen that the practice of granting land on service-tenure whereby occupations were made hereditary had already begun. The development of feudal institutions and the proliferation of sub-castes also could be discerned from the document. The temple looked

into such public utility services as education, banking and hospital. In short, the process by which a small brahman colony grew both in space and in the range of economic, social and political activities is typically illustrated in the case of the Tiruvalla settlement.

The author believes that Aryanisation did not begin with the mere influx of the Aryans. On the other hand, its real beginning was in the process described above, and this moulded Indian society and polity

by providing a framework of feudal land tenure, social stratification, religious beliefs, customs and manners. The pattern in Kerala may be used to provide more insight into the process that was at work in other parts of the country, more so in peninsular India. It is hoped that if similar studies are undertaken with regard to other parts of the country, the mechanism and implications of Aryan migration and settlement could be brought out more effectively, so that the spread of ideas and institutions may be traced with greater confidence.



the ceraman perumals of kerala

The ancient Cera kingdom of the Sangam age, in its developed form, extended from West to East including the central portion of present day Kerala State and also Kongunādu which now forms the Coimbatore and Salem districts of Tamilnadu. Even though it probably originated in Kuttanādu on the West Coast, its extension across the Palghat gap into Kongunādu and the establishment and growth of its capital in Karūr-Vañci, near Trichinopoly, were the most important developments in its political life. It was basically a Dravidian kingdom, exposed to some extent to Aryan influence through Jain, Buddhist and Brahmin missionaries coming from the Deccan and Mysore and the Kalinga region. Except for brief periods the northern and southern parts of present day Kerala were not included in its territory. Fighting against the contemporary Pandyas and Colas for survival and supremacy, its prosperity was enhanced by trade contacts with the Roman empire. Its institutions language, and culture were the same as those of the rest of Tamiḻakam during the Sangam age.

The later Cera kingdom of the Perumals of Kerala with its capital in Makōtai or Mahodayapura (Koḍuññallūr or Cranganore, on or near the ancient harbour city of Muciri or Muziris) appears to have been founded and ruled by a branch of the ancient Cera dynasty. Nevertheless in the political and cultural sense it was really a by-product of the Brahmin settlements, established all over the West-Coast in the post-Sangam period, apparently under the patronage of the Cālukyas and Kadambas, and the Ālupas and Ceras who came within their sphere of influence. According to tradition there were 32 of the settlements in Kerala proper from Payyannūr in the North and Nirman in the South. Literary and epigraphic evidence would show that

many of the settlements mentioned in tradition were already well-established and powerful even before the advent of the new Cera kingdom of Makōtai in the 9th century. These Aryan Brahmin settlements with their Paraśurāma legend (Bhārgava Rāma legend) must have formed part of a long chain of such settlements gradually moving south-ward from Gujarat. They had become prominent in Kerala even by the beginning of the 7th century when they were known to Daṇḍin of Kāñcīpura. They reached Kerala from Karnataka and brought with them a new cultural heritage. They introduced a revolutionary factor into the socio-political set up of Kerala.

The foundation and growth of these settlements formed the most significant development of the post-Sangam period in Kerala. With their well-organised community life in semi-autonomous temple-centred gramas (big villages) and their common leadership, their Kanarese-Prakrit-Sanskrit languages, their superior agricultural techniques, and their willingness to befriend and exploit the indigenous population, they became a formidable force in Kerala politics capable of reshaping everything according to their choice. When the old Cera capital of Karūr in Kongu declined owing to periods of domination by the Cālukyas and Pallavas, and subsequently by the Pandyan kingdom by the close of the 8th century, the new Kerala Brahmins appear to have championed the rise of an independent Cera kingdom excluding Kongu and having its new capital on the West-Coast in Makōtai or Mahodayapura.

This new Cera kingdom was, like its predecessor, involved in the Tamil politics and the military adventures of the Pandyas and Colas and it also partook in their cultural developments like the Śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite Bhakti movement and their

literature. However, the colonies of 'Paraśurāma Brahmins', peculiar to Kerala and different from the Brahmin colonies in the rest of Tamiḻakam, started Kerala on a different course of independent linguistic and cultural development. The new cultural affiliation to the northern regions, now under the Rashtrakutas, becomes clear in the progress of astronomy, the styles of architecture and sculpture, the constitution of the Brahmin village councils, and the very language of the inscriptions which is often mistakenly called Tamil but which really represents the early Malayalam language.

The age of the Ceras of Makōtai (c. 800-1124 A.D.), known as Kulaśekhara in the works of Prof. Eḷamkuḷam P. N. Kunjan Pillai and the new district Gazetteers of Kerala, may be viewed as the key period in Kerala history since it was the formative period for all that is distinctive in Kerala society and culture: the peculiar caste pattern, matriliney, plurality and peaceful co-existence of creeds, Malayalam language, temple-theatre and the regional style of sculpture. In the pre-Makōtai period Kerala was different in many ways from the rest of Tamiḻakam. Thus the later Cera kingdom formed a watershed in the history of Kerala.

In spite of this it may look strange that famous writers on Kerala history in the 19th century and the first half of the present century—Shangoonny Menon, Robert Sewell, Burnell, Ellis, Gundert, William Logan, Nagam Aiya, T. K. Velu Pillai, C. Achutha Menon, K. P. Padmanabha Menon, K. V. Krishna Aiyar, and P. K. S. Raja to mention only a few prominent names—never even suspected the continuation of the Cera kingdom beyond 822 A.D. For many of them the Cera Perumāls had already disappeared from the scene of history long ago, either in the 2nd century or in the 5th century A.D. The situation was not due to some defect in their scholarship as the majority of Cera epigraphical records were unknown till recently and even the half a dozen ancient records discovered before 1910 had not been properly deciphered and dated. Even after 1910 with more inscriptions noticed almost every year, no general outline of the kingdom of Makōtai could emerge for a couple of decades for many of the texts remained unpublished. The pity is that even recently the writings of these important Kerala historians mentioned earlier continued to

provide the material for the views on the history of Kerala expressed in standard works on South Indian history and the history of India as a whole.

Chronology and Political History:

The prevailing hypothesis about the origin of the kingdom of the Cera Perumāls of Makōtai put forward by Prof. Eḷamkuḷam, attributes its foundation to Kulaśekhara Ālvār and places him at the beginning of the 9th century. This is based on speculation unsupported by evidence. Examination of epigraphic and literary material suggests that the first king of Makōtai was the Śaivite Rama Rajaśekhara in the first half of the 9th century, who was probably known as Ceramān Perumāl Nāyanār also. Kulaśekhara Ālvār may be identified as the next ruler known to epigraphy as Sthāṇu Ravi Kulaśekhara. Kulaśekhara was not the founder of the dynasty, nor was the term a hereditary title in the line. It was only a popular abhiṣeka name (coronation title) borne by two, or perhaps more, and epigraphic records have brought out other titles like Rājaśekhara, Vijayarāga Kēraḷa Kēsari, Manukulāditya, Rājasimha, Rājāditya and Raṇāditya.

Pandyan expansionism in Āynādu and Kongunādu is found to have been responsible for the decline of the old Cera capital of Karūr in Kongunādu, and to have produced a counter-action resulting in the rise of Makōtai as the new Cera capital, and the foundation of Kollam Nagara as a secondary capital, during the first half of the century, and resulted in a marriage alliance, has been expounded by Prof. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri and Prof. Eḷamkuḷam Kunjan Pillai. This is clarified by the finding that Pandyan relations with the Kongu-Cera feudatories improved, while the Kuṭa Ceras or Western Ceras of Makōtai continued their anti-Pandya posture supporting the Cola against the Pandya. More facts throwing light on the intimate Cera-Cola association from 844 A.D. onwards are brought out recently. It is found that Srikanṭha Cola and not Āditya Cola was the military partner of Sthāṇu Ravi Kulaśekhara. The discovery of the date of coronation (883 A.D.) and the coronation title (Vijayarāga) of Kōta Ravi fills a gap in our knowledge and helps us to understand the law of succession since

Vijayarāga was not the son but the son-in-law, and probably the nephew, of Kulaśekhara. With the help of Mūśakavamsa the earliest known vamsakāvya in Sanskrit (11th century), the political relations between the Ceras and the Mūśakas have now been clarified. The Cola-Cera relations of the first half of the 10th century have been analysed with the aid of Cola inscriptions outside Kerala.

The dates of Bhāskara Ravi inscriptions are settled and a solution is proposed for the riddle of the existence of two different series in them by postulating that one set starts from the date of actual enthronement and the other set from the date of the formal coronation. The identity of Bhāskara Ravi and Munukuladitya has now been established. The discovery of the lost portions of the Eramam record brings out the Bhāskara Ravi Kaṇṭan Kāri-Rājendra Cola synchronism and confirms the dating based on astronomical data. It also substantiates the fact of the Cola victory in Kerala. Nilakanta Sastri was working under a handicap in tracing the history of the Cola invasions of Kerala undertaken by Rājarāja Rājendra, and Rājādhirāja, since he did not possess any idea of the existence of the Cera kingdom of Makōtai. This handicap has now been removed in the light of Cera inscriptions and some of the problems regarding the time and the range of the Cola campaigns are solved.

A newly discovered inscription of Kōta from Tirumattukōde helps to identify the successor of Bhāskara Ravi and adds further proof of Rājendra Cola's political sway over the Cera kingdom. Incidentally his new records also help the identification of Virruvakōde celebrated in Perumāḷ Tirumōḷi and reckoned as one of the 13 great Vaiṣṇava centres of Malaināṭu. This Ravi Kōta is identified with Rājasimha of other inscriptions which give only the coronation name. Rājarāja is reckoned as the next ruler on the basis of his inscriptions from different parts of Kerala.

Following the period of Cola ascendancy from 1018 A.D. onwards, the story of the revolt of Kerala in 1066-7 A.D. and the defensive wars of Rāma Kulaśekhara have been traced with the help of inscriptions from both sides. The notion that Rama Kulaśekhara's rule ended in 1102 A.D.

is corrected and its extension up to 1122 A.D. is established by a temple inscription from Tanjore. This has helped to clarify the role of the Cola-Pandya invasions in the period of Kulottunga Cola and Vikrama Cola in bringing about the disintegration of the Cera kingdom of Makōtai. References to Ravi Ālupa, Udayavarman of Kōlathunādu, Mānavikaama of Eranādu, the Cera king's escape into the sea, and the foundation of Matāyi mosque in the epigraphic records of this period are found to be corroborating the Keralolpatti legend about the last Perumal's partition of Kerala and conversion to Islam. However, there is a vital shift regarding the traditional date of this event—The popularly accepted date was 825 A.D. but the new date is 1122-24 A.D. The story of 'Partition of Kerala' is found to be the embellished native account of the transformation of districts of the Cera kingdom into separate principalities with the advent of independence.

Governmental Structure

A study of the royal titles and activities mentioned in Cera documents reveals that these rulers were sovereign hereditary monarchs for most of the time except the period of Cola ascendancy in the 11th century (1018 A.D. to 1067 A.D.) and that they even flaunted claims to imperial status at times. The references to the Brahmin Council called 'Nālu Taḷi' show the power and influence of the Aryan Brahmin settlements and this is further elucidated by the reverential attitude shown by these Kshatriya kings towards Brahmins and orthodox Hindu institutions. All these go to support the tradition of Keralolpatti that a Brahmin oligarchy was the power behind the throne. Glimpses of the War Council, attended by the governors of districts and commanders of the army, are also provided by such records as the Jewish copper plates and the Kollam inscription of Rāma Kulaśekhara. The practice of sending princes of the royal family as king's ministers to district headquarters and Brahmin village assemblies can be noticed in several records of the age.

The Cera Inscriptions present a picture of the division of the kingdom into various districts, big and small, with hereditary or nominated governors, and with Kshatriya or Samantas or Nayars in charge of administration. It is revealed that the district governors functioned with a good deal of

autonomy subject to supervision by king's representatives. The semi-autonomous nature of local bodies, like the Nagara in rural areas, can be seen reflected in a number of temple inscriptions. These were not democratic in character as envisaged by some scholars, but hereditary caste council of proprietors of land with limited membership and with the functions of a guild or corporation. They created executive committees by rotation, employed the officers of the temple and selected tenants for their joint properties. Meeting under the presidency of king's agents or district governors they followed the rule of unanimity rather than majority at all times. They often quoted precedents of Mūḷikkalam and other places, proving the urge for uniformity and central direction. Though some scholars have read into their code of conduct an anxiety to protect the tenants and the common people, this is found to be designed to promote the interests of joint property of the corporation by bringing individual members under a strict discipline. The powers of tax-collection, punishment protection of institutions etc. enjoyed by the Christian, Jewish and Brahmin Corporations—the first two in towns and the last in villages—reveal the beginnings of feudalism and the peculiar pattern of caste organisation in Kerala. Outside these were the crown colonies called Cērikkal' composed of indigenous people and administered directly by the officials of the crown. The feudal principle of contractual rights and hereditary loyalties within a framework of hierarchical society is in evidence everywhere.

The nature of 'the Thousand' at the centre and the Hundred organisations at the district level had remained obscure. Scholars had even speculated that they were democratic and popular assemblies guiding and restricting the royal power. A study of scattered references in epigraphy reveals that here we have the hereditary bodies of companions of honour, exalted body-guards and men of all work attached to princes, an institution common to all early kingdoms of the Deccan and South India, which sprang up from the Maula organisation prescribed in the *Arthasastra* and faithfully described in the 13th century Malayalam translation of the same. This finding also throws light on the character of the medieval suicide-squads of Kerala known as 'Caññāttam' and 'Cāver', familiar to the Portuguese and the Dutch who came to

Kerala. It is shown how these bodies were nominated by rulers to undertake the protection of temples and temple properties in return for the payment of the protection fee.

Though there is no idea of the total revenue of the state collected by different agencies, various items of professional taxes, house tax, land tax, tolls and customs, protection fee, fine etc. are brought out in the inscriptions of this period in Kerala. A surprising similarity to the revenue system prescribed in the *Arthasastra* is noticed here. The procedures of collection, remission, and exemption, and the share of different officials, are hinted at in the records from the towns and villages. The practice of alienating tax collection rights in favour of temples etc. followed by princes reveals the identification of land ownership and political power in the system of administration.

Social life:

The distribution and names of Aryan village settlements furnished by the records justify the Keralolpatti claims regarding the Kerala-wide organisation of Brahmin villages in this period. The growth of Tiruvalla settlement in wealth and power during three or four centuries could be seen reflected in Tiruvalla copper plates. These temple-centred gramas, with hereditary proprietorship, produced the Brahmin elite which dominated the social system and by making compromises for convenience, gave rise to the sub-castes of temple dwellers and tenant-farmers in between the Brahmin and the Śūdra. Earlier they had conferred Kshatriya status on ancient local chieftains and they in turn promoted the growth of a Samanta sub-caste also. The desire to perpetuate family property, by passing it on through the eldest son, led the Brahmins to encourage the younger brothers to seek-marriage alliance with all these classes though it was prohibited in the scriptures. This resulted in popularising and perpetuating, the remnants of matriliney which had survived among the tribes. At the same time sections of local population like the Pulayar or Paṇayar which were not associated with the Brahmins in temple affairs or state affairs were gradually relegated to the status of serfs and slaves in the fields or pushed back into the forests to lead a semi-nomadic life.

Some anthropologists have advanced fantastic theories about the migration and settlement of Nayers regarded as a tribe or race and equated with Nagas. These views disagree with known facts as this particular sub-caste, like other sub castes of the Vāriyars and Potuvāls, could be seen as a product of hereditary occupation with the hereditary title of Nāyakan or Nayan. Their special association with military work and training and their matrilineal system are in evidence. Glimpses are provided of the Ilavas (settlers from Ilam or Ceylon) with fraternal polyandry engaged in toddy-tapping, the Vāniyar engaged in oil-making and other trades and Vaṇṇar (washermen) Tracer (Smiths) etc. These are settled on land as tenants of the church or temple and regarded as subjects of the landlords in each case. The Pulaya slaves are found to have been bought and sold along with village land while the towns witnessed a regular slave trade.

The West Asian colonists are observed to have founded, in those pockets where they settled, corporations like the Ancuvaṇṇam of the Jews and the Maṇikkirāmaṁ of the Christians. Their wealth and maritime leadership were exploited by the rulers who conferred on them aristocratic privileges and treated them like another caste-group recognising their own chieftains and community regulations. Though legends about their settlements in Kerala in the first century A. D. are not reliable, their prosperous condition during this period is well attested by epigraphic evidence.

It is possible to know much from inscriptions about the use of gold of standard weight in Kaḷanju and Kāṇam and also 'old coins'—probably the old Roman Dinara mentioned in one record, as medium of exchange. No Cera coins are mentioned anywhere. The details of weights and measures and the prices of paddy and other articles are registered in the records. It is discovered that the Ālakku-Uḷakku-Uri-Nāli-Para system, prevalent in Kerala till recently, had evolved even during this period and that three different Paras existed in use. The big Para, known as the new Para came into use in the period of the Cola invasions. Other bigger measures called Tūpi and Kalam were in common use and standard weights and measures were maintained by trade guilds, temples etc. Time was usually measured in terms of the length of the shadow though the Ghaṭika system

was also known. The rate of interest and wages can also be calculated from a few records. Payments were often made by the grant of land held in the form of service tenure. A good deal of information about merchants and merchant guilds like Vaḷan-ciyyar and Nānādēśikaḷ, along with Ancuvaṇṇam and Maṇigrāmaṁ, is provided by the records of the age. Several Kerala merchants in the Cola country and Cola guilds in the Cera country are indicated. There is also evidence of Kerala merchants in the far off lands of South East Asia.

Land is theoretically crown property and it is often granted in perpetuity to trade guilds and agrarian corporations. Thus Urānmai or proprietorship, Kārānmai or tenancy, and other rights like those of Kānam or limited proprietorship and Kuṭimai or occupancy are also encountered. The Brahmasvam (Brahmin property) and Dēvasam (temple property) lands were protected by strict rules and regulations and such proprietors enjoyed special privileges. A system of sub-infeudation by voluntary surrender of property (Kīḷitu) also existed and paved the way for the enormous growth of temple corporations in Kerala. Trusts known as Gaṇam or Kaṇam were formed for managing land set apart for special purposes. A surprising continuity coming down to the modern period is noticed in customs and even in the matter of compound names and family names,

Religion and Culture:

A highly developed form of temple-oriented Hinduism is found to be holding a dominant position in the field of religion but the prevailing mood was that of tolerance of other creeds leading to peaceful co-existence like that of 'wild animals forgetting their natural conflicts in the vicinity of an āśrama'. There are epigraphic and literary references to a great Buddhist Vihāra called Srimulavāsa in central Kerala and several Buddha statues of the period are also discovered. Contemporary or near-contemporary theatrical works refer to Brahmins' conversion to Buddhism. A representative of the Buddhist centre was given a place in the Perumāḷs Council. Jainism also had its pockets mostly in the north and south ends of Kerala as evidenced by a few records and sculptures. The most important among them in the Cera country proper was Tirukkunavāy or Guṇaka, adjacent to Makōtai, which was

described earlier as the residence of Ilamko Aṭikaḷ, author of Cilappatikāram, one of the twin epics of Dravidian India. Some of the Jain shrines, as in Tirukkunavāy, Tiruvaṇṇūr, Kallil, Paruvaśṣēri and Tiruc-caraṇattumalai are found to have been converted later into Hindu temples. The existence of Judaism is indicated by the presence of Jews and the prosperity of Christianity is attested by the founding of the Church of Taras at Kollam and the discovery of a number of old Pahlavi crosses from different parts of Kerala. Both Hindu and Muslim tradition ascribe the introduction of Islam into Kerala to the period of the last Cera Perumāḷ and this is borne out by the foundation date (1124 A. D.) of the Mātāyi mosque, one of the first ten mosques of Kerala.

The Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava Bhakti movements patronised by the Cera kings of the 9th century gave a new impetus to temple-building and some of the temples like Tiruvancakkaḷam, Tiruvalla, Trikkāḍithānam, Trikkākara and Tirumūlikaḷam, acquired great prosperity with much property and many servants and provision for dance and music, vedic training and the celebration of festivals like Ōṇam, Viṣu and Tiruvātira. The records offer details of temple organisation and administration. The educated and influential class of Tēvaṭṭici or Nangacci (dancing girls of the temple) and Caṭṭar or Cāttirar (Vedic pupils of the temple college) appear often in records and this fact gives a clue to their growing prominence in medieval Kerala as reflected in Maṇipravāḷam literature. The present writer had shown earlier that the institution of the Śālai or Ghaṭikai attached to temples had played a prominent role in promoting Aryan political power and Aryan culture in South India (See *Proceedings of Indian History Congress*, 1970). The character and operation of this institution in Kerala during this period is revealed in the documents of the Āy and the Cera temples. The development of a temple-theatre and the peculiar form of Sanskrit-Malayalam play-acting called Kūṭiyāṭṭam, performed by Cākyārs, can be noticed here. It is found to have been initiated by Kulaśēkhara Varma and his courtier Tolan and it stimulated the growth of Malayāḷam as a medium of literature.

In respect of architecture and sculpture no proper survey has been made so far to identify the products of this period

and study them in detail. Some specimens of 9th century rock-cut cave temples, Jain and Śaivite, are found at Kallil, Chitrāl, Irungalakōḍe, Trikkur, Kaviyūr and Tirunandikkarai. The style of work reflects Pallava-Pandya influence. They possess cave-pillars, and relief sculpture of a high order. Structural temples of the 10th and 11th centuries are many and they are identified by inscriptions found on them but they are often ruined, or they have been renovated, which is worse. They represent the common Drāvida type in essentials and contain three types of sanctum sanctorum: circular, apsidal and rectangular. The roofing technique, adapted to the heavy rains and strong winds of the West Coast, alone differentiates them from similar buildings of the Cola empire. In fact, each new development of Cola temple architecture (eg. the formation of Pillars and Pilasters, Kūdu and Panjars) found its way to Kerala though the absence of resources probably prevented the structural growth and multiplication of the gōpura and the maṇḍapa. Therefore it is clear from a study of several examples that the postulate of a Kerala type of temple of indigenous origin, separate from the Drāvida type, as advanced by Dr. Stella Kramrisch must be rejected. The roof alone is different and there is no Kerala idiom in this period in the foundation of the superstructure. (See plates). This is found to be the case in sculpture also as exemplified by figures of Dvārapāla, Gaṇapati, Viṣṇu, Saptamata etc. especially in Kīḷtaḷi, Kulaśēkharapuram and other places. Though it is more difficult to date images because they could be replaced any time, several idols in old temples carry the identity marks of Cālūkyā, Pallava and Cola sculpture. Similar good work in Dravida style is found in miniature granite panels and balustrades also, the best examples being found in Cōkiram and Kulaśēkharapuram temples.

In the dated inscriptions of this period may be noticed the quick evolution of Vntṭeluttu script, changing in shape from century to century and this is important for Kerala since it continued even up to the 18th century while it was replaced earlier by other scripts everywhere else. The changing shape of letters provides an aid in dating undated inscriptions. On the basis of the links between Asokan Brahmi, Tamil Brahmi and Vntṭeluttu it is suggested that the term Vntṭeluttu can be explained as the combination of two words, i. e.

'Vaṭa' and 'Eḷuttu', meaning northern script. The mistaken notion that the language of Cera epigraphy is Tamil, propounded by Travancore and Madras epigraphists, has already been corrected by other scholars. The new tendencies, operating haltingly and irregularly but with increasing frequency, indicate the quick changes in the spoken language of the Brāhmin-Kshatriya elite, brought about perhaps by the impact of Tulu, Canarese and Prākṛit languages which the immigrant Brāhmins had as their original spoken language. Thus the changes which transformed Tamil in Kerala into Malayalam are found to be the by-products of Aryan colonisation which determined the character of the Cera kingdom of Makōtai in many other ways also.

A brief review of Bhakti literature both Śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite, produced in Kerala by Cēramān Perumāḷ Nāyanār and Kulaśēkhara Ālvār, is presented here. Works in Tamil are not produced after the 9th century probably because the spoken and written language underwent decisive

changes taking it further away from standard Tamil by this time. Sanskrit poetry of the Yamaka type is shown to have flourished in this period since the chronology of kings enabled the dating of the poets also. Sanskrit dramas of Kulaśēkhara Varma which depict the influence of Vyāsa and Kālidāsa and the Sanskrit astronomical work named Leghubhāskariyavyākhyā by Sankaranārāyaṇa, which shows a clear group of Hindu classical astronomy are noticed. On the basis of uniformity of style and imagery, Kulaśēkhara the royal dramatist and Kulaśēkhara Ālvār are identified as one and the same. The date of the philosopher named Sarvajñātma has been ascertained. Mūṣakavamsakāvya (c. 1020 A. D.) a unique work of history by Atula the courtier of Mūṣaka ruler Śrīkantha, is not only an important source book for Kerala history but also the earliest known work of political and dynastic history in Sanskrit literature. Thus the Cera period is found to have been highly productive in the fields of architecture, sculpture, stage-arts and literature.

