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II. TALIKETTU KALYANAM— ITS ORIGIN AND SIGNIFICANCE.

By M. D. Raghavan, B. A., R. A. S., F. R, A. I.

Among the most peculiar of the customs in Malabar is what is called, the Talikettu Kalyanam or as its name signifies, *kalyanam* or marriage by tying the *tali*, a ceremony common to all Marumakkattayam Hindus of Malabar, which every girl has to undergo before she attains puberty. The *tali* consists of a small flat gold ornament with a gold bead on either side, the whole strung on a string. Opinions differ as to whether it is a real marriage sacrament as among the Hindus generally in South India or whether it is a mere caste rite, without any special significance. However much it may be described as a meaningless ceremony which it undoubtedly is at the present day, it has been an institution almost universal over the whole of Kerala particularly among the Nairs and the Tiyars, and a study of its origin is of undoubted interest. The vast amount of evidence collected by the Malabar Marriage Commission 1891, has not helped towards a real solution of the problem, for the witnesses invariably based their views on what they saw around them, as in fact all who have expressed any opinion about it so far have done, without attempting any investigation as to its origin or significance. As observed by the Commissioners in their report, the majority of the witnesses described the Talikettu Kalyanam as a fictitious marriage, the origin and

meaning of which they could not explain. [1] The task of exploration is far from easy. In trying to understand the significance of the ceremony, it is obvious that we have first to examine what evidence the ceremony as now practised affords. On such a scrutiny, the first thing that strikes one is the *Brāhmini pattu* or the songs that a Brahmini sings in well-to-do families by way of blessing the couple. Brahmini does not mean a Brahmin woman but only a woman of the Namisan caste. The idea was that these songs were to be recited in Rig Veda *swaram* or voice in which the Rig Veda is recited. The compromise was apparently made to obviate the Sudras reciting the Vedas which the Brāhmans only could utter. Though these songs are getting obsolete they are of value as they throw much light on the significance of the ceremony.

A few of the typical verses are extracted below :—

Mūsāri vārtitoru nilavilakkum kolutti vechchu,	Lighting the brass lamp moulded by the brassmith,
Chāliyanāṛ nurritoru vennulum chennulum,	The white and red threads spun by the weaver,
Udan kalannu veda Brahmini pirichitoru charatitanna,	The Brahmini twisted into cords,
Muppiripāyi pirichukoṇḍu kanniyaḍa valankeimēl,	And bound them as armlet on the right hand of the virgin.
Kāppōṭan kettiyatu ikkuṭṭikku vilakkayirikka.	May the thread be they constant light.

[1] Report of the Malabar Marriage Commission, p. 18.

Nūṟṟaṇḍum vāṇiri kanniyē neḍumaṇṇalyam ninikkennu,	And mayst thou live a hundred years in the enjoyment of married life.
Bhartāvum puṭramokshavum ninakkayiṭṭiri kanni,	Mayst thou live with thy husband blessed with children,
Nellenni puṭṟaṟuṇḍaka arienni ayissuṇḍāka,	Mayst thou have children as numerous as paddy counted and life for years as numerous as rice counted.

(2)

Āṟu māsam mumbē pandal paṇi tudaṇṇi,	The pandal has been six months in building.
Arabharattinnu perumpaṟayum tākki,	And the kettle drums announce the wedding.
Uttupura urakkapandal uṇuum pandal,	In the pandal there is place for feasting and a bed chamber.
Tēn moṟiyayaval kaṟuttil mālayiṭṭāl,	The beautiful maiden garlands the husband.
Malayiṭṭu bhartāvum bharyayumayi.	And garlanding they became husband and wife.
Avaraviṭe sukhichchirunnu vasichapōle.	And as they lived there happy,
Ivariviṭe sukhichirikkum pala nālekkum.	So let these live here long in the enjoyment of happiness.

The verses undoubtedly signify the idea of the union of the bride and bridegroom, and a happy married life.

History of Malayalam literature. Govinda Pilli pp. 80-81.

2. Turning now to the details of the ceremony we find that even at this distance of time they are intimately related to the real marriage ceremony, with which it must have been identified in its earlier days :— The casting of the horoscope of the girl and the boy chosen to play the part of the bridegroom, the fixing of an auspicious day for the ceremony, the *ashtamangaliyam vekkal* or the placing of the eight articles symbolical of *mangaliyam* or marriage (such as rice, paddy, tender leaves of the cocoanut, an arrow, a looking glass, a well-washed cloth, burning fire and the round wooden box or cheppu) ; the bridegroom's investing the bride with the *tali* or the marriage badge, the presentation of new cloth, the formalities indicrative of wife's duties, such as cooking food, grinding curry stuff, giving the bridegroom betel to chew and water to wash his feet, eating together from the same leaf, even sleeping in the same chamber, going to water the supposed jasmine plant,—all these are so patently marriage ceremonies that they leave no ground for doubt that by origin and significance, *taliketṭu kalyānam* was the real marriage ceremony of old. On the fourth day the bridegroom severs his connection with the girl by cutting into two the cloth she wore. As recorded by the Malabar Marrirge Commision, notwithstanding this divorce the South Malabar custom obliges the girl to observe pollution when her bridegroom dies, and the Nambur divies regard her as a widow for some purposes. [2] The

[2] Report of the Malaber Marriage Commission. 1891. page 18.

ceremony has always been performed with all the customary observances which endure to the present day, such as the sacred *nilavilakku* and *niranazhi*, or the fully lit lamp and a measure of rice full to overflowing; and was fully performed with the sanction and in the presence of the parents and the maternal uncle of the contracting parties and the elders of the community, of whom each and everyone by turn sprinkles rice on the seated couple by way of benediction. Care is taken to throw rice first on the burning light, which is done as an offering to the fire and is a mild, but nonetheless an essential, representation of the *hamam* or sacrifice to the fire, which is a prolonged affair and enters so largely into the ceremonies of a Brāhman marriage. *Taliketṛu* has thus in it every feature of a marriage ceremony, which it has retained through all ages. Having considered the internal evidence that the ceremony presents to us, we have a mass of other contemporary evidence available which may be classed as external. In the forefront of these we have the invaluable traditions of the country as treasured in folk-lore, which nobody has yet estimated at their real worth. In these we find abundant instances of *taliketṭu kalyānam* having been in its earlier days the real ceremony of marriage. Specific instrnces of this in regard to the ceremony that obtained among the Tiyars are afforded in the song recounting the exploits of Valia Aromar Chekavar one of the greatest of the heroes of old. In entrusting his only sister to the guardianship of

his brother before proceeding to his last fight, he observes :—

Namukkū me onnallō nërpeṇṇalum	We have an only sister;
Anchu vayassilum kātum kutti	At five years old, were her ears bored,
Eṛu vayassil eṛuttināk̲ki	And at seven, put to school,
Eṛuttum payaṛṛum patich-chavale	Was educated and trained in fencing exercises ;
Eṭṭu vayassil muḍiyumkeṭṭi	Her hair was tied at eight years.
Vidayakalokke tikaṇṇa-valke	Thus was her education completed,
Āṛṛum maṇammele Kuññi Rāman	When Kunhi Raman of Aṛṛum maṇamel
Pattu vayassil kulicchchu keṭṭi	Married her in her tenth year
Neḍumaṇṇgalayam vechchu koṇḍupōyi	Tying the *tāli* or *maṅgalya Sūtram*, and took her away.

In the same song, speaking of his own wife Aromar states that he married Alatturviṭṭil Kunjannūli, the only daughter of Alattūrappen, in her seventh year.

Nenmūṛttam koṇḍu kuli-chchuketṭi	Tying the *tāli* at the auspicious moment.
Keṭṭiya pandalil koṇḍu-pōnnu	And forthwith took her away with me.

It impossible to be more specific or to express the idea more clearly, which sets all doubt at rest as to the origin or significance of the ceremony.

It must therefore have been nothing more nor less than what the words literally mean, viz., marriage by tying the *tāli*, the tying having been customarily done by the bridegroom himself. From internal and other historical evidence available, the date of the song may be fixed at between the 12th and 13th centuries, not later than the first half of the thirteenth century. The song presents a very clear picture of the social customs and manners in vogue in Malabar at the time, specially among the Tiyars. Songs belonging to a later date also tell us almost the same story in a different form about the Nayar society and their social customs giving us at the same time an insight into the gradual evolution towards the state of affairs, that puzzles us so much at present. Kāvilachāttottu Madaiamma is described in a popular song as proceeding at the approach of the *talikeṭṭu* ceremony of her daughter Chiru to Koma Kurup, Tacholi Odenan's elder brother, Odenan having been found on an examination of the girl's horoscope, to be the proper person to tie her the *tāli* and remain her husband.

Tachōli Kōma Kuruppē yinnu	Oh ! Koma Kurup,
Enṟe makal kunni Chiru vinnu	My daughter Kunhi Chiru's
Maṉṉakkuli kalyāṇam kollavēṇam	*Talikeṭṭu Kalyānam* is at hand,
Maṉṉakkuli kalyāṇam kollunnēram	At the auspicious moment

Kuruppinṟṟe kayyal poruttam kaṇḍu. Odenan's hand has been found to be the most suitable to tie the *ṭali.*

Odenan's positive refusal to perform the function dəspite pressure from Koma Kurup, on the score of the girl not being sufficiently pretty to induce him to espouse her, and the mother's utter discomfiture in failing to secure him, unmistakably show that *talikeṭṭu* was really intended to be the actual ceremony of marriage.

The date of this song centres round the date when Tachōli Odenan flourished. Though his date has not yet been determined, from contemporary evidence available we can place him in the latter half of the 17th century. During the long period of time that Malabar passed between the earlier and later songs referred to, its social customs underwent great changes. This was a period of transition which while it shows the evolution towards the modern state, also demonstates the significance of the social institutions of the past and their hold on the people. In the 17th century it was still the real ceremony of marriage, at which the chosen bridegroom invested the girl with the *tali* and continued to be her husband and protector throughout life, without a further marriage ceremony, and the ceremony was anything but a mere formal or sham one that we now find it to be. As pointed out by Lewis Moore, it is remarkable that, while the *Tali-Keṭṭu kalyāṇam* is mentioned by the early European writers such as de Castanhedle and Buchanan, no allusion

to anything corresponding with the *Sambandham* is to be found in any of these works. [3]

While *talikeṭṭu* thus formed such an essential feature of marriage among the Nairs as late as the 17th century, it needs no effort to imagine how much more so it must have been in still earlier days. Such instances may easily be multiplied, but the three extracted above will suffice to establish the fact of *talikeṭṭu kalyānam* having been by origin the essential marriage rite. It thus stands revealed by origin and significance to have been as binding a marriage sacrament as it now is among the other Hindus in South. India. To say that the essential elements of a Brahmanical marriage are not to be found among its details, as remarked by Sir T. Muttuswami Iyer, the President of the Malabar Marriage Commission, 1891, and that therefore it cannot be considered as constituting a marriage sacrament, is obviously unreasonable. There is no reason to imagine that Malaber alone presented a different picture from the rest of the province, and even in Malabar only among certain sections, for the artisan cases still have the *talikeṭṭu* on the marriage occasion. The form the ceremony has assumed in modern times has led many an onlooker to weave fanciful theories and to make analogies that serve no purpose, and carry us no further in a real study of the subject. The ceremony has by some been compared to what a Devadāi of the East Coast undergoes before she begins her profession, while

[3] *Malabar Law and Custom.* Lewis Moore. p. 78.

Mr. Fawcett considers it to be analogous to that obtaining in the Bellary Distrit through which women called Basavis, are after an initiatory ceremony of devotion to a deity compelled to follow no chastity, but whose children are under no degradation. [4] It is futile to draw such analogies, disregarding the origin and significance of the ceremony, however much one may feel justified in making them from the present state of affairs. No analogy is really called for, considering that the custom of tying the *tali* at weddings is one prevailing over the whole of South India, and it was as much a token of marriage in Malabar as it is elsewhere at present.

3. As already observed the later folk-songs indicate the course of evolution to the present state of affairs tending to the separation of *talikeṭṭu kalyānam* from marriage proper. As to when causes contributed to the degeneration of the ceremony into a meaningless and costly show dissociated and disconnected from marriage is not however easy of solution. On the one hand it is stated that the state of Nair society which subjected the whole community to military service from the earliest youth led to the laxity of matrimonial institutions in the early days, which in turn gave rise to polyandry, and that the *talikeṭṭu* was only a cloak to give every girl a semblance of a marriage sacrament, which again led to the system of descent through women. This view, though plausible, is at the same time the most superficial,

[4] Madras Govt. Museum, Bulletin, Vol. III. No. 3. Nayars of Malabar. p. 231.

and ignores the fact that the matrilineal system of descent has been a very widely prevalent institution over various parts of the globe where there is no trace of polyandry, and that countries which now possess father right show traces of having passed through mother right, which is founded on the idea of common blood which all within the kin possess. Ignorant as they were of the general course of evolution of the laws of descent, it is not surprising that foreign visitors have been overready to assert without sufficient reason that the *Marumakkattayam* system had its origin in polyandry, apart from the question whether polyandry as is now implied by the word ever existed in Malabar. There is no ground therefore to justify the implication that the system of descent in the female line has originated from promiscuous polyandry. Indeed the true significance of the *taliketṭu* ceremony, precludes all attempts at its explanation by trying to connect it in any manner with any possible existence of polyandry.

4. The beginnings of the *taliketṭu* as a separate and as a mere formal ceremony unconnected with marriage must therefore be sought for elsewhere. Several persons have expressed the view that the ceremony is one of purely Brāhman origin or that it was introduced by the Brāhmans. We accordingly find it stated in Moore's *Malabar Law and Customs* that the *taliketṭu kalyānam* introduced in all probability, by the Brāhmans made matters much worse by giving a quasi-

religious sanction to a fictitious marriage which bears an unpleasant resemblance to the sham marriage ceremonies performed among certain inferior castes elsewhere as a cloak for prostitution. [5] The President of the Malabar Marriage Commission in his Memorandum similarly observes that having regard to the fact that several of its details bear a resemblance to a portion of the marriage ritual among the *Nambudiri* Brāhmans, it is not unlikely that they introduced the ceremony among the Nairs as a caste rite. Mr. Wintorbotham, the European member of the Commission also gave expression to the same view, remarking that the Brāhman *tali*-tier was a relic of the time when the earth-gods were entitled to the first fruits, when it was considered the high privilege of every Sudra maid to be introduced by them to womanhood. To lend verisimilitude to this theory, capital was made of the fact that the woman singing songs at the ceremony is called a Brāhmaṇi. Commenting on the name of Brāhmaṇi, though she is not of the Brāhman caste, the Report observes that possibly by a fiction she is imagined to represent the female relatives of the Brāhman bridegroom, who would otherwise be conspicious by their absence, adding that it is not easy to account for her title of Brāhmaṇi in any other way. It is remarkable and not a litle surprising that the more probable and authentic origin of the Brāhmaṇi' as given in Govinda Pillai's *History*

[5] *Malabar Law and Custom.* Lewis Moore, p. 87.

of Malabar Literature, a second edition of which was published in 1889, did not come to the notice of the Commission.[6] According to it, a Brāhmaṇ woman having conceived while *rajaswalā*, or in her menses, lost her caste and her issues gave rise to a separate community of Antchavasis. To them was assigned the work of collecting flowers and making garlands for the deity. Their female descendants came to be known as Brāhmaṇis, a name which betokens their Brāhmaṇ origin. To them were assigned the duty of singing surgs at Bhagavati temples, and at *Kalyānam* ceremonies of the S'udras. The songs they sing are known as Brāhmaṇi *pattu*.

This view is also untenable in the light of the evidence already adduced of the ceremony having been not a mere formal caste rite that it is at present, but the essential and integral part of marriage from very early days among all castes, as it now is elsewhere in South India. Among the *Nambudiri* Brāhmaṇs, the *tali* is curiously enough tied by the father during the course of the marriage ceremonies. If the ceremony among the Nairs and Tiyars had been one of *Nambudiri* origin the chances were that this practice would have been copied, instead of their improving on their masters and the bridegroom himself tying the *tāli*, the shadow of which continues to the present day. The statement that the Nambudiri Brāhmaṇs introduced the ceremony among the Nairs as a caste rite is however literally true in a different

[6] *Marriage Commission Report.* President's Memorandum. p. 5.

sense,—in the sense that they were mainly responsible for the gradual transformation of the ceremony from an essential marriage rite to the mere caste rite that it is to-day. The social institution of the *Nambudiris* permitted one member alone of a family to marry, and by preference only the eldest brother married within the caste, while the others formed alliances with Nair women. As the author of "Malabar Law and Custom" observes, there are no grounds for supposing that the *Nambudiris* when they originally entered Malabar had already adopted the system under which the elder member of the family alone contracts a legal marriage while the others enter into concubinage with Nair females. [7] The custom has no doubt grown up later from a desire to keep family property intact and the heavy dowry which has to be paid on the marriage of a daughter, the wife joining her husband's *gōtram* forsaking her own. To facilitate alliances with Nair women it was necessary to divest the union of the true character of marriage which the *tali* symbolised. This was easily accomplished with the supreme power that the *Nambudiri* wielded both as the lord of the soil and as the supreme sacerdotal authority and exponent of religion. The Nairs soon submitted their women to the embraces of the *Nambudiris*, and as the sanctity of marriage was inconsistent with such concubinage, *talikettu* was easily dispensed with as a marriage rite and relegated to the position of a mere caste formality

[7] *Malabar Law and Custom.* Lawis Moore, p. 61. foot note (b).

with no significance in relation to marriage. Only in this sense can we consider *talikeṭṭu kalyānam* as a relic of the times when the *Nambudiris* were entitled to the "first fruits", not in the sense that they originated it, but in the sense that they saw to its degradation into a mere caste rite. The vernacular treatises of *Kerala Mahātmyam* and *Keralolpati* which are now recognised to be concoctions by *Nambudiri* Brāhmans, dating not earlier than the 18th century, embody the false and pernicious doctrines as to the obligations laid on the Nairs by divine law to administer to the lust of the *Nambudiris*, and are ordinarily cited by the *Nambudiri* as the authorities for the practice. Once the ceremony has been degraded into a formal and unmeaning institution it soon became the practice to perform *talikeṭṭu* on all the girls of a householder which was never the practice in early days, purely as a measure of economy. Beginning with the Nairs, the change unavoidably spread to, and were adopted by, the Tiyars amidst whom they lived, and among whom also it has been customarily observed as a mere caste formality, though as recorded by Sir T. Muttuswami Iyer in 1891, according to the reformed practice, it is the intended husband's sister and in some cases the intended husband himself that ties the *tali*. [8] *

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[8] *Report of the Malabar Marriage Commission.* Memorandum by the President. p. 5.

* Read at the annual meeting of the Indian Science Congress, 1929.

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KALARI

and

ANGAM

With Compliments
H. K. Rajaratnam
Museum House, Egmore (Madras)

IV. THE KALARI—AND THE ANGAM—INSTITUTIONS OF ANCIENT KERALA.

By M. D. Raghavan, B. A., M. R. A. S., F. R. A. I.

The most distinctive of the institutions of Kerala in the past and one that best reflects the spirit of the people, was the Kalari. It was at once a place of religious worship and an academy or gymnasium for physical culture and fencing practices. Every *desam* had its own Kalari which existed for the benefit of the whole *desam*, as the training ground for the youth of the locality. In modern times the Kalari is almost extinct, except for certain feeble attempts at its resuscitation, by a few who cherish its memory. In common with all ancient institutions of Kerala, the origin of the Kalari is ascribed to Parasu Rama, the legendary founder of Kerala, who wielded the miraculous axe, and it is stated that he established Kalaries throughout the land.

2. Published accounts of the Kalari are few. Except for a short description in Padmanabha Menon's *History of Kerala*, and casual references in books on Malabar topics, no account of it, sufficiently descriptive, seems to exist. Mr. Fawcett gives an account of the principal instruments and weapons used, in his "Nayars of Malabar", published as v.l. III, No. 3 of the Government Museum Bulletin.

3 Kalaries in Malabar may generally be classified as belonging to two types. *Abhyasa Kalari* or *Porkalari* devoted to the more advanced

forms of physical culture, the use of weapons and training in martial exercises generally. The second called, the *Kolkalari* or *paricha kalari*, popularly known as *palisa kalari*, a form which the *kalari* has assumed in comparatively recent times, and existing solely for purposes of recreation and display, giving exhibitions of stick or sword and shield play, so often seen accompanying processions and festive occasions. Corresponding to the latter, are the *kalaris* which the Moplas of North Malabar own, where boys are trained in somersaulting feats, stick and shield plays.

4. The description here attempted is of the first type, the *porkalari*. In structure it is rectangular, and is hollowed out of the ground, 42 feet long, 15 feet broad and about 6 feet deep from ground level. The conventional length of 42 feet has given it the name of *nālppattīraṭisttānam*. It is thatched and covered all over with cadjan leaves and faces the east, where on the right side a broad opening is left as the entrance. All who enter it, do so by placing the right foot first as is customory in entering *Devasthānams* or temples. The floor of the pit which is evenly rammed and smoothened with cowdung dissolved in water, is reached by steps leading to it. At the south-west corner is the place sacred to the *kalari devata* or Bhagavati, the presiding deity. This place is called *Pūttara*. It is so called because of the offerings of flowers and *tulasi* leaves, in worship of the deity, and is formed of a flight of semicircular steps narrowing towards the top. The practices at the *kalari* are

begun with worship to the presiding deity. In former times the worship was conducted with elaborate ceremonies, directions for which were preserved in copper plates. By the side of the *pūttara* and to the south, is the *guruttara*, where the Guru or ās'ān takes rest watching his pupils practising. The *guru* has ordinarily a deity of his own, the *upāsanamūrti*, who may or may not be the *kalari devata*, to whom he prays and whom he invokes in moments of trial and in all undertakings.

5. The course begins with the pupil and the Guru rubbing themselves all over with oil in profusion. The pupil is taught to kick his leg high in the air to the height of his own uplifted arms, and to bend his body backwards till his head touches the ground. After some proficiency in these movements, the pupil after some massaging by the Guru, stretches himself at full length on the floor, first on his back and then with face to the ground, while the teacher holding a strong rope secured to the roof proceeds most dexterously with his feet to shampoo his pupil all over including the region of the heart, lungs, joints etc., After this the pupil rises up, when the tutor vigourously rubs him down with his hands. These preliminary processes called *meiodukkam payattu* (मेयडुक्काम पायाटु) or the practices necessary to make the body supple and the limbs flexible, are essential, as suppleness and agility are of great importance in advanced stages of fencing. After these the pupil is first taught to fence with the

muchāṇ, also called *cheruvadi* or *kuruvadi*, a short stick 1½ inches in diameter, and 3 chāṇs, or 1½ to 2 feet in length. After finishing a regular course of twelve excercises, he is taught to defend himself with longer sticks, 6 feet in length, known as *keṭṭukari* or *sarīravaḍi*, which may be called the Malabar quarter-staff. This is grasped in the middle and weilding it to the right and left is used to strike and defend. It is also held near either end, by one or both the hands, as required. Mr. Fawcett describes as follows a contest with this stick that he witnessed in 1895. "The "opponents who faced each other stood 30 feet "apart and, as if under the same stimulus, each "kicked one leg high in the air, gave several "lively bounds in the air, held their staff horizon- "tally in front with outstretched arms, came down "slowly on the haunches, placed the staff on the "ground, bent over and touched it with the fore- "head. With a sudden bound they were again on their feet and after some preliminary pirouett- "ing went for each tooth and nail". [1] The various forms of the use of this stick are known under the names of *kōltari*, *angattari*, *paṭattāri*, *puliangam*, *pandīrān* etc., some of which are adopted for fighting wild animals. The use of the various sticks and proficiency in these practices, prepares the pupil to begin the use of weapons which are now introduced. He is taught the use of the shield, the sword and the javelin. The javelin or *urumi*, as it is called, and the shield were the favourite

[1] Madras Museum. Bulletin Vol. III. No. 3. p. 291.

weapons men invariably carried with them in olden days in self-defence. But the instrument that represents the acme of perfection and calls forth the best efforts in fencing is the *oṛṛa* (ഓറ). It is a short staff about 2 feet in length, curved at the middle and tapering towards the end. Made of wood or elephant tusks or the horn of the deer, it is used with great efficacy to stab or strike or to ward off the opponent's blows. In practising with the *oṛṛa*, suppleness is everything, the opponents winding and turning their bodies and throwing themselves backwards and forwards, to the astonishment of the beholders. While undergoing this course of physical culture and martial exercises, the pupils have to abide by certain strict regulations. They must remain strictly continent, take no long walks, and avoid cold. Before the day's practices begin, they take a breakfast of some sustaining food in liquid form, and at the conclusion of each day's exercises, swallow a beverage of hot water mixed with ghee and ground pepper. They have to rise by dawn, should not sleep during the day, and must avoid fire.

6. On the day the course begins and on the day it closes, each pupil gives the Guru a *dakshina* in money and clothes. As we learn from folk songs, the annual ceremoney during the 40 days period known as a *maṇṇalam* which falls during the cold weather, in November and December, was the occasion for prolonged worship of the deity followed by exhibition of skill with the various instruments and weapons. The pupils assemble

and do homage to the Guru with *dakshina*, and presentations of rich gifts are made by the *naduvarhi* and *desavari* who come to witness the ceremonies. It is interesting to observe how this ancient institution has left its imprint on the domestic life of the Malayali, for it used to be customory for every Malayali to undergo for about a month, every year of his life, a course of *urichal* (ഉരിച്ചാൽ) at the hands of an expert, oiling the body profusely, with shampooing the hands and feet, similar to the preliminary *kalari* practices described above.

7. *Angam.* Fencing in its higher stages naturally led to trials of strength by single combats where the parties used either sticks or more deadly weapons. The single combat which the *kalaris* fostered was known by the distinctive name of *angam*, a word which means fight, duel, battle, challenge. [2] The principal weapon used was the *churika* or a small sword. The *angam*, with the martial spirit it kept alive, was soon made use of by the rulers of the day as an effective means of settling disputes between rival factions. For a proper understanding of the *raison-d'-etre* of the *angam* and its long popular favour, it is necessary to illustrate it from folk-lore which alone has preserved its memory fresh and handed it down to succeeding generations. The most important of the songs is the one called after *valia* Aromar Chekarvar, one of the most romantic and heroic figures of Kerala, who

[2] *Malayalam and English Dictionary.* Gundert. p. 7.

flourished about the 13th century. The story so far as it relates to the institution of *angam* may be briefly described as below :—The old Kaimal or chief of Kurungattidem at his death-bed calls his two nephews and bids them both to live amicably with the wealth that he has bestowed on them. Unichandror, however, after the death of his uncle, in defiance of his dying wishes, lays claim to the chieftainship in preference to Unikkonar, the senior whom his uncle had nominated the Kaimal. The dispute soon assumes bigger proportions, and serious altercations arise between the two, both sides losing heavily. The matter finally reaches the ears of *naḍuvaṛi* or the ruler of the country, who makes all possible attempts at arbitration. Failing in all means of reconciliation, he gives his final award in the following significant words :—

Paḍavetṭu tammil tuḍan-niyālō	If you wage war
Eṛiya jananṇal naśichu-pōkum	Many a man will die ;
Nallanga chēkavare tēḍikkōlin	Search for combatant Chekors ;
Aṇgam piṭichu jayik-kunnōṛku	He who wins in the *angam*
Annatte mūppāḍum vāṇirikkām.	He shall rule as the elder.

The object then of the *angam* as illustrated above was to avoid unnecessary bloodshed. Its effects on the economy and the welfare of the

country were far reaching. It was cherished by the rulers of the times as a national safeguard to preserve the man power of the country at a period in the history of Kerala, when the peace of the country was disturbed by numerous feuds and factions, and might was right, and armed retainers under their respective leaders scoured the country, prepared to draw the sword at the slightest pretext. *Angam* thus transferred the contest from the real protagonists to the chosen champions of either party and prevented warfare and the consequent loss of life. On the other hand, it gave rise to a class of professional fighters known as *Chēkōrs*, vowed to the sword, whose sole business in life was to fight these mortal combats for remuneration. "*Chēkōr*" comes from a Malayalam word, *chēkam, sēva, sēvakam*, service, chiefly about the king's person, and also denotes one of the Illavar castes. [3] Tiyars by caste, the *Chēkōrs* flourished from about the 9th century, in and about Kaṭattanāḍ in North Malabar, Putturam house being celebrated for the heroes famed in songs it has produced, the most distinguished of them all being Valia Aromar Chekavar, referred to above, one of the greatest warriors of Kerala. In a moving address to his brother, on taking leave of his kith and kin before proceeding to his last fight, Asomar observes:—

Nammuḍe pandēte kāranamāṛ	Our forefathers
Anga chamayam chamañña pōnnu	Came down as *angam* fighters;

[3] *Malayalam and English Dictionary*, Gundert. p. 388.