Note :

Page 29, first column, second paragraph, second and following sentences may be read as follows :-

In the pre-Makotai period Kerala was just a region of Tamilakam with the same society and language. In the post-Makotai period Kerala was different in many ways from the rest of Tamilakam. Thus the later Cera kingdom formed a watershed in the history of Kerala.

Page 29, second column, third paragraph, first sentence may be read as follows :

Pandyan expansionism in Aynadu and Kongu-



nadu is found to have been responsible for the decline of the old Cera capital of Karur in Kongunadu, and to have produced a counter-action resulting in the rise of Makotai as the new Cera capital, and the foundation of Kollam Nagara as a secondary capital, during the first half of the 9th century. The view that Pandya-Cera relations improved in the second half of the 9th century and resulted in a marriage alliance, has been expounded by Prof. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri and Prof. Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai.

n. g. unnithan

temples in kerala

The temples in Kerala are staggeringly large in number. They are of different types—circular, rectangular, square and apsidal. They are available in either stone or wood. The Adhiṣṭhāna or basement is invariably in stone. Most of the temples in Kerala carry puranic lore in wood, stone or paint. The earlier temples are small shrines with a sanctum sanctorum and ardhamandapa in front as in the temple at Viḷiñṇam, the earliest structural temple in Kerala.

The temples of Kerala are centres of learning and education. A number of schools and colleges were set up in different parts of Kerala in the 9th and 10th centuries A. D., known as Śālais, the most important among which was Kāntalūr Śālai. These Śālais were residential institutions that had grown due to the generosity of kings and chieftains. Other religious systems like Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity and Islam grew hand in hand along with Hinduism. This spirit of toleration had led to the growth of innumerable temples in Kerala which facilitated the spread of Hindu puranic lore in the form of painting, sculpture, woodcraft, etc.

In addition to temples of simple character like a cell and a porch, there had been development in their type of construction with pillared interiors with several stories. These temples mainly based on a square plan are believed to be the result of the influence of Tamiḷ Nāḍu. They are mainly found clustered in the southern parts of Kerala. In their main features they are seen built with huge blocks of stones both for the adhiṣṭhāna, prastara, pillars etc. and they resemble mostly the shrines of Coḷa Maṇḍala.

Through the passage of time the small structures with pillars on square plan had

also developed in different stages. In their developed stage they contain a hall within its interior and in its centre is the small sanctum sanctorum. Structural walls used as temples are described in a compendium of Indian architecture namely *Samarangana Sutrādharma* of the early 11th century A. D.

Another variety of temple is the storeyed type with three or more stories, a flat ceiling for the interior which makes visible from inside the superstructure. Each storey consists of a variety of small shrines and they are aligned around the central hall in several shapes like squares in the corners and rectangular in the centre. These structures look like a stepped pyramid. Similar types of temples have been noticed in the south of Kerala, probably due to the influence of Tamiḷ Nāḍu.

The Kerala indigenous temples are mainly built on square plans and they are of greater beauty, superiority and significance. The texts of Vāstu Śāstra the science of Indian Architecture, from 6th to 16th centuries treat in detail of circular temples and Śilpa Ratna of Śrī Kumāra of Kerala of the 16th century also refers to it. The Paraśurāma Temple of Tiruvallam of 14th century A. D., the Viṣṇu Temple at Niraṃṇkara etc., are some of the finest examples of circular sanctum sanctorum in Kerala. In addition to the circular type we also notice apsidal, square and rectangular types of sanctum sanctorum in Kerala.

Apsidal form of temple also known as Gajaprṣṭha has the back portion projected like the back of an elephant. Tiruvēgappuṇa Śiva temple, Pattambi, and Shoranur Śāsta temple are examples of apsidal temples. In Kerala the Vāstu and Śilpa Texts had been the main source of inspiration in the

construction of various temples. The *Tantra Samuccaya*, *Śilpa Ratna*, *Manuśālaya Candrika* are some of the *Śilpa* texts which had influenced the construction of temples in Kerala. In this respect, it may be said without exaggeration that *Tantra Samuccaya* had a greater hold with the architect in the making of several mouldings of the temples in Kerala.

The exterior lay-out of the Kerala Temple involves the *balivatṭam*, the *nālam-balam*, *viḷakumāḍam*, *śivelipura*, *puramatil*, etc. The *namaskāra maṇḍapa* is just 6 to 12 feet away from the sanctum sanctorum. The lighting cloister is around the *garbha grha*. The *balipīṭha* is in its own house. The *namaskāra maṇḍapa* encloses generally the *balipīṭha*.

Now let us examine in detail the different mouldings noticed in the temples in Kerala. The plinth or the basement is the most important part in a temple complex. It is divided into *garbha grha*, inner wall, outer wall, *madhyānāli* or circumbulatory passage. In small temples of single shrine the outer and inner walls coalesce into one. There are four openings on the sides of the wall of the sanctum sanctorum. The openings are adorned with festoons. There are *balustraded* entrances for each temple. *Praḷāṇa* or water-outlet from the sanctum sanctorum is seen in all temples, sometimes ornate with circular-sectioned projections.

The covering for the sanctum sanctorum is provided with pillars, *vajana*, *uttira* and *jayanti* which ends with *pidhāna palaka* and over it rises *uttira paṭṭika*, followed by diagonal rafter courses leading to the projecting eaves. A *kalāṣa* is placed on top of the *vimāna* or *śikhara*, covered with copper sheets or tiles. In the case of a second *tala*, the inner wall is raised with rafters fixed to the outer *uttira*, and inner plank. The height of each *tala* should be proportionate to the wall next below and to each there will be a *prastara* or entablature. Sometimes the wall is decorated by *Śāla*, *Kūta*, and *Gavākṣa* or pierced windows. Temples over three storeys are not mentioned at all in texts.

The plinth of Kerala temple is always erected in stone mostly granite and seldom in laterite. *Upana*, *jagati*, *vr̥tta* or *tripaṭṭa kumuda*, *kaṇṭa*, *vedi* and *prati* are some of the main elements of the *adhiṣṭāna*

or basement. Among these elements certain mouldings like the *jagati tripaṭṭa kumuda* and plain *kaṇṭa* with *paṭṭika* or *kapēta* etc. have a separate combination. The *jagati* with *vr̥tta kumuda* and without a *vyālavari kaṇṭa* is clearly an early feature noticed in temple constructions. There are about six plinth combinations so far noticed in the *adhiṣṭānas* of different temples in Kerala.

Another interesting feature noticed in the development of Kerala temples is the expansion of the sanctified premises in relation to utility in recent times. The *gōpura mukhamāṇḍapa*, *balipīṭha*, *dhvaja-stambha*, etc. have in recent times occupied greater space in view of the increase in temple rituals. The *prākāra* and *gōpura*, so far as Kerala temples are concerned, are two independent entities and not always liable to form an integral whole. The rise of the *gopura* is much higher than the rise of the subsidiary turrets of the terminals on the *prākāra*.

The essentially closed frontage or *Sukanāsa* with elaborate motifs of false doors, windows, transverse struts, etc. is non-functional in character. The *Sukanāsa* further occurs only in the case of apsidal square or rectangular temples. The *Sukanāsa* is conventional in the case of *Cālūkyā* temples and has become prevalent by heritage in the *Vijayanagar* style, but is almost unknown in *Tamiḷ Nāḍu* temples. The *Sukanāsa* is an expediency caused in *Sandhara* temples of one or more than one storey. It is intended neither for ventilation nor for light but only intended as a conventional decorative motif.

The walls of Kerala shrines are mainly in laterite rarely in wood or granite and wherever laterite or granite is found, it is plastered over with mud and lime to carry mural paintings of the fresco style. Where murals are absent either stucco ornamentation or carvings in wood are seen. In granite masonry walls, pierced windows or panel sections are seen. Based on the square or circular plan, the wall sections respectively carry decorative motifs like the *Karnakūtas*, *madhyasālas*, *śailāntara nāsikas* with *stambha Pañjaras*. The *makara toraṇas* generally enclose the true or false doors on the sides of the walls. In certain instances, these doors had been converted into sub-shrine doors for the introduction

of *Devi* or other sub-shrines with a balustraded flight of steps. They are available in places like *Peruvanam*, *Ērṇumānūr* etc. It is also presumed that the temples with true door opening on the cardinal points with regular figure carvings are earlier ones than those with false doors. The original intention of these doors was to provide ventilation for the circumbulatory passage and they became false in course of time when the temples had become incommunicable to the lay worshippers. It may also be remembered that these doors have some relation to the character of the interior as they are false when the temple is of *nirandhara* category and true in the *Sandara* category, where the circumbulatory passage is available.

"In the apsidal, square and rectangular schemes, there is a *tala* scheme sometimes, one, two or three, the top most being of a relatively modest size." In circular temples, the copper-sheet roofing is impressive by itself. In Kerala, the circular conical roof is found in large numbers than the square or rectangular preferably due to the easier methods of construction and the *prastara*, *griva* and *śikhara* could be arranged in a continuous slope. It may also be noted in this connection that the circular temples do not have a *Sukanāsa* and the *mukha maṇḍapa* is kept within the entrance of the temple door.

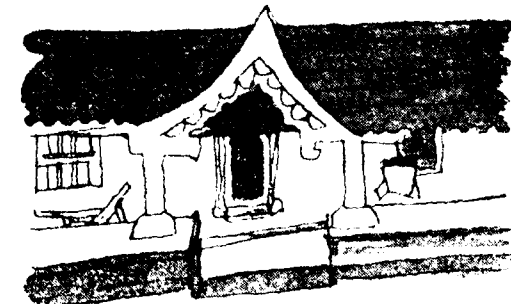
In single storey temples also the *Sukanāsa* is absent. In *tala* temples the *Sukanāsa* is not intended for ventilation or light, as it is closed in its front, but only as a conventional element. The most interesting part of a Kerala temple is its interior,

the entry into which is permitted only to the clergy and not to the lay public. The sanctum sanctorum in majority of cases is square irrespective of the exterior character of the temple viz., square or circular or apsidal.

As we had discussed earlier other important elements in Kerala temple complex, like the *namaskāramaṇḍapa*, *mukhamāṇḍapa*, etc. something remains to be said about the part played by *kūttampalam*. In the Kerala Temple complex, the *kūttampalam* is usually located either as part and parcel of the cloister circuit on the south-east corner facing north or as a separate hall located outside the inner-most *prākāra* facing either west or north.

The multiple-pillared hall is more impressive than the *namaskāramaṇḍapa*. It is much more functional and secular in character and avoids any sectarian embellishment. The stage part is raised from the rest of the floor and has a rear, or back-stage separated from the front by a transverse parapet wall of about 3 ft. cut by aside passage in which the person who plays the drum stands during the discourse of one man-gesture dramatisation of the puranic theme.

The temple complex is thus of a complicated nature with functional and embellishment features combined. They had in earlier periods of history played a significant part in moulding the average citizen of the country, though this aspect has very little significance in the present day.



k. v. krishna ayyar

gurutvayur

On Kali day 1712210 (762 M. E., A D 1586), the little shrine of Kuruvayūr of the ancient records and Kuruvayūr of early Malayalam literature suddenly blossomed into a healing centre with the new but now famous name of Guruvayūr, associated with Guru and Vāyu, sacred to the Hindus. On that memorable day, Mēlputtūr Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭatiri completed his Nārāyaṇīyam in praise of the Lord, and found himself endowed with a new Āyurārōgyasaukhyam, a new life of health and happiness, free from the diseases which had brought him almost near death. From that day began the pilgrimage to Guruvayūr, swelling in numbers day by day.

Mēlputtūr's cure seemed a miracle—nay a double miracle—a complete transformation of body and mind, from sickness to health and atheism to faith. Born in the well-known family of Mēlputtūr in 1559, son of the priest and trustee of the shrine Candanakkāvu. Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭatiri soon mastered Veda and Mimamsa, Tarka (Disputation and Logic) and Vyākaraṇa (Grammar). Tarka made him a rationalist with his characteristic doubts about God and the efficacy of religious rites. Growing up in an atmosphere suffused with love literature, like other Brahmin cadets of the day he led a reckless and irresponsible life, which brought upon him the inevitable nemesis in the shape of not one disease or two, but a Rōgarāśim or heap of diseases. Among them, rheumatism made life a veritable hell. The prescribed remedies all proving futile, death seemed imminent.

What made him proceed to Guruvayūr we do not know. Perhaps it was contrived by the Lord Himself. The rationalist in him might have been prompted even by curiosity to see Pūntānam engaged in the quixotic project of seeking to recover his deceased son by Bhajan or prayer. Any-

way, the moment he arrived at Guruvayūr a change suddenly took place in him. Impressed perhaps by Pūntānam's sincerity and blind faith (in spite of the absolute impossibility, which even a child knows, of resurrection) he also began Bhajan, and and reinforced it by epitomising in Bhāgavata in Sanskrit itself, even as Pūntānam was translating into Malayalam the relevant Bhāgavata story of Kumaraharanam or Recovery of the Deceased Sons. At the rate generally of ten slokas a day (on some days more) he completed his work of 1036 slokas on the hundredth day, becoming altogether a new personage, both in look and outlook.

The Nārāyaṇīyam, so called from the name of the author and of the central figure being both Nārāyaṇa, marks an epoch in the history of Hindu religious thought and practice. Its importance cannot be adequately described here. Suffice it to say, as I have said elsewhere:—“To a world hard-pressed for time and therefore in search of a short-cut for everything including salvation, it is a boon. It offers the sacred Bhāgavata in a nutshell” (Journal of Indian History, 1962 Vol. XL, p. 843). “We get the same benefit by reading the Nārāyaṇīyam as the original Bhāgavata itself... The Nārāyaṇīyam in itself is at once the greatest Māhātmya of Guruvayūr and the greatest of Guruvayūr Māhātmyas; it creates a Guruvayūr in the heart of everyone who reads it... Though, like its parent or original, the Bhāgavata, the ultimate aim of the Nārāyaṇīyam is Mōkṣa or liberation from the cycle of birth and death, it is also concerned with the lesser, nonetheless necessary and immediate interests of the present birth. Though it begins with “Here at the shrine founded by Guru and and Vāyu, before our very eyes shines in all its brilliance that supreme Brahman” it ends with, “May this Nārāyaṇīyam give

us here (in this world and now) Āyurārōgya-saukhyam—life, health and happiness”.

(Kalyāṇakalpataru, Vol. 28, p. 216).

Mēlputtūr spent the remaining forty six years of his life (he must have lived at least for seventy two years), writing on various subjects and spreading the glory of Guruvayūr among the upper classes who vied with one another in doing him honour.

His contemporary, Pūntānam (1547–1640) was a contrast to him in almost every respect. Mēlputtūr was the apostle of the Learned, Pūntānam of the masses. Mēlputtūr's magnum opus, Nārāyaṇīyam, comprises 1036 slokas of four lines each (in all 4144 lines), Pūntānam's Jñānappāna or Song of Wisdom consists of only 349 lines. Mēlputtūr's genius was Sanskrit, Pūntānam's Malayalam. Mēlputtūr was a well-known family, but Pūntānam's real name is unknown, his family is obscure. Mēlputtūr's knowledge was encyclopaedic, Pūntānam's traditional and confined to the Bhāgavata. Mēlputtūr's concern was more with the immediate and the present, Pūntānam's solely with the ultimate. Mēlputtūr's devotion was the result of conviction and experience, while Pūntānam's faith was simple and blind, demanding the impossible, and finally getting what is really beyond the comprehension of ordinary mortals. Performing Bhajan for the restoration of his deceased son, he came at last to realize.

When little Kṛṣṇa is playing in
the heart

Why need we other, little sons,
of our own?
(Jñānappāna, 11.289,290)

Mēlputtūr's path was difficult, the goal being reached step by step, aided by the Nine Limbs, (beginning with listening to Puranic stories), Satsang or good company, and Meditation, requiring long life and health. Pūntānam's path was simple—mere Nāmajapa or repetition of the Sacred Name—without any restriction in regard to time, place or circumstance. With all the enthusiasm of a realised soul, he tells us:—

Birth is fruitless, life is fruitless,
If the Holy name be not always
on our tongue.

.....
.....

Hear ye all the power of the
Holy name
No matter, born in the lowest caste
or the highest,
An antyaja, born at the bottom
of the social scale,
Or a Vedic Brahmin at its top,
Of the numberless Holy names,
One only one, once only once,
every day,
While taking rest or dreaming
in sleep, knowing it not,
In joke or scorn at another,
Even for others, not for oneself,
While in temple or closet be,
Uttered by one's own tongue,
Or only heard by one's own ears,
Once only once, morn or eve,
Life's purpose thus fulfilled,
The soul becomes one with Brahman,
So says Bādarāyan, Anen says
the Gīta,
Vedas too with respect say the same.
So with heart filled with joy,
utter ye the Holy name.
If ye mind, this is enough,
Filled with bliss to become one
with Brahman.
(Jñānappāna, ll. 2–4, 323–346)

“The importance of Pūntānam”, as I have said elsewhere, “in the religious history of Kerala cannot be exaggerated. Sankara's appeal was more to the head than to the heart; and he spoke in a language which the learned alone could understand. Cera-mān Perumāḷ and Kulaśekhara Āḷvār appealed to the masses in their own language; but they belonged to an entirely forgotten past, when Malayalam had not come into existence” (Journal of Indian History, 1962 XL, p. 842).

Kerala Rāmānuja (1495–1575) proclaimed the Tamilnad Rāmānuja's doctrine of Śaranāgati or Absolute Surrender in Kerala and tried to wean the common people from their worldly ways by popularising the stories of Rama through his Kiḷippāṭṭu or Parrot Song. To the parrot says he.

Tell me, tell me, stories edifying of
Kākustha's sports,
Never enough, but ever eager for more
and more.

(Adhyātmarāmayaṇam, Sundarakāṇ-
ḍam, 11 3 & 4)

Pūntānam went a step further. Ramanuja's Sravaṇa or listening to stories is only passive but Pūntānam's Namajapa or repetition of the sacred name actually involved the devotee and delivers its fruits more quickly.

Kurūramma (1570-1640), the widowed and childless lady of Kuṟūr Ilam, spread the Nāmajapa among the members of her own sex, enabling them to directly attain Mokṣa, which even in Jainism can be attained only after being born as males. Through Nāmajapa, round the clock, so to speak, she not only began to feel the presence of Unnikṛṣa near her but actually saw Him before her. Adopting Him as her child, she used to play with Him, rebuke Him while naughty and cry when He ran away and hid Himself.

Though the ubiquitous Vilvamangalam is associated with almost every temple in Kerala and was one of the two Puṣpāñjalis at Śrīpadmanābha's temple at Trivandrum his favourite deity was Guruvāyūr Unnikṛṣṇa. Some time after 1620 he helped Prince (afterwards Zāmorin) Mānavēdan to get a vision of Unnikṛṣṇa playing at making rain with the berries of the Elanji tree then standing where we have the Big Bell now.

Some time after 1351 the Zamorin built a palace at Guruvāyūr as a rest house on his way to Kodungallur and Cochin. The Ponninkoti (flag of gold or golden flagstaff) mentioned in the Cakṛavākasandēsa (sl.36) of the early sixteenth century must have been his offering. Prince Manavedan, accompanying his uncle on and off during his tours, became a devotee of Guruvāyūr. As the result of his vision his devotion naturally increased, and with the collaboration of his preceptor he wrote a series of dramas called Kṛṣṇagīta referred to as Kṛṣṇāṭṭam in common parlance. When Mānavēdan became Zāmorin in 1655 he adopted the Lord of Guruvāyūr as one of the family, but neither he nor his successors interfered in the administration of the temple.

We do not know when Guruvāyūr came into existence. The Kuruvēyūr of the records, which survived to the nineteenth century, might have been the Koreoura of Ptolemy (A.D 125-150). The Brahmin settlements of Kerala were most of them independent village republics, and others temple

states with the Lord as the head. All deeds and documents were executed in His name. He functioned through a Samudāya Manuṣam (literally corporation representative), appointed by the committee of Urālars (village administrators) annually elected by and accountable to the Yōgam or Pariṣa which was the assembly of the heads of families constituting the village. As the heir of the devotees who had made over all their properties to the Lord, He still performs two annual ceremonies one in memory of Cempakaṣeri, the other of Deṣavarma!

The Cēnnās (Cēnnamangalam) Nampūtiri is the hereditary Tantry or supreme authority in all matters connected with worship. The Mēlsānti or chief priest was and is still appointed every six months. He must observe strict Brahmacharya or absolute abstention from women, even if married, and reside within the temple premises. He is assisted by two Kīṣāntis or assistant priests appointed by rotation every two months from certain families, and obliged like the Mēlsānti to observe Brahmacharya and reside within the temple premises. The Pantīraṭṭi, the third worship so called from the sun's shadow then measuring twelve feet, is the duty of the four Ōṭikkans, hereditary domestic priests, teaching the Vedas and ministering to the religious needs of the various families, forty eight (seventy two?) in number, of which one alone has survived to this day, and that too by three adoptions in the last century!

During the confusion of the Cola invasions of the eleventh century, if not during the overlordship of the Buddhist iconoclast Accuta Vikkanta of the sixth century, Guruvāyūr commended itself to the protection of the powerful Trkkunāvāyil (Kunavayilkōṭṭam of the second century Tamil epic Śīlappathikāram and Trkkaṇāmathilakam of later records) submitting to its supervision and control. The elephant race at the beginning and the perambulations with the elephant carrying the Lord's small metallic image and running round the shrine on the ninth and tenth day of the annual Utsava or festival, and the grand quinquennial Visvabali with its elaborate rites in propitiation of the spirits of the universe must have been introduced here by the Mēldevasvam or suzerain temple of Trkkunāvāy. When Trkkunāvāy (Trkkaṇāmathilakam) was occupied and destroyed

by the Dutch, its rights lapsed to the Zamorin as its authorities refused to return after he reoccupied it in 1757. The Zamorin however meticulously carried on the various worships, celebrated the annual Utsava and had the five-yearly Visvabali regularly performed.

Unfortunately, along with other parts of Malabar, Guruvāyūr also suffered from the Mysorean interregnum (1774-1790). Thanks to the delay caused by the miraculous blunder committed by Tipu Sultan in sending his order to plunder the temple to the Governor of Malabar at Kōlīkkōd (Calicut) instead of direct to the Commandant of Cāvakkād within hailing distance, the authorities of the temple were able to conceal the Mūlavīgraha or stone image in a well and escape with the Utsavavīgraha or metallic image to Ampalappuḷa in Travancore.

The refugees returned from Travancore on March 18, 1792. The Mūlavīgraha was taken out of the well and reinstalled on September 17. In spite of the wholesale destruction and devastation of the Mysorean interregnum and the loss of his kingdom and income, the Zamorin soon addressed himself to the task of restoration. The Mūlavīgraha was firmly fixed in the pedestal by an Aṣṭabandhakalaṣa in 1852. And gradually, though spread over more than a century, the various structures were not only restored but even roofed with copper. The flagstaff was encased in gold in 1952, and the sixteenth century Cakṛavākasandēsa's Ponninkoti or golden flagstaff restored. And only the Ārāṭṭus, or immersion in the temple tank of the Āñjiyūr Ayyappan in Kumbha Tiruvātira (February-March, 6th asterism) and of the Five Bhagavatis in Mīna Pūram (March-April 11th asterism) and the Viśvabali remain to be restored.



dr. a. p. ibrahim kunju

martandavarma and the rise of travancore

The second and third quarters of the eighteenth century A.D. witnessed momentous changes in the political set-up of South India. The Nāyak Kingdom of Madura had reached the last stage of disintegration. The refractory Poligars of Tirunelvēli and Madura were a perpetual menace to the withering Nāyak Kingdom of Madura and its neighbours. Travancore territories, in Nāñcinād and across the Ghats suffered heavily from the depredations of these freebooters. The Nawāb of the Carnatic who occupied the Tirunelvēli region, now fell heir to the dispute over the possessions across the Ghats.

Competition for the spices of Kerala had reached an all-time high at this time. The Dutch near-monopoly of the spice trade was being threatened now by the rival European Companies. The Dutch, like their predecessors, the Portuguese, were unwilling to follow the market; they wanted their requirements of spices at very low rates, below market prices. To this end they attempted to enforce agreements which Kerala chieftains had made with them, long before prices of the spices had begun to spiral up on account of keen European competition.