Chekavanmārāyi janichāl pinne	When one is born a Chekavan, his bread
Vālkāṇayil chōrellō chēkōnmārku	He earns on the point of the sword ;
Angattinu ārānum vannatenkil	Should any one requisition your services,
Pōkate kaṇḍittu irunnukūḍa	You cannot refuse to go.

They were established at Kadattanad by the rulers of the day who bestowed on them the four kalaris, Angakalari, Cherukalari, Toduvorkalari and Todukalari. The ceremonies preliminary to the *angam* are elaborate in the extreme and emphasise the religious idea of divine help without which no success is possible. To begin with, on the Chēkōr signifying his consent, a pūjā or offering is made to the god Ganapati who is duly worshipped. At the conclusion of the pūjā, the full fees for the *angam*, called the aṇgakkiṛippaṇam is deposited, with due ceremony in the principal room of the house, which will have already been provided with a lighted lamp and a measure of rice. The fee is recokened in gold fanams, then current, made up in bundles of a thousand and one famans in each bundle, one hundred and one such bundles being about the maximum fees payable, amounting at a rough calculation to over Rs. 30,000 at the present rate of as. 5 ps. 4 per fanam. The Chēkōr then calls on one of his relatives to come and take the fees, and secure it in the strong room of the house. It may be noted that the fees that snccessive generations of Chēkōrs thus added

to the family exchequor made them as a class very wealthy and prosperous.

The fee accepted, the Chekor spends the rest of his time until the date of the fight in devotion and prayer to his deity to crown his efforts with success and in preparation for the fight. This is usually a most trying period for the whole family who are overcome with grief, at the impending departure of their dear one, perhaps to meet certain death. A good deal of his time is taken up in settlement of his household affairs, and disposal of his property should he die in the fight. On the appointed day, with the rising of the Sun the procession starts triumphantly to the place of fight with all the honours and privileges attaching to the rank and status of Chekors conferred on them by Cheraman Perumal, such as the light by day, the cloth spread on the ground to walk upon, firing of salutes, wielding the burnished shield and the short fencing staff, drums beating and with all the acclamations of a battle. The angatattu or the wooden platform on which the combatants stand and fight, will in the meantime have been erected at the most convenient and prominent place. The erection of the platform is accompanied by appropriate ceremonies and Ganapati pūjā, after which the carpenters engage themselves in constructing it,—the three different parts, namely the central post, the platform, and the steps being made of teak, tamarind and rosewood respectively. Before the fight begins, a narration of the matter in dispute is made by one of the

principals to the contest, concluding with the orders of the nāḍuvāṛi, that the controversy should be fought out at an *angam*. On the termination of the fight, which takes place when one of the combatants is vanquished or killed, the successful combanat proclaims that he has won the *angam*. The victor is at once received with loud acclamations of joy and firing of salutes in honour of the victory. He is decorated with a golden bracelet, the customory mode of rewarding merit and valour, taking the place of the medal of modern times.

8. The following account by Mr. Jonathan Duncan will be read with interest. [4] "When "mortal offence was given by one man to another, "a solemn contract used to be entered into before "the chieftain of the locality to fight a duel, the "chieftain himself being the umpire. Large sums "used to be deposited as the battle wager and these sums formed one source of the chieftain's Revenue, and the right to levy them was sometimes transferred along with other privileges apertaining to the tenure of the soil. A preparation and training (it is said) for 12 years preceded the battle in order to qualify the combatants in the use of weapons. The men who fought were not neccessarily the principals in the quarrel,—they were generally their champions. It was essential that one should fall and so both men settled all their worldly affairs before the date of the combat."

[4] *Madras Govt. Museum Bulletin*, Vol III. No. 3. *Anthropology*, p. 289.

9. It is easy to discern in the *angam* a counterpart of the duel in European countries at about the same period of time, with the difference that champions fought in the *angam*, instead of the principals themselves as in the duel of the West. It is also of interest to note that the *angam* as a means of settlement of disputes in judicial enquiry, had the charatcerestic in it of trial by ordeal, the essence of which was faith in divine intercession, which largely entered into the idea of the *angam*, with its glorious uncertainty, trusting to divine intercession to crown the cause of justice and righteousness with success.

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SOCIETY AND CULTURE IN EARLY KERALA.

(A Study in Folk Songs)

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In the elucidation of the history and culture of early Kerala, which has baffled the best efforts of her historians to unravel, the folk-songs of Kerala will no doubt play a leading role. The ballad, singing the might and prowess of Valia Aromer Chekaver of North Kerala,[1] is by far the most valuable of the historical romances of early days. Unique for the insight it gives into the society and culture of early Kerala, it is particularly remarkable for the light it throws on the institution of matriarchy, and the matrilineal form of descent in Kerala.

While there is no doubt that society was organised on a matriarchal basis among the Nayars in the North Kerala, the social organisation as disclosed in this song seems to have been different among the Tiyars and the Izhuver. An elaborate system of dowry seems to have prevailed among the latter, the bride being endowed upon marriage with her share of the family property or wealth including domestic utensils and cows. She was thenceforward a member of her husband's household ; and she and her children for ever belonged to it. Due provision was nevertheless made for her return to her parental home in the unforseen contingency of anything untoward happening in the course of her married life, ending in separation. This was provided for by a system of what amounted to guarantees of good faith announced on behalf of either partner at the marriage ceremonial, the compensation agreed upon having to be paid to the aggrieved partner by the one who is adjudged to be in the wrong.

1. For a full translation of the song, by the present writer see Indian Antiquary vol Lxi.

If this represented the form of social organisation which obtained in early days among the Tiyar of North Malabar, as seems to have been the case, great changes must have taken place in course of ages resulting in their adoption of the Marumakkattayam law or the matrilineal form of descent, which now prevails among the community in the north of the district. What these changes were, and how they have operated in transforming Tiyar society, are matters for further investigation. The partrilineal character of Tiyar society, it is interesting to observe, has in the main continued unchanged among the Izhuver in South Malabar.

A point of interest is the community to which the Chekors belonged. "Chēkon" —is an appellation derived from a Malayalam word, "Chēkam" which means "service," "chiefly about the Rajah's person" [1] —a derivation largely accepted, and supported by internal evidence from the songs. Specifiic references in the Chekavar group of folk songs afford abundant evidence to conclude that the Chekors were Izhuver by caste. But all Izhuver were not necessarily designated *chekor*, though the name must have since been generally used to denote the members of the caste, as is clear from its survival in the suffix "*Choen*" largely used with Tiyar names in Calicut, Cochin and Travancore. The expression, ॥ *angam pitichāle Chēhōrāvū* = "angam fighting alone makes a *chekon*," conveys, much the same sense as the expressions which follow, such as " wearing the *pulasyam*[2] makes a Nayar, or the sacred thread, a Nambudiri", "or the investment of the tali, makes a woman". The intention obviously is, as "*pulasyam*" was the badge of one deserving

1. Gundert. Malayalam-English Dictionary.
2. A silk band presented to soldiers by Natuvazhis, on demonstrating their prowess before them. The soldiers are expected to tie the band round the waist when they appear in public. It is an insiguia of their proficiency in the art of warfare.

of the name of Nayar, or the sacred thread that of a Nambudiri, so was engagement in an *angam* the badge of a *chekon*,—only it was not an external symbol as other badges were : in short, the expression means that to deserve the name *chekon*, one must have actually served as a combatant at an *angam*, and a *chekon* is born as such, and not made. This is obvious from the words,

Chēkavanmārāyi Janichehāl pinne
Vālkkānayil Chōrallō Chēkonmārku –

"When one is born a Chekon,
"He earns his bread on the point of his sword."

Angam fighting was clearly therefore the function of those born as Chekon.

The names Choen, Tiyar, Tandan, & Izhuver are now used in different parts of Kerala to denote the same community. Tandan is by origin clearly a Sthānam or rank conferred on the headman of the community, as Moopan or Mukysthan ranks are in parts of North Malabar. Tandan is probably derived from *tandu*, a palanquin, and denoted personages privileged to be conveyed in palanquins.

Ārōmer traces his forefathers to the land of "Izham" which is believed to be the old name for the island of Ceylon. His narrative of the migration is of special interest. This apparently is the corner stone of the theory of the migration of the Tiyar from Ceylon. The subject is too vast to be discussed here. A full investigation has yet to be made as to how far the theory is sound that the Tiyar originally belonged to the island of Ceylon, whence they migrated to the mainland of India in or about the 7th century A. D.

Aromal Chekaver's song has yet another interest, for the information it gives of the institution of Kalari and the martial practices which it fostered. It is the most important of the Kerala folk-songs in this respect. The community of Chekor is mentioned as having been first established at

Kadathanad (in North Malabar) by the ruling prince of the day. There they flourished both as *angam* fighters and as Kalari Asans, or preceptors in physical culture and martial practices, which are still fostered in parts of North Malabar, where the Kalari as an institution has shown remarkable survival in recent years. If any one fact emerges from a critical study of the folksongs, it is that the Kalari as an institution has been always above caste. The youth of the locality, irrespective of caste, or creed, enjoyed the benefits of the physical training that the Kalari stood for. As Dr. Achutha Menon [1] has pointed out, the differences that have grown up between the two major communities of Malabar, the Nayar and the Tiyar, scarcely existed in Chekavar's days, the best of social relations having subsisted between members of the two communities.

The *Angam*, as the single combat which obtained in medieval Kerala is called, is another of the institutions best protrayed in Aromer's song. *Angam* comes as the last resort in the settlement of a dispute, when every other means of effecting a settlement has been tried. The *raison de' etre* of the *angam* is clear from the words of the Naduvazi :—

Padavettu tammil tudaṅṅiyālō
Eṛiyajanaṅṅal nasichupōkum
Nallanga Chekavare tēḍikōlin
Angampitīchu jayikkunnōrku
Avarkumet annēyummūppuvārka=

"If you wage war,
Many a man will die,
Choose your own anga Chekavar,
Who wins in the combat,
He rules as the elder".

1. Ballads of North Malabar. p 15

It was an institution recognised by the State, and the State had its privileges and responsibilities. The fixing of the date, selecting the site, erecting the platform or arena on which the combat was to be fought, were all State functions.

As a medieval institution designed to settle disputes and avoid mass fighting, it has no parallel. That it served its purpose is undoubted, while its contribution to the culture of Kerala was far reaching. It fostered the art of single combat which found its champions and exponents in the Chēkōrs, who rendered yeomen service by founding Kalaries as family institutions.

The Chekor were invested with almost baronial honours and prerogatives, and great were the ceremonials and pomp which attended the procession of the Chekor and his protagonists to the spot consecrated for the combat. The death of either of the combatants being inevitable, each settled all his worldly affairs betimes. An adventure attendant with such great personal risk was of course well remunerated. And the remuneration was on a liberal scale. The payments prescribed were in gold *panams*, and were to be paid in three lots—*Viṭṭu Kizhi*, or the share of the Chekor's family, *Nāṭṭu Kizhi* or the State's share, and *Anga Kizhi* or the Chekor's personal share.

As an institution, the *angam* fell into deseutude between the period of Aromel Chekavar and of Tachōli Odēnan, until it was quite unheard of after the time of the latter, about the eighteenth century.

The sequel to Aromer's death at the moment of his victory affords a fitting illustration of what is known as *Kudi paka*, the characteristic institution of the blood feud in medieval Kerala. The attitude of mind at the bottom of the institution of *Kudi paka*, was that straight dealing was of the essence of all disputes, no foul play or anything contravening the principles of right conduct being tolerated by

the community or by the State. Any one who contrived the death or ruin of another, was subjected to an almost unending vendetta, which took different forms according to the wrong avenged. It was the essence of the vow that the vengeance should be continued until any male member survived in the hostile family group.

Almost with his last breath, Aromer entrusts his blood-stained sash to his sister, Unniarcha. He presumes that her yet unborn child will be a son, and enjoins on her to narrate to him when he grows to be a man, all the incidents which led to his untimely end. A son is born to her. The boy in time becomes a youth. One fine morning enraged at the sight of his uncle's blood-stained sash, he prevails on his mother to narrate to him the life history of his uncle. As the narrative ends, he rushes to his cousin and traitor Chandu, announcing himself at the latter's Kalari and the object of his visit. He engages him in a single combat on the spot, and takes his life, thus avenging his uncle's death.

Such in brief are a few of the cultural aspects disclosed in a study of the folk-songs. These songs have long been neglected, and need further collecting and studying, if we are not to lose the rich heritage of the past, or the continuity of the cultural history of South India.

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ANCIENT KERALA

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with the best regards

of the author

Cameron

8/4/41

ANCIENT KĒRAḶA*

By

Dr. C. Achyuta Menon, Ph.D., (London),
Head of the Department of Malayāḷam

Brother Delegates :

Coming as this session does, after the one held at Trivandrum, whose distance echo I heard even in London two years ago, with the memories of the antiquities and curiosities of Kerala still fresh in the minds of many, it is too soon for the Conference to forget Kerala and its culture which by the way, I may observe, deserves an All-India recognition. I may even venture to say, that the organisers of this Conference must be credited with a better sense of proportion than the average historian of South India in whose scheme Malabar is nowhere as a separate entity. Not that isolated existence and conception will bring any material advantages to us, but that the treasures of knowledge accumulated through centuries should not be lost sight of through wilful neglect. Either in scholarship or literary production or artistic achievement Kēraḷa lags behind no other linguistic division of India. Bāsa's works were first discovered in Kēraḷa where Silappadikaram, the famous Tamil classic had its birth. Sometimes our South Indian historians condescend to accommodate us in a corner of the Cēra Empire whose headquarters according to our tradition was at Tiruvancikkuḷam, and according to some of them at Vanci Karur in Trichinopoly. Though our friends are not prepared to give the town its due status and prestige its importance which finds distinctive mention in ancient Greek and Roman Chronicles and in Tamil classics like Silappadikāram can hardly be minimised. We just now witnessed a regular warfare between scholars from Malabar and Tamilakam on this issue. † Whether the controversy will reduce an ancient town into oblivion lying unnoticed in a far off place, or enhance its reputation in future history, will depend upon the champions who present the case on either side.

* Presidential Address delivered at the Malayalam Section of the All-India Oriental Conference, held at Tirupathi Madras Presidency, March 1940.

† Refers to the debate held at Tirupathi on the identity of Tiruvancikkuḷam.

Our Ancient Culture.

The Kathakaḷi in recent times has turned the search light of the world into Malabar and given the general impression that the tract of land that has produced such a vigorous idealistic art must have after all had a history of its own and a message to the world at large. The value of a culture is not dependent on the numerical strength of its coteries but its intrinsic worth. Sparta and Athens still live in human memory through the pages of their history. Their cultural reputation has far outgrown their territorial limitations. The military life of ancient Sparta bears a family resemblance with the martial traditions of Nāyars whose affinities with the cultural heritage of the Greeks are striking to a degree. The administration of the Kūṭṭams in which representatives of people and not kings once looked after the affairs of Malabar reminds one of the City State System of Athens. In one of his recent letters to me Mr. Percy Macqueen, I.C.S., who has developed a passion for the Ballads and Folklore of Kēraḷa has sent me an extract from a book* describing the Roman pantomine at the time of the Emperor Augustus. Let the extract speak for itself :—

"The mimetic performances on the Italian stage are remarkable. The mimi seem generally to prefer tragedy or melo-drama and certainly they 'tear a passion to rags,' as none but Italians could. Nothing to them is impossible. Grief, love, madness, jealousy, and anger, convulge by turns. Their hands seem widely to grasp after expression : their bodies are convulsed with emotion : their fingers send off electric flashes of indignation : their faces undergo violent contortions of passion, every nerve and muscle become language. They talk all over from head to foot."

Need I add that this description can be easily applied to Kathakaḷi actors, their dexterous dance and hand movements and the death scēne enacted on a Kathakaḷi stage.

It is hard to believe that these affinities are mere coincidences. It looks as though the broad sea and land that now divide these two spots of the world were not once so vast and their people had closer contact between them. Mutual borrowings and loans between their cultures were not uncommon. But the diversities that are apparent in their modern outlook and environment induce us to look upon a statement of the kind I have ventured as something

* Rob Di Roma by William W. Storay. Chapman and Hull, 1863, Vol. I, p. 196.

fantastic. But the facts are there and it is for modern research to turn its light on the subject and discover the missing links.

The Need for a Central Library and Museum in Kerala.

This reminds us of the urgent need for a Central Library and Museum for the whole of Kēraḷa where materials indicating the various stages of our cultural evolution must be collected, preserved and kept for use for scholars. Our President in his address yesterday argued the case for a Central Library and Museum for the whole of India. I would wholeheartedly support the proposition with this reservation. My own view is that such an object can be achieved satisfactorily only after establishing similar institutions at centres representing different cultural and linguistic units of India. The value of such institutions is proclaimed as he pointed out, by the British Museum of London where you can get materials for research on any conceivable subject on the face of the earth. My experience has convinced me that even Malayāḷam scholars need not be ashamed of going there. All our relics from Tōṟṟampāṭṭu to Tippu Sultan's sword, are there. India Office Library, London, is another such institution where a good collection of Indian manuscripts and antiquities await the attention of Indian scholars.

South Indian Culture

Coming to the province of language, I may remind you of the theory which Dr. Caldwell advanced half a century ago that the Dravidian languages bear Scythian affinities which they have managed to maintain in spite of the irresistible influence of Indo-Aryan languages. Indian writers have in recent times endeavoured to show that the theory requires reaffirmation in a reverse form making South India the centre from which culture radiated to the Mediterranean and other regions of the world. When identical conditions are found in different countries it is not easy to determine their priority. But the geological evidence furnished by Professor Sahni in his Presidential Address at the recent Science Congress held at Madras* in which he has proved on unimpeachable grounds that South India is one of the oldest fragments of the earth seems to favour the latter view which was first sponsored by the eminent scholar late Prof. Sundaram Pillai.† With the endorsement

* January 1940.

† Ind. Ant., Vol. XXIV, (1895).

of the scientists whose materials have an advantage of those supplied by the historians in that they can give us something more tangible than conjectures—the theory is gathering momentum and South India and its culture are gaining an importance† in the cultural evolution of mankind, which the historian of a generation ago was not prepared to admit.*

This is an epoch-making development which is going to affect the outlook on India and its culture, which was till now dominated by Sanskritic traditions. I have no quarrel with the latter. They present only one side of the picture and the other side should not be ignored. While in England, Dr. L. D. Barnett, the eminent Orientalist used to tell me that whenever Westerners think of India their attention is absorbed by the vast output of literature produced on Hindustan and its legendary wealth; while they know very little of the South which seems to have an earlier and longer lease of life in the evolution of mankind. But workers in that field are few and far between. I do not propose to pursue the point further, as I have hardly time, but I would lay particular stress on the fact that South India's cultural history when properly written will revolutionise many of the accepted theories and conclusions about India's past that are now considered as final in many quarters. The field affords ample material for study and it is open to the scholars engaged in various aspects of the subject to tackle the problem once for all in a true academic spirit and raise the region that lies to the south of Tirupati in the realm of scholarship which has often a tendency to ignore it. It is particularly appropriate that the question is being pushed to the forefront in this historic place which was for several centuries an important centre of learning and religious zeal and formed the northern boundary of Tamilakam. We will invoke the blessings of Lord Sri Venkatachalapathy to show us the right solution in the problems we are engaged in considering.

The Place of Kerala's Culture.

On this background of South Indian antiquity our province deserves an honoured place. Our claims for such a recognition are

†Vincent Smith's picture of Ancient India originally contained scanty reference to South India. His attitude changed when it was revised several years later. Vide: The third edition of his Early History of India.

* I am glad that the Chairman of the Reception Committee has emphasised this aspect in his address.

by no means insignificant. The greatest philosopher of India Sri Sankaracharya is a son of Kēraḷa. Solomon's ships first visited our shores. Our sandal wood found its way even to the town of Carthage which the Romans destroyed. Our language finds a place among the few in which the miraculous cure effected by Jesus Christ on a paralytic patient is recorded in the holy city. Our Mother Kāḷi with her terrific aspect which we draw in coloured relief on the floor is among the finds of Mohenjo-Daro.* At any rate the similarity is remarkable and has not so far been traced elsewhere. In modern times when Portuguese planned an adventurous trip to India it is the Calicut City that they first thought of.

Our Marumakkattāyam in which men and women are given equal status in society though a puzzle to the anthropologist, still bears positive evidence of enlightenment and progress. It is an anamoly and an ideal at the same time. Though the system is considered antiquated in certain quarters, those who follow it are the most progressive communities of Malabar. The earliest form of Vedic culture is found among our Nambudiries. Our simplified marriage ceremony which has led some to characterise it as ungodly and unhuman still produces the happiest relationship between men and women. Our medical system with its special features like Navarakkizi, Uziccal, Piziccal, are gradually finding their way for special attention among outsiders who once realised only the efficacy of our black magic and witchcraft. Our astrologers advance a similar claim. With all these our true history is yet to be written. Our tolerance brought us trouble from without and our individualism born of excessive passion for personal liberty flourished under the old party system of Kūṛus created disharmony within. The new dispensation found us out of our moorings deserted by friends and foes alike. A knowledge of our past is therefore, essential to make us realise what we were.

Malabar History and Parasurama

Let us now have a brief survey of what we have done in this respect. In the field of history as I have already indicated, we have not begun to stand on our own legs. Our origins are still obscure. We are still swayed by two traditions which provide no common link between them—one Sanskritic and the other Tamilian. The first takes us to the realm of pure mythology giving the reins to

* Marshall, Mohenjo-Daro and Indus Civilisation p. 50, Vol. I.

Paraśurāma, the Brahmin warrior of old. There is hardly time for me to examine the question in detail, but I should like to invite your attention to one or two important aspects of the problem. Paraśurāma of mythology is an interesting figure. He is unique in many things—the first among Purāṇic heroes to kill his own mother at the command of his father. In Brahmandapurāṇa he figures as the enemy of Kārtavīrya and the reclaimer of Gōkarṇam from the sea when it was submerged in it owing to the digging of the earth by Sagara's sons. In Rāmāyaṇa he appears as a champion of Vaiṣṇavic prowess and faces Dāsarathi Rāma with his Vaiṣṇava bow. There he is discomfitted and retires to Mahendra mountain for penance. Mr. Saletore in his History of Karnāṭaka* claims him as the founder of the Tuḷuva kingdom and suggests that the local traditions obtained there about Paraśurāma bear some affinities with those current in Kēraḷa. Our Kēraḷa Mahātmyam weaves out another elaborate story about Paraśurāma's reclamation of Malabar from sea in expiation of his sin resulting from the extirpation of the Kṣatriya race. He does it at the instance of Śiva whom he approached when Brahmans to whom he made a gift of his land asked him to leave the territory which was no longer his. Śiva took pity on the poor hero who in spite of his valour had no arguments against the Brahmans and were obliged to go a begging for an abode for himself. Suddenly he becomes almighty, hurls his maze from Gōkarṇam which falls at the Cape of Comorin—probably the Cape was already there to receive it—and the sea in between recedes. The land thus reclaimed is Kērāḷa. Apart from the incongruities inherent in these legends, there emerge from them two Paraśurāmas —one who retired to Mahendra and the other who was responsible for these miraculous deeds. Gōkarṇam forms the common ground between the Karṇaṭaka and Kēraḷa legends, but their settings are different. Again after its reclamation Paraśurāma made a present of Kēraḷa to Brahmans, having not grown wiser after his first experience. The tradition thus makes Brahmans the original inhabitants of Kēraḷa. The question then arises what about the Nāyars, Īzuvas, and the lower classes, who claim a much earlier pedigree according to historical accounts. The Paraśurāma problem thus bristles with all sorts of improbabilities and calls for a thorough re-examination†.

* Page 10, Ch. 1.

†I have already prepared a brochure on the subject.

It may also be mentioned in passing that geological research confirms the theory that Kēraḷa was under water for some time and upheavals have taken place in two or three distinct stages before it assumed its present configuration.* Even in recent times land formations have been noticed in the neighbourhood of Cochin and Varkala. We shall leave the question at that for the time being.

Tamil Tradition

We shall now proceed to analyse the Tamil Tradition. Here we are not in the land of imagination but on *terra firma*. We have some solid facts to go upon. Only on their interpretation more light has to be thrown. Śilappadikāram, which is supposed to have been written by Iḷan-ko-aḍigal brother of Cēran Senguṭṭuvan, Cēra Emperor, has its own contribution to make to the elucidation of our history. Tiruvancikuḷam is believed to be his capital. There is difference of opinion regarding its identification. But it is presumed on the authority of this work that Kēraḷa was under the reign of the Perumāḷs at that time. But if the capital is transferred to the East Coast the theory may have to undergo some modifications. Apart from that our Tamilian historians are inclined to begin the history of Kēraḷa with the Perumāḷs presuming that before that period Kēraḷa was no separate province and only a part of Tamilakam. Even the language was Tamil. They are not prepared to enquire what the indigenous traditions of Kēraḷa and its folk-lore have to say in the matter, which give a glimpse of the pre-Perumāḷ period of the Kēraḷa history. The story of our Māmānkam tells us that the election of a Perumāḷ from outside to the Māmānkam Chair was the outcome of the internal disputes among the different parties that guided the politics of Kēraḷa. An outsider was expected to be above party politics. When the Perumāḷ was from the neighbouring kingdoms of Cōla, Pāndya or Cēra they were called Cōla Perumāl, Pāndi Perumāl and so on. Cēra Perumāls seem to have had their connection with the West Coast the longest. We have a number of Cēramans. If the honour is conferred on a son of the soil he is only a mere Perumāl which means only a big man or overlord. Perumāl period came to an end with the beginning of the Malayāḷam Era i.e. 825 A.D. Even as early as the second century A.D. Ptolemy mentions Kēraborthos to distinguish Malabar sovereigns with the kings of Tamilakam. Here the Tamil tradition, is in conflict with that of Kēraḷa.

* Oldham, Geology of India, Vol. I.

Ballads and Folklore of Kerala.

The study of our folklore leads us also to the same conclusion. The Ballad relating to Arōmalcēvakar which is the earliest so far discovered gives us a picture of ancient Kēraḷa where kings had no place and the Assemblies of people with Nātuvazis as their presidents managed the affairs of the country. In this connection I wish to lay emphasis on the importance of the study of folklore and ballads, in their relation to history. Modern scholars have a tendency to ignore them as unworthy of their attention. But they fail to realise that in them we have something of our own unencumbered with the inhibitions of sophisticated intellect. Our customs and manners are described as they are, without comments or embellishments and our emotions are placed in their natural setting and colour. I do not deny that there may be exaggerations in them when they deal with heroes of uncommon prowess but their general trend is reliable and true to nature. We see in them human beings of flesh and blood with their joys and sorrows, love and jealousies which are often within our experience and as such we can take a personal interest in them. They mark the stage in man's life when he begins to interest himself in the affairs of his society of which he is a part and endeavour to emulate the example of those who have made their mark during their brief existence. Their value as a true record of human activities is therefore, invaluable.

Says Mr. Brinply Johnson:

"The ballad may be called the most human form of literary expression. It is fundamentally a song of the peoples, evolved by instinct before writing became a conscious art, when the singer, with little or no thought of self, spoke not in his own person but for mankind.

"Its direct and primitive appeal is universal "from the Skioldung who clad in scarlet, wields the sceptre, to the peasant who breaks the clod with his plough," and though too often temporarily forgotten by those busy about culture or material progress, has survived throughout all time."

Because, moreover, the Ballad is at once simply human in feeling and intensely national in form and phrase; it provides endless material to students of the nature of man and the origin of race. Variations of one tale in many lands are a part of history".*

*Brinply Johnson: Introduction to Ballads of All Nations: Translated by George Barrow: p. xvi.

The anthropologist and historian can hardly afford to ignore folk-lore preserved in ballads. But it is this fertile field that they are persistently ignoring. Anthropologist like my friend, Mr. M. D. Raghavan whose paper* we will be reading in one of our meetings is an exception to this. Historian are still fighting shy of it.

You will thus realise that in the field of Kēraḷa history particularly in its early period considerable work has to be done and the materials are waiting for the language scholar and the historian. The field is vast and requires the co-operation of a band of scholars and research workers.

Mr. K. P. Padmanabha Menon has done a good deal of spade work but much remains to be done. He has confined his studies to foreign sources. In this connection I would urge that the three Governments under whom we are as three political divisions should consolidate their resources and found a common institution to carry on systematic investigations on the lines indicated.

Archaeology and Epigraphy.

In the fields of Archaeology and Epigraphy in which there are separate departments for the States as well as the British Governed tracts co-operation is easy and bound to be fruitful. Archaeological departments of Travancore and Cochin are both doing good work. The question of Tiruvancikkuḷam which has raised a controversy in recent times comes within the purview of the latter. Malabar being but a small portion of the Madras Presidency receives but scanty attention from the Department of Archaeology which has its headquarters at Delhi and provincial headquarters at Madras. I may invite their attention to the ruins of Panniyūr, Ponani Taluq, S. Malabar, where the Saivites and Vaishnavites fought a battle royal 100 years ago for its possession. Relics of the foundations of old temples in which all the Gods of Kēraḷa once had their habitation are still to be found. Here is a site which the Archaeology department may explore with the sure prospect of unearthing an enormous yield which is expected to throw considerable light on the various epochs of Kēraḷa History. The place was once in charge of the Nambudiri priests whose quarrel called for the interference of the Nayar chieftains who ultimately restored order. But the temples and the Deities therein never came back to their own. Saivism won a victory there and the Varāhamūrti's (Boar-incarnation) idol was

* Arōmalcevakar and His Times.

thrown into the neighbouring tank which is still held sacred by the people of the locality on that account. There is still a proverb that "the temple of Punniyūr will never be completed" as the different factions once existed there never allowed the work of construction to continue uninterruptedly for a reasonable length of time. Excavations at Punniyūr, I am sure, will give considerable work to the epigraphists.

Our Literature

I may now pass on to our literary field which again has two distinct schools of thought—one, the classical school that pins its faith on the method pursued by the Sanskrit critics and rhetoricians. Anything that is not after their model is anathema to them and they do not recognise its merit or value. The other school which may be called after the English fashion the Romantic school, despises everything that has a classical colouring. It is gratifying to learn that so early as the 13th century the author of the Līlātilakam† who may be called the critic of Maṇipravāḷam felt the necessity of drawing a distinction between the Sanskritic mixture and the indigenous literature by styling the latter as Pāṭṭu and the former Maṇipravāḷam. It is a pity that even after six centuries of progress our scholars are unable to take a similar balanced view. They are at their wits end to analyse Ezuttaccan's pāṭṭus, Kathakaḷi and Tuḷḷal as they do not follow any model prescribed by the Sanskritists. We are thus left without a genuine school of criticism in Malayāḷam which takes stock of the genius of the language and its people and proceeds to examine its literary productions according to the peculiar features noticeable in them. The late Mr. P. K. Narayana Pillai, B.A., B.L., ex-Judge, Travancore High Court, was a pioneer in the field, whose studies on Ceṟusseri, Ezuttaccan and Nambiar are fine specimens of literary criticism in Malayāḷam. He combined classical learning and modern critical outlook and showed that a blending of both is in the interest of sound criticism in Malayāḷam.

A word in this connection about the linguistic test that is applied to Malayāḷam works when discussing their date will not be out of place. The usual method is to relegate them to the earliest period when there is a preponderance of Tamil words. When Sanskrit takes the place of Tamil they are assigned to the middle period. If the two are well balanced they are stamped

† Edited by the famous scholar Sri. Attur Krishna Pisharoti.

with modernity. According to this method Iravikuṭṭi Piḷḷai pāṭṭu and Rāmacaritam can be ascribed to the first period as the language employed is more or less the same as they belong to the South Travancore where the language is practically Tamil. In Uṇṇunīli Sandēsam we come across big Sanskrit compounds as well as pure Tadbhava forms which according to the above method can be assigned to two different dates. Some of Kerala Varma's works which abound in Sanskrit compounds can be easily dated several centuries ago. Ancient records and ballads available in Central and North Kerala, such as the chronicles of Zamorins, etc., are comparatively free from Tamil or Sanskrit influence. The Ballads of North and South Malabar are in pure Malayāḷam. The test is therefore defective. The language of a work may be taken therefore as an index of the author's predilictions or the place of its origin. The variety of literary forms in Malayālam only suggests the various influences it was subjected at different period of its growth and it is their background that has to be investigated in deciding the question of their dates.

Comparative Study.

Limitation of time and space prevents my elaboration of the topics which I have alluded to, further. Some of the papers that are going to be read here will throw more light on them bringing forward more details. I shall therefore conclude with a reference to another important aspect of research which should receive the adequate attention of scholars; I mean the field of comparative study particularly in Philology and Traditions. I have already observed that South Indian Culture and its characteristic features are now engaging the attention of modern scholars. It is now embedded in the four main languages of the Presidency, *viz.*, Tamil, Telugu, Kanarese and Malayāḷam. Unless the common features of these languages are thoroughly studied our knowledge of South Indian Culture cannot be complete. A Comparative Dravidian Vocabulary, is therefore, a desideratum. We in our University have taken up the work and we hope to follow it up with another on their grammatical affinities which will be a continuation and an extension of the pioneer work by Dr. Caldwell.

Conclusion.

I shall now conclude my general survey in which I have been able to deal with only a few outstanding problems. It is only in recent times that research in South Indian Languages is being un-

dertaken. They formed a sealed work till now except to the small coteries of scholars working in their respective fields. At this stage errors are bound to occur but they will disappear as we progress and gain new experience. South Indian Antiquities form a mine that is bound to yield enormous treasure of knowledge if properly explored.

We are gradually getting over the general apathy towards our own languages both among ourselves and authorities. With the dawn of nationalism we have begun to feel the pulse-beat of a new spirit and love our mother tongue more than ever. This enthusiasm is fully shared by Malayāḷam along with her sister languages. Our Poetry, Prose and Art are surging with this new life showing symptoms of restlessness and revolt which mark the inward urge for freedom and expansion. May this new enthusiasm continue to inspire us for further efforts and take us to the desired goal enhancing the glory of our Motherland is my ardent prayer.

THE HISTRIONIC ART OF MALABAR

The Cultural Background

By

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Before we discuss the histrionic art of Malabar it is necessary to have an idea of the society of Malabar and its component parts, as art is mostly the expression of society. India is often described as a country of contrasts. The most primitive and the most modern can be seen here side by side. It is a wonder for foreigners why it is so. A new phase in the evolution often follows the disappearance or gradual extinction of the previous stage. While this is true in respect of other countries, in India it is the other way round. A new stage does not entirely replace the earlier one which continues for those who are not yet fit for the advance that has come. This accounts for the existence of both side by side. If this state of affairs applies to the whole of India it is doubly so in respect of Malabar.

I. KERALA SOCIETY.

Mountaineers.—If we look into the forest of Malabar we find a number of aboriginal inhabitants formed into different communities such as Nāyādis, Malayans and Pariahs etc., having nothing in common except their primitiveness. The first though called Nāyādi, the hunter, he never does hunting and is sometimes a vegetarian. His comrades in the forest, on the other hand, are experts in every variety of black art or sorcery and eat the flesh of all animals. The two are distinct entities. One looks upon the other with suspicion and never lives as a neighbour of the other. There are plenty of such on the mountains calling for the attention of the anthropologist. Each community has its own God to be propitiated in certain seasons of the year with ceremonial dances and offerings.

Other Classes

Ceruman.—Coming to the country or plains ordered society appears with its distinctions of caste and creed under the broad division of high and low. In the lowest rung of the ladder are *Ceruman* and *Kaṇakkan* who are slave labourers maintained

by landlords for work in the field and elsewhere in the lands they own. He is a born dancer and the harvest season, when he gets enough paddy from his master for his luxuries, which comprise a new cloth and a modest provision for drink and a holiday to witness the festivals at temples (Kāḷi temples), presents him at his best. As the proverb goes, whatever comes uppermost in his mouth, is his song which generally deals with the temples he sees at a distance or the paddy fields in which he works throughout the day during winter, or important ceremonies in his master's house, or his dealings with other communities. His sense of rhythm is proverbial. He generally dances in company and his steps could be heard from a distance. They are timed with remarkable precision with the result that a hundred steps sound as one. He never goes wrong even if he is under the influence of drink which only makes him dance better.

Pāṇan

The next man in the social scale is *Pāṇan*. He is professionally the manufacturer of umbrellas made of the palm leaf which is cheap enough to suit the taste and pocket of all. His craft marks him out as an artist of no ordinary capacity although he is rarely appreciated as he has set a low value on his work. Besides, he is the chief entertainer for the lower classes and invokes seasonal festivals by ceremonial songs. Dance, mimicry and a kind of dramatic presentation of social and mythical incidents form the chief items of the entertainment he provides. The performance is called *Pāṅkaḷi* which lasts for the whole night.[1]

Vaṇṇān.

Then comes *Vaṇṇān* or *Maṇṇān* who is a washerman by profession. He is to be distinguished from Veḷuttetan (washerman for higher classes). Vaṇṇan is intimately associated with the worship of the primitive Mother called Karinkāḷi—(literally black Kāḷi)—and he is the chief priest in such temples and master of the ceremonies called *Veḷḷāṭṭu* and *Veḷḷari*. In the more refined Kāḷi temples frequented by higher classes like Nāyars and Nambudiris he appears during festivals with masks of different kinds performing a kind of dance which is the craze of his community and his patrons who give him due recognition. On the final day of the festival called *Pūram* experienced dancers among them come with a semi-circular head-

1. He is also noted for his knowledge of medicine and whenever a native physician makes a prescription a Pāṇan is engaged to procure them as he is the only person who can identify the various shrubs mentioned in it.

gear, three to four feet high, and visit houses within the jurisdiction of the temple to which he is attached dancing dexterously with that unwieldy encumbrance on his head and finish the day's work at the temple. Some of them get possessed during the day and go on dancing endlessly till they are caught and persuaded to stop by others. They generally fast the whole day out of devotion to the Goddess.

Īžuvan.

The leading community among the lower classes is *Īžuvan* or Tiyan who once held an amount of authority among the communities mentioned above in settling their disputes and social problems. His status varies in different parts of Kēraḷa along with his nomenclature and the community has three or four sub-divisions. A section has been engaged for centuries in the manufacture of toddy or arrack as their profession while the more advanced section hold the title *Taṇḍāyma* (the leadership among the lower classes) and enter the battlefield along with the Nāyars. There is a theory that this community came from Īžom—now identified with Ceylon—and brought cocoanut[2] to Malabar for the first time. His favourite pastime is a sword and shield dance called *Palisa*[3] *muṭṭumkaḷi* (literally the shield-strike-dance) which is a relic of the part which this community once played in war. It may also be observed in this connection that this past-time is popular also with Nāyars and the non-hindu communities like Muslims and Christians of Malabar. Whether it was copied from Nāyars by Taṇḍans or *vice versa* is a disputed point. Among non-hindu communities it is a recent innovation and there is no doubt about its origin. In respect of Taṇḍan or Īžuvan the matter is not easy to decide. In the history of Malabar Īžuvan or Tiyyan possesses equal claim for priority with Nāyars. In fact the folklore seems to suggest that they settled in Malabar earlier, holding prominent positions in society in ancient times, which they lost owing to certain historical or social developments that occurred later and of which it is not easy to determine the precise nature. There is no doubt, that they were once closely associated with the Nāyars in various social rites than they are at present.

Higher strata of society.—Among the so-called higher classes who are officially called caste Hindus in Malabar three deserve mention—viz., Ambalavāsis, Nāyars and Nambudiris.

2. The Malayāḷam word for it is Ten Kā=Southern fruit (Ten=South. Kāy=Fruit). The name suggests only its entry from South but has no reference to the community that brought it.

3. Paliśa=Shield.

Ambalavāsis.[4]—The name denotes their traditional connection with the temple. This is a promiscuous community containing a number of sub-divisions mutually exclusive. To say that the Ambalavāsis constitute the intermediate caste between the Nambudiris and Nāyars is misleading. It is true that temple work is a common link among them, but it must also be borne in mind that the term is comprehensive enough to comprise services of various denominations from pūja down to cleaning. Pūja is done by the Nambudiri who now occupies the highest position in the social heirarchy. The others are in a way his assistants. Certain sub-divisions of Ambalavāsis like Varier, Poduval, Piṣaroti are more closely connected with temple service and are on a superior level while others like Cākkyar and Nambiar are required to be in the temple only on ceremonial occasions. There is again the Māran the drummer, who attends temple constantly but does not enjoy the same status as others. In certain localities he serves some sections of Nāyars during pollution time. The position of Kuṛuppu also is similar. The high class Nāyars once never used to dine with any of these and once there was no intermarriage also. In the light of these facts to describe them as occupying a position between the Nāyars and the Nambudiris is not exact. Tradition and their customs suggest that they were evolved out of the out-castes from both communities—the Nāyars and the Nambudiris—and with the installation of the latter in the temple they rose in varying degrees in their status and influence. Whatever their origin, from the point of view of art their importance is unquestionable. Four institutions *Kūttu, Kūṭiyaṭṭam, Pāṭhakam* and *Pāṭṭu* which will be described in the course of this chapter are their distinct contributions to the histrionic art of Malabar and their influence on its general development has been by no means inconsiderable.

Nāyars.—This term unlike other caste appellations of Malabar is applied to a number of clans and communities ranging from Rajas and aristocrats who interdine with the Kēraḷa Brahmans, to the lowest clan whose members are regarded as untouchables. The Rajas and aristocrats began to style themselves as Kṣatriyas being warriors, although such a denomination conveyed no special significance in the society of Kēraḷa in ancient times. The qualifi-

4. Ambalam=Temple, Vāsi=one who lives; i.e., one who lives in a temple. Ambalavāsi does not live in a temple but he resides within a convenient distance of it.

cation of fighting also was possessed by many other sub-sections of Nāyars such as Kaimaḷ, Paṇikkar, Kuṟup,[5] Nambiyar.[6] The innumerable sub-divisions into which the Nāyar community is split indicate that it was once a self-sufficient unit in Malabar and that the various divisions that it now comprises are the result of the distribution of various administrative and social duties which they were performing once. According to the nature of their functions the members of each clan came to be looked upon as of superior or inferior status. Communities that bear the names Kaimaḷ, Paṇikkar, Menōn, Kuṟup, etc., earned their respective titles through special services rendered to the State, which their descendents enjoyed later. The rest were called Nāyars with the distinctive qualifications such as Vaṭṭekkaṭ or Attikkūṟuśśi indicating their special functions. Customs and manners differ with each clan but the matriarchal system[7] of inheritance distinguishes them from the other communities of Malabar. The majority of them took to fighting as a profession and the term Nāyar is often synonymous with captain or general or even a fighter. As the ruling class for several centuries they have left their mark on the various arts and institutions of Malabar particularly on Kathakaḷi. The Nāyar militia exercised a healthy influence on the society of Kēraḷa and served as a check on the autocracy of their Kings.[8] Mother Goddess was their guardian Deity and their gymnasium (Kaḷaṛi) inevitably contained an image of the Kaḷi for them to worship before they begin their daily lessons. Ancestor worship and Serpent worship also form a part of their traditional culture. Different theories are current about their association with Malabar.[9] According to some Rajaputana is their original home, while others transfer it to the land that borders on the Mediterranean their original home. The subject fascinates the anthropologist who is yet to make a systematic study of it.

Nambūdiris.—This community occupies the first rung of the social ladder in modern Malabar and has a very interesting history. They are regarded as the representatives of Āryans who colonised Malabar in pre-historic times led by their leader Paraśu-

5. and 6. Some clans among *Ambalavāsis* also bear these titles.

7. A section among the Nambudiris and the Tiyyar follow the same system. It is not universal among them.

8. Logan: *Malabar Manual,* Vol. I, Preface, p. iv.

9. One of them identifies them with Nāgas of the Dravidian family of races, another makes them the West Coast counterparts of the Naidus and Mudaliars of the Eastern districts of South India.

rāma the mythical Brahman hero. But the theory lacks historical support or confirmation. Although they were once noted for their Vedic learning and humour (the latter they still retain) in general appearance and stature they look the same as the high class Nāyars, the majority of whom still enjoy the right of dining with them. Their inheritance is a compromise between the matriarchal and patriarchal systems. While the descent among them is generally reckoned through the father, the paternal uncle succeeds him as the head of the family. Only the eldest brother among them marries in his own community,[10] the younger brothers choose their wives from the prominent Nāyar houses against the original custom which insisted on their celebacy and devotion to religion. The majority of them are priests in temples. There is evidence to show that a section among them called "Āḍhyans" shared administrative functions with Nāyars. As a cultured community they have exerted considerable influence on the development of literature and art of Kēraḷa although in social matters they did not exhibit a similar progressive tendency. In respect of Kathakaḷi they have joined hands with Nāyars and have shared with them the credit for shaping its technique and design.

II. PRIMITIVE ART.

We shall now proceed to survey the various aspects of the histrionic art of Malabar, which these communities developed. I may observe in this connection, that temples of Malabar were the chief centres of art in its various manifestations except certain varieties of it that were developed among the lower classes and could be classed as popular types. Even those that have no religious significance such as Tuḷḷal were included as items of temple festivals. Had it not been for such an arrangement a good number of them would have perished long ago owing to the unfavourable conditions that developed later.

Influence of the Mother-Cult.—Mother-worship forms the earliest cult of Malabar and has therefore, a major share in the development of the dramatic art. Ayyappan the guardian Deity of the village and Vēṭṭakkaran the hunter God, are other primitive deities whose propitiation has given rise to certain varieties of the art. The snake also has a place in this group and a contribution to its

10. In recent times a law has been introduced allowing the younger brothers also to marry in their own community.

credit. Śiva and Viṣṇu loom large in its latest phase. In our classification therefore, these deities and gods form the nucleus round which the arts rallied and developed with the march of time.

The art in general lends itself to a broad division such as popular and classical. This applies to all branches of it. A further classification into religious and secular is also necessary for a clear understanding of the subject. We shall give precedence to the Mother and describe a few prominent types. The varieties which the Mother-cult has inspired from time immemorial to the present day are innumerable. They range between the crudest primitive specimen to the highly refined variety.

(*a*) Religious Types

Pāna.—Among the popular religious types *Pāna* deserves some prominence both in point of antiquity and dance modes. It is generally performed by Nāyars in their houses as an offering to the Goddess, Kāḷi, and its literature can be reckoned as the oldest available in Malayalam. It is styled '*Kāḷināṭakam*' the drama of Kāḷi. It is conducted either as a day ceremony or a day and night ceremony. In the night the items of the day's ceremony are repeated with a fire-walking scene as a finale.

A big pandal or flat roof supported by 64 pillars is constructed first. Within the four pillars at its centre *a sanctum sanctorum* duly decorated by tender coconut leaves and fruits is then set apart to propitiate the Goddess who is represented for the time being by a branch of *Pāla* tree[11] with three sprouts, that is ceremoniously escorted to the place and planted there. This is followed by a Pūja by the leader of the troupe, who dances round the place to the rhythm of the accompaniments (drum, paṛa[12] and cymbals) offering flowers etc., to the Goddess as he dances. The last item of the Pūja is pouring on himself a red liquid which is a mixture of saffron and white lime and spilling it on all sides. This is a relic of the primitive blood-offering[13] to the Goddess. He fasts till the Pūja is over. Another prominent member of the troupe then dances round the central place with a torch in his hand specially made for the occasion. This dance is more strenuous and technical than the Pūja-dance. When this is over the whole troupe sometimes assist-

11. Asclepias, a kind of tree that has a milky juice.
12. Somewhat resembling drum but producing a different variety of sound.
13. This seems to be a universal cult and the fox-hunt of England appears

ed by a few others perform a circular dance round the *sanctum sanctorum* each member holding a wooden ornamental stick in his hands. The next item is the singing of the songs called *Tōṟṟam* describing Kāḷi's birth and her encounter with Dārukan the Lord of Asuras. Towards the close the Mother is invoked and requested to come in person to receive the offering when a Kōmaram[14] (oracle) who is also called Veḷiccappāṭu appears. He also dances round the place when the whole troupe join him and indulge in tumultuous uproar and violent dance which symbolise the Mother's pleasure. In the course of this chaotic item the *sanctum sanctorum* is demolished. The present writer still recalls the thrill which he enjoyed as a boy of ten when he ran away from home and danced with a *Pāna* troupe. Though he had no previous training in it he kept pace with others full of intense excitement which made him forget the strain and exhaustion.

(2) *Bhagavati Pāṭṭu.*—Bhagavati Pāṭṭu is another variety of Mother-worship. This is the exclusive right of a section of Ambalavāsis called Kuṟupp or Kuṟippu (derived from the word Kurikkuka—draw) and is conducted either within the precincts of Kāḷi temples or the houses of Nambudiri Brahmans. From the environment and the circumstances in which this ritual is performed we are led to suppose that this is an attempt to raise the popular *Pāna* to a higher level to suit the conditions of caste distinctions that developed in the society of Kēraḷa by that time. The literature of both has a striking similarity as *Pāṭṭu* appears as a revised version of *Tōṟṟam.* First the figure of Kāḷi is drawn by Kuṟuppu with powder of different colours, which acquires divine significance through a Pūja performed by a Nambudiri. At the time of the Pūja Kuṟuppu disappears and the drum is played in a low tone.[15] He re-enters after that and sings the hymn which is in pure Malayalam describing the same theme as that of the *Pāna Tōṟṟam.* The arrival of Kōmaram or Veḷiccappāṭṭu (oracle) who after a ceremonial dance communicates the blessings of the Goddess to the devotee marks the end of the ceremony.

A similar ceremony is performed for the hunter-God Veṭṭūkkāran. The items are the same as those of the *Pāṭṭu* except that the figure drawn is different and the literature has another story to tell.

14. Inspired hymn.

15. This practice suggests the inference that the Nambudiri had no place in the original scheme of things.

3. *Muṭiyeṟṟu*.—The most imposing of the types inspired by Kāḷi-worship is the *Muṭiyeṟṟu* which consists of two words Muṭi and Eṟṟu=Wearing. In this we notice the next stage when an attempt is made to present the theme used for the rituals mentioned above in some form of realistic reproduction in which we see the beginnings of tragic drama. This is again performed by *Kuṟuppu* in Kāḷi temples and the communities that have no access to temple cannot witness it except from an elevated place at a distance. "They arrive early in the afternoon, and in a conspicuous place in the temple-front prepare a relief-painting of the Goddess Kāḷi in her most terrific aspect. Simultaneously with the evening rites in the temple, they begin to entertain the people with their music, vocal and instrumental. When the evening rites and ceremonies of the temple are over, the idol of the Goddess is taken in procession and after a fixed number of circumambulations in the precincts of the temple it is kept in a prominent place. The first item in the representation is a meeting between Śiva and Nārada,[16] when the latter informs him that the earth is groaning under the oppression of Dāruka and it closes with Śiva's promise of his destruction by Kāḷi. In the meanwhile, the two characters, who impersonate Kāḷi and Dāruka and are dressed in costume, are ready to appear and at the appointed hour Dāruka comes out and challenges Kāḷi. The challenge is accepted and Kāḷi rushes in. There is no fixed stage; the whole temple area forms the stage and the characters walk about in a moving fight. Here is a long tedious process of acting a battle between the two, and ultimately the Goddess wins killing Dāruka. The last act is an imposing scene and fills the audience with terror, occurring as it does at day-break".[17] (Kāḷi kills Dāruka torturing him to the utmost). After his death his crown is removed by Kāḷi and is worn by her.

4. *Brāmaṇipāṭṭu*.This is another variety of *Pāṭṭu* called Brāhmaṇipāṭṭu which is conducted exclusively by women belonging to a set of Amabalavāsis called Puṣpiṇis or Brāhmaṇis. This is mostly a family function. A four-footed stool called *Pīṭha* is placed in a convenient spot and rendered pure by certain ceremonies. The women will stand round them and sing the songs in praise of the Mother. They become possessed after some time and begin to dance round the '*Pīṭha*' in ecstacy. While doing so they convey

16. The divine sage noted for his love of war.

17. Kerala Theatre, by Prof. K. Rāma Pisharoti, Annamalai University Journal, Vol. 1. No. 1, pp. 98-99.

the wishes of the Goddess. I am reminded in this connection, of the view expressed in certain quarters that women did not participate in the various dance-types prevalent in Malabar. This is a clear instance to show that the view had no foundation in fact. When there is no dispute about their participation in religious functions it is needless to discuss the question in respect of secular matters.

5. *Pāvakkūttu* is another interesting performance associated with Kāḷi temple. Although it is done outside the premises of the Kāḷi temples it has nothing to do with Kāḷi or the legend about the Mother. It follows a different tradition to which Kāḷi's name is tagged on. It is a kind of shadow-play which has its counterpart in Java and China and in which the scenes from Rāmayaṇa are enacted through puppet-shadows manipulated by two men standing on a raised platform behind a white curtain. This takes place in a building[18] outside the temple premises. Inside the curtain is arranged a row of lamps which make the shadows perceptible to the audience who assemble in front of it. The men handling the puppets start the performance in dialogues that are mostly in Tamil and based on the Rāmayaṇam by Kamban. The characters concerned are represented by puppets. The performers conduct even battles with them. The show runs for the whole night during which they indulge in disquisitions on various subjects suggested by the context in a competitive spirit. It takes one full month to complete the story of Rama. In its popular appeal it is like Kathakaḷi which can be witnessed by all classes of people in Malabar. In the case of Kathakaḷi it has gone a step further in that it can be performed in any convenient place while the stage for the *Pāvakkūttu* must necessarily be near a Kāḷi temple.

There is a story that explains how *Pāvakkūttu* came to be associated with the Kāḷi temples. It gives us an idea of the gradual penetration of the Rāma-sāga into Malabar where Kāḷi legend held sway in ancient times. It would appear according to tradition that the battle between Kāḷi and Dāruka was fought at the time when Rāma was engaged in his campaign against Rāvaṇa the Lord of Lanka. The timing of the two great fights deprived the victors of a chance of witnessing the other and so it was considered desirable that the Mother must be given an opportunity to see it through the presentation of it in the form of *Pāva-*

18. It is called *Kūṭṭumāṭam*.

kkūttu which dealt with the story of Rāma. Why Rāma did not evince a similar interest in the combat between Kāḷi and Dāruka is not made clear by the legend. Perhaps, the increasing importance of the Rāma-cult and the gradual decline of the Mother-cult are responsible for the omission of a similar institution in temples dedicated to Rāma. The custom that *Pāvakkūttu* should be performed only outside the Kāḷi temples and not inside shows that at the time of its introduction Mother-cult was still strong in popular conception and that Rāma legend was yet a novelty waiting for its turn to be admitted within the sacred precincts of the Kāḷi temples. In these legends we notice the beginnings of the fusion between Āryan and Dravidian culture and the progressive super imposition of one cult over the other. In the Kāḷi—Dāruka legend it must be borne in mind that Dāruka is a worshipper of Śiva and when he dies the divine knowledge that Kāḷi is the daughter of Śiva dawns on him and he expresses satisfaction that he receives death at her hands. Here the Mother-cult and Śiva-cult merge into each other. The introduction of Rāma-sāga is a sign of the appearance of the Viṣṇu-cult which is only yet finding its way. Later developments in Malabar show that Viṣṇu-cult gradually gained ascendency over others and many Kāḷi temples were converted into shrines dedicated to either Rāma or Kṛṣṇa. The history of the arts also bears testimony to this development which will be elucidated presently when describing the other types.

6. *Tiyyāṭṭu* and *Ayyappan Pāṭṭu.*—In ancient Kēraḷa Ayyappan Veṭṭakkāran come next to the Mother in importance. The former is called Ayyanar in Tamil and seems to have enjoyed a wider jurisdiction than the latter whose activities are confined only to Malabar. The cult of Ayyappan has given rise to two forms of worship which are important from the point of view of dramatic art. The first is *Tiyyāṭṭu*[19] literally the 'dance of fire.' In general outline it resembles *Bhagavati pāṭṭu* except that towards the end of the ceremony the *Kōmaram* when he is possessed jumps into fire before he begins his ecstatic dance. The figure drawn on the floor also is different bearing distinctive features of the Deity. Another variety of the worship of Ayyappan is *Ayyappanpāṭṭu.* This resembles *Pāna* in important details. The preparations are more or less the same but the theme of the songs deals with the adventurous trip of the village God to the forest to get tiger's milk. On his re-

19. Consists of two words—Tiyyu=fire, Āṭṭu=dance with uproar.

turn he meets Vāvar who is considered to be a Muslim Saint. When that part of the story is reached two characters impersonating Ayyappan and Vāvar appear. In certain contexts the God is referred to as a Nāyar hero who performed a daring deed and became famous thereby.[20] Both make a trial of their strength by a duel which is performed to the rhythm of the music of the singers and the accompaniments. This is a very entertaining item of the performance and some times continues for hours if the actors are really clever. The God fights with the sword while Vāvar has only a defensive weapon. In the end both part as friends and Ayyappan extends an invitation to Vāvar to see him occasionally. This ceremony bears also a historical significance. This is the first time a non-hindu appears in a Hindu ritual in which is dramatised the original reactions of the Hindu society towards the introduction of Islam in Malabar and their final settlement as friendly neighbours, which also speaks of the tolerance of the Hindu religion.