Political situation within Travancore in the beginning of the 18th century was so chaotic as to invite foreign aggression. Trappāppūr Svarūpam, the ruling family of Travancore, consisted of the following tāvaḷis: Pērakattūvaḷi or Neḍumanñād (Peritally of the Dutch and the English). Elēḍattu Svarūpam or Koṭṭārakkara and Dēśiṅganād or Quilon. Weakness in the seat of royalty in Trappāppūr Svarūpam was utilised by the Tāvaḷi members to promote their own interests, as against the

interests of the Svarūpam. They even sided with the refractory local chieftains, called Eṭṭuvittil Piḷḷamār, and the trustees of Sri Padmanābha Temple, known as (Eṭṭara) Yogakkār.

It was from this confusing political set-up that Mārtāṇḍa Varma saved the tiny state of Travancore by suppressing the refractory nobility and insubordinate Tāvaḷi members, and extended the frontiers of the kingdom by over-throwing the weak and quarrelling kingdoms of the north. This attempt to integrate the Tāvaḷis for laying the foundations of a strong kingdom in Travancore enlarged itself into a war with Quilon and Kāyamkuḷam. Fearing that a disturbance in the balance of power in the region would imperil their trade interests, the Dutch supported Quilon and Kāyamkuḷam against Travancore. This prolonged contest convinced Mārtāṇḍa Varma of the possibility of foreign intervention in support of the other refractory Tāvaḷis. Therefore Mārtāṇḍa Varma assumed direct control of Elēḍattu Svarūpam, Peritally and Āṅṅiṇṇal or Desinganad and their territories were taken over.

During the Kāyamkuḷam—Travancore War Kāyamkuḷam was supported by her northern neighbours like Tekkumkūr, Vadakkumkūr and Purakkād, who feared that Mārtāṇḍa Varma would certainly turn against them, once Quilon and Kāyamkuḷam were overrun. This alliance naturally gave Mārtāṇḍa Varma the pretext to proceed against them later on and conquer their territories. Though the Northern principalities were conquered without much fighting, the popular opposition to conquest manifested in a formidable and prolonged rising in this region, which considerably

strained the resources of Travancore. When the rising was brought under control, Mārtāṇḍa Varma undertook several ameliorative measures to reconcile the people to the new regime. These measures had the desired effect for we find the people of the northern parts rising as one man behind the Travancore throne against the invasion of Tipu Sultan from Mysore.

The conquest and consolidation of the Northern principalities had not come too soon. If the principalities had remained scattered and quarrelling, they would have fallen an easy prey to the aggression of the Dutch or the Sultan of Mysore. Even Travancore, the strongest of the principalities in that part of Kerala, was hard put to resist the Dutch aggression and had to seek foreign assistance several times to meet their menace. It was Dutch pre-occupation elsewhere that had really prevented several rich tracts of Travancore, from being occupied by them. Even after their defeat at Kuḷacal, they did not give up dreams of territorial conquest in Southern Kerala. What smashed the Dutch ambitions to smithereens was the phenomenal increase in the power of Travancore in so short a time and the increasing competition from the English and the French Companies. By the time of the Mysore invasions Travancore had consolidated her position and the threat of invasion had

made even bitter opponents of Travancore in the conquered territories join her ranks to resist the invasion. Here again it was a powerful and united kingdom that was able to put up an effective opposition to Mysorean invasion. Had the principalities of Southern Kerala remained scattered and quarelling, they would have fallen easily like the North Kerala principalities, before the invading armies of Mysore.

Mārtāṇḍa Varma's reign (1729–58) was thus the most decisive period in the history of modern Kerala. Realising the menace of the rising tide of internal commotion and foreign aggression, he built up a powerful and integrated state, by annihilating the intractable nobles and hereditary officials of the state, by bringing the insubordinate tāvaḷis under effective control and by dethroning the princes of the Northern principalities, whose effete governments would have fallen like a house of cards in the event of foreign aggression. While these activities were being undertaken, Mārtāṇḍa Varma did not fail to take up measures to effect a reorganisation of the government machinery, with a view to making the administration an effective tool in promoting the welfare of its citizens. By providing a set of rules and regulations for the efficient governance of the country, he set Travancore on the path to peace and progress.



dr. k. k. n. kurup

fort st. angelo

The medieval port-city of Cannanore had played a significant role in the history of Kerala. Situated in the middle of the traditional kingdom of Kōlathnād, this port-city became a centre of maritime trade, especially in commodities like spices, sandal wood, etc. The rulers of Kōlathnād, the Kōlathiris, had their capital at Chirakkal, only five miles away from the city. But the port-city itself was the capital of a small principality, the only Muslim royal house of Kerala, known as the Āli Rājas of Cannanore. This ruling house became independent during 16th century and the sovereignty over the principality belonged to the Kōlathiris,

The dawn of the 16th century witnessed the advent of the Portuguese in Malabar. The landing of Vasco da Gama at Kāppāt, near Calicut in 1498 was an epoch-making event in the history of Asia and Europe. It was this historical event which inaugurated an era of European colonialism in Asia.

Fort St. Angelo, one of the earliest historical monuments in India left by the Europeans, is a dumb witness of a by-gone age of colonial struggle in Kerala. The fort situated on the western brink of Cannanore, on a promontary, projecting into the sea is one of the well-built fortresses left by the Portuguese in Kerala. It commanded the coastal sea-routes of the western sea and played a predominant role in the colonial expansion of the Portuguese in Asia. The architectural style of Fort St. Angelo is European. The citadels, watch-towers and entrance for sea-going vessels are not native designs. However the arches and laterite structure are the testimonials of an indigenous style

The Portuguese had constructed several forts on the Malabar coast in different centres like Cochin, Pallipuram, Cranga-

nore, Chaliyam, Calicut etc. But none of these forts occupied as strategic a position as Fort St. Angelo in the expansion of the Portuguese empire. This fort was constructed between A D 1502 and 1505. But the land-grant for a settlement and fort was given by the Kōlathiri as early as 1498, during the first visit of Vasco da Gama.

The Portuguese Viceroy Francisco D' Almeida built the castle and fort at Cannanore with the native support of the Kōlathiri. The activities of the Portuguese and their fortifications were much resented by the Māppiḷas on account of the Portuguese monopoly of maritime trade. The Portuguese later began to enforce passes for native vessels to undertake journeys by sea. The system initiated a prolonged rivalry between the Māppiḷas and the Portuguese. The cleavage between them was further widened by the execution of Baliya Hassan, a close relation of the Āli Rāja, by the Governor, Dom Henrique Menezes. Following this incident the Muslim opposition became more violent and implacable.

Fort St. Angelo functioned as a spring board in the territorial expansion of the Portuguese in the western coast. When they invaded Goa and made a settlement there the supplies and naval detachments were sent from St. Angelo. In the same manner the supplies from this settlement along with those from Cochin enabled them to establish the Portuguese hegemony over Malacca in the Malayan archipelago. The adventurous explorations of the same period led them even to Cathay or China where they established a lease hold and settlement at Macao. In the move for political expansion, Fort St. Angelo had a significant role as many of the viceroys like Albuquerque had taken important decisions from the castle of St. Angelo. But these

glories were not destined to continue for long to the Portuguese in Asia.

The advent of the Dutch, the colonial rivals of the Portuguese, brought an end to their political domination in Malabar. In February 1663, the Dutch invaded the strategic Fort St. Angelo and conquered it. The flag of the Netherlands was hoisted over the castle where the Portuguese flag had fluttered for over a century and half. It was an end for the political ambitions of the Portuguese in Malabar.

The Dutch also established friendly relations with the Kōlattiri and the Āli Rāja. Virtually they enjoyed a monopoly over the pepper produce of Kōlattunād by formal agreements. The Dutch continued their trade at Cannanore over a century. However historical forces did not leave them uninterrupted in Kōlattunād. As early as 1683, the English established their factory and settlement at Tellicherry with an ultimate aim of sharing the trade in pepper of Kōlattunād. They had their own grievances against the Dutch who had thrown them away from Bantam, the only English settlement in the spice Islands. Thus the colonial struggle was extended to Malabar where the French also joined with a desire for trade in spices and permanently established their settlement at Mahe in 1725. This triangular competition for trade, political influence and concessions continued for several decades in Malabar.

The growing influence of the English and the internal political changes in Malabar finally compelled the Dutch to sell their possessions in Cannanore to the Āli Rāja. When Haidar Ali invaded the province of Malabar in 1766 his conquest brought anarchy and converted Malabar into a sea of intrigues, conflicting interests and mutual jealousies. This state of affairs was a great hindrance to the Dutch trade at Cannanore. The withdrawal of the Dutch power from Cannanore and the sale of Fort St. Angelo were sanctioned in August 1770. The Āli Rāja who had been appointed the governor of Kōlattunād by Haidar Ali now negotiated for the purchase of the Dutch fort. A price of Rs. One lakh was fixed by Senff, the Dutch Governor. A portion of the money was given by the Āli Rāja and for the remaining portion he gave the Dutch a promissory note. But he never paid the money for which the Dutch

officials who sanctioned the sale were fined by the Company.

There was no stability for the fortune of the Āli Rāja also. He had to face his hard days owing to the political struggle between the English Company and the Mysorean power. As ally of the Mysorean power, the Āli Rāja continued hostility against the English settlement at Tellicherry during the second Anglo-Mysore war. An English boat was wrecked near Cannanore and about a hundred men of the boat were imprisoned and put in irons by the Beebi of the Āli Rāja's house. Her refusal to release them actually invited military action by the English Brigadier Macleod in February 1783. He pillaged the city. The fort was defended by the Beebi and her force with considerable courage, but finally fell before the superior force of the Company. The Beebi and her family were brought under arrest to Fort St. Angelo. The strategic importance of the fort and the economic prosperity of the settlement were well noticed by the English Commandar. When he reported his campaigns to the governor, he specifically recorded that there was no other fort better than that of St. Angelo in the whole of Asia.

The peace settlement between Tipu and the English at Mangalore in 1784 once again restored the Fort St. Angelo to the Beebi. But her occupation of the fort was only for a few years. In 1790, hostilities again broke out between the English and Tipu. In 1790 Major Abercromby, the governor of Bombay arrived at Tellicherry to conduct operations against the Fort St. Angelo. When siege was begun in December, the Beebi unconditionally surrendered to the English. This conquest brought the fort under the absolute possession of the English where they retained a military force for maintaining law and order in Malabar. Thus the fort once constructed by the Portuguese mainly with an eye on political expansion now passed into the hands of the English who had the same motives in India.

The later history of the fort under the English Company was not so eventful. During the days of Palāṣi revolt in Malabar, English forces were concentrated in the fort. In later years the Fort remained as a symbol of European imperialism in India. When India became independent, the Āli Rāja Beebi forwarded a petition to the

Govt. of India requesting to consider her family rights over the land in the cantonment area surrounding St. Angelo. But her claim was turned down by the Government in the light of the historical circumstances in which the land and fort went into the hands of the English Company. It was

an outright conquest by the Company in 1790 and as such the principality had no title over these properties. Now a protected monument of the State Archaeological Department, this fort does not indicate its glory and strategic position it once occupied over a long period.



murkot kunhappa

thiyyas of kerala

[Incredible! That should have been the title of this article, because the reader will find startling facts at every step in the history of Tiyyas of Kerala. If he finds it difficult to swallow, without a pinch of salt, some of the statements he meets with in this narrative I, for one, shall not blame him. For—may I whisper it?—I too happen to be in the same boat. When I gathered about me the notes on various points to be made herein, I began to wonder how I could ever make these aspects sound plausible. With that as an apology and an explanation let us begin the tale from the beginning of the story.]

Tiyyas consist of three communities rolled into one. They are known as Bhillavas, Tiyyas and Ilavas—reckoning from north to south, with a few special names such as Cōvans, Tiyyar, Cānnār, etc. They are numerically the biggest single community consisting of several lakhs, in Kerala.

Even at the turn of this century no inter-marriages took place between those several divisions. Today, however, all of them have merged into one endogamous group, thereby providing an Indian with another pleasant surprise: Kerala, the notoriously caste-ridden state, conducting intercommunal marriages on a gigantic scale, merging several lakhs of individuals into one group.

In the hierarchy of castes, the Tiyya stands outside the pale of *Varna* altogether, and is therefore labelled as an *Avarṇa*. He is an untouchable to all those who belong to the four *Varnas*. But untouchability is not usually much of a disability in a state where every caste is an untouchable to the higher caste. In some parts, however, he becomes an unapproachable by a distance of three metres to the higher castes, who in turn have varying grades of pollution among themselves.

Albeit, in the nineteenth century we see that he cannot enter temples, or even walk along public roads if they happen to be contiguous to temples or colonies of

higher caste residences. Schools and hostels even when they were from public funds were out of bounds for him, while service in the government departments was unthinkable. A census taken in Travancore State (which is now a part of Kerala) showed that there was not a single Ilava in government service, even as a peon on a pay of rupees five per mensem, in the last decade of the 19th century.

There is a general impression outside Kerala that Tiyyas/Ilavas are toddy-tappers by profession. This is incorrect for the simple reason that there are not enough coconut trees to go round if an entire community of over half a crore were to clamber up these palms in search of toddy. Actually, therefore, only a small percentage of Tiyyas live as toddy-tappers. The great majority used to live as agricultural labour, road makers and builders, petty traders and bullock-cart drivers etc., with a sprinkling of literate men engaged in jobs requiring literacy. They were, by and large, landless labour, living below the poverty line, with their own customs and manners, their own social organisation and their own modes of worshipping village gods in a crude manner.

That was the picture of the great majority of Tiyyas in the beginning of the nineteenth century. But no sooner has one noted this main feature than some very anomalous and astonishing facts of the

Tiya community appear on the canvas, contributing another unbelievable aspect to this history.

Sanskrit Savants

This untouchable community had Sanskrit scholars, several of them great pundits, in every unit of the land, all the way from the southernmost tip up to the northern border. Poets and litterateurs distinguished enough to find their place in the smallest of literary histories are to be found among them in the last century. Sometimes, as in the case of Paravūr Kēśavan Āśān, you find an untouchable Tiya studying under a higher caste, Putukkāt Maḍhattil Kṛṣṇa Piḷḷai and he in turn possessing among his disciples a great poet belonging to the higher caste—K. C. Kēśava Piḷḷai. All this, be it noted, when Sanskrit education was conducted on the Gurukula system. (Gurukula means the *kula* or family of the Guru). Kēśavan Āśān was a Sanskrit Pundit, a poet, a physician, an astrologer, a teacher, a journalist (who had started his own paper *Sujana Nandini* in 1892) a social reformer, a revered social leader and a member of the legislative body of those days. Therefore, he is well known. But places like Paravūr and Cannanore were teeming with Sanskrit scholars who were gems of the purest ray serene, dwelling in oblivion so far as the outside world was concerned. Śrīkaṇḍhan, for instance, was a polyglot whose titles form a jaw-breaking string of adjectives: Vēda-Vēdānta-Tārka-Jyōtiṣa-Vaidya-Māntrika-Nigamāva Bōdha. Among the earliest works on Āyurveda in Malayalam you have Yōgāmṛtam written by a Vaidyar who was also a Deputy Collector: Uppōṭ Kaṇṇan. One of the greatest Malayalam dictionaries was compiled by a German missionary Dr. H. Gundert. Among the scholars who helped him in this stupendous task we find three Tiyas: Maṇikkōtt Mannon Gurukkaḷ and two brothers, Uraccēri Gurunāthanmār. Early in the 17th century when Dutch Governor, Van Rheede produced a great study of several volumes describing, with sketches, the flora of Kerala, they were helped by a Tiya Itṭi Accutan, whose note to that effect is included as one of the preliminary pages of the book. (Photostat copies of all the pages of this valuable, rare book are now with the Botany Dept. of the Calicut University).

Vaidyas, Vaidyas, Everywhere

Every village in Kerala had Tiyas as Ayurvedic physicians, several of whom were Vaidyas of great distinction. Instances could be quoted of these so-called untouchables, being called in as consultants in royal households to diagnose and treat what may be called "Impossible cases". If Āyurvēda, survived in its most popular and efficient form in Kerala, the credit goes to the Aṣṭa Vaidyans of eight Nambūdiri families and the innumerable Tiya Vaidyars all over the land. (It is only just and proper, however, to mention here that this system and treatment has been put on an excellent footing organised on most modern lines by Vaidyarathnam P. S. Warriar, a distinguished member of the higher castes)

How did this anomaly occur? The question takes us back to the history of communities in Kerala.

A. Balakrishna Pillai, that most meticulous scholar of Kerala history states that Nambūdiris, Nāyars and Tiyas all did, once upon a time, belong to the same community. Historians agree that there was in early days, a great many Budhists in Kerala. Budhists, as everybody knows, were looked upon with animosity by Hindus. That the Tiyas were Budhists has been proved by piecing together many evidences that are still extant in the country. When the Tiya, reverted to pre-Budhist religion, he preferred pre-Aryan deities like Śiva and Kālī for worship. He was therefore an undesirable and an outcaste, slipping down into an untouchable and unapproachable because even Nambūdiri families who practised Āyurveda system of medicine are considered as belonging to a lower rung of Brahmins and are known as Mūsads. The Tiyas were able to continue to study Sanskrit and Āyurvēda even after they were outside the pale of the Varnas because the taboo of Sanskrit learning was confined to the lower of the four castes of Hindus whereas he was outside their pale and therefore he was a law unto himself altogether. Untouchability thus became an advantage. The higher castes just turned a blind eye to the existence of great scholars and Vaidyas among untouchables.

Tribal Characteristics

Tiyas and other Avarṇas, are not now classed as tribes. Even so, they do show

and did so more strongly in the last century, tribal characteristics. Each group in a small locality was an entity by itself without any intermarriage taking place across the border of the unit. A border could very often be a river, a rivulet or even a road. They, along with a few communities of professional barbers, washermen, weavers, artisans, etc., linked to them by services rendered and rights enjoyed in return thereof, formed self-contained communities. All their needs, bare as they were, were met within the circle

In North Malabar, for instance, law and order and customs and rites, were administered by their own elders called Kāraṇavans. The geographical unit for this purpose was called a Tara attached to a place of worship, usually a Bhagavati Temple. Four Taras form a Nālpād, four Nālpāds one Kaḷakam and four Kaḷakams make a Trikkūṭtom. The last is attached to a great temple and the leaders of Trikkūṭtom known as Accans assemble in a Koṭṭil. The different levels of assemblies are held according to the gravity of the decisions to be taken. There were two Koṭṭils in North Malabar; one at Andālūr and the other at Payyannūr. The present writer recollects certain families which had been ostracised at the last Thrikkūṭtom held a hundred and odd years ago. In the thirties of this century, social reformers took the next generation of the outcaste families, back into the Tiya fold.

Other areas had other organisations more or less similar to the one described above. In short a detailed well thought-out system of administration by elders, was the characteristic of Tiya community. When however several units combined to form the largest single community the tribal system disappeared, a process that was eased by the introduction of the British system of government, jurisprudence, etc., in the land.

Property Rights

The great majority of Tiyas were landless labourers but no one was homeless. In fact no one, not even the lowest of the low, was homeless in Kerala until the development of towns and cities with the inevitable growth of slums. Every one had a house to live in. It was built on land belonging to the land-lord who could evict them at his own sweet will. That was the only hitch. The interplay of human feelings that develop between land-lords and tenants was their only security, which, is frail and often fragile

Land was in plenty and fertile too. The more adventurous person with a craving for independent means of livelihood moved out into the jungles cleared a piece of ground and the farmer thus became an agriculturist owning his own land. Hard work with enough hands available through the joint-family system produced in course of time several land-lords and even zamindars like Ālum Mūṭṭil Cānnār and Maḍhattil Rāirichan Mūppan among this landless caste.

Thanks to the cursedness of the caste system these zamindars too had to succumb to the disabilities of their caste. Channar had a car and a muslim driver. When the car reached a spot beyond which the Thiyya should not proceed, the Channar got down and walked along lanes and fields, taking a devious path up to the spot on the road, a mile or so away, beyond which he was allowed to walk on the road. Meanwhile the driver drove the car along the road forbidden to his master and he could be seen waiting at the wheel for Channar to arrive. A truly Pickwickian situation, if ever there was one.

Property earned as mentioned above was inherited patrilineally in Kerala except in North Malabar where the matrilineal system of inheritance—not, be it noted the matriarchal system—prevailed. The patrilineal system is familiar to all. Under the matrilineal system inheritance was through the mother's side. All the children, both sons and daughters were entitled to the property. It is only in the next generation that selectiveness steps in. The children of the daughters had the right to matrilineal property, while the children of the sons, be they male or female, had no such rights.

Inheritance of Funeral Rites only

Under this mixed system, marriages were real marriages and not *sambandhams*. The wife goes to the husband's house and stays there till death separates them. It is only when a woman becomes a widow that she and her children move to the maternal home and stay there. All this, of course, has passed into history. Now—adays patrilinealism pervades. Matrilinealism survives only in the case of property already inherited through the mother's side. Here too the right of partition has accelerated the disappearance of the old system. The humour of it is that it now prevails

when funeral ceremonies are performed. At that time all members descending through women have to perform such rites. Very soon, that too may disappear.

The Great Leap Forward

This downtrodden community got an opportunity to better its prospects and status when the East India Company and later the British Government took over the reins of government in Malabar. The other two parts of Kerala were ruled over by Indian State governments of Cochin and Travancore, under the tutelage of the British. Dr Gundert's dictionary defines the Tiya as a "community which rose into prominence by serving the British in India". That is true to the letter.

The Nambūdiri would not condescend to touch the Britisher with a barge pole, much less serve under him. The *Ambalavasis*, or castes who performed various services in the temple stuck to their traditional loyalty to the Brāhmins. The Nayar rulers had much to loose at the hands of the British, and the intimate connection of Nāyars with the Nambūdiris also led them to stay away from government service. The untouchable Tiyas had nothing to loose except his untouchability by serving the Europeans. As farmers they became food contractors to the British army and amassed wealth. Being the purveyors of liquor too, helped them to earn money by supplying drinks to soldiers and officers. Daily labourers as they were, Tiya constructed roads and built barracks and buildings. The bullock-cart drivers became horse-cart drivers, and later motor-car and locomotive drivers. As there was a superstrata of Tiya pundits throughout the land the Englishman used them as munshis to learn Malayalam. Naturally therefore clerical jobs, positions in the police department, Junior Executive posts in the revenue sections were filled by Tiya. Queen Victoria assumed sovereignty over India, in 1857. Within two years (1859) we find a Thiyyā-Cūria Canāran becoming a deputy collector. The decades that followed saw a flood of this untouchable community filling all sorts of posts under government. The first English schools in Malabar having been run by Christian missionaries Tiya rushed in where higher castes did not deign to tread. At one time, all the ten taluks of Malabar were ruled by men belonging to this untouchable community as *Tahasildars*, which is perhaps a unique

phenomenon in India in the last decade of the nineteenth century.

By that time, the Nāyars and other higher castes had changed their attitudes and government service became the common ground for competition for every caste and creed.

From Dust unto Men

Meanwhile in Cochin and Travancore Tiya continued to groan under the crippling manacles of the dreadful caste system and the deadening effects of cruel customs that were perpetrated under it. The rise of lakhs and lakhs of men and women in revolt which took place in many ways in many directions and in many places at once led by leaders who were reformers, agitators, and firebrands of multifarious types, all of them held together as a team by Sri Narayana Guru, one of the greatest Gurus of modern times. The co-operation rendered by the broad minded among the higher castes; the true Christians among the Christian community, Muslims who were imbued with the true spirit of Islam—all led to a transformation of social life in Kerala that was nothing short of a metamorphosis. When Gandhiji's satyagraha movement and the spirit of Swaraj permeated into Kerala it strengthened a hundred-fold the urge for upward movement by the down-trodden. One by one the orthodox citadels began to fall. Entry of untouchables into schools and colleges, hostels and then government offices, elections of the depressed classes into legislative assemblies which themselves changed to truly democratic institutions with the advent of freedom, looked like nothing short of miracles. This part of India which was a mad-house of caste distinctions and invidious practices was the first in India to throw open the temples to every Hindu in the land.

All honour to Sri Narayana Guru and his intrepid, able lieutenants who led the movement by soul force as it were, to mundane liberties and rights. The vast improvement in the lot of the ordinary men and women that still remain to be done in Kerala, as it does in India as a whole, may perhaps temporarily blind us to what has already been achieved to make men out of dust. But to those among us who lived through those most stirring periods one can only echo Wordsworth's exclamation:

Bliss was it, in that age to be alive
But to be young was the very heaven!

p. k. gopalakrishnan

sri narayana guru- father of kerala renaissance

The latter half of the nineteenth century was a period of tumult and new awakening throughout India. The Brahma Samaj started by Ram Mohan Roy in Bengal in 1825 opened up a new era of social reform, and the mind of the middle-class in Bengal and of the intellectuals throughout India was drawn towards the problem of social decay engendered by the caste system and other meaningless social institutions of the Hindu Society. The great rebellion of 1857, also set in motion forces for achieving political independence of the country which gradually took shape in the form of Indian National Congress.

Social Conditions

It was in this period, in the year 1855, that Sri Narayana was born in a small village called Cempalanti, six miles north of Trivandrum. The social conditions obtaining in Kerala at that time were obnoxious. The caste system was so deep-rooted that people were divided into innumerable castes and sub-castes, each in a close endogamic group with taboos of untouchability, unapproachability or un-seeability attached to lower castes. The majority of the people were driven away from public roads and public places to which they had no access in the presence of a caste Hindu. This state of affairs horrified Swami Vivekananda who visited Kerala towards the end of the 19th century and made him to declare from Madras that Kerala looked like a lunatic asylum. The barbarous way in which the customs of untouchability and unapproachability were enforced by the higher castes in their dealings with the lower castes might appear incredible to civilised society. But it was the order of the day throughout the medieval period in Kerala. This has been recorded by foreign travellers like Barbosa,

Varthema, Visscher and others who visited Kerala during the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries.

The economic system was feudal and oppressive to the extreme. Ilavas and other low castes among the Hindus and the Mappilas (Muslims) in Malabar were the tenants. The upper castes were exempt from the payment of land-tax, while all kinds of oppressive taxes were levied from the lower castes and the Mappilas. Rev. Mateer giving a graphic description of the deplorable condition of the lower castes, in 1883 states: "Everything at all taxable was availed and every special occasion was made an excuse for squeezing the laboring classes of their hard earnings..... Narrow and short-sighted laws, exclusive legislation and oppressive monopolies effectively hindered the extension of trade, the growth of commerce and the spread of agriculture, while barbarous caste restriction produced disunion and national weakness. The use of the public highways was forbidden to low castes and anyone daring to pass on within polluting distance of a Nair would be cut down at once. To secure immediate recognition of such classes they were required to be uncovered above the waist; shoes, umbrellas, fine cloths, and costly ornaments were interdicted to them. The holding of umbrellas was prohibited to all castes except Brahmins on public occasions, though the rains were pouring upon them. The proper salutation from a female to persons of rank was to uncover the bosom". It was in such a society that Sri Narayana Guru was born in an Ilava family and carried out his mission of life, bringing about a thorough social revolution in the country.

From his very childhood Sri Narayana Guru abhorred the caste system and mingled



freely with Pulaya children with whom he always partook his food. Opposition and wrath which he had to encounter on such occasions from the members of his family made him think about the meaninglessness of the whole system.

Life and Activities

Sri Narayana began his public activities in the year 1888, when he consecrated a temple at Aruvippuram. The life of Sri Narayana till that time is not fully known. He had education in Sanskrit and in Malayalam in his early childhood from his father and uncle. Advanced studies in Sanskrit were made at Karunagapally from Kumman Pallil Raman Pillai Aśan. Since then Sri Narayana, it is said, wandered about the forests and hills and travelled through the length and breadth of South India, practising meditation and Yoga, and observing the life of the people. It was during this period of 'avadhuta' life that Sri Narayana got himself enlightened on the problems of contemporary society and he meditated on the ways in which the ills of society could be cured. He also deepened his knowledge in Sanskrit and studied Tamil classics during this time.

The consecration of a Siva temple at Aruvippuram, a few miles south of Trivandrum, was a silent but strong protest against the Brahminical orthodoxy which prevented untouchables even from going near a Siva temple. Here was an instance of not only making offerings to the deity, but also of consecrating the deity, by a man born of an untouchable caste. This event infuriated a section of the orthodox Hindus, and a Brahmin questioned the very propriety of his action to Sri Narayana himself. There came the sober answer that "the deity consecrated was an Ilava Siva and not a Brahmin Siva". The hollowness of caste distinctions was revealed and the meaningless pride of the Brahmins was shattered.

The Three-fold Ills

Sri Narayana Guru is revered throughout Kerala as the harbinger of social reform movements. He realised that contemporary society was suffering from three-fold ills. The first and foremost was that vast masses of people were weighed down by ignorance, superstition and cultural backwardness which made them meekly submit to the cruel caste system and other

inhuman practices. The second ill of the society was the economic backwardness of the people. Thirdly, the people were disunited and therefore they had no power to overcome obscurantist and orthodox forces which wanted to perpetuate feudal backwardness and the caste system. Sri Narayana Guru brought forth solutions to all the three problems.

In order to eradicate the cultural backwardness of the people he appealed to the down-trodden masses to get themselves educated. Though himself a stranger to modern education, he wanted his fellowmen (also women) to take to modern education. In many of the temples established by him schools and libraries were opened, attached to the temples. Pupils belonging to all castes and creeds were admitted into those schools. No distinction of caste was observed in the matter of temple worship also. But there have been instances in a few temples consecrated by Sri Narayana Guru of the conservative section of the Ilavas themselves refusing entry to Harijans. Such was an instance at Jagannatha Temple at Tellicherry. Here also Sri Narayana Guru calmly persuaded the orthodox Ilavas and made them agree to admit Harijans into the temple. By his personal example, more than by advice, he showed the people at large and his followers in particular, that all men belong to one and the same caste, that human society is of human species, and that the so-called caste distinctions are man-made and one of no good to anyone.

The economic backwardness of the people, Sri Narayana Guru realised, resulted from existing feudal order and lack of industrialisation. The age-old customs of Taliketettu, Pulikudi, etc. were draining the hard-earned money of the rich and the poor alike through wasteful ceremonies. Sri Narayana Guru wanted all people to give up these meaningless ceremonies. There was much opposition from the orthodox sections at first. By and by such customs were abandoned by the Ilavas, Nayars, Arayas, Kummaḷas and other communities followed suit in quick succession.

As early as 1916, Sri Narayana Guru told the people of Kerala that industrialisation and mechanisation of traditional industries like coir, are the only means for achieving economic prosperity. Replying to the welcome address presented to him by the Vijnana Vardhini Sabha following the

consecration of a temple at Cherai, Sri Narayana Guru pointed out that the traditional coir industry has no future of its own, and that the only way to make it a flourishing industry was to mechanise it after getting technical know-how from England or other European countries. But, no body took serious note of it for the next half-a-century. Only quite recently the economists and administrators have realised that our traditional industries are fast collapsing, and mechanisation on modern lines alone can make them survive. It is worthwhile to notice that the first Industrial Exhibition in Kerala was organised by Sri Narayana Guru, fifty years ago.

The solution for disunity and the consequent weakness, was to have mass organisations for achieving the ends. Accordingly Sri Narayana Guru advised the people to get themselves strengthened through organisation and he patronised the organisation called S. N. D. P. (Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Sabha) of which he himself was the life time president. This Sabha, formed in the year 1903, was the first mass organisation in Kerala. The great poet Kumaran Aśan was its Secretary for the first twelve years. Numerous were the achievements of S. N. D. P. during the first twenty five years of its existence. It awakened the down-trodden mass of Kerala and kindled in them a new spirit of self-reliance and yearning to reach the heights of civilization. The great ideal of socialism and the glorious achievements of Russian Revolution under the leadership of great Lenin, were first proclaimed to the people of Kerala in the ringing words of Sahodaran Ayyappan, a disciple of Sri Narayana Guru. His fiery speeches and articles attracted leaders like E. M. S. Namboodiripad and others towards the ideal of socialism in the first instance.

The example set by S. N. D. P. in social reform electrified the atmosphere, and different communities began to think of organising social reform movements. Thus arose the Sadhujana Paripalana Yogam of the Pulayas organised by Ayyan Kali, Yogakṣema Sabha of the Nambudiris, Nair Service Society of Nayars, Vāla Samudaya Pariṣkarini Sabha and Araya Vamsodharini Sabha of fisherfolk and a few other organisations all engaged in social reform activities. As a result of the work of these organisations, new light dawned on the face of Kerala as the whole

country was preparing to launch a wider struggle for political independence and social justice.

It may be remembered in this connection, that the first mass agitation in Kerala was organised by the late T. K. Madhavan, a disciple of Sree Narayana Guru, for establishing the right of way through the public road around the Vaikam temple for the non-caste Hindus, in co-operation with the Indian National Congress, in the year 1924-25.

The Guru with Gandhiji and Tagore

When the Vaikkam Satyagraha was in full swing, Mahatma Gandhi came down to Travancore and met Sri Narayana Guru at Sivagiri Ashram. The conversation between Gandhiji and Sri Narayana high-lighted the difference in outlook of the two great men on caste and religion. Gandhiji was not for abolition of caste. He wanted only abolition of untouchability. Pointing to the mango tree that stretched its branches over the yard of the Ashram, Gandhiji said that no two leaves were alike. Sree Narayana Guru remarked that all the leaves had the same taste if chewed. Gandhiji was silenced. That was a time when untouchables were thinking in terms of conversion to other religions. Without referring to the question of conversion, Gandhiji put the question: "Is not Hinduism enough for one's spiritual salvation?". Sri Narayana Guru's replay was something unexpected from a Hindu Sanyasin: "All religions have their own paths for spiritual salvation; no religion can claim a monopoly in this matter". Sri Narayana Guru never wanted to uphold the superiority of any one religion. According to him all the religions were one. "One Caste, One Religion, One God for man"—this was one of his popular messages. He explained his attitude towards religions as "Whatever be one's religion, it is enough that man becomes good".

On another occasion Rabindranath Tagore visited Sri Narayana Guru. The total impression Tagore gained about Sri Narayana was expressed in the following words: "I have been touring different parts of the world. During these travels, I have had the good fortune to come into contact with several saints and maharshis. But I have frankly to admit that I have never come across one who is spiritually

greater than Swami Sri Narayana Guru of Malayalam-nay, a person who is on a par with him in spiritual attainment. I am sure, I shall never forget that radiant face illumined by the self-effulgent light of divine glory and those yogic eyes fixing their gaze on a far remote point in the distant horizon".

A New Philosophy

Sree Narayana Guru is often described as one among the saints and seers of India who drank deep from wells of the Upanishadic philosophy, ably commented by Sankara. Though Sri Narayana himself once remarked that he is a follower of the advaita philosophy of Sankara, his thoughts transcended the limits of Sankara's advaita and opened up new vistas and horizons for human thought. 'Philosophy', wrote Bertrand Russel, "throughout its history, has consisted of two parts inharmoniously blended; on the one hand a theory as to the nature of the world, and on the other an ethical or political doctrine as to the best way of living". Let us examine these two elements in the philosophy of Sri Narayana.

The concept of the material world as contained in Sankara's philosophy was that it is something unreal, as unreal as the illusion of a snake in a piece of rope. 'Brahmah Satyam Jagan Mithya' was the essence of that concept. True, there were philosophies which conceived the world as real, like Lokayata. But Sri Narayana Guru conceives the world neither as real nor as unreal. He says it is indescribable. This concept is contained in poem 87 of 'Atmopadesa Satakam'. However he conceives that 'Knowledge' alone is real and that the world has sprung from that reality (Atmopadesa Sataka, 89). Then he goes on to say that this intertwining of the indescribable world and the reality of knowledge is a contradiction in itself. In such an infinite, indescribable and inconceivable existence, he questions the validity of any dogma or principle (Atmopadesa Sataka, 94). Then finally Sri Narayana clearly states that neither 'Astikyavāda', nor 'Nāstikavāda' gives the whole truth about the universe. Both those theories

would find their grounds eroding on the face of actual experience (Atmopadesa Sataka, 96).

Such a novel thinking about the meaning of the universe cannot be designated as belonging to the confines of old Upanishadic philosophy or Sankara's advaita.

Again, on the ethical element of philosophy, Sri Narayana's contribution has been great. His simple enunciation that "Whatever a man does for his own pleasure, shall be of benefit to others" is a straight appeal to the goodness in man. In the present capitalist society, where almost all people are engaged in selfish activities to amass wealth through whatever means at his disposal, a cultural revolution of massive proportions is called for. In such a cultural revolution we cannot find a better watchword than this simple saying of Sri Narayana.

Social Revolution:

More than a philosopher, Sri Narayana Guru was a man of action with philosophical orientation. His achievements in the realm of social revolution were something unsurpassed in the history of Kerala. One can in no way highlight this aspect better than by quoting the following words of C. Achutha Menon, Chief Minister of Kerala, evaluating Sri Narayana's achievements:

"He (Sri Narayana) was a son of this soil. He got inspired himself from the life of the ordinary people of this land. He could get into contact with inner strains of the life of the people through some wonderful means, and he could even touch the very source of it, a manner unattainable by any body in Kerala at that time. Only such men can lead a whole people, the whole society, to revolution. All others can only shout slogans and lead agitations, i. e., indulge in superficial actions. On the other hand here was a man, at the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the 20th century, who shook the very social fabric of Kerala, turned it to its very depth, and on whose very touch the whole of down-trodden people rose up and fought up to their victory".

k. p. kesava menon

vaikom satyagraha

Sri Madhavan*, Sardar K. M. Panikkar, and myself travelled together from Madras to Kakinada. (To attend the Kakinada session of the Congress in 1923). Panikkar then was the editor of 'Swarajya'. Stories narrated by Panikkar and humorous comments from Madhavan helped to drive away all the tedium of the journey. At Kakinada Madhavan stayed with me at the Kerala camp. In those days, while it was extremely cold Madhavan rose up early in the morning, and prepared 'the Request to the All India Congress Committee on behalf of the Untouchables of India'. Maulana Muhamed Ali was the Congress President that year. Copies of 'the Request' were printed and given to the President, the members of the A I C C, and the Press representatives. It was as a result of this work that the Congress decided to intensify the programmes for the eradication of untouchability, and to give necessary suggestions to the Provincial Committees. As the President Maulana Muhamed Ali listened with great attention to what Madhavan had to say, there was no difficulty that year in passing the resolution regarding eradication of untouchability. Maulana Muhamed Ali and his brother Maulana Shaukat Ali were then the important 'pillars' of the Congress Movement; they were bosom friends of Gandhiji. It was the Khilafat Movement that attracted them to the Congress.

It was after the Kakinada Congress that Madhavan developed more confidence in the Congress and joined it. On our return from Kakinada we were prompt in putting into practice the decisions of the Congress.

The Provincial Congress committee that met at Ernakulam on 24th January,

1924 considered the eradication of untouchability as a specially urgent matter, and appointed a committee to do whatever was necessary in the matter. Another committee was entrusted with the work of going to various parts of Kerala to explain to the people the congress programme. The latter had in it A. K. Pillai, Hassan Koya Mullah, Kuroor Nilakantan Nambudiripad, and myself. A. K. Pillai prepared the tour programme of the committee. He was with me at all the places. We toured from one end of Travancore to the other addressing big public meetings, both in towns and in villages. Memories of those days are inspiring. Three public meetings were arranged daily at different centres; on some days there were more meetings. We received rousing reception at all places. People attended the meetings without distinction of caste or community. We had very interesting experiences during this tour extending over 24 days. We also got an opportunity of seeing for ourselves the great enthusiasm of the people for the National Movement.

In accordance with our programme we reached Vaikom on 28th February 1924. It was then that we came to know that the 'untouchables' were not free to use the public roads near the temple at Vaikom. That evening I spoke about this injustice at the public meeting that was arranged there. I asked the gathering: "Why is it that we, who are protesting against the injustice done to us by the foreigners, are not ready to provide justice to our own people? Is it not our duty to remove this injustice to the 'untouchables'?" There was applause from the audience. I continued—"It is easy to clap your hands. Troubles start only when you begin to work. How many of you will be there if we are to go in procession through

*Sri T. K. Madhavan, the veteran social-worker and nationalist is referred to here.

the prohibited roads taking with us the 'untouchables?' The crowd cried out: 'Every one! Every one!' 'Then we shall conduct the procession tomorrow', I said. There was applause for full five minutes. Everyone left the meeting with great enthusiasm.

When I reached our camp after the meeting I found the Magistrate, the Tahsildar, Police Officers, prominent citizens and many others assembled there. Many of them suggested that there will be a lot of trouble and even bloodshed if, as I had announced at the meeting, a procession including the 'untouchables' was taken out along the prohibited roads. Therefore they proposed that for the time being the procession may be postponed, and to create favourable atmosphere we may resort to propaganda for about one month. After consulting my colleagues and others it was decided to do so. The next day's procession was cancelled. And with determination to conduct the procession after one month, we returned to Calicut.

The propaganda for opening up the Vaikom temple road to members of all castes was carried on with great alacrity. For this publicists were sent to many places. Pamphlets were published. There were talks with various leaders. We also gained the support of the Press. Even after carrying on the propaganda for many days the temple authorities were not prepared for any concession. It became clear that satyagraha alone would lead to a solution to the problem of gaining freedom for using the road. Therefore we decided to start satyagraha.

Before starting it, I wrote a letter to Mahatma Gandhi explaining the circumstances that compelled us to resort to satyagraha and asking for his blessings. The reply to that letter is given below.

Post: Andheri
March 19, 1924

My dear Kesava Menon,
I have your letter.

I know that the condition of the suppressed classes is the worst in your part of India. As you say, they are not merely untouchable, but they may not walk through certain streets. Their condition is truly deplorable. I do not wonder that we have not yet attained swaraj. To vindicate the right of these countrymen of ours to the use of public streets, the Provincial Congress Committee is organizing a

procession containing them that shall pass through the forbidden streets. This is a species of satyagraha. At this stage I do not need to draw attention to its conditions. There should be no show of force if any of our people oppose their progress. You should meekly submit and take all the beating, if any. Everyone taking part in the procession should be acquainted with the conditions and be prepared to fulfil them. There should be only a limited number. There should be no defiance, and if you find that the processionists are not likely to comply with the conditions, there should be no hesitation in postponing the procession. I fear that we have not canvassed enough the opponents of the reform. Caution, therefore, is all the more necessary. The problem, I know, is very difficult. To advise from my sick-bed is easy enough. The best thing therefore, that I can do is after uttering the caution, to wish you every success in the proposed enterprise.

Yours sincerely,
(M. K. Gandhi)

It was decided to start the satyagraha on 30th March 1924. I reached Vaikom four days before that date. Many friends and volunteers had arrived there to assist in the satyagraha. The leaders of both the Nair and the Ezhava communities were there. Their talks, discussions and enthusiastic preparations had created a festive atmosphere at Vaikom. Leaders like Mannath Padmanabha Pillai, C. V. Kunhiraman and Alummottil Channar arrived there. Separate sections were formed for collecting money, collecting materials, conducting propaganda, receiving the visitors, and engaging the volunteers. Arrangements were carefully made so that there will not be any hitch in the satyagraha even if the leaders were arrested.

The day broke on the 30th. Everyone at the satyagraha camp, after taking bath and applying 'tilak' on their foreheads, got ready to proceed to the temple road. Three persons were to offer satyagraha on the first day—Kunhappi, a Pulaya; Bahuleyan, an Ezhava; and Govinda Panicker, a Nair. We started from the camp at 7 in the morning and proceeded in rows of two. It was about one mile from the camp to the temple road. We walked slowly and reached there. A huge crowd had assembled there including spectators and the police. A signboard had been erected on the road hundred yards

away from the temple, with the inscription "Untouchables are not permitted beyond this". Everyone stopped fifty yards away from that board. The three who were to offer satyagraha that day walked forward. All waited eagerly to see what was going to happen. Policemen walked around controlling the crowd. The three Satyagrahis reached near the board. A few policemen stood there in a row. The Satyagrahis stopped there. "What is the caste of each of you?", a Policeman asked them. "I am a Pulaya, I am an Ezhava, I am a Nair", they replied. "Nair can pass through, the other two cannot walk this way", ordered the Policeman. "I have come with these two to take them along with me through this road. I shall proceed only with them", replied Govinda Panicker. The Policemen barred the way. Thus some time passed. "Either you should let us pass this way; or you should arrest us for trying to do so. We are not prepared to return"—so saying the Satyagrahis sat down.

The District Magistrate and the policemen conferred among themselves. Orders were issued to arrest the Satyagrahis. After their arrest and removal all of us returned to the camp. Thus the first day's satyagraha was over.

Next day the Magistrate tried and sentenced the Satyagrahis to six months simple imprisonment. Another batch of three offered satyagraha on that day. They were also arrested and sent to jail.

There were no untoward incidents on the first two days. We were happy about the peaceful progress of the satyagraha. But it caused consternation among some upper-caste Hindus. Many false statements began to spread there. News like "Untouchables are about to enter the temple; they are getting ready for a riot" began to be heard. I received letters hinting at such news. Some friends advised me that we should stop the satyagraha for two days, meet the upper-caste leaders, and try to influence them. Accordingly the satyagraha was stopped for two days. At this stage Mahatma Gandhi wrote another letter to me. It read as follows:

Andheri
April (1924)

My dear Kesava Menon

Messrs Shivarama Iyer and Vancheeswara Iyer have come here in connection with your satyagraha. They tell me that

the roads in dispute are private property belonging to the temple to which they lead and that it is in exclusive possession of Brahmin trustees who, these gentlemen claim, have perfect right to regulate entry. I then asked them if these roads were private property exclusively belonging to the Brahmins, whether any non-Brahmins had the use of them, and they admitted that they had. I then told them that, so long as a single non-Brahmin was allowed the use of the roads, the so-called untouchables and unapproachables must have the same right as other non-Brahmins. They agree, but they say that it will take some time before they can bring round to their way of thinking the trustees and other Brahmins who are interested in temple and roads.

I understand, too, that Malaviyaji is going to the South in two months' time. If the trustees of the temple agree, in the event of any dispute between you as representing untouchables and themselves, to refer all such disputes to the sole arbitration of Malaviyaji, his award to be delivered within a fixed time, I would advise you to suspend satyagraha, publicly announcing the cause of suspension, namely, its reference to arbitration.

Naturally, this advice is tendered in the belief that the main facts stated by the Iyer brothers are correct. They tell me that they are as anxious as we are to carry out this reform in its thoroughness and, if they are sincere in their professions, we should reciprocate and accommodate them in so far as it is consistent with our principles.

Yours sincerely,
(M. K. Gandhi)

Though this letter had been written on the 1st of April, I did not get it till the 4th. But I came to know of the contents of the letter from 'The Hindu'. As the matter was urgent I sent the following reply to Gandhi even before the letter reached me.

Vaikom,
6-4-'24.

Dear Mahatmaji,

I read in 'the Hindu' dated 4th that Mahatmaji has written a letter to me about stopping the satyagraha for the present. I have not received that letter so far. It may be travelling to Vaikom. I do not

think that it is necessary to wait till I receive the letter to let you know the true state of affairs here.

I do not personally know Mr. Sivaramakrishna Iyer and Mr. Vancheeswara Iyer mentioned in Mahatmaji's letter. The things they have stated there do not appear to be true. Neither Vaikom temple nor the roads in dispute are the private property of any individual or trusty. The temple is in the possession of the Travancore Government. Its affairs are looked after by the Government officials. The roads leading to the temple are maintained from the revenue that the Government collects from the public. These roads are used not only by the Brahmins and other 'Savarnas'; Muhammadans, Christians and other non-Hindu communities freely travel through them. Only the depressed classes like 'Thiyyas' and Pulayas are not allowed to use them. Under law the depressed people also have the right to travel through these roads. I am sure that Mahatmaji would advise us to continue the satyagraha in view of these facts.

About Mahatmaji's suggestion that the matter should be settled under the mediation of Malavyaji, I have to say this. 'Mahatmaji is under the impression that the temple is the private property of the Brahmin trustees and that they may accept the mediation of Malavyaji. But as stated above, the owner and trustee of the temple is the Government of Travancore. If that Government is prepared to act according to Mahatmaji's suggestion we are ready, as the representatives of the depressed classes, to accept respectfully Mahatmaji's advice. But till then we have no alternative to continuing the satyagraha.

I had sent a telegram to Mahatmaji about the reasons for stopping the satyagraha for a few days. As the situation here has improved, tomorrow, Monday the 7th April, we are starting the satyagraha again.

I am almost certain that shortly myself and some of my colleagues will be arrested. Mr. George Joseph is now here. I firmly believe that when we are removed the struggle will continue under his leadership with even more vigour and enthusiasm. He will let Mahatmaji know the situation here

from time to time. We pray for Mahatmaji's blessings.