There are also other instances of such representation of historical incidents embodied in secular types which will be dealt with presently.

7. *Pāmpan Tuḷḷal.*—This ceremony arose out of the snake-cult and is performed by Puḷḷuvans. Nāyars and others who believe that they are under the curse of the snake send for Puḷḷuvans who come early in the evening and draw the figures of two snakes intertwined, in a place specially cleaned for the purpose. The two represent opposite sexes. After the drawing is completed they sit at a distance making room for the Nāyar who bestows sacredness on it by a Pūja. Dances round the place which remind us of the *Pāna* then take place. This is followed by two young girls sitting on the figures of the snakes looking at their faces when the Puḷḷuvan starts his songs about the mythical snakes, like Anantan and others accompanied by his woman partner on her own instrument.* In a few moments the girls get possessed and begin to dance and swing on either side like snakes. Puḷḷuvan stops singing at once and asks questions to the possessed girls who communicate the wishes of the snake to the master of the ceremony which is thus brought to a close. The place of Puḷḷuvan is sometimes taken by Kuṟuppu who generally officiates in ceremonies for Kāḷi.

20. This is another instance in support of the theory which Dr. Barnett develops in his 'Hindu Gods and Heroes' about the deification of heroes after their death, which is a prominent feature of the primitive Hindu Society.

* An earthen pot with a leather case on one side to which a string is attached to play on.

(b) Secular Types

Pāṅkaḷi.—We have been describing till now types that have a religious significance. It should not however, be supposed that the Kerala Society as such has not developed any other variety meant for pastime pure and simple having nothing to do with a God. The *Pāṅkaḷi* is one such that is popular among Pāṇans one of the lower classes of Malabar. For want of encouragement this is dying out. It has many interesting items and is more in the nature of a variety entertainment. There is no conscious attempt to enact a story. The performance lasts the whole night and is announced in the afternoon by the beating of drum. The villagers assemble in an open space or the yard before a house or a paddy field during summer. Its most striking feature is the appearance of two lovers who are called Southerners.* They sing songs and perform what is called 'competitive dance' professing love to each other and exhibiting its various aspects of it. They also make fun of each other. The man taunts the girl that she has another lover and the girl retorts in the same way. The dialogue is in song which is adapted to a delicate and soft dance. Another feature is the appearance of a baffoon who entertains the spectators with his satirical comments usually directed against persons and customs of the higher castes. He never dances but he is a good mimic. At the close of the performance the spectators contribute their mite and disperse.

2. *Koṛattiyāṭṭam* is another interesting pastime practised by Koṛattis, the women folk of a community called Koṛavans who correspond to the Gipsies of Europe. They are palmists and fortune-tellers by profession and travel from place to place. Their nomadic life indicates their foreign origin, but for centuries they have been a part of the society of Malabar. Two characters appear in the guise of women who are supposed to be divine spouses of the Gods Śiva and Viṣṇu. They start a dance to the accompaniment of instrumental music interpreting songs by gestures. The songs discuss the merits of their husbands which the other repudiate humourously. The songs are in simple colloquial Malayalam.

3. *Kaikoṭṭikkaḷi* which literally means dance accompanied by clapping of hands is another source of entertainment among Nāyars and Nambudiris. Both men and women take part in that. But it is generally considered to be a woman's art. It is a circular dance in which the dancers sing clapping their hands to the rhythm of the song, which synchronises with the steps. The tradition which

* Tekkanum Tekkattiyum.

connects it with Kṛṣṇa's circular dance with herdswomen must I believe, be assigned to a later period. It has different varieties of steps and is an inevitable item of entertainment during the harvest festivals like Oṇam and Tiruvātira to which it must have been originally attached. The *Kummi* style of dance which forms one of its varieties has found its way to Kathakaḷi.

4. *Ēzamuttī* which was once popular among the Ambalavāsis and the country folk is in the list of forgotten art. It is a pure domestic entertainment indulged during leisure time. "A number of people sit round a lighted lamp. With the sounding of a musical instrument, one of them sings a riddle-song and asks another to answer the riddle. His failure to solve the riddle gets him the punishment which should take the form of acting with or without the costume the part in which he is proficient. The acting covers a wide range from drinking up to a scene from classics. The word means seven old hags, but no woman takes part in this."[21] From the name of the art we should infer that it was once an exclusive pastime of enlightened women who were forced to give it up in later times owing to some social change.

5. *Mōhiniyāṭṭam* or the Siren's dance was once popular. This is a solo performance played by a woman who appears in the most seductive form and entertains the audience with dance and music. The dance is of a mild type and is designed to show the bodily movements and charm of the actors at their best. It is often associated with the mythical story in which Viṣṇu appears as a Mōhini (enchantress) to tempt the demon Śūṛpaka who harassed Śiva. But the songs used for the performance make no reference to the story. Women who practised the art gradually degenerated and the art also along with them. An attempt is now being made to revive it.

CLASSICAL ART

Before we pass on to the classical varieties it would be interesting to note the significance of the titles which many of the types already referred to, bear. *Tuḷḷaḷ, Pāṭṭu, Āṭṭam, Kaḷi* are the words used to describe them. Except the second word which means song all the rest signify some kind of bodily movement or rhythmic motion. All are pure Dravidian words and bear ample testimony to the indigenous origin of these varieties of the histrionic art and the wide popularity of the dance-cult in Malabar. The words *Kūttu* and *Āṭṭam* are synonymous with drama in modern Tamil.

21. Kerala Stage, by Prof. K. Rāma Pisharoti.

1. *Yātṛakkaḷi.*

In the classical varieties we will describe presently the influence of Sanskritic traditions on the old arts of the country is noticeable. The epic stories in which Rāma or Kṛṣṇa are the leading characters gradually replace those relating to the primitive Gods. This resulted in a healthy fusion of both elements which added to the richness and vigour of these arts. One such is the *Saṅghakkaḷi* or *Yātṛakkaḷi* so styled as there were special saṅghams or schools or troupes who practised it exclusively. This is mainly performed by Nambudiris. Time forbids a detailed description of the various aspects of it, viz., (1) *Kaḷi,* (2) *Nālupādam Vekkal,* (3) *Pāna,* (4) *Añgyangaḷ,* and (5) *Hāsyangaḷ.* I confine my observations to a few of its striking features. The second part consists of a kind of dance around a lighted lamp singing songs that are in pure Malayalam. The fourth item is a sword-play in which a mock-fight is exhibited by the actors dressed in military costume. This item is generally done with the co-operation of Nāyars who were the leading military class. The last part brings in a master-idiot known as 'Kaimal' who is the traditional Nāyar chieftain. He is received with due honour but is driven out unceremoniously. It is possible to read into this the gradual extraction of powers from Nāyars by Nambudiris by their subtle machinations.

2. *Kūttu* and *Kūṭiyāṭṭam* form other varieties and are more important from the point of view of art. *Kūttu* is only recitation of Purāṇic stories usually from Ramayana and Mahabharata by the Ambalavāsīs caste called Cākyars who recite verses and proceed to elucidate their meaning. It is in the elaborate exposition of it, illustrating it by reference to contemporary characters and incidents, that the real entertainment lies. Cākyar is noted for his satire. His performance in those days served the purpose of press in ventilating public grievances and commenting on the actions of public men. He is accompanied by a drum called Miżavu which in course of time became a mere formality and a Nangyar woman who marks time with a pair of cymbals. In course of time narration and satire became more prominent and music and dance suggested by the drum and cymbals were reduced to the barest minimum.

3. *Kūṭiyāṭṭam*[22] afforded full scope for the histrionic talents of the Cākyar. In this a number of Cākyars join to stage a Sans-

22. Literally means a joint performance as distinguished from his solo entertainment called Kūttu.

krit drama. Though the material is taken from Sanskrit it has been thoroughly transformed owing to the influence of indigenous traditions of dance and acting. One performance extends over eight days and the first four days are taken up with the preliminaries and discussions on the duties of a king and his subjects. Cākyar begins his performance with a Malayalam prayer which indicates that is founded in an indigenous art. When he begins the Sanskrit text he gives a commentary of it in Malayalam and acts it to the accompaniment of dance and time. When he acts he uses the gesture language which is restricted in scope when compared to that used by Kathakaḷi actors. Cākyar emphasises facial expression in preference to dance. *Kūṭṭu* and *Kūṭiyāṭṭam* are performed only in temples but when its importance as a social institution was established its religious significance gradually disappeared.

4. *Pāṭhakam* and 5. *Naṅgyar Kūttu.*—Another section among them called Nambiars has to their credit an institution called *Pāṭhakam* which is an imitation of *Kūttu* with none of its accompaniments. It is performed sometimes outside temple precincts but in it there is neither music nor dance. It is a mere humourous narration of a story with a deal of satire. Their women who are called Naṅgyars perform a variety of *Kūttu* called *Naṅgyar Kūttu* which is only a reproduction of what Cākyar does in *Kūttu* with the difference that she indulges in no satire and gives prominence to music and dance.

6. *Kṛṣṇāṭṭam* and 7. *Aṣṭapadiyāttam* are other varieties of the classical type. *Kṛṣṇāṭṭam* has the story of Kṛṣṇa as its theme, but makes no mention of Rādha-Kṛṣṇa episode. It draws its material from Bhāgavata Purāṇam. Its composition resembles that of Gīta Govindam and Kathakaḷi and consists of ślōkas (four-footed stanzas) followed by a song. The story of Kṛṣṇa is divided into eight parts and enacted in 8 days. The literature is in pure Sanskrit. But its dance modes and technique are indigenous. Some characters use masks but others paint their faces and wear distinctive costume. The circular dance of Kṛṣṇa with gōpis is an important item in one day's play and reminds us of the popular *Kaikoṭṭikkaḷi.* The gesture language used by the actor is not so complicated as that of Kathakaḷi.

Aṣṭapadiyāttam is the staging of the famous Gīta-Govindam of Jayadēva. How this classic which had its origin in Bengal in the 11th Century A.D., was transplanted leaving little trace of it on its way, in Malabar is a matter for close study.

Perhaps, it testifies to the universality of the traditional culture of India before historical cataclysms disturbed its even progress. The songs are sung in the traditional way and their meaning interpreted through acting and gesture language to the accompaniment of dance. The theme of the work is the amours of Kṛṣṇa and Rādha. Jayadēva has introduced a maid also for Rādha who acts as her messenger. This is a highly devotional piece and a supreme example of the blending of love with religious fervour or Bhakti.

Kathakaḷi—In point of time *Kṛṣṇāṭṭam* and *Aṣṭapadiyāṭṭam* come after *Kathakaḷi* which is the crowning achievement of the people of Malabar in the realm of histrionic art. Everything that is best in the popular and secular varieties of the art has been incorporated in it and its technique is established on a firm artistic basis. Its dance-mode has now attracted world-wide attention and it is the only art in India in which we find the masculine aspect of dance preserved. Years of training (generally twelve years) are required for one to be a master in it and it is a delight to see how a Kathakaḷi actor sways his body in his rhythmic step and movement. It combines the vigour and control of body which Nāyars, its founders, exhibited in warfare and the delicate refinement of Nambudiris who patronised it in a later age.

INTRODUCTION.

The work that is now being presented to the public is a treatise on Kathakaḷi, the well-known dance-drama of Malabār. The author has taken considerable pains to study the subject in its technical aspects. It is divided into five prakaraṇas or sections. The first discusses in detail the conception of fine arts in general (which includes the histrionics also) and their classification into sixty four varieties according to the Hindu conception proving in the course of discussion that Kathakaḷi comes under Nṛtya and not Nāṭya as is generally supposed and establishing the importance of Kathakaḷi as an art. In this classification the author takes his stand on the rules enunciated by the Sanskrit rhetoricians and examines the Mudras (Hand poses) and their variations as basis for his contention. In the succeeding section the origin and development of Kathakaḷi and the make-up used in it come in for treatment. This leads to a general survey of the growth and development of the Kathakaḷi literature and the book closes with a few suggestions about reform in Kathakaḷi.

Thanks to the efforts of Poet Vaḷḷathoḷe and artists like Rāgiṇi and Udayaśankar, and the Neo-Kathakaḷi dancers like Gōpināth[1] and Mādhavan[2], the name of Kathakaḷi is now fairly familiar to people all over India and art-lovers abroad. But its real implications are still uncertain to many even among Malayāḷis. This work is primarily intended for them and therefore supplies a real want. There is now a demand for a similar work in one of the western languages preferably in English and the present writer has already prepared one at the request of the India Society in London.[3]

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

The critics of Kathakaḷi both among Mālayaḷis and Non-Malayāḷis seem to look upon it still as a puzzle. Their interpretations of it range from warm admiration on one side, to unreasoning contempt on the other. Some have extolled it as a perfect idealistic art in which acting, danc-

1 State dancer, Travancore.
2. one of Udayasankar's tropue.
3. Kathakaḷi, The Malabār Dance.

ing and music exist in perfect unison. According to them, it should be preserved as it is. They are even inclined to ascribe it to a divine origin and leave it 'untouched by human hands.' There are still others who go to the extent of declaring it as uncouth, its make-up horrible, its dance wanting in grace, and its gesture-language antiquated. I don't think, there is any other art in India or abroad that has been subjected to such diverse criticisms. Truly there is something strange either in the art or its critics, or in both that has provoked such an unsavoury jargon of critical acumen. A close student of Kathakaḷi can however, easily assess the value of such criticisms and make an emphatic declaration that there is nothing wrong in the art and it has yet to be properly interpreted. It is a mistake to regard Kathakaḷi as an isolated phenomenon divorced from its social and historical background. This initial blunder has made many a critic go astray and linger on its superficial aspects, leaving its spirit to look after itself. It is there, as the product of cumulative growth extending over several centuries. A finished product is often an admirable thing in itself; but when you are asked to value it, the various stages of evolution that gave it the final shape have also to be taken into account. It is so with Kathakaḷi. The Nāyars and the Nambūdiris, the two leading communities of Malabār, and their special characteristics, have gone to the making of Kathakaḷi as an art. Its features reflect their dominant qualities which they acquired in the course of their evolution. Some of them may not appeal to the modern mind. But that is no fault of the art which has a glorious and unbroken tradition behind. At one stage of its growth, even the kings of Kēraḷa were not content by being merely its patrons,. They regarded it a pleasure and a privilege to actually participate in it. Several stories of such royal actors are current among the people of Malabār Even as authors of Kathakaḷi works, royalties take foremost ranks. Is it then conceivable that an art that flourished under such distinguished auspices has no special message to give to the modern world.? We are now living in an age in which our past is getting out of tune with the present. Ideologies that fundamentally differ, now exist side by side and they do not lack enthusiastic champions. A sudden cataclysm in the political horizon has thrown us overboard, depriving us of our capacity to realize our starting point and the destination. We have begun to think more and more in terms of extremes. Either we magnify a drop of water or we drown

ourselves in the ocean of which the drop is but a very insignificant part. A thing is either good or bad : there is no via media. If we understand this psychology we can have an insight into the apparent contradictions which the critics of Kathakaḷi have managed to bring forth.

SPECIAL FEATURES OF KATHAKAḶI—GESTURE.

There are certain features of Kathakaḷi which elude an average critic or thinker. Its gesture-language is an enigma to him. Our common sense asks why the ordinary language which can be understood by all has been substituted by the gesture which only an expert can interpret. A careful examination of the point will show that in any art in which dancing has a prominent part, speech becomes a physical impossibility. Then there is the additional advantage that if speech is avoided the actors can concentrate more on acting. Besides, speech disturbs facial make-up and paints. Above all, the universality of the gesture-language is in its favour. In spoken language peculiarities of accent and intonation sometimes create serious handicaps in the matter of understanding. But when once we are able to master the technique of gesture-language, individual peculiarities have no place in it and the difficulties of understanding also vanish. The gesture language used in Kathakaḷi is not something which supplements the spoken tongue but is a real substitute for it. It consists of 24 basic Mudras (hand poses) and about 400 main combinations of them. They form a subject by themselves and call for separate treatment. They come under three broad divisions *viz* (1) imitative,[1] by which action or form of objects is imitated. (2) Suggestive,[2] by which certain ideas are suggested (3) Technical which cannot be defined.

MAKE-UP AND COSTUME.

Its make-up and costume need not detain us long. It may be pointed out at the very outset that characters in Kathakaḷi are either Gods, Demons, or their feminine counterparts. Both the costume and make-up therefore, have something of the gorgeous and fantastic about them. The dress of the people bears no resemblance to that of Kathakaḷi except

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1. For example: lotus is shown by keeping two hands together leaving the space between the palms hollow and moving delicately the fingers which symbolise the petals.

2. *e. g.* Mind which is shown by keeping the hand near the heart.

those worn by magicians and oracles who are supposed to play a superhuman role. There is no doubt that they have been deliberately chosen, as the designers were fully aware that they were not handling a problem concerning human beings. It became imperative under such circumstances that the personal identity of the actor should not interfere with the part which he acts, and that the impression of God, Goddess or Demon should be suggested by the appearance of the actor. If we keep these considerations before our minds' eye we can easily understand why the promoters of Kathakaḷi took so much pain in respect of even the minutest details in the matter of facial make-up and costume. It should not be understood from this that Kathakaḷi make-up and costume were the same from the very beginning to this day and they underwent no change. Once the original design was made, further developments were only a matter of course and for nearly three hundred years one experiment after another was made until they reached artistic perfection about hundred years ago. The improvements were mostly in details and not on the general plan. Considerable artistic energy was spent on it and even now there is room for minor modifications to suit individual tastes. There are also distinctive schools maintaining special features as in the dancing styles. The facial make-up is an art by itself, and is generally done by experts who undergo training in it for at least three or four years. The difference in the make-up [1] indicates the difference in the type of characters.

DUEL AND DEATH.

On the Kathakaḷi stage duel and death are essential items. Ninty five percent of Kathakaḷi plays end in the death of a demon or a Tāmasik hero. There are a few ending in marriages also. Even in such stories there will invariably be a fight of which the marriage will be the sequel. Sanskrit rhetoricians taboo deaths and fights on the stage while in Kathakaḷi without them the performance is not considered to be worth its name. An explanation of this phenomenon can be found in the history of Kēraḷa. As I have already pointed out, it reflects the martial

1 There are four main varieties in the make-up of male characters. 1 Pacca (Green Paint), 2 Katti (Knife), 3 Tāṭi (Beard), (this again is of three kinds, red, black and white), 4 Kari (Black). In the female make-up there is nothing extraordinary. But the demonesses are generally represented in black, and usually have the ferocity of their masculine counterparts.

characteristics of the Nāyars who were the chief administrators of Malabār for several centuries and who were also the chief promoters of the Kathakaḷi art.[1] Malabār was once governed by feudal chieftains, mostly Nāyars, owing only nominal allegiance to a common sovereign. They were always vying with each other for leadership and wars were not infrequent. Every one of them owned a militia consisting of five hundred or thousand Nāyars and they were ready to fight on the slightest pretext. There was compulsory military training for all. The whole atmosphere was surcharged with militarism. Kathakaḷi flourished in such an atmosphere, and it could not but imbibe some of its qualities. Duel was the most popular form of fight. As a matter of propaganda, Nāyar administrators must have discovered the efficacy of elevating the profession of fighting to the realm of fine art. The horrors of war will thus be familiarised and people will not entertain any fear arising therefrom. Such an attitude of mind will render the Nāyar soldiers, who witness these performances, more efficient in their work. This aspect of Kathakaḷi thus survives as a relic of Nāyar-heroism. Once it found a place in the art, its aesthetic possibilities made it stay even after the class heroism of Nāyars died out owing to pressure of historical circumstances.

In representing death, Kathakaḷi tradition is again contrary to that of the Sanskritic School. Every detail of death according to context, is exhibited on the stage. After a strenuous fight one of the characters falls on the ground and the victor tears him to pieces. A typical instance is the killing of Duśśāsana by Bhīma. The occasion has its own justification. Duśśāsana by that time has piled up a series of insults on Bhīma, his brothers and Draupadi and the big brother is only waiting for an opportunity to give full vent to his wrath. There is also his vow that he would tie Draupadi's hair by his hands stained by the blood of Duśśāsana, for the latter's open insult on her after the fatal game of dice. The Kathakaḷi actor takes nearly an hour to finish with Duśśāsana. Bhīma on this occasion assumes a form quite in keeping with this act. He is usually painted in

1 Even now the actors in Kathakaḷi are invariably Nāyars with one or two exceptions. Other communities like Nambūdiris and Ambalavāsis take part in it as singers and drummers. Some years ago there was a movement among Tiyyas in North Malabār and central Travancore to organize Kathakaḷi troupes. But the enthusiasm did not sustain. A section among christians has developed a kind of drama called Caviṭṭu Naṭakam (Kicking drama) which is an imitation of Kathakaḷi.

green, like other sātvic (virtuous) characters. On this occasion he wears a mustache with curls on either side and his lips are painted thick red. The effect of this scene is tremendous. The dexterous drumming helps the actor to create an atmosphere that strikes terror, and sounds the ultimate limits to which vengeance can go. Only first-rate actors with years of training to their credit can perform this according to the strict Kathakaḷi style, as it is not easy to sustain the pose of revengeful anger continuously for an hour[1]. It may also be observed in this connection, that blood-spilling was not introduced by the Kathakaḷi people for the first time. In some of the Kāḷi temples of Malabār Kāḷi and Dāruka enact a similar scene, in which Kāḷi subjects Dāruka to a similar treatment.

This ' bloody ' aspect of Kathakaḷi gives it a halo of antiquity, that defies the theory propounded by some critics that Kathakaḷi is only about three hundred years old. It also reminds us of the blood revenge which anthropologists associate with primitive man and Shakespeare portrays in his tragedies. But are we sure that modern man is less bloodthirsty ? Hitler, Mussolini (and Japan?) will give us the correct answer.

THE SENTIMENT OF LOVE.

Kathakaḷi is equally interested in the presentation of love in its practical aspects. There is hardly any Kathakaḷi play without a love scene. The hero and the heroine enter the stage fully prepared to indulge in their amorous propensities. They express the desire in unmistakable language. In between there are poetical flashes introduced by way of describing a garden or some other pleasure resort where the lovers happen to be at the time. This interlude raises the scene to a classical height and shields it from vulgarity. According to our forefathers, love is one of the fine arts and anything done to unfold or illustrate its intricacies, should not be deprecated. Love-quarrel (Praṇaya kalaha) is an interest-

1 About 4 years ago, when this scene was enacted on one of the stages in Madras, two tamilian ladies swooned. But I have not heard of a similar instance in Malabar.

2 Even in modern society this blood-cult survives. Fox hunt among the English people is a typical example.

ing variety in this series. Rāvaṇa's 'Kamaladaḷam'[1] is a typical illustration. The scene is laid in Rāvaṇa's bedroom where Maṇḍōdari rests on his lap. Suddenly she wakes up and rejects his advances. The Lord of Lanka is unable to know the reason for the change of attitude of his queen and he begins to play the lover anxious to please her. The song is fairly long in which Rāvaṇa praises the good qualities of his queen and requests her to forgive him for his sins, if any. As a last resort he prostrates before her. Such an abject submission moves the heroine and reconciliation takes place. In the conversation that follows, she tells Rāvaṇa that she had a dream in which she found her lord embracing Urvaśi, (the celestial nymph) which excited her jealousy and that she did not realise it to be a dream. Then Rāvaṇa laughs at the whole incident and the scene closes leaving them in that happy frame of mind.

To a modern mind, this over-emphasis on love (Sṛṅgāra) may appear to be going too far. But, as V. F. Calverton assures us, sex worship is inherent in us[2] and with the progress of time we have only changed the method. We have been upholding it in all the stages of our evolution, and even in modern times, both East and West are not free from the faith in phallic charms and symbols. Hindus have not hesitated to place their Gods also in the same level as themselves. Their love-intrigues are more subtle and complicated than those of men. It is this tradition that we find reflected in Kathakaḷi. Even among Kathakaḷi authors there seems to have been a feeling at one stage, that Kathakaḷi was giving undue prominence to "Sambhōga Sṛṅgāra". But they were a minority and their views have found expression in 'Uṇṇāyi Vārrier' who presents his hero and heroine in a very dignified pose. The love-scenes in Kathakaḷi have also a research value. For those who want to know how our ancients made love, there is plenty of material in Kathakaḷi. In these matter-of-fact days one may also take lessons from it and be profitted thereby.[3]

DANCE IN KATHAKAḶI.

Of all the features of Kathakaḷi, dance has captivated the modern mind most. The Kathakaḷi actor's

1 Called such, after the song with which it begins namely "Kamaladaḷa nayane!" (the lotus-eyed beauty!)

2 Sex expression in Literature P. 11

3 Vide—ch : IV. "Kathakaḷi ; the Malabār dance" by the present writer for a fuller treatment of the subject.

perfect control of his body and limbs, the facility with which he conducts his foot-work and the dexterity of his eye movements have been a marvel to all witnesses of the art. This mastery is acquired after years of training. Generally a Kathakaḷi actor puts himself under a master for twelve years, before he is able to take leading roles. The training consists of systematic massage of the body besmeared with oil which renders it extremely pliable and adaptable for every kind of movement, and lessons in steps, gestures, facial expression etc. After this course, they are familiarised with important Kathakaḷi plays. The rest they must pick up by experience. The first appearance of an actor on the stage is a ceremony in itself patronised by an important person of the locality. Even after entering the profession they have to take every day a few exercises called "Meypurappāḍu", to keep the body fit always.

In ancient times every Malabār boy—sometimes girls too—used to undergo massage and take a few lessons in dancing, which were then considered to be a part of his or her equipment. After that it is open to them to specialise.

The dance in Kathakaḷi is a mixture of the various types: religious[1], martial[2], and artistic[3], prevalent in Malabār from very ancient times. The various types thus incorporated were given a new form and setting in Kathakaḷi.

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1 **Religious**:—A typical example is "Pāna' which is performed to propitiate "Kāḷi" In it every item takes the form of a dance. Even the Pūja is performed by the Pūjāri dancing round the 'Sanctum-Sanctorum,' offering flowers at regulated intervals, to the accompaniment of 'Mēḷam". This is followed by a series of dances round the sacred place, till the oracle known as 'Veḷiccappāḍu' appears and joins the dancing troupe, giving a finishing touch to the whole ceremony. Ameng the items is a very interesting form of fire-worship in which one member of the troupe takes a torch in his hand and dances round the altar. This is really a difficult piece of work, and can be done only by experts. A similar ceremony called Ayyappan Pāṭṭu is performed in respect of the God 'Ayyappan'. In Tamil the god is called Ayyanār who is the guardian deity of the village.

2 **Martial**:— a notable instance of martial dance is the 'Parisa muṭṭum Kaḷi' (the sword and shield play) performed by all communities in Malabár. In ancient times this dance was usually performed when soldiers march for a battle, or when they return after a victory. This is a very strenuous performance and when they dance, many a military feat is exhibited in an artistic form. Paṭayaṇi of central Travancore also belongs to this category.

3 **Secular and artistic dances**:—Under this category there are a good many varieties, such as 'Kaikoṭṭikkaḷi,' Kōlkaḷi, Kalyāṇakkaḷi besides Kathakaḷi which is the most important of all.

Its vigour is one of its distinguishing features. Works like "Abhinaya Darpaṇa" define dance as a feminine art and give prominence to women dancers. But, in Kathakaḷi it is the other way round. It does not mean that the soft variety of dance (lāsya) is absent in Kathakaḷi. It has also its due place, and is resorted to, only in love scenes or scenes of descriptions. As I have already shown when the duel became an inevitable item in Kathakaḷi, masculinity necessarily formed an integral part of it. It is at the same time noteworthy that the masculine element in dance has practically vanished from other types of dances* in India, and that only the Kathakaḷi enjoys the rare distinction of having preserved it. Even in respect of the 'lāsya' variety Kathakaḷi presents two distinct types; one suited for men, and the other for women. The 'lāsya' style calls for more control and grace, while the 'tāṇḍava' style exhibits sheer strength and agility. Kathakaḷi actors are adepts in both and it is delightful to see them change from one to the other.