Yours faithfully,
K. P. Kesava Menon

I attended a meeting of the Caste Hindus and requested them to mete out justice to the 'untouchables'. I said that it was the 'Savarnas' who should at that stage request the Government to permit the 'untouchables' to pass through temple road, that they should not miss this golden opportunity to do so. I dare not say that this had much effect. After returning to our camp and consulting the others we decided to start the Satyagraha again the next day.

T. K. Madhavan and I got ready to offer Satyagraha that day. Hearing about the decision to start the Satyagraha again a crowd had assembled on both sides of the temple road at Vaikom. We started from the Satyagraha camp and reached the temple road. Leaving the others behind, myself and Madhavan walked towards the temple. As we walked up we were arrested and taken to the police-station. After food our trial started at the court.

The case came up for trial at the court of Sri Andi Pillai. The sum and substance of the argument against us was that we incited the 'untouchables' to walk through the temple road, that if they do so it will excite the 'Savarnas', and that it may provoke some of the 'Savarnas' to riot. Neither myself nor Madhavan cross-examined the witnesses.

I submitted to the court as follows:-

"It is true that I induced the Ezhavas, Pulayas and others who were considered as 'untouchables', to walk through the roads barred to them as per the orders of the Magistrate. As long as that order stands I shall continue to induce them to break it. The so called untouchables have every right to use the places which could be used by the 'Savarnas' and people belonging to other religions like Muslims and Christians. I am now trying to gain that right for them. There are misunderstandings among some people about our intentions. I wish to make it clear that we are not trying to gain entry for the so-called 'untouchables' into the temple; we are only trying to induce them to establish the right to walk

through the public places. We believe that this right, which has not been granted even after sending repeated requests and petitions for a long time, can be achieved only through satyagraha. If the punishment that we are going to suffer for this belief would help to remove this evil practice from Kerala, nothing would give us more pleasure".

After the trial the court ordered each of us to deposit an amount of Rs. 500/- as security. As we were not prepared to do so, we were sentenced to six months simple imprisonment.

We informed the Magistrate that we did not intend to file an appeal on that verdict. The practice was to retain those sentenced by that court at the sub-jail at Kottayam if they intended to go on appeal against the judgement. As there was to be no such appeal, it was decided to take us to the Trivandrum jail the same day. At 3' clock myself, Madhavan and a Police Officer started in a car to Trivandrum. After stopping for some time at Kottayam, we reached Trivandrum by 10 at night.

By that time the Vaikom Satyagraha had gained all India fame. E. V. Ramaswamy Naicker came from Tamilnadu, offered satyagraha and arrived in the jail at Trivandrum. Leaders like Srinivasa Iyengar and Swamy Sradhananda came to the jail to see us. A group of Akalis arrived at Vaikom from the Punjab. They began to run a 'free restaurant' there for the visitors and others. Everyday countless visitors reached Vaikom from various parts of India. Police stopped arresting the satyagrahis. They began to stand in front of the Satyagrahis (barring the way) in rotation. Chathukutty Nair who offered satyagraha sitting there continuously for two days, day and night, became unconscious and had to be carried to the hospital with the aid of doctors. It was an inspiring sight and the incident gave a new vigour to the Vaikom Satyagraha.

The satyagraha thus went on without any change in the attitude of both the authorities and the satyagrahis.

At this time there occurred an unexpected event. Sri Moolam Tirunal, the Maharaja of Travancore, died. As his heir,

Chithira Tirunal, had not come of age Maharani Sethu Lakshmi Bai took up the reins of the Government. The Maharani decided to let off all satyagrahis in honour of the Maharaja.

Though we are let off from the prison, the campaign at Vaikom had not come to an end. Only the style of the campaign changed from time to time. At that time Mahatma Gandhi visited Vaikom. After talks with him the authorities agreed to allow some concessions. It was decided that the temple road that could be used by the Muhammadans and Christians may be used by all Hindus without distinction of caste. But it was also agreed that the Satyagrahis will not insist on gaining admission for the low-caste Hindus to places near the temple where customarily high-caste Hindus alone were allowed. Accordingly the signboard on the temple road prohibiting entry to the 'untouchables' was removed. And the satyagraha was withdrawn.

Though this solved one aspect of the problem that led to Vaikom satyagraha, eradication of untouchability was not achieved. Work for that continued in accordance with Gandhiji's advice.

It was decided to take out a 'Savarna' procession (favouring eradication of untouchability) from Vaikom to Trivandrum. Great preparations were made for this in haste. The reception that the procession received all along the way, due to the enthusiastic efforts of leaders like A. K. Pillai, M. N. Nair and Changanassery Parameswaran Pillai, was inspiring. On the way there were public meetings at several places. More people joined the procession as it passed through different centres. The procession that moved flying flags, singing songs and crying out slogans became almost a huge army taken out to fight untouchability. A similar procession started from Nagercoil under the leadership of Dr. Naidu. At a huge public meeting convened at Trivandrum beach a resolution was passed requesting the Government to take steps to remove untouchability. A delegation of the 'Savarna' procession under the leadership of Changanassery Parameswaran Pillai met the Maharani and submitted a giant petition signed by 25,000 'high-caste' Hindus. All this caused a

great awakening in favour of the eradication of untouchability.

Vaikom satyagraha continued through various stages for 20 months. It laid the foundation for removing untouchability and for firmly re-establishing the self respect of the low-caste Hindus, not only in Kerala, but in all parts of India. It also created an

atmosphere for building up a new society. It is an inspiring chapter in the history of the Congress activities in Kerala.

(From K. P. Kesava Menon's autobiographical work in Malayalam, 'Kaliñña Kālam').

Translation : M. Gangadharan



Tamil Grantha Inscription from Ganapati Vattom, (Batteri) c. 14th Century A. D.
(Calicut University History Department Museum)

n. s. mannadiar

lakshadweep - mappila outpost in the arabian sea

The enchanting coral islands lying scattered in the Arabian Sea are known as Lakshadweep, the smallest Union Territory in India. Its fascinating landscape and the shallow lagoons with the dazzling whiteness of the coral sand at the bottom, the rainbow coloured tints and diversified shapes of the living coral rocks, the intensely brilliant colours of fish which dart in and out and the exquisitely buoyant crystal clearness of the water strike the visitor with surprise and leave indelibly impressed on his mind a picture of radiant beauty, such as few spots on earth can produce. The group which consists of 22 islands and 5 attached islets are away from the Kerala coast by 200 to 400 kilometres. Out of these islands, only 10 are inhabited. The islands lie generally from north to south and are identical in physical conformation. They are narrow strips of land lying not more than 3 to 4 metres above the sea level. With the only exception of Androth, every island has a shallow lagoon on its western side bounded by the coral reef and a storm beach on its eastern side. The lagoons protect the islands from the fury of the south-west monsoon. Coconuts are the staple product of the islands and the mainstay of the economy. Apart from the nuts which have a ready market, the husks provide the raw material for the traditional household industry of coir twisting. The land birds are limited to a few very common species found on the west coast of India. The islands are a treasure-house of a variety of marine fauna which cannot be found anywhere in India. The lagoons are full of fish of every kind and colour. In the open sea there are sharks, seer fish, tuna, devil fish and many other oceanic fishes of economic importance. Turtles and sea-slugs are abundant; corals and shells in attractive colours are also in plenty.

According to 1971 census, the population of Lakshadweep is 31,810. The inhabitants are Muslims. Excepting Minicoy, the southernmost island, where the dress, language and culture of the people are akin to Maldivians, all other islands appear like insular pockets of Malabar Moplahs.

The popular tradition about the early settlers is that they were the ship-wrecked members of an expedition that set out from Malabar in quest of their King Cheraman Perumal who was believed to have gone to Mecca and that the people were subsequently converted to Islam by an Arab Saint named U-beidulla. Not much reliance need be placed on the tradition of Cheraman Perumal, because the historians are divided on this point. These islands which lie in the trade-route between Kerala coast and Arabia must have attracted the Indian and Arab navigators from very early times. They should have halted there for collecting cowry and tortoise shells and also to escape from the fury of the unfavourable wind, until they thought of settling in these islands some time towards the end of fourteenth century.

The colonists were the subjects of the Kolathiri Raja of the erstwhile Malabar district and they had acknowledged his overlordship. Though the Portuguese made a settlement in one of these islands called Ameni and tried to establish their footing on the islands on several occasions, they did not succeed in their attempts. The Portuguese colony was exterminated in 1445. Shortly afterwards, making a virtue of necessity, the Kolathiri Raja made a grant of the islands in *Jagir* to his Chief Admiral, the Ali Raja of Cannanore. Though many might have embraced Islam much earlier, it was during the reign of this Muslim principality that the conversion became complete and the islands became

virtually the outposts of Malabar Moplahs. The rule of the Ali Rajas continued in the northern islands till the people revolted and transferred their allegiance to Tipu Sultan in 1787. In 1799, with the fall of Tipu Sultan in Seringapatnam, these islands were annexed by the East India Company.

Meanwhile, in 1791, the southern islands had passed to the East India Company along with other possessions of the Beebi of Cannanore (the ruling princess of the Cannanore house). But it was determined as a matter of policy to permit her to retain her possessions, provided she paid a tribute to the Company. When the payments fell in arrears, these islands were sequestered in 1875 which remained in force till 1908 when the Beebi surrendered her phantom sovereignty. These two groups of islands, which were parts of South Canara and Malabar districts, were taken out and a separate Union Territory was formed in 1956.

The language of the people (except in Minicoy where the historical and cultural background is conspicuous by its difference from other islands) is Malayalam with many local variations in vocabulary and pronunciation. The people wear the same dress as Moplahs of Malabar. The women do not generally wear purdah. Their ornaments are much like those of Moplah women in Malabar. A very peculiar feature of the society is that it is matrilineal in descent and matrilineal in residence. The majority of the people belong to the *Shafi* School of the *Sunni* sect and acknowledge besides the Quran, the authority of the Sunnet. Caste system prevails among the people. Koyas, Malmis and Melacheries are the three castes. Intercaste marriages are not very common.

An insular society living in isolation, the people are closely knit by bonds of communal discipline. When the rains are over and the season is open for trade with the mainlands, the entire population take part in launching the country boats and at the close of the season they are also hauled up in the same way. Though the community participates in all other activities including construction of houses, rat-hunting is one of the most interesting and utilitarian community endeavours in the islands. Rats are found in appreciable numbers and they are a source of menace to coconut, which is the only commercial crop in the islands. Rat-hunting is the traditional system of

controlling this pest in which all men are expected to participate. An assembly of the people is called and able-bodied young men with sticks in hand divide themselves into groups for the rat-hunt. One man climbs the coconut tree and disturbs the rats from their arboreal den and those below would strike them when they come down.

The people are devout Muslims and they are scrupulous in observing the various sacraments like the recitation of the *Kalima* (an expression of faith in God and in Muhammed), offering of *namaz* (prayers) five times a day, *roza* (fasting in the month of Ramzan) and *Zakat* (contribution in cash or kind for charitable purposes). However, they also follow some ritualistic practices like *Rathib* which do not have the sanction of Islam. The participants in *Rathib* sit in two rows facing each other, each holding a kind of tambourine. They beat the tambourine to the tune of hymns and perform a series of exercises. At the same time, half a dozen of them dance up and down between the rows carrying a pointed iron piece and gets into fits of frenzy as the pace of the hymn as well as the beating gain momentum. At the climax they shout and leap into the air and apply the pointed iron piece in their bodies.

Though the people are divided into various castes, there is very little difference in the social manners and customs followed by them. The ceremonies relating to birth, circumcision, marriage and death maintain in spirit, the culture and tradition of the Malabar Muslims, though they may differ in details. The women enjoy a higher social status and economic freedom than their counterparts elsewhere in the country. There is no dowry system and the groom is obliged to pay a bridal price in cash. The matrilineal system of inheritance, under which the property descends through the female line, saves the women from the proverbial economic dependence. The husband is obliged to make an annual payment towards the maintenance of the wife which forms part of the marriage contract. The wife can demand a divorce on grounds of non-payment of those customary dues. No social stigma is attached to a divorce, nor is it considered a disqualification for a woman to seek a fresh alliance. There is also no ban on the re-marriage of a widow. Because of these facilities for divorce and remarriage, very few men have more than

one wife and there are very few men or women who have not been married or divorced several times.

A spirit of co-operation is reflected in all walks of life in the islands. Even today communal contributions are made towards the expenses of marriages. When a death occurs in a house, the entire community not only shares the expenses but also provides the bereaved family with food till the entire ceremonies are over.

Though the people of Lakshadweep are Muslims, belief in magic and superstition as common as among the people in the mainland. They believe in demons and spirits and demons are even now invoked to spread terror and death over enemies and services of sorcerers are requisitioned to bring them under control. It is considered bad omen to catch sight of a garden lizard, skink or old woman, first on leaving the house. The striking of right foot against a stone is considered inauspicious. Tamarind trees are supposed to be the abode of evil spirits and they are not allowed to grow in front of a house. The effects of an evil eye are

supposed to be warded off by adorning new houses by some object which will conspicuously attract the attention of people.

During the first world war, the famous German warship *Emdon* found a convenient hiding place for a short time in Lakshadweep waters for its malignant attack on enemy ships. She operated off the Lakshadweep in September and October 1914 and sank several vessels on the trade routes which run north and south of Minicoy. Today the Germans are again attracted towards Lakshadweep, not by its strategic position but by its radiant beauty. The Bangaram island with its idyllic palm grove backdrop and the smooth sands caressed by the rippling waves of the multicoloured sea, is slowly developing into tourist resort of international fame: Little known as they were till recently even to the people of other parts of the country, these islands with their matchless scenic splendour, are bound to be an attraction in the future to those who are eager to lie for a shortwhile in complete harmony with nature far from the madding crowd.



Masati-stone with Tamil Brahmin Inscription—Pulpalli
C. 4th century A. D.
(Calicut University History Dept. Museum)

ayurveda in kerala

Kerala has a unique status in the field of Ayurveda. It is proud of its tradition and actively engaged in improving traditional studies and practice. In or outside his state a Malayalee carries a bit of his home tradition of medicine also with him. Whether he is aware of it or not this tradition is firmly rooted in the Ayurvedic system of medicine. The Tridōsha theory—the theory that the balance or imbalance of the three humours Vāta, Pita and Kapha is basic to the proper maintenance of health—has moulded the conception of our forefathers for centuries. Therefore the day-to-day and seasonal routine of every cultured Malayalee can be seen to be guided by this outlook.

Great scholars and physicians had sprung up from all communities in Kerala. If the *Ashta Vaidyas* of the Brahmanical class were privileged court physicians of great fame, the physicians from Ezhavas Vēlar and other low castes also had equal fame and recognition amongst the people, and stories of their accomplishments are told around. Works on medicine in the form of recorded clinical experiences, independent treatises, commentaries on original Sanskrit texts or their translations also came from writers of higher and lower communities alike. The heritage of Kerala Medicine is the heritage of the Kerala people.

All original and basic Ayurvedic texts are written in Sanskrit. The history of Ayurveda in India has inseparably and closely followed the bloom and decadence of Sanskrit literature. The original Samhitas in which the instructive words of Atreya and Dhanwantari were recorded belong to the era of the 'Brahmanas' and 'Upanishads'. In the period of the renaissance of Buddhism the "Samgrahas" were written. Some scholars hold that

Bhattara Harischandra, the first authoritative commentator of Charaka was one amongst the nine luminaries of the court of Vikramaditya. Others attribute this prestige to Dhanwantari, the first compiler of an Ayurvedic medical dictionary. Alchemy (Rasatantra) became prevalent as a major branch of Medicine in the late Tantric period. The decadence that followed then had its devastating effect on Medicine also.

Sanskrit is believed to have captivated the Kerala elite in the early centuries of Christian era. It was welcomed and taught as the language of advanced literature and knowledge. The basic texts of Ayurveda in Sanskrit were accepted in Kerala. But Kerala had its own traditional medicine also. This can still be seen in the various indigenous systems of medicine catering to the needs and modes of life of the people here and utilising the herbs, plants and organic sources special to localities. These are not found in the original Sanskrit texts. Sanskrit texts have gained the upper hand and certainly contributed much to improve our tradition. However, local systems also had their contributions to make and they have changed the pattern of Ayurveda in Kerala. A student of Ayurveda cannot fail to notice this if he compares the herbs, prepared medicines, and methods of treatment widely used and popularised in Kerala with those in vogue in other states.

The medical store of a practitioner of Kerala contains many herbs which are specific to these parts. Prepared medicines like Dhanwantaram pills, Gōrōchanādi pills, Vāyugulika (Kasthooryādi Pills), Elanēr Anjanam, etc. which are familiar to every Malayalee house-wife are specific preparations of the Kerala physicians. Most of the oils and other preparations in which coconut water and other parts of that plant

enter as important ingredients are Kerala specials. All parts of the coconut including its roots, leaves and fibres, etc. are constituents of preparations. It can be said that pills, *Avalehas* (confectionary) and other preparations in which Civet (a glandular secretion of the Malabar Musk cat) is also an ingredient, are specific preparations of the Kerala physicians.

Kerala has unique tradition in methods of treatment also. Physiotherapies like *Dhara*, *navarakizhi*, *Pizhichil*, etc. are reckoned as the special treatments of Kerala. Although the methods and medicines employed in these treatments can be traced to or compared with those in original Sanskrit texts, they are on close scrutiny adaptations of Ayurvedic methods to the traditional medicine under Ayurvedic guidance. Traditional medicine in Kerala had advanced and developed *Marma Chikitsa* with *Uzhichil* (massage and administration of medicine) *Kalarippayattu* (Physical exercises and training to handle arms for offence and defence in the old feudal days) and *Kathakali* are the two other sources from which varieties of *Uzhichils* (massages) have developed apart from the traditional *Uzhichil* for fractures, split bones or for common ailments. In this field Kerala had attained great perfection. Recipes bearing Kerala marks can be selected from treatises in Sanskrit dealing with *Marma Chikitsa*. Atridēva Vidyālamkar, President, Ayurvedic Pharmacy, Banaras University, holds that works on Nādi pareeksha (studies on pulse reading) are of southern origin. Another branch of medicine in which Kerala physicians excelled is that of Toxicology (*Visha Chikitsa*). In the control and management of small-pox also Kerala had strived much. It is evident from these facts that side by side with the advance in the study of Sanskrit Ayurvedic texts there were somewhat developed local systems of medicines in these parts. These systems were enriched and revitalised or modified by the advanced learning in the Sanskrit texts.

Absence of authentic works which refer to and picture the social life and medical practices of earlier days prevent us from closely observing its progress. We can only fancy for ourselves from what scant information we get from folklore, stories, and old songs and await further findings of the researches in the history of Kerala.

In the early centuries Kerala is said to have been a part of the old Tamizhakam.

There are references to Vela Vaidyas in Sangam literature. It is said that pregnant women were anointed with ghee and treated with the "veriyat" of "velas". Veriyat is explained as a magic performance with administration of medicine which was not yet separated from magic. Any plant or herb detected to exhibit extra-ordinary qualities was recognised as having magical powers of healing. Worshipping the Sap-tacchada (Ezhilāmpala—*Alstonia scholaris*) as a divine plant is still extent. In Ayyappan Vilakku celebrations festival and worship of Lord Sastha) a cut branch of Ezhilāmpala is sanctified and brought in a procession. It has the magical power of dispelling devils. Relics of such worship take us to the days when magic and medicine were inseparable. But as time went by the wisdom of the people advanced. Medicines were recognised as materials having properties of healing or assisting man's biological functions. Elementary scientific methods of observation, classification and grouping gradually developed. Diagnostic techniques also evolved through similar stages. As in *Atharva Veda* all abnormal physical or pathological phenomena were observed, noted and recorded as separate diseases. They were described either attacks of evil spirits or the diseases themselves had independent wills and attacked men with set purpose. So appeals to gods, spirits and directly to personified diseases also can be heard. However, a vast number of diseases were identified. ("Vasurimala" a book of later origin records more than hundred "Vasuris"—small-poxes) But after the study and propagation of Sanskrit Texts, the symptoms of diseases were generalised. Diseases were brought into the orbit of Tridoṣas as their various manifestations and hence reducible to the *Vikaras* of Vāta, Pitta and Kapha. At any rate, it is definite that the immense storage of observed facts, clinical experiences, methods and ideas were modified by Tridōṣa Sidhānta so as to enrich our medical heritage. A rich and firm basis was thus laid for the progress of a Kerala system of medicine.

Another observable fact about Kerala medicine is the role of the temple in the advancement of medicine. Almost all temples in Kerala—Saiva, Vaishnava or of original Dravidian gods—are attributed powers of causing or controlling some specific disease. The same is true of certain mosques and churches, and the magic powers of priests of other religions. The

Goddess at Cranganore controls small-pox, the goddess of Chottanikkara cures epilepsy and other mental diseases. The Lord at Guruvayur is the physician of vāta. Besides the above, certain temples actually distribute medicines. Thiruvizha temple is famous for its emetics. Some temples distribute medicines for skin diseases. Some have antidotes for poisoning. All temples take special care to plant trees and herbs of medicinal value as the Pippala, Vilwa, etc.

Sanskrit texts were accepted as authoritative and standard treatises for study in Medicine. Charaka, Susrutha and Vagbhata became the major texts. Traditions of Bela and other authors also were accepted and studied. Sanskrit was prestigious. Masters of Sanskrit were accepted as masters of knowledge also. Scholars of olden days tried their hands either in writing a commentary to some original Sanskrit text or creating an independent work based on the original. This development took place in the field of Medicine also. Some original works or recorded clinical experiences in Malayalam were translated to Sanskrit also. (For instance Bālarōga Chikilsa, Dhārākālpam, etc.).

It is believed that the Nambudiris (Brahmins) brought Sanskrit here. They were a dominant class and were votaries of Sanskrit. But Sanskrit was learned and mastered not only by Brahmins but by the members of all classes and castes. Both Ullur S. Parameswara Ayyar and Vatakkumkur Raja Raja Varma, in their respective works on the history of Malayalam literature, have recorded the names of a great number of scholars from Ezhavas, Panikkars, etc. who contributed to literature and Medicine.

Stories of the great accomplishments of *Ashta-Vaidyas* of the Brahmin class are popular. Vatakkumkur points out that the term *Ashta Vaidya* does not mean eight families of Vaidyas, but Vaidyas (physicians) who were masters of *Ashtanga Vaidya*, i.e. Ayurveda. There was one *Ashta-Vaidya* family in every Nambudiri Grama (Village) of the olden days. It was the duty of this family of physicians to see that their folk are cared and kept in health and hygiene. So there were as many *Ashta-Vaidya* families as there were gramas. In course of time many of these families disappeared either due to lack of progeny or

due to other historical reasons. Some eight or nine families however survived. Besides these *Ashta-Vaidyas* there were other families who took up Medicine as their main occupation. There are amongst Nambudiris many families reputed for special treatments in Visham or poison and mental diseases.

The *Ashtavaidyas* and the other Brahmin physicians in Kerala have been showing a special interest in *Ashtanga Hridaya* and *Ashtanga Samgraha* of Vagbhata. (Some say there were two Vagbhatas, the elder being the author of *Samgraha* and younger that of *Hridaya*). This is rather strange and should stimulate the curiosity of researchers. The Brahmins vie with each other in claiming a heritage and direct instruction from Vagbhata. No one could deny that Vagbhata's works are more concise, precise, well-meant, upto date and written in beautiful verse and prose comparable to classical writing. The Vagbhata were Buddhists and their works are replete with Buddhist ideas and traditions. In North Indian States also Physicians of the Brahmin class acclaim Vagbhata. Charaka and Susrutha are also held in high esteem and taught with emphasis. In Kerala Vagbhata is accepted and diligently followed as a piece of Veda itself. How could the conservative Nambudiri Brahmin physician rate Vagbhata so high? The *Ashta Vaidyas* are ranked lower in social status to the vaidik Brahmins because of their pursuit of the medical profession. Is it because the Nambudiri Brahmins acquired their Sanskrit traditions from sources where Buddhism had its dominating influence? Or is it merely a manifestation of the high quality of the Nambudiris in tolerating other creeds and their readiness to accept the authority of master works irrespective of their sources? The research worker alone can answer.

As stated earlier physicians came from all classes and castes in Kerala. Practice of Medicine as main or co-occupation is the traditional pursuit of a number of families of Ezhava, Kanikkan, Panikkar, Mannan, Velan and other castes of lower strata and communities. Even the caste name of many of them end with the suffix-Vaidyar. Besides there are several families in Kerala which prepare and distribute some items of specific medicines for particular diseases. This is sanctioned only by custom and tradition.

Our early medical literature can be classified into three categories: commentaries, translations and independent works in Malayalam and Sanskrit. Independent works comparing and synthesising Ayurveda with modern Science are published in recent times.