INNOVATIONS.

A reference in this connection, to the innovations recently introduced in the form of popular dances without much of a costume and make-up based on Kathakaḷi techinque[1] will not be out of place. The innovation lies only in bringing them to the modern stage and not in any new idea. It is only a continuation of the Colliāṭṭam[2] tradition of Kathakaḷi in which the actors portray a situation or enact a full play without having recourse to the artificial aid of make-up or costume. The only difference is that the Kathakaḷi people do it during day time. It is however significant that in recitals like this, it is the actor that forms the chief centre of attraction, while in a performance it is the action that impresses the spectators. While the recital loses much of its dramatic value, as one actor assumes different roles, it has at the same time the advantage of presenting the symmetry and beauty of human form with all its artistic potentialities at its best. Kathakaḷi in maintaining the two traditions has set different values on both and never regarded one as a substitute for the other. In modern times the tendency is in the latter direction and if it ultimately succeeds, I am not sure, whether

*This observation applies only to cultivated types and not to the folk dances in which masculunity is still a common feature.

(1) Two popular recitals they present are :

¶ (a) **Hunter's dance**, reproducing a description of a forest in Kathakaḷi, and (b) **Peacock dance**, depicting a description of a garden at the palace.

2. Literally, "recital and dance"

we can congratulate ourselves on our achievement in as much as it involves the loss of one half of a rich heritage.

Kathakaḷi dance has no parallel either in India or abroad, although it is possible to discover its affinities in the systems obtained in other parts of South India and in Jāva. It is in the main an original contribution of the people of Kēraḷa to the art of dancing. Certain features it imbibed in the course of its evolution, bear ample testimony to the original unity of South Indian culture and art.

ANTIQUITY OF KATHAKAḶI.

It is not easy to determine the date on which Kathakaḷi saw the light of day. Some of its critics are inclined to give it only a life of three or four hundred years. It is not possible to examine the question in detail within the compass of this short introduction. But, it is at the same time necessary in view of certain persistant statements made, to place before the public the results of latest research on this subject which point to a much longer tenure for this art in Kēraḷa. The theory referred to, may with some justification, apply to the literature that has sprung out of it and not to the art. The history of the dramatic art in other countries has shown that by the time a literature begins to grow out of an art it has already reached a fairly high stage of development. There is no reason why the same should not be true of Kathakaḷi also. It is quite possible that an art which was once used only for the presentation of a situation, later on came to be adopted for the enactment of a story. The available literature relating to Kathakaḷi shows only the latter stage. Otherwise, the various conventions, which Kathakaḷi actors faithfully observe, but which are not warranted by the texts can hardly be justified. It shows the art is much older than the literature.

The history of the art also supports this view. It is believed, that Kathakaḷi owes much in respect of Mudras (hand poses) and acting, to Kūtiyāṭṭam, another form of drama enacted in temples by a professional troupe of actors called "Cākkiyārs".[1] There is a tradition

1 By caste Nambūdiri out-castes. They enact Sanskrit dramas in Malayāḷam, using 'mudras', and to the accompaniment of a light type of dance. The term literally means "joint dance,".

among them that they should not witness a Kathakaḷi performance, as according to them, Kathakaḷi actors are making fun of them. The tradition devoid of its sentiment seems to indicate the introduction of classical traditions into an existing popular art. Nambūdiris as champions of this tradition encouraged this fusion as we are already familiar with the names of two Nampūtiris *viz*, Kallaṭikkōde and Kapliṅṅāṭ, as having introduced certain reforms. Mention is made of a Cākkiyār[1] of Parur (North Travancore) in "Śilappadikāram"[2] (2nd century A.D.) who seems to have entertained Śenguṭṭuvan during his sojourn in the Nilgiris, by his "Kūttu". This shows that people of Malabār were noted for their dancing even in that age. One Arabic writer[3] records in his memoirs that a king of Jāva who invaded South Travancore in the 10th Century A. D. took some Malayāḷis as prisoners who introduced a new kind of dance-drama without speech into that country. It is quite possible that this author refers to Kathakaḷi. Even about the date of Koṭṭārakkara Rāja who is the first among the Kathakaḷi authors, opinions differ.[4] He is generally assigned to the 17th Century. But the internal evidence furnished by his plays pushes him back at least two hundred years. These facts point to the unbroken tradition of Kathakaḷi at least for a thousand years.

KATHAKAḶI AND BHARATANĀṬYAM.

Recent notices of Kathakaḷi—mostly by non-Malayāḷis-very often exhibit a tendency to prove that Kathakaḷi contains nothing which is not adumbrated in Nātyaśātr a of Bharata or Abhinayadarpaṇa of Nandikēśvara. To them those two works are the last word on the subject. No one disputes the authority of those works. But the identity of their authors and their dates are open to question. Though we are not concerned with the topic directly it is well to know something about them to negative certain unwarranted assumptions. It is even doubted whether the term Bharata indicates the name of one individual.[5] Those who pin their faith on these works proclaim that they have

1 The derivation of Cākkiyār from Ślāghyavākku (noble word) is too fanciful. In Tamil the word is used in the sense of an actor.

2 Śilappadikāram-by V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, M.A., P 318-319

3 Travancore State Manual Vol. I, P 245. I am indebted for this information to Vedabandhu

4 The author has discussed it fully in the IV Prakaraṇa of the book

5 Some are of opinion that the term stands for the three arts, viz, Bhāva —expression, Rāga—music and Tāḷa—rhythm—implying rhythmic steps

preceded all artistic development in India. They are also anxious to trace all indigenous varieties of art to them. The idea that treatises of art existed before the art itself developed is too ludicrous to be entertained. It is however, interesting to note that none of these except the Śilappadikāram makes any reference to different systems of dance, music, and acting which S. India had developed in abundance from very early times. They also go to the extent of asserting that all the developments in India, literary, artistic and religious are due to Āryan influence, while we know that the excavations of Mohenjo-Daro tell a different tale. We are now in a position to say that India had a highly developed civilization and all that it implies even before the advent of the Āryans. No civilization worth the name has ever ignored fine arts which often supply the land marks of human civilization and culture. History tells us that with the arrival of the Āryans, Sanskritic traditions also were imported to India and what we have at the present day is a composite culture resulting from the fusion of the indigenous and the imported as the Āryans settled down in India and never went back. It is not easy to discover which elements dominated in the mixture. A close study of the various South Indian institutions very often reveals that the process was one of assimilation and absorption rather than extinction or supercession. In South India where civilization dates much earlier than in the North, indigenous elements, particularly in the field of fine arts seem to have prevailed over the Sanskritic elements. This fact is doubly true of Kathakaḷi and accounts for the deviations in Kathakaḷi which the Sanskritists are not inclined to accept. We have already seen that there are elements in it in which the influence of Nāṭyaśāstra is noticeable. It also contains features which run counter to the essential principles enunciated in that work and it is the latter that has determined its ultimate form and design.

The argument that Kathakaḷi is based on Nāṭyaśāstra therefore falls to the ground. Kathakaḷi like many other institutions (cultural and otherwise) of India was affected by classical influences at one stage of its development. But the original frame-work which imbibed later additions was indigenous. I have already indicated that it is more perceptible in the literature that grew out of it. In Kathakaḷi, literature is subordinate to art.

KATHAKALI AND TERUKKŪTTU.

Certain writers endeavour to make out that Kathakaḷi is on a par with Terukkūttu of Tamil, Vīthināṭaka of Telugu and Bayalāṭṭa of Kanarese. But they have not cared to enquire whether Kathakaḷi ever had such an appellation at any stage of its evolution. The above three names practically mean the same except that in Kanarese Bayal (field) takes the place of the street. They are all street plays meant for the common people to whom they are mere amusements and nothing more. In respect of Kathakaḷi, tradition is entirely different. In the early stage we find it associated with the Kāḷi-cult and it was performed in temples only. The death and duel scene in Kathakaḷi is a survival of this stage. When it was secularized, kings took charge of it, never allowing it to degenerate into the level of the street play which is not governed by definite principles. I am not belittling street plays which have their own appeal to the unsophisticated. I am only making the distinction between refined and unrefined art clearer. The words "Tōṭayam" and "Kalāśam" are pressed into service to indicate that Kathakaḷi borrowed these terms from other varieties of the art prevalent in various parts of South India. "Tōṭayam" in Kathakaḷi is not the same as "Tōṭayam" in Terukkūttu in which we are told is an invocation to God followed by a reference to the names of the author and the play. In Kathakaḷi, there is no direct mention of either the play or the author. Even if it is conceded that one borrowed the word from the other it only means the original identity of the South Indian cultural background. When it comes to the question of borrowing it is not easy to determine the priority. The word "Kalāśam" also has a similar history. In Sanskrit classics it implies the end of a course of dance, while in Kathakaḷi it means a particular style of dance which begins when music ends.[1] The origin of the word "Kalāsam" also is not free from doubt. Dr. Gundert derives it from the Arabic word "Xalasa" meaning 'conclusion especiallyin music.' This meaning is particularly appropriate to Kathakaḷi in which "Kalāśam" comes only at the end of the music. Sanskrit lexicographers have not claimed this word as theirs. In

1 There are different kinds of 'Kalāsams' such as Eṭuttu Kalāsam, aṣṭakalāsam, vaṭṭam vecca Kalāsam and Eṭakkalāsam.

any case it does not indicate any Sanskritic influence. Malabār history tells us that Arabs and Malayāḷis were brought into contact even from the 8th Century A. D. and it is quite possible that this word like many others is the outcome of their association with the Malayāḷis.[1] If at all we are to construct any theory out of these words it must have a necessary reference to the extensive influence which Malayāḷis wielded among the peoples whose lots were cast with them. In any case to build a theory based on these words, making Sanskritic traditions the main inspiration for the evolution of Kathakaḷi art is, to say the least, unjustifiable.

I believe, this rapid survey of Kathakaḷi in which it has been possible to draw attention only to a few of its prominent features will be of some use to the reader who is anxious to know some thing of it and I shall now conclude with the hope that Mr. Krishnan Nāyar's interesting and instructive study of the subject will considerably help to clear the hazy atmosphere in which Kathakaḷi is shrouded at present and emphasise its importance in the cultural evolution of the Malayāḷis. I may also avail myself of this opportunity to express our thanks to the University authorities for having sanctioned this publication.

C. ACHYUTA MENON,
General Editor.

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1. Many common words in Malayāḷam, e g. Kattu, Karār, Takarār etc. are derived from Arabic. It is also worth while to observe in this connection that the female make-up of Kathakaḷi particularly the veil, has some resemblance with the costume of a Muslim lady.

പ്രസ്താവന.

ആട്ടക്കഥാവിഷയമായി, സാഹിത്യകലാശാലയുടെ ആഭിമുഖ്യത്തിൽ ആറു വർഷത്തിനു മുമ്പുണ്ടായ എന്റെ ഒരു * ഉപന്യാസക്കുറിപ്പുതന്നെയാണു് കാലോചിതമായ രൂപഭേദത്തോടുകൂടി പുസ്തകമായി പരിണമിച്ചിരിക്കുന്ന ഈ 'ആട്ടക്കഥ' അല്ലെങ്കിൽ 'കഥകളി'. വിശേഷിച്ചു്, ബാലാരിഷ്ടങ്ങളൊന്നും കൂടാതെ കാലക്രമത്തിൽ വളർന്നു നവയൌവനം പ്രാപിക്കുന്നതോടുകൂടി ഒരു ബാലികയ്ക്കുണ്ടാകാവുന്ന സവിശേഷമായ ആ രൂപഭേദത്തോടു് ഏതാണ്ടു സമാനയോഗക്ഷേമമായ ഒരാകാരവൈശിഷ്ട്യംതന്നെയാണു് പ്രസ്തുത കൃതിക്കും വന്നു ചേർന്നിരിക്കുന്നതെന്നു പറയാം.

എന്നാൽ, മുൻപറഞ്ഞപ്രകാരം അരിഷ്ടപ്രസക്തികൂടാതെ ഈ ചടുവയ്ക്കു് ഈ വിധത്തിൽ വളർത്തിക്കൊണ്ടുവരുന്നതിലേക്കു് യഥാകാലം പ്രോത്സാഹകവും സഹായവുമായി, യോഗ്യന്മാരായ രണ്ടു ഭിഷഗ്വരന്മാരുടെ സ്നേഹമസൃണമായ അനുകമ്പ ലഭിക്കുവാൻ ഭാഗ്യംസിദ്ധിച്ച എനിക്കു് ആ വിഷയത്തിൽ യാതൊരു ബുദ്ധിമുട്ടിനും ഇടവന്നിട്ടില്ലെന്നുള്ള വാസ്തവംകൂടി ഈഅവസരത്തിൽ പ്രസ്താവിച്ചുകൊള്ളട്ടെ. എന്റെ ജ്യേഷ്ഠഭ്രാതൃസ്ഥാനീയനായ ഡാക്ടർ, സി. അച്യുതമേനോൻ (ബി, ഏ., പി. എച്ചു്. ഡി. ലണ്ടൻ) അവർകളും പ്രേഷ്ഠഗുരുസ്ഥാനീയനായ റാവുസാഹിബു്, സാഹിത്യഭ്രഷണം, മഹാകവി, ഉള്ളൂർ, എസ്. പരമേശ്വരയ്യർ അവർകളുമാണു് ആ ഭിഷഗ്വരന്മാർ. ഒരാൾ ഡാക്ടരാണെങ്കിൽ, മറെറയാൾ ഒരു വൃദ്ധ f വൈദ്യനാണു്. പ്രൌഢനും സമർത്ഥനുമായ ഒരു ഡാക്ടരുടേയും വേണ്ടവിധം പരിചയവും പരിജ്ഞാനവും സിദ്ധിച്ച ഒരു വൈദ്യവയ്നേറയും മേൽനോട്ടത്തോടും ഒത്താശയോടുംകൂടി വളർന്നവന്ന ഒരു പൈതൽ * കല്പ്യാത്മികയല്ലാതാ

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* 1932 നവമ്പർമാസം 24, 25, 26 എന്നീ തീയതികളിൽ പ്രസിഡൻസികോളേജിൽ നടത്തിയ പ്രസംഗം.

f വൈദ്യൻ=അധീതവിദ്യൻ— യഥാർത്ഥപണ്ഡിതൻ എന്നർത്ഥം "തദധീതേ തദ്വേദ" എന്ന സൂത്രപ്രകാരം വിദ്യാശബ്ദത്തിനു് അൺ പ്രത്യയവും ആദിവൃദ്ധിയും വന്നു 'വൈദ്യ' എന്നു രൂപം സിദ്ധിക്കുന്നു.

* "സ്യാൽ കല്യാതു രുഭാത്മികാ" എന്നും "കല്യൌ സജ്ജനിരാമയൌ" എന്നും അമരം കാൺക.

കുമോ? ഡാക്ടർ മേനോനും എനിക്കും തമ്മിലുള്ള സൌഭ്രാത്രത്തെക്കുറിച്ചു വിശേഷിച്ചൊന്നും എടുത്തുപറയേണ്ടതായ ആവശ്യമില്ല. വിദ്യാവൃദ്ധനായ മഹാകവി ഉള്ളൂർ അവർകൾക്കും ഈ ഗ്രന്ഥകാരനും തമ്മിലുള്ള ബന്ധമാകട്ടെ, ദ്രോണാചാര്യൂക്കും ഏകലവ്യനും തമ്മിലുള്ളതിനു സമാനമായ ഗുരുശിഷ്യഭാവം തന്നെയാകുന്നു. ഇന്നാതരത്തിൽ പ്രവർത്തിക്കണമെന്നും മറ്റും യഥാകാലം മേനോൻ എനിക്കു തന്നിട്ടുള്ള ഉപദേശം വാച്യമായ്വാദയിലാണെങ്കിൽ ഉള്ളൂർ വ്യംഗ്യമായ്വാദയിലാണെന്നോ വ്യത്യാസമുള്ളൂ. ശിഷ്യവത്സലനായ ഒരു ഗുരുനാഥനു യോജിച്ചവിധം ഗവേഷണനിപുണനായ ഉള്ളൂർ അവർകൾ അഭിപ്രായവ്യത്യാസത്തിന്നിടയുള്ള ഏതാനും ചില വിഷയങ്ങളെ സംബന്ധിച്ചുള്ള ഈയുള്ളവന്റെ അഭ്യൂഹങ്ങൾക്ക് എത്രത്തോളം അടിസ്ഥാനവും ദാർഢ്യവുമുണ്ടെന്നു പരീക്ഷിച്ചുനോക്കുവാനായി എന്റെ ചിന്താഗതികളെ തോദനം ചെയ്തിട്ടില്ലായിരുന്നുവെങ്കിൽ പ്രസ്തുത പ്രബന്ധത്തിലെ വാദപ്രകാരങ്ങൾക്ക് ഇത്രത്തോളം വൈപുല്യവും സ്ഥൈര്യവും ഒരിക്കലും സിദ്ധിക്കയില്ലായിരുന്നുവെന്നു ധൈര്യമായിപ്പറയാം. മഹാകവിയോടുള്ള കടപ്പാടിന്റെ പാരമ്യത്തെപ്പറ്റി ആലോചിക്കുമ്പോൾ വിസ്മയാദിവികാരപരവശമായ് ച്ചമയുന്ന ഈ ഗ്രന്ഥകാരന്റെ ഹൃദയത്തിനു സല്പം സ്വാസ്ഥ്യമരുളുന്നതു് ആചാര്യുത്രതനായ അദ്ദേഹത്തിനു് അതിലേക്കു ചുമതലയുണ്ടെന്നുള്ള ബോധമൊന്നു മാത്രമാണു്. ഈ ഗ്രന്ഥത്തിന്റെ പ്രധാന പ്രസാധകനായ സി. ഏ. മേനോൻ അവർകൾക്കുള്ള ചുമതലയാകട്ടെ,ധർമ്മ്യം (Moral) മാത്രമല്ല, ന്യായ്യം (Legal) കൂടിയാണെന്നുള്ള വസ്തുത വ്യക്തവുമാണു്. ആകയാൽ, എല്ലാംകൊണ്ടും കൃതഹസ്തനും സൌഹാർദ്ദനിധിയുമായ ഒരു ഡാക്ടരുടെ മേൽനോട്ടത്തിലും ദോഷജ്ഞനായിരുന്നിട്ടും ഗുണഗ്രാഹിയായി വിജയിക്കുന്ന ഒരാചാര്യന്റെ വാത്സല്യഗർഭമായ ശാസനയിൻ കീഴിലും എത്രയും ബാലയായ ആ ചിന്താഗതിയെ ഈ വിധത്തിൽവളർത്തിക്കൊണ്ടുവരുന്നതിനു ഭാഗ്യം സിദ്ധിച്ചതിലുള്ള സന്തോഷാതിരേകത്തെയാണു് ഈ ഗ്രന്ഥകാരനു് ആദ്യമായി പ്രസ്താവിക്കുവാനുള്ളതു്. ഒരു വേള, ഈ പ്രസംഗം അതിപ്രസംഗമോ അധികപ്രസംഗമോ ആയ്പോയെന്നു വിജ്ഞന്മാരിൽ വല്ലവരും വിചാരിക്കുന്നുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ, അവർ,

"പൂരോൽപീഡേ തടാകസ്യ പരീവാഹഃ പ്രതിക്രിയാ."

എന്ന ഭവഭ്രതിവചനമോർത്തു് ഒന്നു ക്ഷമിക്കണമെന്നു പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കയേ നിവൃത്തിയുള്ളൂ.

പ്രകൃതഗ്രന്ഥത്തിലെ ചച്ചാപ്രകാരങ്ങളെ പ്രധാനമായി അഞ്ചു പ്രകരണങ്ങളായിട്ടാണ് വിഭാഗിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നതു്. ആദ്യത്തെ പ്രകരണത്തിൽ കലാസചരുപം, നൃത്തചസ്ഥാപനം രണ്ടാമത്തേതിൽ ആട്ടക്കഥാപ്രസ്ഥാനത്തിന്റെ ആഗമം മൂന്നാമത്തേതിൽ സാമാന്യസചരുപവും വേഷസന്നിവേശവും നാലാമത്തേതിൽ സാഹിത്യം അഞ്ചാമത്തേതിൽ പരിഷ്കാരപ്രകാരം എന്നിവിഷയങ്ങളെ അധികരിച്ചാണ് യഥാശക്തി ചച്ചചെയ്തിരിക്കുന്നതു്.

അതിൽ ആട്ടക്കഥയുടെ ആഗമത്തെ—അതായതു, രാമനാട്ടത്തിന്റെ ഉൽപത്തികാലത്തെ—സംബന്ധിച്ചുള്ള ആ പുതിയ ചിന്തയിൽ പലർക്കും ആശങ്കയും അഭിപ്രായവ്യത്യാസവും ഉണ്ടായെന്നുവരാം. എന്നാൽ,

"പുരാണമിത്യേവ ന സാധു സർവ്വം
നചാപി കാവ്യം നവമിത്യവദ്യം
സന്തഃ പരീക്ഷ്യാന്യതരദ് ഭജന്തേ
മൂഢഃ പരപ്രത്യയനേയബുദ്ധിഃ."

എന്ന കാളിദാസസൂക്തിയിലടങ്ങിയ തത്ത്വം വിജ്ഞന്മാർ വിസ്മരിക്കയില്ലെന്നാണ് എന്റെ വിശ്വാസം.

"പ്രാപ്താനന്തഘന—" എന്ന രാമനാട്ടപദ്യത്തിലെ "ശിഷ്യേണ പ്രവണേന ശങ്കരകവേഃ" ഇത്യാദിപ്രയോഗത്തിന്റെ സ്വാരസ്യമനുസരിച്ചു്, തമ്പുരാന്റെ ഗുരുവര്യൻ 'കോകിലസന്ദേശ'ത്തിലും 'ചന്ദ്രോത്സവ'ത്തിലും പുകഴ്ത്തപ്പെട്ടിരിക്കുന്ന പ്രസിദ്ധനായ ആ ശങ്കരകവി—ഉദ്ഭണ്ഡശാസ്ത്രികളുടെ സമാനകാലികനും കൃഷ്ണവിജയകർത്താവുമായ ആ ശങ്കരവാരിയർ, അഥവാ മാരാർ—തന്നെയായിരിക്കണമെന്നുള്ള സ്വരസമായ അഭ്യൂഹത്തെ ആധാരമാക്കിയാണ് ഈ ഗ്രന്ഥകാരൻ രാമനാട്ടത്തിന്റെ കാലത്തെ നിർണ്ണയിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നതു്. അതിനു് അനുഗുണമായി പ്രസ്തുത പദ്യത്തിൽ തമ്പുരാൻ തന്റെ അമ്മാമനായി നിർദ്ദേശിച്ചിരിക്കുന്ന വീര കേരളവർമ്മപ്പെരുമാൾ അക്കാലത്തു രാജ്യംഭരിച്ചിരുന്നതായി കൊല്ലം ഗണപതിനടയിലെ ശിലാശാസനത്തിൽ നിന്നുംമറ്റും അറിയുന്നതുമുണ്ടു്. രാമനാട്ടത്തിന്റെ പ്രാചീനതയേയും തദ്ഭാരാ, കൃഷ്ണാട്ടം അയച്ചുകൊടുക്കാത്ത വാശിയാലാണ് രാമനാട്ടം നിർമ്മിച്ചതെന്ന ഐതിഹ്യത്തിന്റെ അവിശ്വാസ്യതയേയും തെളിയിക്കുവാൻ കൊണ്ടുവന്നിട്ടുള്ള യക്ഷഗാനപ്രസ്താ

വവും ചിലപ്പതികാരപ്രസ്താവവും മറ്റും അഭിപ്രേതമായ കാലനിർണ്ണയത്തിന്നു് ഉപോദ്ബലകമാണെന്നേയുള്ളൂ. ഈസ്ഥിതിക്കു്, കൊട്ടാരക്കരത്തമ്പുരാന്റെ ഗുരു, ഉദ്ദണ്ഡശാസ്ത്രികളുടെ സമാനകാലികനും പ്രസിദ്ധനുമായ ആ ശങ്കരകവിയല്ലെന്നും തമ്പുരാന്റെഅമ്മാമൻ കൊല്ലം ശിലാശാസനപ്രകാരം 671-ൽ രാജ്യം ഭരിച്ചിരുന്ന ആ വീരകേരളവമ്മയല്ലെന്നും വല്ല ഗവേഷകന്മാരും സപ്രമാണം തെളിയിക്കുന്നതായാൽ മാത്രമേ ഈ ഗ്രന്ഥത്തിൽ പ്രതിപാദിച്ചിരിക്കുന്ന കാലനിർണ്ണയത്തിന്നു് ഇളക്കം തട്ടുകയുള്ളൂ എന്നതു തീച്ചയാണു്. രാമനാട്ടത്തിന്റെ കാലം കൊല്ലവർഷം ഏഴാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിന്റെ ഉത്തരാർദ്ധമാണെന്നു് അഭിപ്രായപ്പെട്ടിരിക്കുന്നതു് ഏതാനും ചില യുക്തികളും തെളിവുകളും ആധാരമാക്കിക്കൊണ്ടു മാത്രമാണെന്നുള്ള വസ്തുത ഈ ഗ്രന്ഥകാരൻ വിസ്മരിക്കുന്നില്ല. ആ അഭിപ്രായത്തിന്നു പ്രതിക്കൂലമായി അവയിലും പ്രബലങ്ങളായ യുക്തികളോ പ്രമാണങ്ങളോ ലഭിക്കുന്നതായാൽ അഥവാ ആരെങ്കിലും പ്രദർശിപ്പിക്കുന്നതായാൽ പ്രകൃതാഭിപ്രായത്തെ സസന്തോഷം മാറ്റുന്നതിന്നു് ഈ ഗ്രന്ഥകാരൻ ഇന്നും എന്നും ഒരുക്കമാണു്. ഏതുവിധമെങ്കിലും സത്യം വെളിപ്പെടണമെന്നല്ലാതെ സ്വാഭിപ്രായത്തിൽ ദുരാഗ്രഹമോ ദുർഗ്ഗാഢ്യമോ ഉണ്ടെന്നു് ആരും തെറ്റിദ്ധരിക്കയുമരുതു്. എന്നാൽ നേരെമറിച്ചു്, 'ശങ്കരകവിയെന്നും വീരകേരളവമ്മയെന്നുമുള്ള പേരിൽ വേറെ ചിലർ ഉണ്ടായിക്കൂടെന്നില്ല. യക്ഷഗാനം കഥകളിയുടെ അനുകരണം തന്നെ ആകണമെന്നില്ല; മറ്റു വല്ല കളികളുടേയും ആകാം.' എന്നും മറ്റും, വാദഗതിയുടെസ്വരൂപമോ സ്വഭാവമോ മനസ്സിലാക്കാതെ, ഉപന്യസിക്കുന്നതുകൊണ്ടുകായ്മമില്ലെന്ന ക്രൂടി ഈ അവസരത്തിൽ ഉദ്ബോധിപ്പിച്ചുകൊള്ളുന്നു.

ഇനി ഈ പ്രസ്താവകനു പ്രസ്താവിക്കാനുള്ളതു്, ഈ ഗ്രന്ഥത്തിൽ ചേർത്തിരിക്കുന്ന മുദ്രകം, സ്വന്തം പ്രവൃത്തിത്തിരക്കുകൾക്കിടയിൽ ഇത്ര ഭംഗിയായി ശാസ്ത്രീയലക്ഷണാനുസരണം വരച്ചുതന്നു സഹായിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നതു് എന്റെ പ്രിയശിഷ്യനും മദ്രാസ് ഗവർമ്മേണ്ടു മ്യൂസിയത്തിൽ ആർക്കിയാളജിക്കൽ ക്യൂറേറ്റരുദ്യോഗം ഭരിക്കുന്ന മാന്യനുമായ ശ്രീമാൻ ശിവരാമമൂർത്തി എം. ഏ. ആണെന്നുള്ള സന്തോഷവർത്തമാനമാണു്

സമർത്ഥനും വിനീതനുമായ ഈ സൌജന്യനിധിയുടെ ഗുരുസ്ഥാനം പേരിനെങ്കിലും വഹിക്കുവാനിടയാക്കിയ പ്രസിഡൻസി കോളേജിനോടും വിശിഷ്യ അതിലെ സംസ്കൃതവകുപ്പിനോടും എനിക്കതിമാത്രം അഭിമാനം

ജനിപ്പിക്കുവാനും അതിനെല്ലാം കാരണമായ, എന്റെ ആചാര്യപാദർ മഹാമഹോപാദ്ധ്യായ, വിദ്യാവാചസ്പതി, പ്രഫസർ, എസ്. കുപ്പുസ്വാമി ശാസ്ത്രി അവർകളുടെ കരുണാപാരമ്യത്തെ ഓമ്മിപ്പിച്ചു് ഈയുള്ളവനെ കോടീമയിക്കൊള്ളിക്കുവാനും പര്യാപ്തമായ ഒന്നാണു് ശ്രീമാൻ മൂത്തിയുടെ ജന്മവാസനാസിദ്ധമായ സരസകലാകുശലതയും സഹൃദയത്വവുമെന്നു തൽക്കാലം പറയുന്നുള്ളൂ.