There are a large number of commentaries on Vagbhata in Sanskrit and Malayalam written by professionals here. In his work on the history of Malayalam literature Ullur has given us the names and biographies of a number of scholars or authors. Many of them had taken pains either to translate or write a commentary on Vagbhata or other authors. Some authors have produced essays based largely on other originals. Most of them are either unfinished or unpublished. It would appear as though every Sanskrit scholar of those days had a special devotion to Medicine and Astrology.

Among commentators of *Ashtanga Hridaya*, "Indu" is the most outstanding. He is believed to be a Keraliya and a direct disciple of Vagbhata. The title of his commentary is "Śaṣilēkha". The most popular commentary in Kerala is "Pātyam" a work of anonymous authorship. "Kairāṭi" is another well known commentary. Its author is believed to be Pulāmantōḷ Mūs, an *Aṣṭa-Vaidyan*. *Hṛdaya*, *Laṭita*, and *Vākyapradīpika* are some other popular commentaries. These are all in Sanskrit.

Commentaries in Malayalam are of recent origin. Kaikulāṅgara Rāma Vāriyar, a reputed scholar, ushered in a new era of essays in vernacular. His contributions are a number of commentaries in Malayalam on Sanskrit texts on Medicine and Astrology.

In Medicine there is much to the credit of Kerala. Some of the out-standing works are:—

- (1) *Rasa Vaiśeṣikam* — Believed to be fifth century A. D. The "Sūtras" are written by one Bhagantha Nagarjunan, commentary by one Narasimhan in the eighth century. The book contains principles of hygiene and a discussion on 'Rasas'.
- (2) *Vaidya Manōrama*—A Sanskrit text originally written in Malayalam alphabet. A number of recipes and clinical

techniques showing the great sophistication and ingenuity of Kerala physicians are recorded by the author. This book is now printed in Nāgar script at Bombay

- (3) *Dhāra Kālpam*—A work in Sanskrit on the special treatments in Kēarla.
- (4) *Sindūra Mañjari*—An independent work by one Taikkāt Mūs.
- (5) *Ālattūr Mañipravāḷam*—The book, besides being a work of medicine is important from the point of view of Malayalam linguistics. It is an early writing in Mañipravāḷam. (Poetic language in which Sanskrit and vernacular mixed beautifully as in a garland of pearls and corals).

In addition to the above there are many works in which a number of Yōgam (recipes) are collected and popular in Malayāli houses such as *Sahasrayōgam*, *Cikilsa Kramam*, *Vaidya Mañjari*, *Cikilsa Mañjari*, *Yōgāmṛtam* etc. A catalogue of works on Toxicology (*Viṣa Vaidyam*). *Vasūri Chikilsa* (Small-box treatment), *Marma Cikilsa* is not difficult to prepare.

Treatment of elephants developed as a separate branch in Kerala. "*Mātanga Līla*" of one Tirumangalatt Nambissan or Mūs is a work based on Sanskrit text. Dictionaries of herbs and plants also were prepared. Henry Van Rheede, the Dutch Governor of Malabar, collected the names and uses of a number of plants and herbs from one Ezhava Physician, Itty Accutan. He published it in Latin at Amsterdam under the title *Hortus Indicus Malabaricus* (12 folio volumes with 794 plates, between the years 1686–1703).

Some of outstanding physicians were literary geniuses also. Vayaskara Narayanan Mūs, a reputed physician with extensive practice was a good playwright too. Duryodhana Vadham Attakkatha (Kathakali play) is his brilliant work. Attupurath Imbichi Gurukkal, Narikkuni Unnikutty Vaidyar, Kannan Uppot, Kizhakke Pullat Kunhuani Mūs, Taikat Narayanan Mūs, Vaikkam Pachu Mūs, Ananthapurath Raja Raja Varma, Kaikkulāṅgara Rama Varier, etc were also outstanding scholars and physicians. Their biographies are illustrated by Ullur as men of genius of the last generation.

Two of these names have historical significance and contemporary topicality. They are Pachu Mūs and Raja Raja Varma. Pachu Mūs was an outstanding physician and a writer of modern ideas. "Hridaya Priya", and "Sukha Sadhakam" are his two medical treatises. His disciple Raja Raja Varma studied both Ayurveda and Modern Medicine. It was largely due to him and his disciples that the foundation for the present Ayurveda College at Trivandrum was laid.

The modern era begins with the spread of western education, modern ideas of medicine and science and the establishment of new schools and colleges for study in Ayurveda with new outlook and syllabus, with a view to facing the challenge of western medicine and modernizing Ayurveda. The old type of Gurukula teaching is now outmoded. Punnasseri Neelakantha Sarma, a reputed scholar of Sanskrit of the old school and also a physician established a new model Paṭhassala at Pattambi for teaching students of all kinds. The traditional restrictions of caste were broken down. Ayurveda was also taught in his school.

But the outstanding leadership in bringing Ayurveda to Modern lines and needs, improving its teaching and imparting a new scientific character to Ayurvedic Studies so as to improve Ayurveda in the light of Modern Science came from Vaidyaratnam P. S. Varier at Kottakkal. Varier had his education in the old school but he had acquired knowledge of Modern Science. He modernised the manufacture of

medicines, used new equipments and ideas. He established a school where Ayurveda is taught on new lines. The publication of a medical journal "Dhanwanthari" by Sri P. S. Varier stimulated professional interest and promoted new cadres. Prominent physicians and writers contributed articles to the journal. Varier himself had many of his papers published in it. In his two major works, Ashtanga Sarceraam and Brihat Sarceraam, physiology and anatomy are presented on modern lines. There is a College of Ayurveda at Trippunithura which was originally patronised by the royal family of Cochin. The colleges at Trivandrum, Trippunithura and Kottakkal are first grade colleges. Facilities for post-graduate studies are offered only at Trivandrum and Kottakkal. There is an Ayurvedic College at Shoranur managed by Keraleeya Ayurveda Samajam.

The Central Research Institute of the Central Government at Cheruthuruthy is promoting Research in Clinical Medicine. The idea of an Ayurvedic University is now being debated. A new impetus to the study of Ayurveda is created thanks to the attention paid by Kerala and Calicut Universities for its promotion.

Presently the question of unification of studies all over India is receiving popular attention. But this is possible only by giving room for the specialities of each State. Interest in the Keraleeya Vaidya is now more alive amongst physicians and doctors abroad and Kerala has been welcoming this interest,



prof. s. guptan nair

modernism and malayalam literature —poetry and novel

Modern is an old word and an old concept. Whenever there was an assault on an old fortress, people used 'modern' as a war-cry. This has happened from time to time. But 'modernism' is a comparatively recent concept. It was first used in a theological context. Its intention was to reform the church. But it was promptly condemned by the Pope in 1907. Traditional theology said, it won't stand any such nonsense.

Now, modernism has invaded the art-world. It is a surging intellectual wave that has swept off several established conventions in art and literature. It is a new value system, a challenging attitude of mind. It is anti-establishment. It is against old rituals though it has acquired a few new ones. Its fashion is to throw fashions to the wind. Modernism in the west was the result of a new dynamism which believed in constant change. All modernists were concerned with the revaluation of accepted basic concepts. They believed that closed social principles and time honoured rituals should be periodically re-opened and re-examined. If parents and children can to-day sit together in the drawing-room and talk of contraceptives and girlfriends and the disirability of disbelief, it is inevitable that the new novel and the new poem should also talk about similar things. But the question is 'do the modernists do it well'. Certainly not all. Only a few manage to do it artistically or even convincingly. Recently I came across a quotation from an American poet. He is speaking on modern American Poetry. He says:

Whatever it is, it must have
A stomach that can digest
Rubber, coal, uranium, moons, poems,

Like the shark, it contains a shoe
It must swim for miles through the
desert
Uttering cries that are almost human

This is perhaps an exaggeration. But the too numerous and almost aimless experiments with forms and a total disregard for meaning make us open-mouthed. Literature' says Ezra Pound, 'is language charged with meaning' and poetry is even more so. But by Jove, the modern poet quite often is not charging words but flogging them!

Take the case of Malayalam poetry. Did not every poet worth his salt use a new idiom? Asān's language was different from Venmony's and Sankara Kurup's was different from Vallathol's. Kakkād and Ayyappa Panikker have taken the language further away from Changampuzha and Sankara Kurup. Naturally we first suffer a jolt and then try to adjust our sensibility. The main reason for the prevailing prejudice against modern poetry, it seems to me, is their civilized violence on language which many people instinctively abhor. We are all sentimental about our language, just as we are sentimental about our mother. The modern poets and the modern novelists are generally unsentimental people. At least that is what they want us to believe. "Mother died today. Or may be yesterday. I can't be sure"—You know that kind of thing. The modern poet does not like to be a feeble-voiced singer of effeminate feelings. We had a lot of that wailing sobbing stuff in Changampuzha and his score of imitators. Even a traditionalist like 'Sanjayan' was infuriated with that monotone of melancholy. Twenty-eight years have now elapsed since the death of Changampuzha Krishna Pillai. His enthusiastic

imitators have all fled the field and the Changampuzha school is now closed down. Few are charmed by his music to-day. Some are positively irked by his sentimental excess and spinelessness. But strangely enough pessimism refuses to die. We are again on the track of a new and perhaps more soul-killing kind of pessimism. It is part of a world movement, the result of an enveloping gloom that has overtaken the civilized world. Philosophers call it existentialist agony. Pathologists call it anxiety neurosis. "Man is a useless passion" said Sartre and there are many who echo this. But I cannot assert that all modern writers are plagued by this negative philosophy. Marxists and progressivists are trying their best to wean the writers away from this despair. But our poets, who are intellectuals too, are generally a disobedient lot and they pay scant attention to the wise men called theorists and critics.

I think the first real shock therapy administered to our muse was by N. V. Krishna Warriar in his 'Long Poems' and 'Further Long Poems'. Until then our readers never came across poetry using such a deliberately unmusical and everyday language. Yet it was fluent and arresting. N V's poetry had its detractors. But soon readers began to find some charm in his masculine and vigorous strains. His famous poem 'Gandhi and Godse' (1964) and 'False Gods' are indictments of modern Indian society. The first poem tells us of what we have made of Gandiji within a short period of his death.

Gandhi stands in the queue
To buy the day's ration
And Godse floats away
In a luxurious limousine.

This is the dramatic opening of the poem. It is plain that Gandhi and Godse are only symbols here. Gandhiji stands for the honest, suffering and neglected common-man while Godse stands for the prosperous blood-sucking money-spinning social elite. He dons a Gandhi-cap travels in State cars, lives in Circuit houses and moves with ministers. More often than not, it is he who places the wreath on Gandhiji's samadhi. This is a sad commentary on the state of our Civilization. Krishna Warriar's themes are seldom personal. He expresses the profound sorrow that lies embedded under the surface of

modern civilization. They are bitter sugar-coated pills administered in heavy doses to a docile society. With him poetry became a satirist's axe, rather than a minstrel's lute.

Many of his younger contemporaries adopted Krishna Warriar's antisentimental, tough stance though their techniques varied to suit individual modes. Take for example Akkitham or Ayyappa Panicker or N. N. Kakkad or Kadammanitta or Ramachandran. There is an undercurrent of protest and restlessness in most of their poems. But it is not either the pessimism of Changampuzha. These poets do not wall in helplessness. They are not 'half in love with easeful death' like Changampuzha. They on the other hand are impatient, angry souls.

Their feelings are mixed. They express horror and contempt, sorrow and anger, disgust and sympathy by turns. What they aim at is not a precise statement of their feelings but an effective inducement of certain attitudes. And this they do with the help of bold images, new rhythms, arresting word patterns and above all evocative allusions. A well known poem by Ayyappa Panicker is significantly titled 'Kurukshetra' and he inserts the Gita Quotation "Sukham Dehi Janardana" to bring out a host of memories. It is the eternal story of the doubting Arjuna. But Panicker hints that to-day there are no Arjunas amongst us, only grossly selfish and panicky weaklings. Panicker takes us through a labyrinth of images and concludes on a note of optimism. He wishes that in each our navels perhaps a lotus will rise. Remember this lotus is the seat of the Creator himself. In spite of its obscure allusions and abrupt change of rhythms, the poem builds up a synoptic view of the history of human frailties. Kakkad is another poet who has shown the strength of the new poetic language and the vividness of the imagery. "Kanwa in the City" is one of his well-known poems. His Kanwa is not the old sage who lived in the forest but a modern N. G. O. "in a bewildering metropolitan milieu". He has only a dismal room to live in. He is not the placid old self, but a frightened young man moving across the phantasmagoria of a restless city life. You find:

"Two-legged taxis screeching through
the side-walks, The smell of hair-oil and

talcum mixed up with the stink of sweat"—these are the offensive scenes that the modern Kanwa has to encounter. Sakuntala's friend Priyamvada is to-day a typist and Dushanta clandestinely visits her in her apartment. This is indeed a new way of treating old myths. Kalidasa sang the music of the peaceful hermitage. The modern Kalidasa sings the discordant notes of dehumanising urban tensions.

Most of the successful new poets have assiduously cultivated a new idiom to express their mixed feelings. Theirs is a rhythm in which the simple folk-language jostles with the sophisticated vocabulary of modern living. Kadammanitta's lyrical piece on his own village and Ayyappa Panicker's nostalgic family-history are written mostly in the folk-idiom while Kakkad's 1963, Paloor's 'Poet at the Airport' and several others are written in vibrant neologism. Kakkad's language is sometimes only a stone's throw from Mahabharata and at other times from the latest news-bulletins. I can't say the same about a host of pseudo-modernists who call themselves poets. Flouting grammar and distorting idioms seem to be their only object in writing, what they believe is, poetry.

Now I come to the novel. A character in Uroob's famous novel 'Handsome Men and Beautiful Women' speaks about life to a young man:

"To die you require only two yards of rope. But to live, aye, that's a little tough. But let not the future mothers die like dogs on the roadside. So we have to accept life with all its pitfalls, Uroob seems to say.

On the contrary the younger generation of novelists—M. T. Vasudevan Nair, O. V. Vijayan, Mukundan, Kakkadan, and others do not seem to be enthusiastic about living. There is no zest for living in most of their novels. Life to them is a big irritation a nausea on, at best, an inevitable evil and the all too rare relief comes from sex. The vast change in the attitude towards sex is one of the most dominant features of the new fiction. Broadly speaking the Malayali attitude towards sex has always been uninhibited. Chandu Menons' Indulekha, C. V. Raman Pillai's Subhadra and Savitri are all uninhibited women. Yet women were not discussed by our early novelists; they were

taken for granted. Today women are not only discussed but even sex and extra marital relations are discussed without compunction and sometimes with positive gusto. That sex occupies a fairly important position in adult life is accepted by everybody. It does not require the sanction of a Sigmund Freud to say this. Yet the prominence it gets at the hands of the new novelists is out of all proportion to its basic importance. More and more writers are capitalizing on it to make their works more titillating and sensational. Very few are honestly concerned with its subtleties and psychological impact. M. T. Vasudevan Nair, Vilasini, and O. V. Vijayan are among those who have kept the issue within artistic relevance. M. T.'s 'Mist', Vilasini's 'Swing' (Oonjal) and Vijayan's 'Epic of Khazak' come to mind as worth while examples.

I would like to classify the modern novelists broadly into two, the 'inlooker's' and the 'on-lookers'. The Dev-Thakazhi-Pottekatt generation was by and large the generation of onlookers, the socially conscious novelists, the shouting Toms and the progressivists. Their psychological excursions were only incidental. To-day's novelists are essentially in-lookers. They are not the socially committed types worrying too much about the ills and pangs of society. But individual problems and anxieties do agitate them. O. V. Vijayan's famous novel 'Khazak' is basically the story of one individual-Ravi, and he is not an ordinary young man. He is an eccentric and an idealist but not an ideal hero. He runs a single-teacher school in Khazak where he comes across a dismal world of diverse characters. He dips into their lives, feels with them and into them. But he has no passionate attachment to anyone. He just drifts on and on. Until he is accidentally bitten by a snake. Ravi's end is as accidental as his escape from home. Its ultimate message, if it has any, seems to be the sheer meaninglessness of life and the abruptness of death. Our life is just a repetition of the Creator's 'leela'. But His is divine and ours human and hence prone to errors of all kinds. Mukundan's 'The Bell Tolls in Haridwar' and Kakkadan's 'In the Valley of Ignorance' give us this quaint odour of drifting and wasteful life.

The alienation of man from himself and from the world has been a favourite theme with our young novelists. The idea of

the non significance of the individual in a competitive world which has no concern for others gets a grand treatment in a first novel by a young engineer, 'Anand'. The novel is meaningfully titled 'The Crowd'. It is a very unusual novel. It has no story, no hero and no cohesion. It is a teeming gallery of people. As you read on you feel that you too are jostling with the crowd as in a third-class compartment. Everyone tries to preserve his little space and sinks into himself in an effort to forget the unpleasant surroundings. The scene of the novel is mostly metropolitan Bombay. "There are people from all corners of the country, poor, desparate, frustrated, idealistic, wretched to the core, marching from one kind of degradation to the other, yet not all hopeless". The author gives us a synoptic view of the Indian predicament with epigrams strewn all over the novel. Here is one: "The morality of our society is like the character certificate from a gazetted officer, a formality to be completed, something accepted but not understood." Another: "Coffins for sale. Those who buy two will get a coffin for children free of charge."

The 'Crowd' is an Indian novel with Indian characters. I should add it is not a reader's novel but a novel meant to provoke our intellectuals. Intellectualism is another aspect of the modern novel. A writer like Vilasini or Surendran or Anand, will introduce highly academic discussions in the course of his story-telling. And Vilasini

went to an extreme by freely introducing chunks of metaphysics from Tantrism to Zen Buddhism and Kierkegaard to Sartre in his novel, "Links that do not Clinch". To echo with Sartre that 'Man is a useless passion' or with Heidegger that 'man can exist authentically only in the face of death' seems to be a passion with young novelists. Even the marxist critics who used to condemn this trend are now obliged to take a second look and say that there is some point in what they say. Real passion for social change which has been the pervading spirit during the socialist upsurge has somehow lost its appeal. Disillusionment has set in and the only political theme that is of current interest seems to be the revolutionary's readiness to relapse into respectability (See Cherukad's 'Devalokam' and Kakkadan's 'Tropics') The main features of present-day novels may be summed up as follows :-

1. A gradual indifference to social problems and a slow exit of the revolutionary novel.
2. A greater concern for projecting individual psychic problems (M. T., Vilasini, Surendran)
3. A lyrical strain in narration
4. Invasion of intellectualism.
5. A stoic indifference to human suffering.
6. A pre-occupation with sex, more abnormal than normal (which incidentally is bad substitute for sex-education)



rajan gurukkal

festivals in kerala

This article attempts to have a bird's eye view of the important socio-religious festivities in Kerala together with a description of what is unique and outstanding in rapidly vanishing cultural heritage. A few national festivals are also discussed under this with a view to ascertaining the native elements in such ceremonies. As the festivals in Kerala are too much in number no single one could be treated in the context of a larger historical perspective. Again it is too short an article to include an evolutionary sketch of the archaic customs and practices associated with the festivals from the dim past of their origin.

The main festivals in Kerala can be epitomised under the following heads:

Onam

Onam is celebrated by all people of Kerala, rich and poor alike in memory of a period of peace and plenty supposed to have existed under the traditional king Mahabali. The legend says that the prosperity and splendour of his days excited envy even among gods that Lord Vishnu took the incarnation of Vamana before whom the king failed to give three feet of land, requested by the latter. The bountiful king finally bowed his head before Vamana who had grown into the gigantic Trivikrama measuring the whole worlds and heaven by two feet. Allowing to place the third feet on his head Mahabali kept his words. This Puranic story wrapped up in poetic embellishments might be reflecting some political incident of the days of Aryan encounters with the native rulers of Kerala.

This festival falls in Chingam (August-September) which is the harvest season of Kerala and it begins to be celebrated from the lunar asterism 'attam' and stretches

throughout the days of which the final day, tiruvonam, is the most glorious. During all these ten days young boys and girls with jollity and enthusiasm hang about the natural gardens of Kerala, humming lovely Onam songs and plucking flowers. They consecrate Trikkakkara appan, the deity of Trikkakkara, in front of their house to honour the deity at whose feet the festival began first. They build up beautiful designs in flowers which is an enchanting sight in all the houses during Onam season. In the morning of Tiruvonam all the people take bath and put on new costume, calling back the old days of splendour. All the people conduct heavy feasts with quasi-religious zeal on utratam and tiruvonam. During the early days all the Kings and local chieftains of Kerala had the practice of assembling at the Vishnu temple of Trikkakkara for celebrating Onam which lasted twenty eight days. The Rajas of Cochin and the Zamorins of Calicut had the practice of celebrating 'attachamayam' which was a ceremony of King's adorning himself with royal costumes and ornaments for attam, the beginning day of Onam. 'Attachamayam' is variously interpreted that it signifies royal preparation for a battle, or royal adorning to welcome Mahabali or the display of royal power etc. Ariyittuvälca was another royal festival in this connection.

After the Onam feast all people will take part in sports and amusements. While the girls will be singing, dancing and swinging, in the shades of trees and gardens, the boys will be indulging in games like Pantukali, Talappantu, Kurippantu etc. The virile class will be engaged in martial amusements like Kayyankali, Onathallu (mock fight) etc. Vattukali and Villukottu are other famous entertainments of the men folk. Tumbi Tullal, Tiruvātira-

kkali, Oonjālāttam and Tālīpeetikali are famous amusements of the women folk.

In spite of its quasi-religious bias to Hindus, Ōnam is very popular among all the religious groups of Kerala. In modern period it has completely lost its religious affiliation. Since 1961 Ōnam has been taken up as a National festival by the Government of Kerala.

Vishu

Vishu is a famous festival of the Hindus and is celebrated on the first day of Mētam (April-May) which is the new year day. The people of Kerala believe that on the dawn of the New Year's day some good objects should be beheld since it determines the fortunes of the days ahead. Therefore the most significant ceremony during Vishu is Kaṇi Vaippu which is arranged in a metal vessel — Talika or Uruli. Objects kept in the vessel are: ari (rice), vellari (cucumber), veṭṭila (betel leaves), aṭayka (arecanut), vālkannāti (mirror), konnappūvu (cassia fistula), grandha (a book of palm leaves) and svaṇṇa (gold) over a fresh cloth. Two coconut halves with oil and lighted wicks will be placed on either sides in the vessel. At the dawn of Vishu people get up and approach the vessel with eyes closed so as to have the first sight of the Kaṇi which would determine their fortunes of that whole year. At times the eldest female member of the house will take the vessel to the bed of each one and wake them up to see the Vishukkaṇi. After this the Kāraṇavar of the family gives Kaineettam (handrel) to the younger members, generally to the children. In former days the land owners distributed paddy to their labourers as a dole by the acceptance of which they were bound to work in the fields of the concerned land owner till the next Vishu. Feast is the next important thing and usually most of the houses provide food for a large number of guests.

In certain parts of Kerala a particular ritual known as Kaikkōṭṭu cāl is observed by which a furrow is made in the agricultural field as the mark of commencement of the agricultural operation for the new year. After this a ritual known as Vignēswara pūja is conducted in the field for better prospects of agriculture for the ensuing year. This season is synchronised by a bird's beautiful singing — Vittum Kaikkōṭṭum, Okka porappetto — which calls the

attention of agriculturists to get ready with vittu (seed) and kaikkōṭṭu (spade). It is also the practice in certain areas that the village astrologer goes round the suburb giving ōla with forecasts about future crops, rain, individual fortunes etc.

Tiruvātira

This festival falls in the lunar asterism tiruvātira in the Malayalam month of Dhanu (Dec.-Jan) and is popular among the women folk of the high-caste Hindus. Tradition says that tiruvātira is celebrated in memory of the birth day of Siva. Another belief goes to say that tiruvātira was the day on which Siva showed compassion towards Parvati. It is also said that it was on this day that Kamadeva was burnt to ashes. According to astrological belief tiruvātira is the asterism of Lord Siva.

The festival lasts seven days commencing from aśvati and ending with tiruvātira. On all these days, before dawn the women folk, especially the teenaged, take a ceremonial bath in the tank or river with group-songs accompanied by dances. The splashing sound that they make in water adds musical rhythm to it. They observe extreme hygiene and abstain from rice food. Singing Tiruvātirapāṭṭukal (love songs) and Oonjālāttam are the main amusements during this festival. Tiruvātirakkali and Kaikkōṭṭikkali are also popular entertainments in this connection. Tiruvātira has some kind of association with flowers. Pātirāpūcūṭal is a very interesting custom observed in the midnight of Tiruvātira according to which the teenaged girls wear the flagrant neelakkoduvelipū (plumbago ceylanica) into their lock. These girls in attractive traditional costume decorated with flowers then dance round the image of Siva, generally consecrated in the courtyard. There they worship the deity of tiruvātira with flowers, incense and lamps. This reminds one of the Vasantotsava celebrated throughout India in the month of Māgha from the days of remote past. The aim of tiruvātira festival, it is said, is to achieve conjugal harmony. However the customs of tiruvātira have a strong bearing on physical health also.

Navarātri

Navarātri or Bhuvanēswari pūja is associated with the cult of Mother Goddess.

As elsewhere in India, Kerala also keeps the age-old tradition of the cult of Śakti in several manifestations like Devi, Durga, Kālī, Chāmundi, Bhagavaty, Saraswati etc. Navarātri is dedicated to Saraswati, the goddess of learning or Vidya. Durgāshtami, Mahānavami and Vijayadesami are the three important days of Saraswati worship in connection with this festival. On Durgāshtami day the pūja vaippu ceremony is celebrated by keeping the grandhas, books and other tools of learning before the goddess Saraswati and a pūja is conducted. The Mahānavami day is devoted in full for the worship of Saraswati. During these two days all activities of learning will be kept in abeyance. Vijayadesami is celebrated as the day of pūjayeduppu. Early in the morning of this day one grandha is taken from the feet of the goddess and recited as a mark of the commencement of learning afresh. This is the day for initiation or vidyārambha in Kerala. Ariyileluttu or Eluttintruttu ceremony is observed on this day which means the initiation of the children in writing. It is the belief that the faculty of learning is the gift of Saraswati whose inscrutable presence on the tongue is the secret of one's knowledge or learning. A village teacher or the Kāraṇavar of the family initiates a child by moving his fingers through rice or sand sprinkled on ground which marks the initiation to 'vidya'.

Navarātri is a very old festival that the ancient Kings of Kerala had celebrated in pomp and glory. Grandha puja and āyudhapūja are very popular in Kerala even in these days. During this festival all people submit their tools or implements at the feet of the goddess for pūja, for instance a potter his wheel, a carpenter his chisel, a bus owner his bus and the like. This recalls the tradition of Arjuna taking back his weapon after an interval of prayer and worship.

Deepāvali

Deepāvali is a famous festival of the Hindus, especially those in northern Kerala. It falls on the eve of the new-moon day in the month of Tulām (October-November) which corresponds to the 14th lunar day, often called Narakacaturdeśi. Tradition says that this festival is in memory of the destruction of Narakāsura, a demon, by Lord Krishna and the term Deepāvali originated from the reception given to

lord Krishna by the people of Dwāraka with the cluster of lights. Some of the orthodox Hindus take hot-water bath on this day morning commemorating the bath of Krishna after killing Narakasura. Deepāvali has some association with commerce that it is celebrated by the business community on a large scale. In north Kerala it is considered to be the date of clearing all the credit-accounts of the preceding year and opening up of new transactions. The business people celebrate this festival by giving presents, sweets and receptions to their customers. Distribution of muṭṭāyikkōṭṭa (small basket full of sweets) is a popular custom amidst the merchants of Calicut.

As Dhannuantari jayanti falls on the day preceding Deepāvali mostly the celebration of both is merged together. The people of ayurvēdic tradition make a kind of herbal preparation with dry ginger and molasses as the naivēdya for their great acārya, Dhannuantari

Maha Sivarātri

Mahāsivarātri is a religious festival of the Hindus which falls on the Krishna caturdeśi day i.e. the 14th day of the month of Māgha (Feb. - March) when the moon wanes. Traditionally, this festival commemorates the day on which Siva protected the world from a total annihilation by drinking the hālahalam venom emitted from the fang of Vasuki who was tied up with the Mandhara mountain for churning Pālāṇi. As Parvati caught hold of Siva's neck the poison was held up in his throat, according to the Purāṇas. On that day the gods kept vigil on Siva throughout the night which came to be called Sivarātri. It is also said that Sivarātri is that night when Siva appeared to end the fight between Vishnu and Brahma. The story of Suswara who was blessed by Siva for observing Sivarātri is famous among the orthodox Hindus of Kerala. They observe fast and keep vigil in the night, spending the whole time in prayers to Siva. They cluster round the temples of Siva and after bath smear their bodies with holy ashes. The people in rural areas prepare holy ashes required for the year on this day. All the Siva temples in Kerala observe abhishēka and kalaśa besides the ordinary pūjas. Kavatiyāṭṭam (a type of folk dance) is a popular amusement in Siva temples on this day. The Alwaye Siva temple on the bank of Periyār

is of great repute for Sivarātri where people flock in thousands.

Vallamkali

Vallamkali (boat race) is celebrated with extreme joy and vigour during the Ōṇam season. Arammula, Champakkulam, Payippad, Thālathangādi, and Neerāṭṭupuram, all belonging to the Alleppey district, are the most popular spots of Vallamkali. A peculiar type of boats known as 'cunṭan vaḷḷam' are used for this water sport. The Vallamkali of Arammula is celebrated on the lunar asterism Utrattāti of Cīṇṇam which is the vivification day of the Parthasārati temple, situated on the bank of river Pampa of grave solemnity, where this jālōtsava is conducted. The stately march and exercises of the expert boatmen in the colourful and decorated boats of variegated types and sizes in extreme mirth and enthusiasm, attract thousands of people every year to Champakkulam and Arammula. Nowadays a number of foreigners come to witness this thrilling water sport in Kerala.

The Festivals of the Temples

Kerala is so rich in temples that she had nearly twenty two thousand temples a little before the last century. Now about ten thousand temples are functioning in this small state as the invaluable monuments of medieval religion and society of Kerala. Our temple festivals are innumerable in number, each of which requiring volumes for their socio-religious analysis. In the superficial garb of temple festivals one can find only the caparisoned elephants colourful decorations, processions, illuminations, music, pyrotechnics and the like. But beneath are the hidden sociological factors that require serious study.

Annual ceremonies and ceremonies of religious significance are the chief occasions of festivities in temples. Most of the festivals are the celebrations of the vivification days of the deity in the temples. They are observed on the respective lunar asterisms like pūram, utratam, kārtika, utrattāti, bharani, tiruvātira, puyiam etc. The famous temples which observe pūram as their vivification day are Vārākkara Bhagavaty temple and Vadakkumnathan temple of Trichur district and Attoly Madam of Trivandrum district. Trichur Pūram of the Vadakkumnathan temple is

a glorious and spectacular marching ceremony of eight Goddesses and one God in and around the place. Thousands of people flock to Trichur for witnessing this grand occasion of pancavādyā, caparisoned elephants and all the temple paraphernalia moving in a procession. Display of parasols and pyrotechnics is unique and unexcelled. Kumāranellore Trikkārtika, Ārammūla Utrattāti, Kodungallūr Bharani and Kēcchappally Tiruvātira are other famous festivals which celebrate the vivification days. Āyilyam, Tiruvōṇam, Ashtami Rōhiṇi etc. are certain asterisms of great significance to some of the temples, for instance, Āyilyam for the Nāga temples, Tiruvōṇam and Ashtami Rōhiṇi for Vishnu temples. Āyilyam festival of Pampum-mēkkāvu in Trichur, Peraḷassēri in Cannanore, and Mannārssāla in Alleppey are celebrated by the devotees of snake gods. Tiruvōṇam festival of Trikkākkara temple in Ernakulam district is significant in that it goes back to the early medieval years of Kerala. Ōṇam festival began for the first time in this temple although Kerala must have had some other harvest festivals anterior to this. Vaikom Mahadevan temple and Vadayārūkkotta Sree Krishna swamy temple are the important centres of Janmāshṭami festival. Guruvāyūr ēkādesi and Murajapam of Padmanābhaswamy temple in Trichur and Trivandrum districts are festivals of state-wide attraction. Some of the temples in the border line of Tamilnadu like Parappadam Bhadrakālī temple (Trivandrum district) Mariamman temple and Anjumūrty temple (Palghat district) celebrate the Pongal festival. Makara Sankrama is an important festival in Sabarimala Sāsta temple (Kottayam district) and Varnappally Siva temple (Alleppey). Sabarimala temple attracts people all over India during this festival for witnessing Makarajōti. Vēla, Tīra, Teyyāttam, Garudan tūkkam, Kettukālca etc. are some of the very interesting festivals associated with the temples of indigenous tradition of non Aryan culture. Nellikulangara Bhagavaty temple's Vēla festival which is celebrated every year on the 20th of Meenam (March-April) is very famous in Palghat region. Tīra and Teyyāttam are the ancient dance festivals associated with the cult of mother goddess and hero-worship celebrated in grand scale by the villagers of Calicut and Cannanore. Chemmanad Bhagavaty temple (Alleppey) is the famous spot of Garudan tūkkam festival, a semidancing pro-

cession which lasts thirteen days from Pūram to Utrattāti. Kettukālca is an ancient festival of Jain and Buddhist tradition now celebrated in the Parabrahma temple of Ōchira in Quilon and Chettykulangara Bhagavaty temple in Alleppey. Sayanapradikshana and Tūkkam are the rites of self-mortification observed in certain temples of Kerala during festivals. Tūkkam (hooking one's back on a crane) has become more or less extinct and replaced by Tulābhāra which means weighing oneself with some object of oblation.

The Festivals of Christians and Jews

Christmas is the most colourful festival of the Christians. On the Christmas eve every one feels refreshed or rejuvenated in the jovial company of friends and relatives. In Kerala the Christians and non-Christians celebrate the Christmas day by intensifying the bond of friendship far above the religious level. During this season all the churches of Kerala reverberate the melodious songs of Christmas carol for which both the Christians and non-Christians flock to them. The churches and houses and the whole bazaar will be beautifully decorated with illumination and Christmas Star.

Generally the church festivals in Kerala include the birthdays of the saints, foundation date of the church etc. Most of the religious festivals in the churches resemble the indigenous tradition. Feasts are the most popularly known part of the celebrations in the churches. Mūnnu Noyambu is a famous annual festival in the St. Mary's Churches of Kallissery (Alleppey) and Kuravilangad (Kottayam).

Among the Jewish festivals the sabbath occupies an important position which is observed in connection with the story of creation. Pente-cost or the Feast of weeks is another festival of the Jews which falls in May-June. This is the harvest festival of Jerusalem. In Kerala they celebrate this by adorning their houses with flowers and collecting all the available fruits for

their feast. Tabernacles is also celebrated by the Jews in Kerala. This festival is their pastoral celebration commemorating the tradition of exodus from Egyptian bondage. During this festive occasion they dine in a temporarily made shelter, remembering the hardships of migration from Egypt to Palestine. The New Year festival of the Jews is purely a religious ceremony dedicated for self-purification, immunity from sin etc. This is the holiest of all holy days in the life of a Jew.

The Festivals of the Muslims

Idula-Azha (Bakrid), Idula Fitr (Ramzan, Miladi Sherif and Muharram are important religious festivals of the Muslims. Idula Azha which falls on the 10th of Dhul-Hajj, the last month of the lunar year, is celebrated in memory of Abraham's willingness to offer his only son as a sacrifice. Idul Azha dawns with the reverberating sound of Thakbir - "Allāhu Akbar" (God is great). The spirit of large-heartedness, inter-communal harmony and brotherhood are promoted by this festival. Idula Fitr is celebrated in the month of Ramzan. This festival is dedicated for spiritual activities like fasting, prayers etc. Ramzan comes to its fag end with the appearance of the crescent moon in the western horizon. In certain parts of Kerala the Muslim women in gayest attire and ornaments pay visits to the houses of their friends. Group singing of Māppilāpāṭṭukal (Muslim songs) and a type of group dance are popular among them. Kōlkkali is an interesting amusement of the men folk. Milādi Sherif, the birth date of Prophet Muhammad, is also celebrated by the Kerala Muslims in large scale. Reading Maulood (the biography of the prophet) is the chief activity during this festival. Sometimes night classes of the Ulemas are organised during the first twelve days of this month. In certain parts of Kerala Milādi Sherif is celebrated by feeding the poor and the destitute, for instance, at Ponnāni in the Malappuram district. Muharram, 'the forbidden month,' is celebrated in memory of the first creation. The 10th day of Muharram is celebrated by the Muslims of Kerala.

christian theatrical arts in kerala

The Thomas Christians or Syrian Christians are the most ancient Christians of Kerala. They claim to be the descendants of the converts of the Apostle. They followed the traditions of Hindus almost in every respect, such as customs and manners, social organisations, art and architecture, literature, cultural activities, etc. Due to certain socio-religious and economic reasons the Syrian Christians were kept out of the artistic and cultural activities of the Hindu community in Kerala. The main reasons for such exclusion was that the Christian hierarchy did not allow the Syrian Christians to mingle with the Hindus in their temple-centred artistic performances. The religious festivals, music concerts and art forms such as Kūttu, Kūdiyāttam, Mudi-yerū, Krishnanāttam, etc. were strictly forbidden to Syrian Christians. This was made clear in the decrees of the Synod of Diamper in 1599 (Thallichy Jonas, *The Synod of Diamper*, Rome, 1958, pp. 25-46). In former times the Syrian Christians, in common with the members of the various Hindu castes, used to dance on the occasions of marriage and other social festivities, but they were stopped by the authorities of the Church on the plea of indecorum. A number of 'Kalyana Pattukal' (marriage songs), 'Palli Pattukal' (songs related to the history of churches), 'Rabbān Paṭṭu, Marggam Kalī' etc. formed part of their traditional cultural heritage.

During the 16th century, Kerala witnessed different phases of their socio-cultural and religious activities. They provide instances of the direct Western involvement in the cultural life of the natives. European invaders were chiefly motivated by their interests of colonial expansion and economic exploitation. The English and the Dutch did not deem it necessary to impose upon the Christian community their own cultural heritage.

The Portuguese, however, due to a variety of complex circumstances, made their impact felt in the cultural field also. The 'Cavittunatakam', the new Western theatrical art-form is the shining example of their contribution, to the Indian theatre as well. Cavittunatakam bears the stamp of foreign influence which opened new vistas of development for the theatrical arts of Kerala.

Cavittunatakam, a theatrical art of Kerala, synthesises the religious, cultural, social and artistic aspects of Christianity in Kerala. The meaning and purpose of Cavittunatakam, the foreign elements underlying its production and stage presentation, its definite artistic intention, and the manner in which it evolved through a combination of several elements of drama such as make up, costume, music and choreography are discussed here briefly.

Dr. K. M. George (*A survey of Malayalam Literature*, New Delhi, 1968, p 191) makes the following comment: "Drama as we now understand and use the term, is by and large a borrowed form of art in Kerala. We have already indicated the influences of Sanskrit in the early stage of the evolution of the dramatic literature in Malayalam. Even before this drama had in a way found its way to Kerala. The Portuguese who came to Kerala as early as the 16th century, were responsible for introducing Cavittunatakam which is a type of play similar to the Miracle Plays of the West. 'Genoa', 'Karalman' and 'Napoleon' are some of the better known plays of this type. The use of costumes and masks, as well as curtain for the stage, introduced in them were novelties in Kerala. However, the literary quality of the songs and the dialogues in Cavittunatakam were rather low. The movements of the actors on the stage arrest our attention as that of acrobats. They are more vigorous than graceful,

more martial than artistic. Those who did not possess enough technical knowledge to appreciate Kathakali supported and encouraged this early attempt of dramatic portrayal in the 18th and 19th centuries. It was in a way the Christian counterpart of Kathakali, which was reared on Hindu puranic stories."

Mrs. Sebeena Raphy (*Chavittunatakam*, Kottayam, 1964, pp. 163-176) has attempted to find out the authors of the plays. The name of Chinnathambi Annavi stands out conspicuously as a composer of Cavittunatakam. According to the oral tradition among the artists this man who belonged to Tamilnadu composed Cavittunatakam and propagated the art. Various names have been suggested as composers of Cavittunatakam but on a close scrutiny it is found that they are only scribes who transcribed these plays. The script might have originally been written in Tamil and these script would have changed while passing from hand to hand.

Themes of Cavittunatakam are of four kinds: (1) Historical (2) Biblical (3) Religious and (4) Social. The purpose is to educate the illiterate Christian folk. They convey the message of Christianity through moral-oriented stories. The themes selected for Cavittunatakam abide by the religious doctrines of Christianity. These might have been popularised only with the influence of the West.

The language of Cavittunatakam does not appear to be descended directly from the literary tradition of Kerala. The influence of Tamil can be seen in the form and content. The distinctive features of 'Paṭṭu' are observed quite closely in Cavittunatakam, with its own peculiarity of language.

Actors of Cavittunatakam are trained in 'kalaries'. In Cavittunatakam, the martial element is very much predominant. Sword play is an indispensable factor in the play. The fighting seen ('Portaru') is quite attractive. These are dreadful fights and there will be group fights of 20 to 30 actors on the stage. The 'kings' do not actively take part in the fight. The 'ministers' lead the army. The fighting continues for half an hour and arrests the attention of the audience.

The staging of this play usually takes place in the rural areas on happy occasions

such as Christmas, Easter, Patron Saint's Day and anniversaries of socio-religious organisations under the churches. Cavittunatakam troupes belonged to the Province of Varapoly and the Dioceses of Alleppey and Quilon. In former days all these Latin dioceses had the tradition of Cavittunatakam. At present it is seen abundantly in coastal areas of Cochin and Quilon. The Latin community among the Christians preserve this art form as a traditional and ancestral property among them. They alone participate in this theatrical performance.

The costume, make-up and stage settings are entirely influenced by Western tradition. A unique feature noticed in this art form is the accent on the costumes, make-up and stage-settings at the expense of some other important factors that make a good play.

Choreographic steps are given less importance in Cavittunatakam. The movement punctuates the words in the songs and the dialogue. They are not always meaningful gestures following the rhythm of the words and dialogues. According to Mr. Ashley Wayno, choreographer, California, USA, the similarities with the dances of Canada are seen in the movements of Cavittunatakam. Certain movements of the opera, are also seen in Chavittunatakam. Foreign as well as indigenous elements are mixed up in this theatre.

Music is an indispensable accompaniment of Cavittunatakam. The influence of Terukkūttu songs is seen with corrupted form of Ragas and Tālas of Carnatic music. Cavittunatakam has a fascinating choral music which shows the features of polyphonic chanting. Musical instruments in Cavittunatakam are such as Cenda, Tamburu, Elattalam, Harmonium, Clarinet, side-drum, Fiddle, Dolakku, Jalra, etc. The instruments in this play vary in accordance with local influence.

Women are not allowed to participate in the play. Men impersonate women. Cavittunatakam is performed on an open stage of 30 ft width and 100 ft. length generally. The planks on the stage are fixed so as to produce a drum-like sound at the foot-fall of the actors on the stage. About forty to sixty actors usually participate in it according to the nature of the theme.

Karalman Natakam, (story of Charlemagne) is one of the famous and lengthy plays, and it is staged sometimes continuously for three or seven days. The literary as well as the historical evidences establish that Cavittunatakam has migrated from Tamilnadu to

Kerala. The rudiments of Cavittunatakam are seen in 'Varasu Natakam' and 'Allēsu Natakam' of Tamilnadu. It is a pity that this highly complex and and colourful relic of the past is facing a slow and painful death in the rural parts of Kerala.



Head-less figure—Yaksha
(Calicut University History Department Museum)

dr. n. a. karim

the impact of english on malayalam literature

To understand the nature and profundity of the impact of English on Malayalam language and literature it is useful to have a quick dip into the history of the advent of the British to the Indian subcontinent. It is a matter of common knowledge that in the year 1600 Queen Elizabeth I granted a charter to the English East India Company to trade with the East Indies. Thereupon the Britishers came to India and established their trading centres called factories at Surat, Bombay, Madras and Calcutta. While they were carrying on and expanding their trade, the last of the great Moghal Emperors died in 1707 at Delhi. This signalled the disintegration of the Moghal Empire. Political instability, confusion and disorder followed. This provided an opportunity for the British to transform themselves from mere traders into political administrators of the country. In the Carnatic Wars in the South they defeated their French rivals and made themselves masters here, while the Battle of Plassey in 1757 securely laid the foundation of their power in the north. Thus from unpretentious beginnings of traders the British became the paramount rulers of India within a century.

When Muslims were replaced by the British, the latter realised the need for doing something for the education of the people, and, Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General, established the Calcutta Madrassah which was intended "to qualify sons of Mohamedan gentlemen for responsible and lucrative offices in the State" and a few years later another institution at Benares, more or less on the same lines, "for the preservation and cultivation of the Laws, Literature and Religion of the nation, to accomplish the same purpose for the Hindus as the Madrassah for the Mohamedans and specially to supply qualified Hindu assistants to European Judges".

The appeal of John Owen, Chaplain to the Bengal Presidency for the establishment of schools for the purpose of teaching English "to the natives of those provinces" seemed to have then fallen on deaf ears.

A few years later Charles Grant who was one of the Directors of the East India Company in a memorandum submitted to the Company deplored the low moral conditions of the people of India and exhorted the rulers to improve it by imparting to them a knowledge of the English language to serve as "a key which will open to them a world of new ideas". Two years later when the charter of the East India Company was being renewed a clause was incorporated stipulating that "a sum of not less than one lakh of rupees in each year shall be set apart and applied to the revival and improvement of literature and for the introduction and promotion of knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India". Now started the controversy as to how this amount was to be spent; whether it should be spent in starting institutions of Western knowledge or Eastern learning. A group of men under the leadership of Raja Rammohan Roy, one of the greatest Indians of the century, formed an association for founding an institution where the Hindus would receive instruction in European Languages and Science. The Hindu College was thus founded in 1817 and in 1818 the Bishop of Calcutta started an institution which was to serve the double purpose of training young Christians as preachers and of imparting a knowledge of the English language to Mohamedans and Hindus. It is interesting to note that the proposal to establish a Sanskrit College at Calcutta evoked strong protest from Rammohan Roy who did not want his young contemporaries to waste their time and energy on "the vain and empty subtleties" of "speculative

men". As opposed to this was the group of 'orientalists' of Warren Hastings ably supported by Sir William Jones, the famous Sanskrit scholar who advocated Eastern learning. In this controversy Lord Macaulay who was then the Law Member played the most decisive role. Though his argument that "a single shelf of a good European Library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia" is an exaggerated position, his superior eloquence carried the day and English education became a *fait accompli*. While this great controversy was raging in Bombay and Bengal the demand for instruction in English grew more and more insistent. The demand for English books increased. In order to satisfy popular demand English classes had been attached to the Madrassah and Sanskrit Colleges at Calcutta as also to the Agra College started in 1818. All these facts point to the conclusion that English was not thrust down the unwilling throats of the Indians. The few people who cared for education in those days wanted English.

The newly opened channel of English language and education irrigated the parched lands of socio-cultural life of the country and new shoots of liberal ideas sprouted first in Bengal and later in other parts of the sub continent. As R. C. Majumdar has correctly pointed out this contact with English literature helped Indian literature to extricate itself from the killing strangle-hold of traditionalism and enter into a new phase of development. When he says that the fifty years of English education brought about greater changes in the heart of Bengal than the changes that took place in the preceding thousand years, the statement is also equally applicable to Kerala. The British rule economically impoverished India, but the contact with English culturally fertilised the country, and the yield of this fertilisation was richest in the fields of arts and literature.

The impact of English on Malayalam literature has been indeed profound. Through this contact not only new literary forms like the novel and the short story came to be evolved but they became dominant forms of expression of our experience and creative imagination. Though grammatically Malayalam language remains largely uninfluenced by English, the vocabulary of the language has now a considerable number of loan words. The phonology and mor-

phology of Malayalam also have been, though marginally, influenced by English. On the whole the latent linguistic potentialities of Malayalam have been considerably developed by this vitalising contact with English language. But it is in the area of literature the influence of English is more pervading and profound.

Take for example Malayalam poetry which has a long tradition, but till the arrival of English on the scene it was under the tyranny of Sanskrit poetics which smothered poetic imagination for the glorification of rhetorics and several mechanical rules of composition. The situation was almost similar to that of the 18th century England when Aristotle's *Poetics* held a kind of deleterious sway over the literary imagination of the period. Similarly the literary law-makers had pushed Malayalam poetry into a creative *cul-de-sac*. A few poetic forms like *sandeshakavyas* and *mahakavyas* and elaborate rules of compositions were the sole resources this literary *genre* had to draw upon and the sensitive plant of poetry seemed to wilt in this blighting climate. The fresh wind from the West acted as a kind of liberating influence on Malayalam poetry which, when emancipated from the cribbing and confining influence of Sanskrit poetics and prosody, showed signs of enormous creative vitality that expressed itself in new poetic forms like *khandakavyas* (short poems) *vilapakavyas* (elegies), etc. English poetic forms like the ode, the sonnet and the dramatic monologue soon found their way into Malayalam.