പ്രസ്തുതഗ്രന്ഥത്തിന്റെ പ്രസാധനത്തിൽ പ്രൂഫു് നോക്കിത്തന്നു യഥാവസരം സഹായിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളതു്, മി. മൂത്തിയെപ്പോലെത്തന്നെ എനിക്കു ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട വിദ്വാൻ, മഹോപാദ്ധ്യായ, ബി. ഓ. എൽ എന്നീബിരുദത്രയധാരിയായ ശ്രീമാൻ പി. വി. കൃഷ്ണൻനായരാണെന്നുള്ള വസ്തുതയും പ്രസ്താവയോഗ്യമാണു്.

ഈ രണ്ടു പേരോടും പ്രത്യേകം കൃതജ്ഞത പ്രകടിപ്പിച്ചുകൊണ്ടും പ്രകൃതഗ്രന്ഥത്തിന്റെ പ്രകാശനം സദയം സമ്മതിച്ചു നിർവ്വഹിച്ച വിശ്വവിദ്യാലയത്തിന്റെ ആഭിമുഖ്യത്തിലും അതിലെ മലയാളം വകുപ്പിന്റെ അദ്ധ്യക്ഷനായ ഡാക്ടർ. സി. അച്യുതമേനോൻ (B. A. Ph, D. London) അവർകളുടെ സാന്നിദ്ധ്യത്തിലും ധന്യവാദം ഉദ്ഘോഷിച്ചുകൊണ്ടും പുസ്തകസ്ഥയായ ഈ എളിയ ചമ്പുവെ കൈരളിയുടെ കൈങ്കര്യത്തിന്നായി ഇതാ ബഹുജനസമക്ഷം സമർപ്പിച്ചുകൊള്ളുന്നു.

ഗ്രന്ഥകർത്താവു്.

Dravidic Studies in Madras

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INTRODUCTORY

If the division of India on a linguistic basis is decided on, what will happen to Madras? Some have a ready answer to this question. They argue thus: "The Cooum river bisects Madras into two; give one half to Tamils and the other to Andhras." One is not sure whether such a mathematical precision will help us in the matter. What about the innumerable business places including coffee-hotels and restaurants of Madras where Malayalam and Kanarese have come to stay? What about the China Bazaar Road which is a real epitome of India where all Indian languages are spoken. We will leave the problem to the modern politicians to solve and endeavour to know how the main languages of the Presidency were faring for the last two or three centuries in this city.

It may be stated at the very outset that with the erection of the Fort St. George at Madras by the English, a new chapter in the history of the city was opened. The coast-town began to give up gradually its parochial character and assume the importance of a common centre for North and South based on its position between the two—a position which it maintains even to-day. The British East India Company changed its headquarters gradually from Masulipatam to Madras from which directions were issued from time to time for the conduct of the factories established under it in the various ports of South India. Their operations brought them into contact with the chief powers ruling different parts of the province and their subjects. In their dealings with them they realised that the knowledge of the main languages of the Presidency, viz., Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kanarese was of the utmost value. Nay, it was an absolute necessity. The realisation of this fact may be regarded as the primary cause that inspired the voluminous and laborious literary efforts in the languages of this Presidency which will be described in the course of this article.

In this connection, we have to take into consideration the activities of the missionaries who came to India for religious service and propaganda. In fact, so far as literary ventures are concerned, missionary

enterprise must be given precedence to commercial or political expansion. Although we hear of Christian and Jewish Saints visiting South India at an early period, say, soon after the commencement of the Christian era[1], systematic missionary propaganda, dates only after the arrival of Vasco-de-Gama. Western merchants that belonged to his camp and succeeded him were in need of religious service by their own priests when their journey to and stay in India became protracted and assumed a permanent character. While their merchant brethren were carrying on their commercial transactions with the native inhabitants their priests endeavoured to do a bit of religious preaching with them. Portuguese were notorious for this and it was when their propaganda took an aggressive turn that the Zamorin of Calicut—which was by the way, the first city to receive a foreigner in modern times—declared war against them which ultimately led to the giving up of all their ambitions in India.[2] Other nations as the Dutch, the French and the English took a lesson from this and conducted their propaganda later through inoffensive and diplomatic channels.

It is obvious that no religious propagandist can do justice to his work without an adequate knowledge of the language of the people with whom he is dealing. It is no wonder then, that the European missionaries realised this sufficiently early and directed their energies and efforts to this end. Problems of grammar and translation are the main difficulties that a foreigner engaged in the study of a new language has to face and an analysis of the works done by European missionaries and administrators will disclose that they devoted themselves mainly to the production of grammars and lexicons. It must be, however, gratefully acknowledged that missionaries when once they started their self-imposed task were impressed with the inherent worth of the languages they were studying and they accomplished their work with an amount of thoroughness which is the envy and despair of modern Indian scholars. It is not for us to question their motives as neither religious zeal nor a spirit of venture which raised many a nation to the pinnacle of its glory is a reprehensible thing in itself. When that materialises into solid contributions which the western missionaries and administrators can very well take credit for, they are even beyond praise.

1. (*a*) Solomon's agents visited Malabar first in 1000 B.C. Then again in 70 A.D. *Cochin Tribes and Castes*, L. K. Ananta Krishna Iyer, p. 401. (*b*) Apostle St. Thomas visited Mylapore (52 A.D.); and died there. His body was entombed in the Church at St. Thome. Page 402-3. *Ibid.*

2. K. M. Panikkar. *Malabar and Portuguese*, pages 182-196.

We will now proceed to examine the achievements of the two agencies mentioned above, making the city of Madras the nucleus of our analysis. Most of the linguistic work that stands to the credit of the foreigners during the period, was done in the moffussil stations[3] but they attained fruition at Madras which became a centre of all provincial activities in various fields. The first notable event in this connection is the establishment of the S. P. C. K. Press in Madras (now known as the Diocesan Press) in the year 1761, which is the first press to start printing books in Indian languages. The Press authorities took a good deal of interest in the literary activities of the Protestant Mission at Tranquebar and brought them to light. The first Manager of the Press, Fabricius (1761-9) was the author of "Malabar (Tamil) English Dictionary" which was printed in this press. It is curious that in the title of the work 'Malabar' is used in the sense of Tamil. He was also the author of a Tamil Grammar. Among the publications printed in this press during 1805-1812 mention is made of "The Tamil New Testament, The Tamil Catechisms, Fabricus' Tamil Hymn Book, the 2nd edition and other works on religion, morals, education not excepting the classics and the sciences in English, Latin, Tamil, Teloogoo, Hindustani and Malayalam."[4]

A Catholic Mission at Madura had by this time, done some pioneer work, in the field of Tamil. Two outstanding names attached to this Mission deserve special mention, viz., Robert-de-Nobili and Constantius Beschi (1680-1747). The former is said to have spent his last days (1656) in Mylapore and if so Madras has every right to claim the scholar as one of its alumni. He seems to have combined in his person "the sanctity of the Sanyasi and the erudition of the Pandit."[5]

[6]Fr. C. Beschi belongs to that rare type of scholars who are born to achieve something great. The following account of his work will give an idea of the man and his genius :—

"As a great Tamil scholar and poet, Beschi has always attracted the attention of all Tamils and has served as the model of Protestant missionaries engaged in Tamil studies like Rottler, Caldwell and Pope. Of Beschi's works on the grammar of the Tamil languages and of his dic-

3. There were five big missionary centres, three in the East Coast, Serampore, Madura and Tranquebar, and two in the West Coast, Mangalore and Kottayam.

4. From a note of Mr. W. H. Warren, the present Secretary of the Press.

5. Prof. C. S. Srinivasachari, page 147, Indian Historical Records Commission, proc. Vol. VIII p. 147.

6. A list of his numerous works in prose and verse both in Tamil and Latin was published in *The Madras Journal of Literature and Science* (1840).

to it. A Board also was constituted to look after its affairs. The Library of the Oriental Manuscripts which originally belonged to the Madras Literary Society[16] was after some time transferred to the custody of the Board. The College and other organisations connected with it developed into full working order by the year 1820 when the Rules for the conduct of the Board and the College were framed.[17] Though the College was originally meant for training the Civil Servants in the languages of the Province, its aims had a wider scope and application. We learn from a consultation[18] that " the acquirement of a knowledge of the general grammar and connection of the several languages of Southern India and of some acquaintance with the sources whence they spring is the chief object " of the Institution which a Board consisting of eminent scholars like F. W. Ellis, A. D. Campbell, was called upon to serve. The Board distributed its patronage equally to all the main languages of the Presidency and for convenience sake it is proposed to review their activities under each language. Certain works were undertaken by the Board itself. Private enterprise was encouraged by financial assistance by Government on the recommendation of the Board, which examined the merits of individual cases.

TAMIL

The Board commenced its literary activities by purchasing the copyrights at the instance of the Government of " several elementary works of first utility in the High and Low Dialects of the Tamil Languages," including Beschi's grammar of low Tamil, and " A brief exposition of Tamil by Chidambara Pandaram, the head Tamil master of the College.[19] Pandaram soon after began to work on the Tamil translation of ' Vignaneswariyam ' and ' Vyavahara Kandam '[20] comprising the 8th and 9th books of the translations of the ' Institutes of Manu' by Sir William Jones. In the year 1815 the Government asked the Board to review the Translation of the English Liturgy[21] by Rev. Mr. Rottler and the Tamil translation of Beschi's ' Grammar of Sen Tamil ' by B. G. Babington. The former was ultimately recommended for purchase in 1825 although the Government was not quite satisfied with the quality of the work. It was however, thought that it would serve as a foundation for

16. Started in 1817 by Sir Thomas Newbolt, the then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

17. Rules for the Colleges of the Fort St. George (1820).

18. Manuscript of Public Consultations, 1812 (Madras Record Office).

19. Consultations, 1813 (Set).

20. *Ibid* 1814. Vol. VIII. The author received 1000 Pagodas for these works which he utilised for the erection of a public choultry.

21. Consultations, 1815.

subsequent attempts. In the same year a reward was given to Thandavaraya Vadhyar for the writing of 'Amarakosa' and three other works in Tamil and the translation of the 'Arabian Nights' in Tamil by Thana Mudaly, was patronised by the Government by purchasing a few copies of it.

From 1825 to 1834 there is a lull in the literary activities of the College Board. In 1834 however, Rottler's work, Vol. I Part I was taken up for publication. The 2nd and 3rd parts of the work revised by Messrs. Taylor and Venkatachala Mudaly (certified teacher of the College) followed in the years 1837-41. Again there is a gap till the year 1853[22] when the question of compiling a catalogue of the Mackenzie Collections in Tamil engaged the Board's attention. Mr. Taylor was put in charge of the work.[23] In the year 1854, an American missionary, Rev. Miron Winslow came forward with a prospectus of 'A comprehensive Tamil and English Dictionary' of High and Low Tamil and sought Government support. The work was published in 1862 and contained this remarkable testimony about Tamil "in its poetic form, the Tamil is more polished and exact than Greek and in both dialects with its borrowed treasures more copious than Latin." It is interesting to compare this picture with the one which emanated from the brain of the late T. B. Macaulay, " a single shelf of a good European Library was worth the whole native Literature of India and Arabia.[24] In the same year Dr. Caldwell's 'Dravidian Affinities' received Government help and was published. Ellis's 'Mirasi Tenure' and Robertson's glossary of Tamil and English words used in Law Courts are the contributions to the legal lore of the period.

TELUGU

In the field of Telugu the Board's work is by no means inconsiderable. The first work that came up for the consideration of the Board was a Telugu dictionary called 'Andhra dipika' compiled by Mamudi Venkayya of Masulipatam. The copyright of the work was purchased for 1,000 pagodas. This was followed by 'a Grammar of Teloogoo

22. But the missionaries of the period were not idle. They produced a "United Tamil Version of the Bible" which was planned by the Madras S.P.C.K. and Jaffna Auxiliaries Bible Society in 1845. It was printed in 1850. (*—Promotion of Tamil Studies*, C. S. Chari. C. R. N. Commemoration Vol. p. 86).

23. Mr. C. P. Brown who was by this time known as a great Telugu scholar was not quite satisfied with the work of Taylor.

24. His minute dated the 2nd February, 1835. Selections from Educational Records, Part I, page 109. (Govt. of India, 1920).

language commonly termed the gentoo '[25] by A. D. Campbell, which was printed[26] at the College Press and dedicated to the Governor-General. In this work Campbell had the assistance and co-operation of the famous orientalist, F. W. Ellis and two Indian scholars,—Messrs Udagiri Venkatanarayana Iyah, the head English master of the College and Pattabhirama Sastri, Head Sanskrit and Telugu master of the College, who also produced at that time another book called 'Dhatu mala' (Telugu roots). In the same year the College Board secured the manuscripts collected by Col. Colin Mackenzie and one of his assistants. The need of a comprehensive Telugu dictionary was keenly felt at this time and the work of Mr. T. Dalziell was examined in this connection and the year after Mr. Campbell was asked to compile one. He was allowed to have two Indian assistants and live in Bellary for the purpose. In 1819, the Government ordered the publication of the 'Tales of Vikramarka '[27] written by Mr. K. Gurumurthi, a master in the College and the 2nd Edition of Campbell's 'Telugu Grammar.' Mr. C. P. Brown, the great Telugu scholar was now coming to the forefront. In 1827, he brought out at the instance of the college Board 'An analysis of Telugu Prosody,' for which he was paid 1000 pagodas. In 1835, Mr. Morris whose elementary work on Telugu language had already received support, prepared the "English and Telugu Dictionary" at the instance of the College Board with the assistance of the Telugu master, Mr. K. Gurumurthi Sastri. It was published in the same year.

In Telugu the works of T. C. Morris supplemented by his brother, H. Morris and C. P. Brown are of a very high standard. We have already commented on Morris' attempts. Mr. Brown was a versatile and prolific writer. His works include grammar, prosody, cyclic tables of Hindu and Mohammadan Chronology, Nistara Ratnakaram (Ocean of Salvation) and translation of the verses of Vemana, to mention a few. His own account of the state of Telugu learning in his own time gives us a picture of the conditions under which he worked. Says he :—

"When I began these tasks Telugu literature was dying out, the flame was just glimmering in the socket; the Madras College founded in 1812 preserved a little spark."[28] His remarks seem to have roused the native scholars from their slumber and provoked them to an outburst of literary activity. English synonyms (Carpenter) with

25. Consultations, '1813.'
26. 1816, First Edition; 1849 3rd Edition.
27. Copies of this were sent to England.
28. Prof. C. S. Srinivasachari, Indian Historical Records Commission, Proceedings, Vol. VIII, p. 157.

Telugu explanation by B. Subbarayalu is another notable work of the period.[29]

KANARESE AND MALAYALAM

Compared to the volume of output in Tamil and Telugu, the attention bestowed on Kanarese and Malayalam is meagre. Perhaps the Malayalis and Kanarese people in the city were a minority.

(*a*) *Kanarese*: Correspondence commenced about the Karnataka grammar by M. C. Kerrel (M.C.S.) even so early as 1815[30].....when the Government asked the Board to judge its merits. It dragged on till 1820 when it was decided to purchase the copyright thereof and publish it. After some years the need for a better Dictionary was felt when Mr. Reeve of the London Mission Society came forward with his English-Kannada and Kannada-English Dictionary which was recommended by the Board for purchase. It was published in four quarto volumes in the year 1832. He took 14 years to finish his work and he speaks with feeling the difficulties he had to face in the course of it. "The rareness of ancient manuscripts, the endless blunders of drivelling and hireling transcribers, the paucity of duplicates for collation, and comparatively smaller number of men to be found among the natives possessing appropriate philological information, soundness of judgment or zeal for literary research[31] and improvement have occasioned no inconsiderable suspense, annoyance and embarrassment."

With this the activities of the Board with regard to Kanarese seems to have come to a standstill till 1849 when we find from the Records that certain works of Rev. Mr. Moegling were recommended for help. We do not know what the works were. But the 'Basava Purana' and the 'Chenna Purana' produced by the same writer were granted aid sometime later. The Court of Directors do not seem to have been quite happy over this donation as is evident from the observations they have made in that connection. "The aid of government should be confined to original works or to publications calculated to be useful to junior civil servants and the expense of which is moderate."[32]

(*b*) *Malayalam*: Rev. Mr. Whish's 'Malayalam Grammar and Dictionary' was the first work in Malayalam to receive the attention of the Board and Government during the period. What exactly happened to

29. It is not possible to say whether this work received any assistance from the Board.

30. Consultations, 1815.

31. Preface. Page 11 of the work, *A Karnataka English Dictionary* (1894), p. 7-8.

32. Public Department Proceedings, dated 16th December 1852.

this work is not definitely known although the records show that the author was encouraged to compile it.[33] Correspondence on the subject began so early as 1815. In the year 1834 the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland made an enquiry and in reply to that the Government informed them of the works in vernacular languages done by the late Mr. C. M. Whish. A notable scholar who took an interest in Malayalam at that time was Mr. F. W. Ellis who as has been stated already, was a member of the Board associated with the College. He had written several articles on Malayalam and was struck with the abundance of Sanskrit derivatives in the language. He has also a few comments to offer about Ezuttaccan, the celebrated epic poet of Malayalam.[34] Their accuracy is, not however, beyond question in the light of subsequent research.

In 1847, Rev. I. Reek's proposed grammar of the Malayalam language received help from the Government. Two more grammars of the language, one by Mr. Spring of the Madras Civil Service and another by Rev. Peet of the Church Mission Society[35] appeared at this time. The dictionaries, (Malayalam-English and English-Malayalam) by Rev. Bailey of the C. M. S. Mission were by far the most substantial production of the age. In 1842, Government help was sought for their publication. They were printed at the C.M.S. Press, Kottayam, Travancore and are two voluminous works. The author apparently knew more of Sanskrit and less of Malayalam and as such his dictionaries contain more Sanskrit words than Malayalam. Dr. Gundert mentions this defect of the work in the preface to his Malayalam-English Dictionary.

"It is one of the chief defects of that otherwise valuable work that it does not discriminate between Malayalam and Sanskrit terms and leaves the student entirely in the dark, both as regards etymology and the proportional importance of words."[36] It should not be inferred from this account that the period was poor of productions in Malayalam.[37] The activities of Western scholars (Missionaries) in this

33. It is also significant that Dr. Gundert in the preface of his magnificent work (Malayalam-English Dictionary) makes no reference to this work but he mentions the works of Rev. Bailey.

34. Logan's Manual of Malabar, Vol. I, p. 94.

35. These were replaced by the works of Dr. Gundert and Dr. Garthwaite later. It is doubtful whether they have seen a second edition.

36. Page vi, Preface to Gundert's 'Malayalam-English Dictionary.'

37. (a) A Malayalam translation of the Bible was printed in Rome in 1639. A copy of this is available in the India Office Library (London).

(b) A book on the plants of Malabar was prepared by Portuguese in the early part of the 17th Century.

(c) Portuguese and Italian Missionaries of Virapoli compiled a Malayalam Dictionary in the 16th Century. Preface, Page iv. Gundert's Dictionary.

respect were mostly in the West Coast, and they were directed by two agencies, viz., the Basel German Mission (with Head-quarters at Mangalore) and the C.M.S. (with Head-quarters at Kottayam).

AFTER THE COMPANY'S DAYS

The preceding survey has shown that during the first half of the 19th century linguistic studies were making considerable headway although evidence of original talent was not forthcoming. Both the College of the Fort St. George and private enterprise, combined to produce works in various languages to suit the needs and requirements of the times. There was a regular stream of scholars coming one after the other, willing to continue what their predecessors had done. This flow of scholarly genius was however arrested when the College was abolished by the Company in the year 1854 and a Board of Examiners took its place. It was a period of transition in every respect. Different interests and ideals began to grow and it became impossible to bring them under one focus. Many institutions with more or less identical objects sprung up in place of one. Though their activities cover a wider field they lacked the original unity and solidarity, which the central institution of the Company maintained. The Company was preparing to hand over the administration to the British Government as its responsibilities increased day by day. The dual role, i.e., commercial and administrative, it was playing hitherto was too much for one organisation to bear and division of functions became an imperative necessity. The few years that followed the closure of the College were indeed momentous. I am not referring to the great sensation of 1857. Already there were signs in Madras of varied educational activities which very often went with literary enthusiasm. The Madras Christian College originally called the 'General Assembly's Institution' was started in 1837[38] by Rev. John Anderson, the first missionary of the Church of Scotland who came to Madras. Three years after the city witnessed the beginning of the present Presidency College as the outcome of a joint enterprise of "leading Europeans and Indians in Madras[39] in the form of a High School. In the year 1857, the Madras University came into being with this "High School of the Madras University" as its nucleus.[40] The year after saw the birth of Pachaiyappa's College which again started life as a High School.

38. Glyn Barlow *The Story of Madras*, page, 95.
39. *Ibid.*
40. The College was housed in its present building in 1870. (*The Story of Madras*, page 96).

These Arts Institutions had South Indian languages as part of the course provided in them and made a central Institution like the College of the Fort St. George a superfluity. As these were in course of time affiliated to the University the latter assumed by degrees the position of the College at the Fort in maintaining the standard and level of instruction in Indian languages and English. Second languages had a chequered history under the University. In the beginning they were included under the compulsory items of study; but in the early years of the present century they were relegated to the background as optionals, with a nominal compulsory Syllabus. This experiment fortunately did not last long and a return to the old position was effected in about twelve years. With this development the enthusiasm for the individual languages grew and the Madras University undertook in 1912 as a first step in the direction of promoting the vernaculars, the compilation of the Tamil Lexicon which attained completion three years ago. It may be considered the *magnum opus* of the University. The latest phase of the University's interest in South Indian languages is represented by the Oriental Research Institute in which original research in more than six Indian languages is being done by well known scholars. In recent years educational expansion of the Presidency necessitated the creation of new Universities and each main language of the Presidency has now a University of its own.[41] The University of Madras being the oldest still retains its original representative character.

It is not possible within the space of this paper to give even a brief survey of the varied literary achievements of eminent scholars of the time[42] of whom only a small proportion was connected with the above-mentioned institutions. There was a healthy fusion in them of the old and new traditions of scholarship which inspired a large variety of literary effulgence.

THE TYPE OF WORKS PRODUCED

As I have indicated in the beginning of the paper the activities of European scholars were mainly directed towards the production of bilingual dictionaries. Since 1854 considerable progress has been made in this direction the later scholars taking full advantage of the works of the pioneers in the field. The most outstanding foreign scholar of the period was Dr. G. U. Pope whose translation of Kural, Naladiar and Tiruvasagam are magnificent works in Tamil. Except in Tamil, dictionaries produced in Telugu, Kanarese and Malayalam in this period were

41. Andhra University for Telugu, 1926.
Annamalai University for Tamil, 1929.
Mysore University for Kanarese, 1916.
Travancore University for Malayalam, 1938.

42. C. P. Brown's work in Telugu-English Dictionary, 1852.

a decided improvement, on the existing ones.[43] But they were compiled outside Madras.

COMPARATIVE PHILOLOGY

Though the College Board had as one of its aims "the knowledge of the connection of the several languages of South India" very little has been accomplished in this respect subsequently. Dr. Caldwell's 'Comparative Grammar of Dravidian Languages[44] is the only solid contribution to the subject. Though it was not produced in Madras, the University of Madras gave due recognition to the work by approving it as a text-book for Higher Examinations and to the author by inviting him to deliver the Convocation address in 1879 and making him a Fellow of the University.

Either leisurely scholars were getting rarer and rarer or the labour and trouble involved in a work of the kind which demanded an intimate knowledge of at least half a dozen languages, Comparative Philology has been a much neglected field. The Oriental Research Institute of the Madras University has unique opportunities to do research in this line and it is hoped that the facilities afforded thereby will be amply utilised.

SUBSIDY TO AUTHORS

The present century is far behind the previous one in another important function which the College of Fort St. George was serving. Its Board very often recommended and secured help to authors either through granting them subsidy for the publication of their works or purchasing the copyright thereof. Since the abolition of the College this useful act of philanthropy which considerably helped Linguistic Studies has been a desideratum. The Government also made provision for such an endowment and regarded it as a legitimate item of expenditure to be incurred ungrudgingly. The only institution that does something of its kind in Madras is the School Book and Literature Society. Though it was instituted as early as 1820, it seems to have begun to function actively only when it was registered under the Act XXI 1860. Its primary object was "to promote the cause of education by the preparation, publication, purchase, and sale at a moderate price of English and Vernacular school books of the best quality, without regard to commercial profit, books bearing directly on religion or theology being excluded.[45]

43a. Kittel's *Kanarese-English Dictionary* in Kannada, 1894.

43b. Dr. Gundert's Malayalam-English Dictionary (1872) in Malayalam.

44. First Edition, 1861. Second Edition, 1875. Third Edition, 1913 (Revised and Edited by Rev. Wyatt, M.A., and T. Ramakrishna Pillay).

45. Memorandum of the Association, Clauses 1 & 2

It was also to engage itself in the dissemination of "Vernacular literature of a healthy moral tone (a) by the production..... (b) purchasing copyrights or otherwise encouraging the publication of really useful works the authors of which may not themselves have the means of publishing them." In recent times the Society is giving prominence to the second object and grants pecuniary help to vernacular publications that are declared useful by the expert committees they appoint now and then to advise them. It looks like the direct descendant of the Board attached to the College of the Fort St. George. But the connecting links in its history are now forgotten.

S.P.C.K. PRESS

Another surviving institution to which reference has already been made, that links us with the past, is the Diocesan Press (originally known as S.P.C.K. Press). Its present name shows the culmination of its long and interesting history[46] during which it changed many hands and saw diverse conditions. It is now under the management of the Christian Literature Society and has become its chief instrument for its literary and religious activities.[47]

Shall we now make a prophecy! It is common knowledge that in recent years nationalism with its immense driving power has given a fresh impetus to the study and cultivation of the languages of India. Its champions have realised their power of appeal to the people at large. External pressure under which they were groaning is now being gradually lightened and the languages are coming to their own, fully conscious of their newly attained freedom though slightly tending to rivalry and conflict,—which are often the first fruits of independence and constitute but a passing phase. South India has fully shared this new awakening. National consciousness has created the inner urge to get at the root of our heritage and has unearthed many forgotten literary treasures laying bare the inestimable value of our age-long culture. Are not these signs of a new light dawning upon us, a new literary renaissance heralding its arrival?

46. It owes its origin to the exploits of Sir Eyre Coote, who brought from Pondicherry to Madras as part of his loot "a hand-press and some cases of type and other printing equipment." Fabricius, the great scholar was at that time in charge of the S.P.C.K. Mission at Vepery and at his request the plant was handed over to him on the understanding that it should be at the service of the government when required. (Consultation, 1761). (From a letter of Mr. W. H. Warren, the Present Secretary of the Press).

47. This article shows only one side of the picture, the other side still remains in the dark.

THE BULLETIN

OF THE

SRI RAMA VARMA RESEARCH INSTITUTE.

MALABAR TEMPLES.

BY SAHITYA KUSALAN T. K. KRISHNA MENON.

1. It is a fascinating subject—temples in Malabar. The only difficulty is to decide where to begin and how to end; or, in other words, what to say and what to omit in a short paper like this. One meets with a variety of these temples in Malabar, from the wayside fane to magnificent, shrines, housing gods and goddesses of different types.

2. Malayāḷis are a very religious people. They consider that the worship of gods is one of the daily duties of a devout Hindu. That is why temples take a prominent place in popular religion.