The three great poets Āśān, Vallattōl and Ullōor, who inaugurated the new era of Malayalam poetry were influenced in varying degrees by the English poetry of the period and of earlier periods. Of these three it is Mahākavi Kumāran Āśān who was influenced most profoundly and in a lasting manner by this contact with contemporary English poetry. It is said that there was a well-thumbed copy of Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* right at the elbow on the shelf of Āśān's study as there were other collections of individual poets. Though nurtured on the traditional fare of Sanskrit language and literature Vallattōl became exposed to the influence of English literature in an indirect manner. The case of Ullōor was different. He had a formal English education upto the Master's Degree level and had direct, easy access to the entire

range of English literature. Still as a poet he remained rooted in the native tradition even when he assimilated the spirit of the new age in poetry.

The influence of English on Malayalam poetry ever since the age of the big trio became deeper and deeper that it is difficult to mention a single poet of the later period who has remained absolutely uninfluenced by English. In the case of most of the poets the influence was direct and easily identifiable, in others, it is more subtle and diffuse. Poetic art in Malayalam is now moving almost on parallel lines with the developments in English poetry showing a direct but often delayed correspondence with schools and movements. This does not mean that Malayalam poetry is still imitative of English poetry. The contact with English has only helped Malayalam poetry to strike deep in its native soil and make itself independent and gain a masculine strength. It is not possible in a brief article like this to mention all the significant Malayalam poets of the last fifty years and point out the extent of influence of English poetry on them. This influence has deeply permeated the entire corpus of Malayalam poetry since the days of the big trio. Political independence in 1947 made very little change in this steady influence which, if anything, only became broadened in the sense that the influence is not now of England alone but of the whole of English-speaking world particularly the United States of America. After the Second World War the influence of American literature on Malayalam literature, particularly on novel, drama and literary criticism, has been increasingly significant.

Even though Malayalam literature was for a long time under the tutelage of Sanskrit, it is strange it had no drama till almost the dawn of the present century. But Malayalees had other forms of performing art like *kathakali*, *tullal* and *kudiyattam* with their own literature. Dramatic literature in Malayalam begins with the translation of Sanskrit playwrights like Kālidāsa. Original Malayalam dramas that were subsequently written in Malayalam were closely modelled on these Sanskrit plays. Perhaps due to the poverty of dramatic literature in Malayalam Tamil musical drama, though inferior in literary merits, found its easy passage into the neighbouring Kerala. The contact with plays of Shakespeare who was an essential

ingredient in school and college English course and the creations of the 18th and 19th century playwrights of England opened up a new field of literary creativity which has been considerably enriched by writers of great talents and sense of drama. There is perhaps as much experimentation and innovation in this form as in poetry. Quite early in time influences other than British seeped into Malayalam drama and inspired gifted-playwrights to strike out in different directions. While some of them are Shawian and Ibsenesque in their mode of expression some are influenced by American playwrights like Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller and even Edward Albee and Neil Simon. Lack of the support of a strong theatre movement is perhaps what retards the full growth of the *genre*.

Literary criticism of the the kind with which we are now familiar was almost unknown in Malayalam till we came into contact with English though Sanskrit texts and treatises on aesthetics and books that contained principles of literary evaluation of poems and plays were available. An unimaginative application of these ideas to creative endeavours of a later period proved of no avail in a fair critical examination of the new literature that blossomed as a result of the contact with the West. Therefore Malayalees tried to get themselves acquainted with the theory and practice of criticism in the West. Today our best critics are as much well-versed with critical canons of English and European critics as that of India. This combination of the Eastern and Western ideals produced very happy results as the philosophical foundations of Indian aesthetics and criticism are as sound as the psychological and sociological insights of the West. Now it has become almost impossible for anyone to be a practising literary critic without a good grounding in the critical creeds of the West. Even a literary critic like Kuttikrishna Marar who made no claims to a sound knowledge of English language had to make himself familiar with the Western criticism in order to buttress his extremely individual, independent critical positions. He was of course a lone wolf of Malayalam literary criticism who held considerable sway over the field with his remarkable critical acumen and ability. All the others like M. P. Paul, Mundesseri, Kuttipuzha Krishna Pillai, Sukumar Azhicode, N. V. Krishna Warriar and the whole

tribe are considerably influenced by Western critics, particularly English critics, and since the last World War, by American critics.

This dependence on the West is justified by the advent of the new literary forms of Western origin for the evaluation of which highly evolved critical tools of the West had necessarily to be borrowed. But our critics have shown remarkable deftness and ingenuity in the handling of these newly evolved tools that they bring a highly refined manner to bear on their critical practice. New expansions in the frontiers of knowledge of sociology, psychology, anthropology and linguistics have influenced literary criticism in Malayalam as much as

they have influenced literary criticism in the West.

On a general survey of Malayalam literature after the advent of the British we see the whole area well irrigated with the literary ideas and ideals of the West mostly channelled through our knowledge of English. This channel instead of being blocked after political independence has only become widened to give space for other foreign influences to flow through. At least in this area of literature the narrow cultural chauvinism is not as much in evidence as in other areas of life. To that extent we have benefited from our contact first with English literature and, later, through the same linguistic medium, with the literature of the whole of the West.



abstracts from m. a. dissertations on kerala

c. girija

nannan of elimalai

The literature of the Sangam throws much light on the early history of North Malabar. This territory which formed the Northern part of Tamilakam on the West Coast between the Cera Kingdom in the South and the Kśōa territory in the North was ruled from Elimalai by an illustrious chieftain called Nannan. This Nannan of Elimalai is different from Naviram Nannan mentioned in some of the Sangam works like Malaipadukadam. Nannan of Elimalai was otherwise known as Nannan of Konkanam

Although a minor chieftain, Nannan made himself a force to be reckoned with. He fought many battles with his efficient military organisation. He defeated Palayan, Piṇḍan etc. but he is lauded specially for his victory over the Cera King in the battle of Pali. His neighbours, alarmed by his growing power, decided to suppress Nannan. The Kosar invaded Elimalai when Nannan was away; but he retaliated with the assistance of the Cola King Ilam Cēt Cennir. On the basis of the association of the Kosar with the Maurya invasion of the South, it may be suggested that Nannan

was a junior contemporary of Bindusara in 3rd century B. C.

Following the Kosa invasion, the Cera king Narmudi Ceral gathered reinforcements and defeated Nannan at Vakaipperi-unturai, near Ponnani. Nannan was killed and the chieftaincy of Elimalai annexed to the Cera kingdom. Nannan's son Utiyan Nannan succeeded him as a Cera vassal.

Nannan has been depicted as a cruel chieftain. He was merciless towards his enemies, including their women. He only showed consideration for poets who flattered him. Under him Elimalai was prosperous. It had flourishing trade with the Western world and the rest of India. The earliest Aryan Brahman settlement of Kerala is identified at Cellūr (present day Taliparamba) in this region.

The dynasty of Nannan, however, continued. The Mūṣaka dynasty of the early medieval period and the Kōlattiris of the later ages formed his descendants. In short, this dynasty has a long and uninterrupted history from the Sangam period to the modern times.

jayarani pallath

mamakam

The Māmākam was a temple-festival celebrated at Tirunavay every twelfth year. It had different aspects—religious, political, military and economic. Its origin remains obscure. Exaggerated medieval accounts highlight the different aspects of this festival. It may have been the counterpart

of the Simhastha festival of Ujjain, Kumbhamela of Prayaga and other similar festivals at Hardwar and Kumbhakonam

It was held on the asterism of Magha in the month of Māgha, when Jupiter stood in Simha lagna, and hence the name of

Mahāmagha, now corrupted as Mamakam or Mamankam.

To begin with, the festival was presided over by the Raja of Valluvanatu. Following the weakness of Valluvanatu and the growing strength of the Zamorin of Calicut the latter took over the privilege. This took place sometime in the 13th century. The Raja of Valluvanatu used to send suicide squads known as 'chaver' who fought in vain to take back the privilege.

This feud became institutionalised and it continued for over five centuries. In fact, it is the longest blood-feud. In course of time, its religious aspect was forgotten. It became purely a martial display with political overtones.

Elaborate arrangements were made for the Mamakam festival. Every section of society had a part in it and all the royal

officers got instructions from the Zamorin sufficiently in advance.

A month in advance, the Zamorin with his retinue moved to Tirunavay. The ceremonial procession of the festival started from the Western gopura of the temple and proceeded to about a kilometer to the West upto the Manittara, the dais. There the Zamorin sat and received the flags, sent by feudatory chieftains as tokens of fealty. The Rājā of Valluvanātu did not send the flag. Instead, he sent a squad of suicidal soldiers, who fought their way to the Manittara only to perish before they reached the destination.

The Māmākam which promoted trade, social contacts and political power of the Zamorin was celebrated last in A. D. 1755. When the Mysoreans invaded Malabar, the Zamorin lost his power and this came to an end.

k. k. radha

early vaishnava temples of kerala

During the early centuries of Kollam Era (A. D. 9th-10th centuries) Kerala witnessed the decline of Jainism and Buddhism. These and the earlier tribal superstitions were replaced by Saiva and Vaishnava faiths. This was brought about through the institutional agency of the temple. Thirteen Vaishnava temples have been praised in the Tamil Vaishnava hegiologies. Besides, a number of Cera inscriptions go to prove the existence and prosperity of Vaishnava temples in Kerala.

These temples had numerous festivals. This meant participation of different sections of society, and promoted social contact. Among the more important Vaishnava festivals was Āvaṇi Ōnam which is described at length in Cera inscriptions. These festivals helped the spread of the faith. Ōnam is the most important festival of Kerala even to-day.

The faith enjoyed royal patronage. The Cera king Kulasekhara Alwār was a Vaishnava saint.

n. t. gracy

christianity in the cera kingdom of makotai

Many creeds co-existed in the Cēra Kingdom of Makōtai and Christianity was among them. Several records including copper plates and crosses prove this.

The two sets of Syrian Christian Copper Plates form the major source of information in this regard. The first set is

dated in the fifth regnal year of Stānu Ravi (A. D. 844-833). It records the grant of some land and certain privileges by Aiyan Atikaḷ, Governor of Veṇād to the Syrian Christian Church at Quilon founded by Mar Sapir Iso. The privileges included the right to collect tax, carry out trade and exercise judicial powers. In short, it was

a charter to the Christian trade settlement of the newly founded city.

The privileges granted according to the first set are re-inforced by the second set. The Christian settlement is exempted from different kinds of taxes. The seventy two aristocratic privileges were also granted to the settlers. The Church and its land were placed completely under Añcuvannam and Maṇigramam, two trade guilds. Arunūrruvar, the police force of Veṇād, guaranteed protection. The Thāḷakkād inscription of

Rajasimha (A. D. 1024) also depicts the growth of a small Christian trade settlement into a township.

Five Persian Crosses dating from this period have been noticed. They bear inscriptions in Pahlavi character. Syrian tradition embodied in the *Anecdota Syriaca* supports the evidence offered by the Pahlavi inscriptions on these crosses. Apart from their trade interests the Syrian Christians had missionary zeal also.



Yakshi, c. 10-11 century A. D.
(Calicut University History
Department Museum)

calicut university

the department of history: a survey

A department of P. G. studies in History was established in 1963-4 as part of the Calicut centre of Kerala University in the Guruvayurappan College. Prof. P. K. Karunakara Menon was appointed head of the department with Dr. T. K. Ravindran to assist him. Sri. M. G. S. Narayanan joined them in 1964. With the establishment of Calicut University (1968), the centre became part of the new University with fulfilled research activities. After the sad demise of Prof. P. K. K. Menon, Dr. T. K. Ravindran took his place in Kerala University (1971) and Dr. M. G. S. Narayanan was appointed as the head of the department in his place at Calicut. At present the teaching faculty includes the following besides the Professor and Head of the department: Dr. A. P. Ibrahim Kunju (Prof.), Dr. Srikumaran Nair, (Reader) Dr. K. K. N. Kurup, Mr. S. M. Mohamed Koya, Mr. K. J. John, and Mr. V. Kunjali, (Lecturers) and Mr. M. R. Raghava Varier (Epigraphist).

The department offers instruction for M. A. degree and facilities for research leading to Ph. D. The syllabus for M. A. has been thoroughly reorganised and a semester system was introduced in 1973. Historical Method, History of Indian Civilisation and Kerala History and Culture are compulsory subjects. There is provision for internal assessment and a dissertation. The Department is planning to introduce specialisation for M. A. in Ancient, Medieval and Modern periods and an M. Phil. course from 1977 onwards. In the field of research the department has been concentrating on Ancient Indian History with special reference to South India and Kerala, and Modern Indian History with special emphasis on freedom movement. Medieval Indian History with reference to South India and relations with West Asia is being strengthened. Among the twenty

one scholars registered for Ph. D., Sri K. K. N. Kurup and Sri P. V. Balakrishnan have been awarded the degree recently.

The departmental library has a good collection of books exceeding 17,000 in number along with rare books and back volumes of Journals. The collection of records includes micro-films and typescripts from the National Archives, New Delhi; Tamil Nadu Archives, Madras; and the India Office Library, London.

The manuscript library of the department contains palm-leaf documents including those of Keralolpatti, different versions of Ramayana and Mahabharata and different commentaries on ancient works of Sanskrit literature. Land and revenue accounts have been collected from the Kollamkode Palace, the Kadathanad Palace, Arakkal Palace and also other aristocratic families and temples. There are a few copper plates, bamboo manuscripts and stampages of inscriptions too.

The museum of history, started in 1972 with the enthusiasm of students and teachers as the sole capital includes, different sections for sculptures, inscriptions, coins, pre-historic relics and items of folk art and culture.

In 1973 the department organised the first UGC Summer Institute in History for College teachers in South India. Eminent scholars like Prof. S. Nurul Hasan, Prof. Romila Thapar, Prof. Bipan Chandra, Prof. R. S. Sharma, Prof. H. D. Sankharia, Dr. G. S. Gai, Dr. A. Sundara, Dr. K. V. Raman, Prof. N. Subramaniam, Prof. K. Rajayyan, Prof. Leela Dube, Sri M. Govindan, Sri V. T. Bhattathirippad and Dr. Anirudha Ray are among the many distinguished visitors who delivered lectures and took part in Seminars in the department.

Faculty

1. Dr. M. G. S. Narayanan—Doctoral dissertation: "Political and Social History of Kerala under the Kulasekharas (800 to 1124 A.D.)"

Publications:

1. Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala. (1972) 2. Aspects of Aryanisation in Kerala (1973) 3. Re-interpretations in South Indian History (1976)

(He is the author of about 30 research papers published in various journals and Member of the Editorial Board of the Journal of Indian History and Indian Historical Review. He was Commonwealth Academic Staff Fellow at the School of Oriental and African studies, London University, during 1974-75).

2. Prof. A. P. Ibrahim Kunhu—Doctoral dissertation: "Marthanda Varma and his Time".

Publications:

1. Mysore—Kerala Relations in the 18th century, 2. Rise of Travancore. 3. Studies in Medieval Kerala History. (He is the author of several research papers in leading journals)

3. Dr. M. P. Sreekumaran Nair—Doctoral dissertation:

"The Role of Constitutionalism in India's struggle for Freedom".

Publications:

1. Reappraisals (1972) 2. Values in Conflict (1973) (He is the author of ten

research papers published in Indian journals. He was Fulbright Post-doctoral Fellow in 1966 and Assistant Professor, Lincoln University, Pennsylvania, USA, during 1967-68).

4. Dr. K. K. N. Kurup—Doctoral dissertation: "The History of East India Company's Settlement in Tellicherry"

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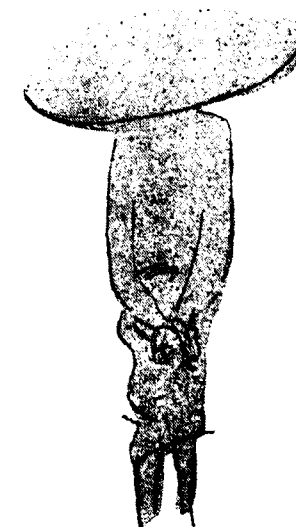
1. The Cult of Theyyam and Hero worship in Kerala (1972), 2. The Ali Rajas of Cannanore (1974) 3. Aspects of Kerala History and Culture (1976) (He is the author of about a dozen research papers)

5. Mr. S. M. Muhamad Koya: (He is the author of three research papers and is doing research on "Muslims of Medieval Kerala in Trade and Commerce).

6. Mr. K. J. John: (He is the author of one research paper and is doing research on Megaliths of Kerala).

7. Mr. V. Kunhali: (He is the author of one research paper. He is doing research on "Early Arab Contacts and the Advent of Islam in Kerala.")

8. Mr. M. R. Raghava Varier: (He is the author of five research papers. He is doing research on "Jainism in Kerala" as part of his M. Phil. Degree course).



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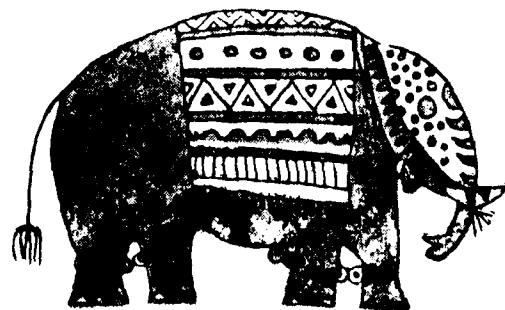
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role of india in the international trade in coir

Among the Industrial Hard Fibres 'Coir' has a prominent position. It is the fibre extracted from coconut husks, the fibrous material surrounding the shell of coconut. Coconut palm is cultivated extensively in the tropics, particularly in southern Asia, Oceania and East Africa. About 29,000 million nuts are produced throughout the world per annum. But only India and Sri Lanka are the two main countries which utilise coconut husks for production of coir on a commercial basis. Philippines which is the world's largest producer of coconuts has only a small coir industry which is mainly for catering to the domestic requirements. Small quantities of coir are produced in Tanzania, Bangladesh, Burma, Kenya, Malaysia, Mozambique and Seychelles also. But when compared with the extent of availability of the raw material viz., coconut husks, their production of coir is negligible. Total world production of 'Coir fibre' is estimated to be 257.87 thousand tonnes of which about 50% i.e. 155 thousand tonnes are produced in India. Sri Lanka's production of coir fibre is estimated to be 73.18 thousand tonnes. The break up of the world output of coir could be seen from the table below:-

Table I
World Production of Coir
(Qty. = 000's tonnes)

Country	Production	Country	Production
India	155.00	Burma	2.17
Sri Lanka	73.18	Kenya	2.00
Tanzania	8.50	Seychelles	1.90
Bangladesh	5.80	Malaysia	1.50
Thailand	4.00	Mozambique	1.00
Philippines	2.50	Morocco	0.50
Total			<u>257.87</u>

'Coir Fibre' is extracted from the husks either by retting the green husks steeped under water for a long period and beating them to separate the fibrous material, or from dry husks by mechanical decortication. The techniques employed for extraction of fibre in India and Sri Lanka differ. While Sri Lanka's production is from dry husks in India the bulk of the fibre is produced from green husks by natural retting. For spinning into yarn and for weaving into floor coverings, fibre obtained from retted husks which is known as 'White Fibre' is more suitable. 'Brown Fibre' produced by mechanical decortication is mostly used for upholstery, brush making, making rubberised coir, etc. While India has a virtual monopoly in the production of 'White Fibre' Ceylon holds the unique position as the major producer of 'Brown Fibre' in the world. India has started production of 'Brown Fibre' only very recently. The States of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have made some headway in this regard.

Coir fibre is further processed into coir yarn and other finished products. In the absence of advanced technology, further processing of fibre is carried out only on a limited scale in coir producing countries, other than India. Their production is mostly intended

for domestic consumption and export as such to developed countries for further processing. But India has developed technology for spinning of coir fibre into yarn, weaving of floor coverings, such as coir mats, mattings, rugs, carpets and for rope making, years before. In fact, India holds a virtual monopoly in the production of coir yarn. Yarn is spun either by hand or using ratts. Out of 155 thousand tonnes of coir fibre produced in India annually, above 133 thousand tonnes are converted into yarn. The production of yarn is estimated to be 1,20,000 tonnes a year. India has an established, century old, handloom industry for manufacturing coir mats, mattings, rugs and carpets. The production of these floor coverings is just over 23,800 tonnes a year. The production figures of coir are given in the table below :—

Table-II
Production of coir and coir goods in India

Commodity	Quantity (Tonnes)
Coir fibre	
(a) White fibre	1,36,000
(b) Brown fibre	19,000
	1,55,000
Coir Yarn	1,20,000
Coir Products	23,800
Coir Rope	11,400
Curled Coir	2,500
Rubberised coir goods	1,000

Coir Industry in India is export-oriented. Indian coir enters the world market in the form of raw coir fibre, spun coir yarn and as woven coir products, and finds markets in more than 100 countries in the world. She accounts for over 50 percent of the world trade in coir. India's exports over the last five years could be seen from the table below :—

Table-III
Composition of coir Exports
(1971-74)

Commodity	1971-'72		1972-'73		1973-'74	
	Q.	V.	Q.	V.	Q.	V.
Coir Fibre	392	6.25	298	4.62	276	3.77
Coir Yarn	30642	722.42	31,924	818.58	29,373	822.01
Coir Mats	13498	507.50	12,742	526.60	12,302	573.28
Coir Mattings						
Rugs & Carpets	7101	240.40	3,648	132.53	3,457	140.40
Coir Rope	238	3.85	104	1.64	140	2.84
Curled Coir	441	5.52	773	9.81	1,208	15.49
Rubberised Coir goods	—	—	@	0.01	3	0.39
	52312	1,485.94	49,489	1,493.79	46,759	1,558.18

Table III (1974-76)

Commodity	1974-'75		1975-'76	
	Q.	V.	Q.	V.
Coir Fibre	161	3.05	266	6.94
Coir Yarn	24,401	826.71	22,970	1,002.19
Coir Mats	11,322	646.53	7,488	592.48
Coir Mattings	5,049	263.29	5,275	337.11
Rugs & Carpets	138	3.47	270	6.70
Coir Rope	762	10.40	1,014	6.70
Curled Coir	1	0.17	1	0.26
	41,843	1,753.62	37,284	1,935.20

Q. = Quantity in quintals

V. = Value in Rupees lakhs

@ = Negligible

India exports only a small quantity of coir fibre, the export during 1975-'76 was only 266 tonnes which formed only 0.7% of her total exports of coir. But the yarn exported from India forms 98 percent of this yarn entering the world market. The export of this item from India during the year 1975-'76 was 229,70 tonnes which accounted for 62% of her total exports of coir. Finished products of coir exported are coir mats, mattings, rugs and carpets. Since the developed countries, particularly West Europe, has a well-developed coir floor coverings manufacturing industry, even though India is the only supplier of these products among the coir fibre producing countries, her share in the world trade is dwindling in recent years. On an average 16,000 tonnes of these items are exported every year. The export during 1975-1976 stood at 12,764 tonnes which accounted for 24 percent of her total coir exports. Another item of coir exported from India is coir rope. The export of this item was 270 tonnes during 1975-'76. India has started production of 'Brown fibre' only in recent years, as stated elsewhere and has started to export small quantities of curled coir and rubberised coir products in recent years. Her export of curled coir was 1,014 tonnes in 1975-1976.

India's exports of coir are directed to almost all regions, but the major consumer of this item is West Europe which share above 60%. The American countries come next in order and then the East European countries.

It is noticed that the export of coir from India is steadily declining since 1960. Coir yarn imported from here to developed countries are mostly used for manufacturing floor coverings, and the products made by them competes with our products made on traditional handlooms. West Europe has developed a well organised coir industry producing a wide variety of superior quality coir products. In recent years they are switching over to the manufacture of floor coverings of other materials. This is an opportunity for stepping up our export of coir products. In Europe there is good prospects for rubber or PVC backed floor coverings. We have to develop advanced techniques for production of such products. Indigenous skill and imported technology should be used advantageously to exploit the present situation. Technical collaboration between the European and Indian manufacturers is the only answer to maintain our traditional market for coir and to improve the exports. In view of the high labour cost in West Europe there is a tendency to close coir factories. The manufacturers of coir products in those countries are now favourably inclined to transfer the advanced technology of production to India. If we take advantage of the opportunity to modernise the Indian coir industry we can hope for a bright future for the coir industry.

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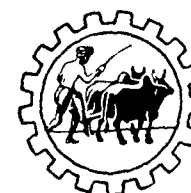
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