3. A temple is, as a rule, built in a conspicuous part of the locality which it serves, or, popularly speaking, over which the deity is supposed to preside and hold sway. It will have a beautiful setting, as it will be in a shady grove, or near a sparkling stream, or on a picturesque hill.

4. God, Universe and the Individual Soul, according to the Vēḍas, are identical. That is the conception underlying the construction of temple structures. Into that abstract subject it is not my purpose to stray. I shall here invite the reader's attention to what he can actually see if he were to visit an ordinary temple.

5. A surrounding wall, with two or four gates, [1] marks off the temple premises from the lands around them. In the middle of this walled area is the sacred place [2] where the image will be found installed. This building will be a slightly raised one, and a flight of steps [3] will lead one to the door of the *sanctum sanctorum*. Beyond

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1. Gōpurams. 2. Garbha-gṛaha. 3. Sōpāna.

this, on all sides, there will be an open court-yard. [4] This space will be bounded by halls, [5] open inside, but closed on the outer part. Portions of the halls are converted into rooms for storing articles for daily use and for preparing offerings to the deity. On the outer wall of the halls will be fixed a sort of wooden trelliswork [6] on which there will be a number of small metal lamps to be lighted on festive occasions. In front of the door of the holy spot, there will be a raised platform [7] for people to sit and pray, and to prostrate before the deity. Further away, there is a hall [8] where the principal altar-stone is fixed. This hall, though it will be linked with the enclosing wall of the halls, will lie outside it, as a projection into the outer yard that lies between this wall and the boundary wall. Outside this, but still in front of the deity, and on a line with the image and the altar-stone, there will be the flag-staff. [9] On this the flag will be ceremoniously furled during the festival of the temple. On the top of the staff will be installed the vehicle of the deity: a bull for Siva, a Lion for Durga and a Garuḍa for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. A few feet outside this staff, there will be, all round the yard, a paved path, [10] used for processions of the Deities, and for the perambulations of the devotees. In certain large temples, the outer yard will also contain a large structure, with an elaborate and complicated workmanship, called Kūttampalam, a theatre from where Cākyars give Kūttu performances and from where, night after night, "hundreds of people stream forth delighted and enlightened, and with 'calm of mind, all passions spent". This, in brief outline, is a sketch of the temple premises.

6. There are many classic works that treat about the architecture of the temples, and of the manner in which the worship is to be conducted there. But, in Malabar, the work that is invariably followed is called *Tantrasamucaya* of Cēnnassu Nampūtiri. Elaborate rules there are for the selection of sites and materials for building temples, then for the consecration of the image and for the development and preservation of spiritual power in it. "This power has also to be protected from dissipation by the action

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4. Amkaṇa. This will be a paved one in large temples.
5. Nālampalam. 6. Viḷakkumātam. 7. Maṇḍapam.
8. Balikkalpura, 9. Kotimaram. 10. Pradakṣhiṇavazhi.

of adverse influences". Here it has to be noted that the above *āgama* work of the Nampūṭiri has only collected in a condensed form the canons of ancient Sruṭi and Smriṭi writers.

7. It is very interesting to trace the rise and history of temples in Malabar. The Vēdas do not tell us of idols or of idol worship. It was the Buddhists who began to build Vihāras and set up images of Buddha for purposes of adoration and meditation. That is the irony of fate. For, Buddhism did not acknowledge any personal God ; or, for the matter of that, any God at all. But, with the rise of the Mahāyāna School of Buddhism, rites, rituals and image worship came into existence. Thus arose the need for building temples for worship. The Malayāḷis must have copied the practice from the Buddhists. For, Buddhism had a long and glorious innings in Kerala. Under the Buddhists, it is said, the Malayāḷis 'attained a marvellous degree of scholarship and acuteness in all branches of Indian Sciences'. The Malabar Vihāras were also centres of learning. There was a great University at Matilakam near Crānganūr, where, at one time, the Assembly of the Wise was presided over by Iḷan-Kō-Aḍigal, the author of *Silappadhikaram* and the brother of the Kerala Ruler Sen Kuttuvan. He was a Buddhistic ascetic and lived in a *chaitya* near Maṭilakam.

8. Treatment that is even now given to lunatics in Tiruvādi and to lepers in Takaḷi temples in Travancore is reminiscent of Buddhistic times. For, Hindu temples do not prescribe or dispense medicines. The Kiḻirūr, Ŝāsthāncōtta, and Nāgercōil temples were originally Buddhistic institutions. When Buddhism was on the wane, the Viharas gradually got themselves transformed into temples.

9. The term Ŝāstha, now the name of a Hindu deity who is also spoken of as the son of Siva, in classical Sanscrit, is a synonym for Buddha, and one meets with any number of temples dedicated to Ŝāstha and to Kāḷi in Malabar, to the former especially in that line of hills to the east of the backwater system where the ancestors of the Malayāḷis lived.

10. The Nāyars and the Nampūtiris are the two enlightened classes of people who are the earliest to be seen in Malabar. From the points of view of physiogonomy and anthropometry, they look

alike. Originally, they were all classed as Kshatṛyas. 'Amongst those same people (Nayars) again' says Abbe Du Bois 'is another class of people called Nambudiris'. Varthema has recorded, 'the first class of pagans in Calicut are called Brahmans. The second are Naeri who are the same as gentlefolks amongst us'. Ma Huan, a Chiness Muhammadan traveller of the 15th century, observes, 'The Nayars rank with the King'.

11. The position of the Nayars in spiritual matters is evidenced by the prominent part they played in the establishment and management of temples. On account of the accumulation of property under the control of these religious bodies, the owners began to exercise even judicial and executive functions which at times rendered the sovereign power in the land a mere shadow. The ruler took advantage of the disputes among owners of temples to intervene; and thus by conquest, escheat and surrender, almost all the temples owned by individuals or private bodies came into the possession of the ruler. Vestiges still remain in the practices of several of the large temples, especially on festive occasion, which will give clear clues of the original ownership. The families of those who owned the temples in olden days may now be in famished circumstances, yet their representatives will be treated with special consideration at the annual celebrations in several temples.

12. Before we view these annual celebrations, let us look at the daily life of a deity. The daily routine of a temple starts with the blowing of a conch-shell, three times. At the same time, a chorus is set up by the temple musicians. Both these take place at about 3 A. M. and are intended to wake up the deity. Immediately, the priest goes for his bath. Before he returns to the temple, Vāriar cleans the premises, and the priest's assistant lights up the lamps there.(1) The priest alone will open the sanctuary, trim the lights and remove the offerings of flowers of the previous day. It is considered meritorious to worship the deity at this time, (2) and many will come to the temple after their

1. That cleanliness is next to godliness is nowhere so rigorously observed as in Malabar temples. For an environment for spiritual uplift one should go there.

(2) Nṛmmālyam-cārttal.

plunge bath to worship and to pray at this hour. Next the image is washed with water, and, in large temples, with the water of tender cocoanuts, with oil, milk and finally again with water. Flowers, fried rice with jaggery, fruits and water are then offered; and, some time after, an oblation of rice. The image is then taken round the temple thrice in procession with music and drummings. Offering of flowers with appropriate *mantras* follow; then an oblation of rice; and, at about 10 a. m., the image is again taken round the temple. This closes the morning service. The temple is again opened at 4 p. m. At 6 p. m., the worship with lights is performed to the accompaniment of music and the chanting of hymns. This consists in waving lights, incense and lit camphor in front of the deity. This is another auspicious hour (1) for worship. Offerings of flowers oblation of rice, sweets, fruits and water and the third and final procession succeed one after the other. The image is taken inside for the rest at night, and the temple is closed. That completes the daily round of services in an ordinary temple. Then there are the annual festivals.

13. The nature of these celebrations varies with temples. It may be an *Ulsavam* in one, *Pooram* in another, *Tālappoli*, *Pūna*, *Pūṭṭu* or *Tiyyāṭṭu* in some others. There will not be a single knowing Malayāḷi who has not heard of Alwaye Śivarātri, Vaikkath Aṣṭami, Guruvayoor Ekādeśi, Trichur Pooram, and Kodungallūr Bharaṇi. Then, again, there are the *Durga Pūja*, *Rāma Navami*; and *Aṣṭami-Rohini*. In fact, to borrow the language of Max Muller, a Malayāḷi is 'born religious and dies religious. Religion is the Alpha and Omega of his earthly career!'

14. In other parts of India, *Rāmanavami* is the festival conducted by the votaries of Rama, *Śivarātri* is observed by the followers of Siva, while *Aṣṭami-Rōhini* is the principal celebration among the devotees of Krishna. But a Malayāḷi is a cosmopolitan and strictly observes all the three. What is called *Durga Pūja* in other parts is called *Ayudha Pūja* in Malabar; for, a Malayāḷi was a warrior by profession. It lasts for nine days and so is called Navarāthri as well. Every hour of these is filled with elaborate ceremonies; and there will be a round of merry-making among the young. For Ekādeśi you fast, while for Pooram you feast.

(1) Dipārādhana.

15. *Tālappoli* is connected with the temples dedicated to Bhagavathi, the Mother-Goddess. There will be illuminations and processions. A bevy of coy maidens, with a sprinkling of militant matrons, spotlessly dressed and decked with jewels, will stand in two rows in front of the elephant on which the deity is mounted, with *tālams*. These consist of light, saffron, cloth, looking glass and so on placed in small burnished bell-metal or brass plates.

16. *Ulsavam* is a very elaborate festival. Besides the purely numberless religious ceremonies, there will be grand processions on elephants decked with costly trappings and with large coloured silk umbrellas. 'Ulsavams are made the occasion for the gathering not of the worshippers only who muster strong during the holy week, but also of the wiry athlete with his rings, the skilled dancer with his quaint dress, the country wit with his sharp tongue for the men and events of the day, the juggler with his cups and balls and his sleight of hand, the melodious piper with his golden flute, the dexterous drummer with his bended back and tireless hands, and the clever trader with his inviting wares.'

17. It is these yearly celebrations in temples, and the inspiring tradition, legend or association connected with them that have attracted people to them, and contributed to the growth of so many places of pilgrimage. Whatever might be the origin of the institution of pilgrimages in India, there is no doubt that these have greatly influenced the religious and national life of the people of this vast peninsula. While saints find sacred places helpful for their spiritual practices, the commonality derive mental discipline and spiritual exhaltation by resorting to them. Pilgrimages have also fostered a sense of solidarity among the masses and have largely contributed to the catholicity of Hinduism. They serve in these respects, the same purpose to the Indians as continental tours to Europeans. 'Many places of pilgrimages developed into great seats of learning. People, when in holy places, desire to acquire an additional merit by acts of philanthropy. So, they encourage learning, renovate old temples and build new ones. It is thus that Benares, the spiritual capital of India, became the greatest seat of learning. Architecture, sculpture and painting have been considerably encouraged by the construction of temples. In almost every holy place there will be besides *pāṭaśālas*, *sadavratams* and *Dharmaśālas* and other institutions where the needy are helped, the poor

fed and the indigent students are maintained.' Similarly, holy places have grown into centres of commercial activity. When you get a continuous stream of visitors, you can certainly expect a good sale for nice wares. Thus temples are highly useful from the standpoint of religion, education, national solidarity and of economics. A trip from Cape Comorin to Gōkarnam — how exhilarating, how educative it will be. Famous temples with centuries of history and tradition behind them, picturesque landscapes, well-known battlefields, *tōls* and *mutts* where even the stones and mortar will look learned by long association — these you will come across in great number. But I shall not tarry over there. I shall just sum up what I have been telling you during these few minutes.

18. Apart from the housing of idols, and without any reference to the prayer and ceremonies conducted there, the Malabar temples stood, as I have said elsewhere, 'for the administration of charity, the dissemination of education, the encouragement of trade and of fine arts and the employment of a great number of people. Many of the large ancient temples exhibit the wonderful development reached here in architecture, sculpture and iconology. The paintings on the walls and panelled ceilings are marvels of the art, and serve to impart instruction in the legendary lore of the Puranas. Temples are also centres of festive gatherings. During the time of these rejoicings, there will be processions, dancing and drumming, music and piping, drama, *Kūthu*, *Paṭhakam* sports and various songs. The songs that accompany the sports and dances, the dramatic literature and hymnology which are the outcome of the existence of these temples are of a high order. Many of these are rightly ranked as classics. They speak of the high and the excellent culture that prevailed in Malabar in ancient days.'

19. 'A Hindu Temple on the Malabar coast is' in the words of the *Travancore State Manual*, 'a centre of attraction to the old and the young, by its perfect system of worship, by the sweet fragrance and peace it breathes, the health and recreation it affords, its remarkable neatness, its regularity and punctuality in all its varied functions, the active beneficence it dispenses, and, above all, by the devotion, the reverence and the order which it silently inculates on the thousands of votaries that visit it.' If

you analyse its functions closely, a temple engenders religion and art and glorifies love and service. All the Srutis, Smritis and all the Puranas emphasise two points: to hurt another, by word, deed or thought, is sin; to do good is virtue. Let us translate these sentiments into our actions in our daily life. For, otherwise, it will end in no noble goal. We can realise salvation only by regarding others as brothers and shouldering their burden. Are we not sons of the same Father, creatures of the same God? Let us hence cultivate brotherhood by knowing, understanding one another a little more closely; and let us show to the world outside that we do stand for selfless service. For.

"God is Love in deed

And Love Creation's final law."



THE NĀGAS

BY

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THE Nāgas were a wonderful set of people. In the early dawn of history, we find them scattered all over the habitable globe. Very little is known of their habits and customs in those remote times, so much so that, according to some, the word Nāga indicated a class of semi-divine beings. But, later on, we find Tamil writers apply the term to a warlike race armed with bows and famous as free-booters. All what have been gleaned about the Nāgas tell us that they were martial, matriarchal, and inclined to Buddhism and sea-faring; they built castles and raised corn and other agricultural products for their sustenance, and manufactured salt from brine.

In the Mahābhārata War, Nāgas of unknown habitat are mentioned as contestants. We have references to them in the *Harivamsa*, and the *Vishnu* and *Mārkandeya* Purāṇas. The Azi and the sons of Danu of the Zend Avesta were tribally identical with the Nāgas of the Indian epic poems—variously known as Asuras, Dasyus, Daityas and Sarpas (sarpa=cobra) in the *Rig Veda*.

On a careful perusal of the works noted above, one can see that even the solar and the lunar races were related to the Nāgas. The Yādavas and the Pauravas (including the Pāndus and the Kauravas) (Krivi = serpent) were descended from Yayāti, son of Nahusha, son of Kadru, the serpent-mother. Āryaka, the Nāga chief, was the grandfather of Sūra, father of Vasudeva (Krishṇa's father) and Kunti. Agastya, the Tamil saint, was a grandson of Brahma, a son of Pulastya, a brother of Visravas and an uncle of Rāvaṇa and Kubera. The Purāṇas say that the eastern capital of Nāgas was at Chāmpavaṭī.

The Nāgas were in India long prior to the *Rāmāyana* period. After the Mahābhārata War, they grew more powerful than before,

and established themselves in Takshaśilā. Parīkshit was killed by the Nāgas. After the fight with the Haihayas near the Nurmuda, one set went to Āssām, and the rest to Kērala. The degenerate descendants of the Nāgas in the Āssām hills have shown extra-ordinary obstinacy in their resistance to the British arms. Between 1832 and 1867, eighteen expeditions, a record number, had to be sent against them to chastise them. Paraśurāma in his fight with the Kshatriyas was assisted by the Nāgas, although his first colonists in Kērala were repulsed by them from there; and it was only by his followers adopting the manners and customs of the Nāgas and by a process of peaceful penetration that they were able to get a foothold in Kērala. One such custom they had to take up is noteworthy: it was the wearing of the top-knot which, according to the Nāgas who were Nāga (serpent) worshippers, represented the hood of the cobra.

In South India, Kērala was the headquarters of the Nāgas, It is still the country where the Nāga worship prevails. In the gardens attached to the Nāyar houses, a *Sarpa Kavu*, a Nāga shrine, is invariably found. The Nāga workship looks like an organized cult. Some scholars identify Nāyanmār with Nāgammār, the plural forms of Nāyar and Nāga respectively, and consider the latter as the proto-Dravidians who subsequently came to be known as the former. Both Śiva and Vishṇu, Dravidian gods, respect Nāgas, the one by having snake as his ornament, the other by keeping one as his bed.

The Basque and the Brahui races are off-shoots of the Nāga stock. The earliest inhabitants of Kashmir, according to the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, were Nāgas. Islamabad is even now known as Anantanāg. Sinhalese tradition relates that the Nāgas, semi-divine snake-men of the Hindu myth, once dwelt in Ceylon, which is also called in certain works as Nāgadvīpa, the Nāgas' island. In Cambodia, there was originally the colony of Funan. "As in Malabar, the matriarchal system prevailed there. The first Indian king of Funan married the daughter of a Nāgā king. A famous race of men descended from him. Through the power of the Nāgas, the vast desert became a glorious land." The tradition of the Nāga ancestors of the kings of Kāmbōja survived up to the thirteenth century A. D.

The great peninsula of India, south of the Vindhya mountains, southward to Comorin, was at one time a low-lying tract of land. It was the Pātāla, the Nāgaloka of the Aryan epics. And Mahābali, a reputed ruler there, is still venerated by the people of Kērala as one of their earliest and greatest rulers. Their great national, annual festival of Oṇam and the songs connected with that day are reminiscent of his rule; for that day, so the tradition goes, he is permitted by Vishṇu to revisit his ancient land and its people.

Arrian mentions a maritime city of Patala, renowned as the capital of a king of the snake race. It is very likely that the reference may be to the Muziris, which, in later times, became the seat of the Perumāls of Kērala.

The Nāga-Kanyakās were famed for their beauty, and not a few of the epic heroes have taken them for their wives. The praise of Kālidāsa of the Kerala ladies shows that these kept up the old tradition. Even in the present day, poets and even the politicians of other parts of India and tourists from outside are not wanting to speak in superlative terms of the charms of Malabar maidens.

'With the downfall of Buddhism, the Nāgās disappear from history'; probably because they, in common with many of the Buddhists in India, were gradually absorbed in the Hindu fold.

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SOME WOMEN WRITERS OF BENGAL

BY

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BENGAL has given to India two remarkable women writers—Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu. Yet to thousands of Bengali women they are mere names as their works are in a foreign language which to many of our female folk is still unfamiliar. But Bengal has during the last few decades produced quite a good number of women writers who have contributed in a large way to the cultural and intellectual life of the province and have added to the general progress of the country as a whole.

That in the past Bengal never lacked women writers is clearly evident from the fact that long before the Western system of education and Western thoughts and ideas found a place in India there were women poets and writers in Bengal like Rammani, Madhavi, Chandravati, Anandamayi, Rasamayi, Gangamani, Tarini, Sundari, and others whose works are mentioned and discussed in histories of literature. It is a fallacy with a certain class of people to think that the introduction of female education in Bengal was entirely due to the efforts of outside agencies. It is still more deplorable to see apparently well-informed people following the same line of thought even to-day. As far back as 1822, a strong plea for the spread of education among the women of Bengal was made by Raja Radhakanta Dev, one of the most prominent citizens of Calcutta and one of the leaders of Indian society in those days. In the same year, the Female Juvenile Society for the establishment and support of Bengali Female Schools published a tract on the importance of female education is evidence in favour of the education of Hindu females from the examples of illustrious women, both ancient and modern. In the *Asiatic Journal* of 1826 we read of a Ladies' Society for Native

EDUCATION IN ANCIENT COCHIN

BY

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I have very great admiration for the noble character and high attainments of my friend, Rao Bahadur K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar. This article is a humble tribute of mine to him on the auspicious occasion of his *Ṣhashtyabda-poorthi,* the completion of his sixtieth year. Though he owns a complete equipment to be a model teacher of the modern type, yet those who have closely moved with him know that he resembles a *Guru* of the old *Aryan* monastic school. That is why I have selected this subject for my contribution to the Commemoration Volume. For the *Guru-śiṣhya-sampradāya* was a prominent feature in the educational institutions in ancient Cochin.

This paper may fittingly be started with a few sentences on the subject which I wrote as Editor of the Blue-book on the *Progress of Cochin.* "Education is more widely diffused in British Provinces than in Native States. But the three Native States of Cochin, Travancore and Baroda, however, take rank above all British Provinces except Burma ; while, in respect of female Education, Cochin divides with Burma the honour of the first place. In Burma, however, there are comparatively few who have received a University education or studied in a High or Middle school ;" while, in Cochin, their number is legion. The above statement of the *Census Report* of 1911 is repeated by the *London Times* in 1930 in its leader on the *Simon Commission Report.* "In education, for instance, which lies at the root of political understanding, a number of the Indian States can show a percentage of literates which is far ahead of the average for British India.

Travancore and Cochin head the list with figures which more than double the average. The great State of Baroda comes a good third."

To those who are conversant with the past history of Cochin there will be no cause for surprise in the above commendable condition of education in the State. Even in the earliest period of which there is any record, education was encouraged by the rich and the poor alike. Formerly, education was given through each *Kara,* which would correspond to a part of a modern village. Each *Kara* had its own *pāṭhaśāla,* elementary school, presided over by an *āsān,* the village schoolmaster. These schools were of the mixed type, in which both boys and girls were taught reading, writing and arithmetic, and a set of selected hymns, besides *Kāvyas* and the elements of astronomy and astrology. These schools were held in the houses of rich men or in sheds put up by the people of the *Kara.*

In aristocratic families there used to be erudite scholars learned in different departments of knowledge ; or they would entertain such scholars as family teachers. They took in aspirants for higher studies. Besides these avenues of learning, there were *Sabhā-Mutts* and *Gurukulams* maintained in *grāmams* in different parts of the State, in which students were taught vedas and Sastras by saintly scholars. Institutions like these are answerable for the great number of poets and scholars and for the many classic works of which Cochin may well feel proud.

Before we lightly touch on these institutions, it will be profitable if we go back a little further into the past when Jains and Buddhists came into the land in large numbers. Buddhism had a long innings in Kerala. The Buddhist *Sanyāsis* went about preaching their religion, built *viharas,* and spent a good portion of their time in spreading education among the people. Dr. K. S. Menon, in his introduction to the *Rasa Vaiśēṣhika Sūṭra,* says, " under the kind care

and tutelage of the Buddha *Sanyāsis*, the Nayars attained a marvellous degree of scholarship and acuteness in all branches of Indian *Sastras*. They became religious teachers and preachers and some attained fame as authors of works."

They were able to convert one or two Perumals who ruled all Kerala from Vanci (Tiruvanchikuḷam in the Cochin State). There is a place called Maṭilakam, about four miles north of Cranganoor (Kotungallūr, the ancient Muziris) and five miles away from Vanci. Maṭilakam originally belonged to Cochin. Vanci was also known as Mahōdyapuram (Mahādēvarpattaṇam). It was here that the saint Sundaramūrṭṭi lived. At Maṭilakam (also known as Tṛgguṇavāyil Kōtu, Tṛguṇa-Matikkam), there was a University of which the Rector was Iḷangō-Aḍigaḷ, son of Imayavaramban Neḍuncēralāṭan. Iḷan-gō-aḍigal was made the Rector and the President of the *Vidvatsabha* by his brother Senkuttavan who succeeded his father. Iḷam-go-aḍigal became a Buddhist Monk and lived in the *caitya* near Maṭilakam. *Śilappadhikāram* by him, and *Maṇimēkhalai* by his friend, Śittalə Śāttaṉar, two of the *pancamahākāvyas* of the Tamil literature, were published from Maṭilakam. The University was adorned by the presence of renowned Sanskrit and Tamil Poets, Buddhist and Jaina scholars and erudite pandits in every department of knowledge, temporal and spiritual. It was to this place that Kaṇṇaki came for her higher studies.

Maṭilakam was a great city in those days. From *Ṭenkailānāṭhōdayam Campu* and *Śivavilāsa-Kāvya* we find that the Cochin (Perumpaḍappu) Rulers were holding their court there. Even in Mēppaṭṭur Bhaṭṭaṭiri's day it was so, for he saw his patron from there.

गुणपुरसीम्नि वसन्तं शृणुमो माटेश्वरं पुरैव वयम् ।
अद्य तु विलोकयामस्तमिमं गुणपूरसीम्नि विलसन्तम् ॥

In *Śukasandēśam* there is a description of this place which is the residence of the heroine of that work. In it there is also a reference, which is more pertinent to the

subject, to a *Sabhā-Mutt* near Ṭripooṇithura, the present seat of the Ruling family of Cochin.

प्रज्ञोत्कर्ष प्रकटन कृते प्राश्निके प्राज्ञलोके
कल्लोलाभैर्मतिजलनिधेरुत्थितैस्तर्ककालैः ।
स्पर्धाबन्धादवहितधियः स्पष्टमत्रार्थ रत्नं
श्रौते लीनं सदसि रहसि श्रावकाः श्रावयेयुः ॥

This *ślōka* gives a distant echo of the lively debate of the intelligent students who were working in *Mutts* to earn scholarship in *Vedas* and *Śāṣtras*. Uḍḍanḍa Sastri gives in his *Kōkilasandēśa* a distinct hint of the evidence of erudition that prevailed in another part of Cochin of his time. After crossing the Bhāraṭa River, the messenger is asked to go to Vaṅṅēri Nātu, the original home of the Cochin Perumpatappu rulers.

तामुत्तीर्णस्सरितममृतस्यन्दिमाकन्द वृन्दान्
देशान् पूतान् पत गुणगणैर्नेत्रनारायणीयैः ।

And then come these two verses about Payyūr Bhattaṭiris which will not fail to raise even now a thrill of delight in the hearts of all true lovers of Sanskrit learning.

किञ्चित्पूर्वं रणखळभुवि श्रीमदद्धयक्षयेथा-
स्तन्मीमांसाद्वयकुलगुरोस्सद्म पुण्यं महर्षेः ।
विद्वद्वृन्दे विवदितुमनस्यागते यत्र शश्वद्
व्याख्याशालावळभिनिलयस्तिष्ठते कीरसंघाः ॥

शास्त्रव्याख्या हरिहरकथा सत्क्रियाभ्यागताना-
मालापो वा यदि सह बुधैराक्षिपेदस्य चेतः ।
तद्विस्रब्धद्विजपरिवृते निष्कुटाद्यौ निषण्णः
कोकूयेथास्स खलु मधुरां सूक्तिमाकर्ण्य तुष्येत् ॥

Mēppaṭṭur Narayaṇa Bhattaṭiri was a nephew of the great Payyūr Bhattaṭiris. To free himself from a fell disease he composed *Nārāyaṇīyam* from the (Mukhamaṇṭapam) platform in front of the inner sanctuary of Śrī Kṛishṇa in

the famous Guruvāyūr temple. It is a marvellous devotional poem where he has beautifully compressed the *Srimat Bhāgavaṭam* in 1000 *ślōgams* of various metres. Strange to say, by divine grace, he was wholly cured of his disease. To illustrate the gifted poet's scholarship, two verses from his *Nārāyaṇīyam* shall be given here.

केशपाशधृतपिञ्छिकावितति सञ्चलन्मकरकुण्डलं
हारजालवनमालिकाललितमङ्गरागघनसौरभम् ।
पीतचेलधृतकाञ्चिकाञ्चितमुदञ्चदंशुमणिनूपुरं
रासकेळिपरिभूषितं तव हि रूपमीश कलयामहे ॥

योगीन्द्राणां त्वदंगेष्वधिकसुमधुरं मुक्तिभाजां निवासो
भक्तानां कामवर्षद्युतरुकिसलयं नाथ ते पादमूलम् ।
नित्यं चित्तस्थितं मे पवनपुरपते कृष्ण कारुण्यसिन्धो
हृत्वा निश्शेषतापान् प्रदिशतु परमानन्दसन्दोहलक्ष्मीम् ॥

Bhattōji Dīkṣhiṭar was so much charmed by the brilliance of Bhattaṭiri's *Prakriyāsarvasvam,* a treatise on grammar, that he wanted to pay his respects to the learned author in person. But the death of the latter prevented their meeting. It is not possible to resist the temptation to quote the opening invocatory verse of that work which must have caught the eye and touched the heart of Dīkṣhiṭar.

रासविलासविलोलं स्मरत मुरारेर्मनोहरं रूपम् ।
प्रकृतिषु यत् प्रत्ययवत् प्रत्येकं गोपिकासु संमिळितम् ॥

He, Tunjaṭṭ Ezuthaśśan and Vidvān Eḷaya Thampuran, intellectual giants of their times, were the products of the traditional mode of Sanskrit study ; and they had a number of *sishyas* under them.

The education of children began very early. After the (initiation into learning) *Vidyārambha* ceremony, they were either taught at home or sent to a village school. It was only after they completed their studies in these schools that they proceeded to the Mutts, or to institutions, or to

great houses like those of Kotungallūr or Payyūr that specialised in varied courses of higher studies.

In Cochin, there were in early days Sabha-Mutts at Ṭṛikaṇa-Maṭilakam, Trichur, Kumbaḷam, Irinjālakuda, Peruvanam and Chovannūr. These stood mainly for vedic studies, although in some *Sastras* also were taught. To these students came only after their preliminary education in *pāṭhaśālas*. Those who had not to or could not study vedas resorted to other places like the Kotungallūr Kōvilakam or to Payyūr Mana where instruction in Sastras was imparted by the specialists in each branch of learning, such as *Nyāya, Vyākaraṇa, Alamkāra* or *Jyōṭiṣha* and so on ; or they would go to the residence of an *Aṣhtavaiḍyan* to study medicine.

Even in *Mutts* and also in certain temples, occasions were designed specially to promote vedic studies. These were the *Ōṭṭūṭṭu, Ṭṛsandha, Panchasandha* and *Vāram* at which vedas are even now repeated by experts for a number of days. Once a year a competitive examination is still held in Katavallūr in the Ṭalapiḷḷy Tāluk of the Cochin State, and the *Kataṅṅirikkal* there is regarded as the blue ribbon of vedic studies.

In Kotungallūr (Cranganur) the members of the Rajas' family used to generally devote a good part of their time to instruct students who went to them to specialise in different branches of knowledge. Their erudition was far famed and the poetical skill of some equally so. On one occasion, a starving scholar from the other side of the ghats was on his way to see a liberal patron of learning in Kerala. He represented to a distinguished scion of this family that he had nothing to offer as a present to the Ruler to whose court he was going. Without any doubt, the Kotungallūr Ṭhampuran scribbled this verse on a piece of *ola* and gave it to him.

दारिद्र्यस्य दयालुत्वं किं ब्रवीमि महीपते ।
आत्मनाशमनादृत्य भवन्तं मामदर्शयत् ॥

When it was presented to the Ruler, he at once asked the scholar whether he had been to Kotungallūr, as he knew that precious poetical gem could be had from nowhere else.

Many of the rulers of Cochin, besides themselves being scholars and poets, were liberal patrons of learning, and encouraged scholarship and talents in an uncommon measure. They also regularly made large contributions to the up-keep of *Mutts* and *Pāṭhaśālas* provided they were maintained in an efficient manner.

There were rules and regulations for the proper management of these educational institutions, for admission and for the daily conduct of the pupils, for hours of study, rest and recreation, which had to be strictly followed.

नस्त्रिया सह सल्लापमपि कुर्यान्न नर्तनम् ।
नच गीतं न वा वाद्यं नच वक्त्रनखादिभिः ॥

आलस्यमनृतं हिंसां यच्च वा नाभिनन्दति ।
स्वोपाध्यायस्तदप्येष यत्नेन परिवर्जयेत् ॥

These precepts were scrupulously observed by the disciples during the period of their studentship. Any violation of the rules of conduct meant expulsion from the *Mutt* and condign punishment in the *pāṭhaśāla.*

The students had to be fed free, and carefully looked after by the *Mutts* and, even in the *pāṭhaśālas,* the teachers received only nominal remuneration or present during the Ōṇam, Viṣhu and Ṭiruvātira festivals. The *Sishyas* looked on their *Gurus* with the utmost veneration, whose lightest wish was a law into them, and the relationship that existed between them was of the most cordial kind.

FOLK-SONGS

By Mr. T. K. KRISHNA MENON

FOLK - SONGS

By Mr. T. K. KRISHNA MENON*

Folklore means the lore of the folk, the learning of the people. It was Mr. W. J. Thomas who coined this word in 1846; and he intended to mean by it 'the traditional learning of the cultivated classes of civilised nations.' In this sense it has been adopted by several other countries. The import of the word, as elaborated, stands now for the science also, which treats of the survivals of archaic beliefs and customs in modern ages; that is, that depar tment of the study of archæology which covers everything connected with ancient observances and customs, notions and beliefs, traditions and superstitions and even prejudices of the common people. "A legend is based in the first instance upon a fact; but the fact may go and the legend survive. Therein lies the wizardry of the craft of letters; it can embalm in amber what has long lost the cap of life, and the thing though preserved may still have the power to move us."

This study of folklore is of recent growth. It was only in 1878 that "the Folklore Society" of London, the first of its kind, was started. In these days, in every civilised land, there are bodies engaged in the collection, classification and study of folklore. Folklore as such began to come into being from ancient times. Even folk-tales made their appearance in literature at a very early period. Story-telling is an ancient art. Ancient, traditional tales depict the sentiments of immature tribes. Book learning, new industrial conditions, trains and steamers kept back the tide of these tales. But, in the dawns of different tribes, the tillers of the fields and the toilers in the forests relieved the burdens of each day's labour by a twilight spell of their folk-tales. When reduced to writing, they lose their dramatic effect, their life and power. Similar tales you may meet with among various nations, but, "like rays of light, they take the colour of the medium through which they pass." Rev. S. Baring Gould has classified folk-tales into seventy types. In India, we have Jatakas and the Panchatantra. Homer has incorporated many folk-tales in his immortal poems, and the Arabs have their 'Thousand and One Nights.' In fact, every country has its own store of folklore.

Folklore is generally classified under three main divisions:— (1) Beliefs and customs; (2) Narratives and sayings; and (3) Art. (1) There are branches to these major heads. For, the first will take in (a) superstitious beliefs and practices, connected with animate and inanimate nature, with ghosts and goblins, witch-craft and leach-craft, magic and divination; and (b) traditional customs, which will include customs during festive days and seasons, and those during ceremonies linked with birth and death and every important event between those two incidents (2) Narratives and sayings will comprise tales and fables, myths and legends, nursery rhymes, riddles and proverbs. (3) And Art

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will embrace folk music with ballads and songs and folk dance. Folk song will certainly come in the art section; it will also find a place in the narrative portion as historical, devotional, sentimental or romantic songs. Cecil Sharp, who devoted his life to folk-song and folk-dance, has done service of immense value; and in recent years British composers consider it a pleasure and a piece of patriotic duty to resort to folk-song for their pattern and their inspiration.

Dance and the Divine Thrill

It is interesting to trace the growth of folk-songs. "In the course of ages, the uncouth, vocal utterances of primitive man developed into sounds of more or less definite pitch. From these emerged short phrases, in which rhythm probably played the principal part, reiterated with interminable persistency." What we call the burden of the song or its refrain is reminiscent of this tendency. "You will then find the phrase repeated at a different level by way of contrast or veriety. It is by a combination of these modes that melody is gradually reached." When this stage is reached, the history of a song as a musical form falls into two main courses:— the folk-song and the art-song. An art-song is the result of a conscious effort of a skilled and civilised person, while a folk-song is an unconscious product of the mind guided more by instinct than by method. A gifted singer will make a poem, off-hand, about current events, and will sing it to an appropriate tune of an existing song, or will make up a tune from typical ones. A familiar popular from will, as a rule, be the one most acceptable. Novelty has rarely any charms for the singers or for their listeners. Some of these folk-songs may be of doubtful value; and while the tunes are mostly good, they may not in many cases be of surpassing beauty; there may be irregularities of time and mode as well. With all these plausible defects, these songs reflect the life of the people who sing them and of those who listen to them, and generally contribute in no small measure to their hilarity and to make the even tenor of their lives, pleasant and enjoyable. "Folk-song is very much more than music and poetry. Relics of past customs, of names and places, of dialects and stories, can illumine many an obscure tract of history; and these gains alone might well suffice 'to fire the ardour, of local or a national antiquarian or social sort,' of a collector of folk-songs But at the same time, folk-songs do not form a mere museum of the past. If musical history means anything, if the study of antecedents explains the nature and prevalence of masterpieces, then the folk-songs of each country will be seen to be intimately related to all permanent and specific music of that country."

In the early stages of folk-song, you will invariably find that singing and dancing go hand in hand. Except to hazard a suggestion, I am not prepared to decide the right of precedence between the two. It is more than likely that, instead of a song being a subordinate adjunct to a dance, the dance must have had its origin in the mimetic actions that naturally accompany rudimentary songs. Whatever that might be, folk-dances have an interest of their own; their inherent

simplicity, vigour and dignity indicate the level of folk-culture. They stimulate muscular activity of a rhythmical sort. From the point of view of art as well as physical culture, and in that they enhance the joy of life, these traditional dances have a value all their own. The flawless, varied steps, the pose and rhythmic movements, the swaying to and fro of the body, the bending and rising, the advance and retire, to see these is to admire them. There is harmony in these picturesque mass movements, and when these accompany their appropriate songs, one gets the divine thrill. In a primitive rural village, where under the canopy of heaven, and with the soft, cool air wafting on you from the smiling greens around, these folk-dances and folk-songs have their best environment.

Tagore on Creative Joy

In the good days of old, the flow of dance always followed a life of joy. But now this language of joy is denied to us. Is it because we live in days of depression? It is for you to revive it, and to dispel the gloom from our land, and to give to its people joy, health and richness. In the words of the Poet, Tagore, allow me to appeal to you: *Let your dancing wake up the spirit of spring in this cheerless land of ours; let her latent power of true enjoyment manifest itself in language of hope and beauty.*

Every country, even every race, owns its collection of folk-songs, its store of ballads. As a rule, these will be the result of a spontaneous outburst of the inspiration of the people. These popular songs, historical ballads and devotional hymns may not compare favourably in their texture and technique with the finished products of the conscious efforts of civilised poets. But they too represent in a remarkable degree the tastes, the feelings and the aspirations of the country or of the race to which they belong. In fact they form a record of the short and simple annals of the people, 'a record of the inner life, of the loves and hatreds, doubts and fears, hopes and beliefs' of each race, nay of each generation of each race. "Unlike the cultivated arts which are often marred by a complicated formality and artificiality, an excessive elegance and over-refinement of mannerism, the folk-art of every nation has a primitive purity, directness, vigour, vitality and robustness which serve as a perennial fund for the regeneration and strengthening of natural life and national art from age to age."

The Heart of Rural India

Folk-songs are the songs of the folk, of the common people. They are songs composed by the common people. From age to age they are handed down by oral tradition. They are sung by the common people when they go through 'the merry round of their daily toil,' when they sow, reap or clear the weeds; when they carry a load or drive a country cart, when maidens go to fetch water from the village well, or mothers lull their babies to sleep. At festive seasons like Onam, Vishu, and Thiruvathiray and on ceremonial occasions in the family, like marriage or birth, they are sung.

Thus these folk-songs possess charms that words fail to adequately describe. They have much to please in them but also much to instruct. To a race they form an asset of priceless value; to an antiquarian no less so. Because folk-songs, as I said before, express the joys and sorrows, the aims and aspirations of a nation; the moral and spiritual ideals of people you will find embedded there. Their outlook on life, their characteristics and their culture will be mirrored in them. The race-genius nurtured by the process of countless years will be seen reflected in the language and imagery of folk-songs. A folk-song, therefore, enables you to study the life of a nation in its varied aspects. "Much of the kernel of the cultural heritage of India" says Prof. Devendra Sathyarthi "lies in its folk-song. They are the Elysian shrines of music and poetry with their doors open to the millions of India. Spontaneous self-expressions of the people as they are, in them we feel the joys and sorrows, the weal and woe of the people in their open-air life in rural India... Each song has its own beauty and charm, its own rhythm, melody and local colour. If one is a flow of tears, the other is a cup brimful of smiles; if one is a dream of the past, the other is a spring-tune of a distant future; if one is a romance of love, beauty and youth, the other is a wail of ripe old age and experience." "Folk-songs pervade all walks of life; they are deeply associated with various religious rites, social ceremonies and all festivities of joy and glee All classes, all walks of life, men and women, young and old, all alike, have songs of numerous tones and tunes. There are songs of love, beauty, youth, of the glories of the past, and of the dreams of the future. The tears and smiles of the masses, their hopes and fears are all enshrined in these songs. No picture can convey more forcibly and clearly to our minds the manners, the habits and the psychological depths of the inner life than an insight into these songs."

The Soul of a People

Individuals differ, so do races and nations. Mr. G. S. Dutt, an authority on Bengali Folklore, classifies human activities, under three groups, as those actuated by reason, imagination and emotion. In the realm of pure reason, of science, there is no scope for striking differences. Fortunately, there is no chemistry special for India, as different from one for Europe or for America. When it comes to imagination, let us take the case of philosophy for instance; you will find Kant, Comte and Sankara have different modes of approaching the great problems of the universe while, in the emotional sphere, the contrast is pointed. You can take the case of music or poetry; there you will notice the soul-genius of each race exhibited in its separate aspects. As Mr. Dutt rightly remarks, "it is through the medium of these more than any other that the soul-quality of each nation finds its characteristic self-expression. It is through the national art that a nation makes its contribution to human culture." For the development of the creative genius of an individual as of a race, it is necessary to look to his 'national art, rhythmic mould and inspirational channel.' However great an Indian might be, no great work will be done by a

slavish imitation of foreign models. Please read the life of Miss Toru Dutt, and then you will understand what I mean. She came to her own, she produced her lasting works only when, on the advice of Edmund Gosse, she took to Indian models, to Indian scenes and incidents. Thus you will realise the value of our folk-songs in stimulating our national literature.

There is another use for our folk-songs, and that specially in these days of depression. Even apart from the gloomy prospect caused by reduction of trade and want of work, there is among our moderns an artificiality born of the cramping effects of foreign etiquette and alien influences. Such conditions are absent in rural parts and among the simple, unlettered people there. In the face of poverty and its attendant trials, these folk-songs help to keep them aloft and to retain the spirit of the old-world ways and the child-like joy. That is no small good turn of our folk-songs. For, depend upon it, when a race loses its vitality to face bad days and gives way to despair, it is certain to be lost. Songs are sung when soldiers march to meet the enemy to drive their dull cares away and to incite them to action; and martial music we know are not from the strains of a Beethoven or of a Wagner. They are songs of the folk that speak of simple joys, or ballads that narrate the brave deeds of the heroes of their land. For a regiment of Gurkha soldiers, a national ditty or a well-known ballad of theirs will be much more appealing and inspiriting than an English tune or a Welsh air. We can see the correctness of this contention by an appeal to our personal experience in our daily lives.

The Ballads of Malabar

A ballad, according to Andrew Lang, an authority on myths and legends and folklore, is from baller to dance, and means a song sung to the rhythmic movement of a dancing chorus. The word is also applied to any popular story told in simple verse. It is under this second definition that our northern ballads, familiarly known as Vadakkan Pattu and Thachcholi Pattu, find a place. Thachcholi is a Desam in Muttati Amsam of Kurumbranad Taluq in North Malabar. These ballads narrate the gallant exploits of Meppayil Kunhi Othenan, a valiant Nayar of Thachcholi. These display the life of the Malayalis of those days in a realistic manner, of their rough and ready ways and of their bold and straight dealings. Othenan was a Robin Hood, minus his plundering propensity, and he had his Little John in Kandasseri. Othenan was a source of terror in his locality. Valayavoor Kutty Nambi, who finally married Chiruthaikutti, the sister of Othenan, had to complain to her on one occasion about her brother. Whether it was the charms of Chirutha or the harms of Othenan that tempted Kutti Nambi to form the alliance the song is silent. We shall leave the solution of that problem to the research student who has much to learn from these ballads of the history, custom and society of the Nayars of North Malabar. For ballads and songs have much to do with the making of nations. In Malabar, every community has its store of folk-songs. In spite of the interplay of old and new modes of thought

among all classes of people, these songs still pulsate in the rhythm of their social and family lives. There is the nursery in which all of us are reared. "Thanks to an old-fashioned nurse," says Mr. Marrett "there in the nursery we come in contact with the underworld of pleasant folklore. These old-time values retain their spell. These values grow up with us and in variously transmuted forms enrich adult life, quickening the sense of wonder, the spirit of adventure, and the love of simple and vital things."

The Lure of the City

But, unless we are on the look-out, and try to appreciate the value of these songs and dances, and make an earnest effort to see that these are not lost to us, we and those who come after us shall be able to enjoy the arcadian, blissful life of which these folk-songs form an integral part, only, if at all, in rare and out-of-the way books. Many influences are conspiring to belittle folk-songs, to ruthlessly kill them. The call of the city is, perhaps, an economical call; and unless and until we reconstruct our villages, the lure of the city will be constant and tempting. In Europe and America, people have found out by actual experience that the enchantment of the city life is after all only an illusion which distance creates. But here we have yet to learn that dear lesson. Again a perversion, the mentality of the machine age, due to the dominance of the industrial era, has contributed to a considerable degree to the lamentable neglect of folk-songs. We think it beneath our dignity, the highbrows at any rate do, to resort to these to enliven our gloomy days. Now-a-days we have music to order. There is the harmful harmonium, there is the grating gramaphone. I enter my emphatic protest against the introduction of harmonium into the musical world. Has it not supplanted *the Veena* that adorns the hands of the Goddess of music? It drowns the beautiful human voice. It kills harmony. It enslaves one as a drug, as Dr. Arnold Bake rightly remarks; and those addicted to it, and who is not, try to create concord in a dingy room instead of singing like a lark 'under the canopy of the sky, in the freedom of the air.'

Folk-Songs and Their Collection

It is high time we make an exhaustive collection of our folk-songs, dances and games. For, they alone create a constant stream of inspiration essential "for the rejuvenation of a nation's creative genius, for the resuscitation of its national culture and for its spiritual development." More than a quarter of a century ago, Mr. Charles E. Gover, a near relative of the late Mr. A. G. Gover, who was a Judge of the Chief Court of Cochin, published a book called the *Folk-songs of South India*. In his preface to that work, he deplores the lamentable negligence shown by the Malayalies in collecting and collating them. "There is a great mass of noble ballads and songs ready to hand in Malayalam folk literature. But total neglect has fallen upon it..... It has not had a chance of obtaining the notice it so richly deserves." In a similar strain the late Mr. Tatakanaran writes in his *Comparative*

Study of English and Malayalam: "No antiquarian has yet arisen among the people endowed with the necessary earnestness of purpose, intensity of interest, and sufficiency of means and influence to attempt a complete or even a partial collection of these ballads of Kerala." It will be a national misfortune if our folk-lore, folk-songs and indigenous dances and 'the priceless tradition connected with them' are permitted to die. An artist's style to be catching must be national. Look at Madhusuden Dutt; he tried to imitate the English style and so he is remembered today only by the curio-hunter. But take our Tagore, who is national to the core; he has become a classic in his life-time. As Mr. G. S. Dutt remarks, "For the renaissance and growth of the poetical, lyrical and musical genius, we have to seek inspiration at first hand from the store-house of our folk-songs, folk-music and folklore." The great Indian Patriot, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, pleads for the folk-songs in these words: "The pathos, the fine poetry and the common sense embodied in these songs of the people deserve to be preserved and popularised." I appeal to you to give a helping hand at the collection and popularisation of these. You will, as I have already proved to you, be doing by that a great patriotic work. Let us then see these introduced in our schools. "Our system of Education is too cosmopolitan" said the late Mr. Cecil Sharp, 25 years ago; "It is calculated to produce citizens of the world rather than English citizens. How can this be remedied? Let every child be put in possession of those which are the peculiar products of his race. The first and foremost, the mother-tongue. Then there are the tales, legends and proverbs. Finally, the folk-songs, the simple ditties that, like wild flowers, have sprung from the heart of the people. The introduction of folk-songs will not only affect the life of England, it will greatly tend also to arouse that love of country and pride of race, the absence of which we now deplore." I can hear the cry of the modern educational experts: "Out with your nursery rhymes. We want more science." But this cry has not affected the hoary, sacred edifices of learning in Europe and America. Let us stand up and say decisively like the people there that we are no machines. More of science does not mean less of letters. We want more of letters to keep us humane. If more science is to mean less of light, of faith and of joy, of fresh air and music, we shall not have that sort of science. That is all. Let us thus stand firm by our folk-songs. "Their very existence under adverse conditions for such a length of time reveals a power of sheer endurance", and the hold they have on the national mind. A loving touch will again engender nimble life in them and an access of growth and a glorious efflorescence. May that be is my wish, my prayer.

KERALA KALAMANDALAM

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in the immediate presence of

H. E. SIR ARTHUR HOPE,

GOVERNOR OF MADRAS.



MOHINI-ATTAM DANCES

AND

KATHAKALI

What is Mohini-Attam?

It is a harmonious blend of Music, Dancing, and the *Natyavidya* (portrayal of emotions) of ancient India. It bears a striking resemblance to what is known as *Bharata natyam* or the *Tanjore dance*. But it is claimed on very high authority that this particular form of dance has been given a different turn by the distinctive genius of Kerala. The great object aimed at in these dances is the portrayal of human emotions in all its phases by appropriate facial expressions and gestures, and supple, sinuous, and rhythmic movements of the whole body, to the accompaniment of sweet and melodious music. It is to be regretted that this kind of dance, which expresses most admirably the poetry of motion in all its varied aspects and is entitled to claim a very high place among the best forms of dancing, is fast dying out in Kerala for want of sufficient encouragement.

5. Thillana *(by Ammini & Vilasini*	Dance steps in unison with the intricate *Tals* or time-beatings in music.
6. Ananda Nritha *(by Bala Mohanan)*	Describes the beauty of the *Basanta* (Spring) season: flowers such as lotuses etc. creepers, plants, trees, bunches of fruits and the like; and dances in great joy.
7. Pantadi *(by Lakshmi)*	A girl inviting her friends to come and join her at a game of ball—throws up, catches and beats the ball in dance movements.
8. Rasa Leela *(by Bala Mohanan, Lakshmi & Ammini)*	Sri Krishna dancing with the Gopis at Brindaban.

(INTERVAL)

ORCHESTRA

Flute	—	Krishna Bhagavather.
Fiddle	—	Unni.
Mridangam	—	Sreedhar.
Idakka	—	Achyutha Marar.
Moorsing	—	S. P. Pillai.
Vocal Music	—	Nambeesan & Madhavan.

What is Kathakali?

Kathakali is a unique dramatic art of Kerala (old Malabar) in which the actors do not speak, but convey their ideas through hand-poses, gestures and vivid facial expressions. All the dialogues are carried through by hand movements called "Mudras". The story is narrated in songs accompanied by Musical drums, and dances are done to give fuller expression to the various motions. In short, Kathakali is a dance-drama, an art highly idealistic and conventional. The facial make up, and costumes and ornaments used, are quaint and peculiar, but very artistic.

In Malabar one full night is required to act a complete story and it is acted in open *maidans*. To train an accomplished Kathakali actor takes six or seven years.

By closely studying the story beforehand one can easily understand and follow what is going on on the stage.

THE STORY OF RUGMANGADA & MOHINI

INTRODUCTION

King Rugmangada of Ayodhya has undertaken to observe the austerity called "Ekadesi Vratha" (fast on the eleventh day of the moon). One day he is out hunting in the forest on the outskirts of Ayodhya. There, one night, when his army and retinue have fallen asleep, he meets a beautiful damsel. She is in reality a heavenly nymph created by Lord Brahma for the purpose of making Rugmangada violate his austerities, Brahma having been begged by Yama to foil the king. She adopts the name "Mohini", meaning "the charmer".

SCENE I.

King Rugmangada is seated alone in the forest. Mohini appears dancing.

King (thinks thus before actually meeting Mohini) :— I feel my mind is being drawn towards some unknown object. I see a splendour all round here! What is it? Like heaps of pearls strewn all about! What marvellous beauty is this, in this solitude? I see here a divine beauty.

(The king at once stops her.)

King :—Who are you please?

Mohini :—I am a celestial girl.

King :—What brought you here alone in this forest?

Mohini : —Simply to see you.

King :—My great luck indeed! Please be my wife, and live with me.

Mohini :—Nothing unpleasing to me should you ever do. If you can swear to that effect your wife I will become.

King :—Here do I swear : 'Anything unpleasing to you shall I never do.' (The king, of course, does not know the wily purpose of Mohini.)

Mohini :—(After a warm embrace.) Let us now go to your palace.

King :—Yes.

(After waking up his soldiers, he orders them to march to the capital, and he also departs with his newly-wedded wife.)

(Curtain)

SCENE II.

On an Ekadesi day (eleventh day of the moon), the king, as usual, is engaged in the contemplation of Lord Vishnu. Mohini appears.

Mohini (aside) :—In the enjoyment of the royal pleasures I entirely forgot the mission entrusted to me by Brahma. To-day is Ekadesi. Let me try to foil him. (She extends her arms and tries to embrace him.)

King :—(Stopping her.) To-day is the Ekadesi day. Touch me not.

Mohini :—Listen please. I have decided not to fast myself to-day, nor will I allow you to observe it. We must enjoy ourselves this day.

King :—This Ayodhya I shall renounce; these riches all. But I will not break my fast. Kindly allow me to go on with it.

Mohini :—(Enraged.) Your son, Dharmangada—in his mother's lap lay him, with your sword cut his throat. Then, you may go on with the fast.

(These cruel words enter into the King's heart like a dagger.)

King :—Alas ! wicked woman ! Why so much obstinacy ? Abandon your cruelty, and your wish declare.

Mohini :—Nay, do it. Neither you nor your child's mother must have a tear in the eye. Then you may observe your fast as you please.

King :—Alas ! What help is there ! O God, why this enmity in Mohini against me ? (To Mohini) The very embodiment of love! Beautiful ! do not harm me.

Mohini :—If you do not kill your son your observance of the fast will be a violation of oath.

(The king is in great pain, either to give up his fast, or to slay his own son—at this cruel decree of Mohini he faints.)

Mohini (aside) :—I pity him. I have been rather cruel in my words. But, what could I do? It is the command of Lord Brahma.

King :—(On regaining consciousness he prays to Vishnu, blaming Mohini and begging her.) O Lord Vishnu! How am I, without tears in my eyes, to behead my son? Wicked Mohini alas, how pitiless your words! What has made you take this course against my child, eye's darling. Alas, Alas.

Mohini :—Why do you cry? You need not kill your son. It is enough if you break your fast.

At this stage, his son, Dharmangada, proposing to save his father from the sin of oath-breaking, decides te give up his life, and comes to his father with his mother, Sandhyavali.

Dharmangada :—Grieve not, my father. Here, take this sword. Preserve truth. And please go on with your fast. (To the Mother) Mother, don't cry. Please sit down.

King :—(Plunged in intolerable grief, addressing his sword) O, my sword! With the boiling blood of my enemies' heads, have you not yet quenched your thirst? Is it your wish to drink the blood of my only son's throat? (Loses grip of the sword).

Dharmangada :—(Hands over the sword again.) Father, if oathbreaking befalls us, our family will be stained with infamy. Therefore, cut my throat please.

(Again the sword falls from the king's hand.)

King :—(To the queen, Sandhyavali) My beloved, I mistook this woman to be of the heavens. She is in reality a Rakshasi (demoness). Do please forgive my sins.

Dharmangada :—Father, take courage, and preserve truth. (Again places the sword in the king's hand.)

King:—The world is full of Lord Vishnu. Why should I pine away in grief? At any cost truth shall I preserve.

The king raises the sword to behead his son. Suddenly Lord Vishnu appears mounted on Garuda (king of birds), and stays the action of the king.

Vishnu :—Don't, please don't kill your son. Yourself and the queen have now attained salvation. It was at the command of Brahma that this woman has done all this. (To Mohini) You may go now. (Exit Mohini.) King, crown your son as the king and you follow me.

Seating Dharmangada on the throne the king does the coronation ceremony, and hands over the family sword.

King :—(To the son) Preserve truth. Long may you rule this kingdom! Your mother and myself are going to Vaikuntha (Vishnu's heaven) with the Lord.

Dharmangada bows before his parents and Vishnu.

(Exit all except Dharmangada.)

Dharmangada :—My father and mother have gone with Vishnu. Here I am left alone. O Lord, I pray that I may have the strength to rule my kingdom properly.

(Curtain.)

ACTOR-DANCERS

Rugmangada	—	Krishnan.
Mohini	—	Karunakara Panikker.
Dharmangada	—	Ramankutty.
Sandhyavali	—	Kunhunni.
Vishnu	—	Krishnankutty.
Garuda	—	Balakrishnan.

BACKGROUND MUSIC

Singers	—	Nambeesan & Madhavan.
Chenda	—	Achyutha Marar.
Maddalam	—	Gopalan.

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