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## CONTENTS

- 1 The Conflict Between Vedic Aryans And  
Iranians 09  
by *Dr. Koenraad Elst*
- 2 Some Kushana Images of Karttikeya  
from Mathura 39  
by *Dr. V. Sandhiyalakshmi*
- 3 Para Vasudeva Narayana 43  
by *Dr. G. Balaji*
- 4 Pallava-Kadamba Interlude in Kerala: An  
Epigraphical Study 50  
by *Dhiraj, M.S.*
- 5 Temple Managerial Groups in  
Early Keralam 69  
by *Anna Varghese*
- 6 Irrigation and Water Supply During  
the Kakatiya Period 86  
by *Dr. D. Mercy Ratna Rani*
- 7 Traditional Health Care in Ancient India  
with Reference to Karnataka 101  
by *Dr. K.G Vasantha Madhava*
- 8 From Egypt To India And China –The  
Karimimerchants in The Indian Ocean  
Trade of Medieval World 112  
by *Dr. M. Vijayalekshmy*

- 9 Rituals and Festivals in Sriranganathar Temple During the Period of Vijayanagar 123  
by *Dr. P.Chandrasekaran*
- 10 The Portuguese-Vijayanagara War of 1558: A Study in Military History 141  
by *Krishna Kumar Panjaje*
- 11 The Doctor Raja in Pre-Independent India: Sagram Sinh Bhagvat Sinh of Gondal, Saurashtra 167  
by *Ramya Raman and Dr. Anantanarayanan Raman*
- 12 Origins of Telugu Journalism: A Historical Perspective 183  
by *Prof. D. Ananda Naidu*
- 13 British Commercial Interests in Assam and the "Otherness" of Nagas: A Study of Colonial Ideas and Motives 194  
by *Louis Mushary*
- 14 Politicisation of Caste Relations in Modern Travancore: Situating The Role of E. Madhavan and his plea for Independent Community 225  
by *Dr. A. Shaji*
- 15 Movement in the Garjats of Odisha: A Study of the Nayagarh District 232  
by *Dr.Benudhar Patra*
- 16 Quit India Movement in Chittoor District: A Case Study of Nagari Ordinance Case 249  
by *Gaddam Venkataramana*

17 Chevalier Sellane Naicker (1884-1965): The Forgotten Freedom Fighter of French India	259
by <i>Dr. S. Babu</i>	
18 Pondicherry Municipal Administration during the Post Colonial Period	278
by <i>Dr. R. Velmurugan</i>	
19 R.C. Majumdar: The Consolidation of Nationalist Historiography	298
by <i>Dr. S. Yasodhamani</i>	
20 <i>Dastangoi</i> – An Art... Lost And Unknown	313
by <i>Dr. Shan Eugene</i>	
21 Book Review	327



## **EDITOR'S NOTE**

The Journal of Indian History and Culture is doing well. We not only get good contributions but also more than sufficient in number.

At the outset, I would like to thank Prof. V. Balambal, Prof. A. Chandrasekharan, Prof. G. Chandhrika, Dr. S. Vasanthi and Dr. Chithra Madhavan for sparing their valuable time to referee our papers.

Our Journal has attracted scholars from leading Universities like Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and Pondicherry Central University, Puducherry, to contribute papers for this issue.

As usual, we have not only papers from senior scholars but also from youngsters too.

We have contributions from all over India and in particular from South India. This time Puducherry tops the list. Further, this time, we have international contributions too. The Ramans from Australia and Dr. Koenraad Elst from Belgium have chipped in with excellent work.

This time, unusually, we have few papers on Medieval India. We need more in the future.

We request our contributors to send abstracts and key words for their papers and take care in presenting their references and footnotes.

I would like to thank Dr. Nanditha Krishna, Mr. Rudra Krishna, Mrs. Malathy Narasimhan, Mr. Narayan Onkar, Dr. G. Balaji and Mrs. Pichu Lakshmi and other staff members of the Foundation for their support in publishing this Journal.

**Dr. G.J. Sudhakar**





1

## THE CONFLICT BETWEEN VEDIC ARYANS AND IRANIANS

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### Abstract

*The discipline of Iranian studies is proceeding in ignorance about the age and place of the founding character of the civilization it studies, Zarathushtra Spitama. However, Vedic literature may have decisive information about it. In a maximalist interpretation, it might even locate Zarathushtra in the direct vicinity of a precise historical event. At any rate, it offers surprising information about the precise relation between him and the religious reforms with which he is associated. It is Shrikant Talageri (building on S.K. Hodiwala) who developed the link between Zarathushtra and Vedic history, and we will be able to add a few insights confirming his hypothesis and exploring its implications.*

### Vedic prehistory

The Vedas were not conceived as a proto-historical narrative. They are a collection of ten books (*Mandala*, “circle”) of hymns (*Sukta* < *Su-vakta* “well said”) to the gods, made up of metric verses (*Mantra*, “mental instrument”). They only provide glimpses of real history collaterally.

Contrary to a common Hindu belief that the *Rig Veda* was God-given and outside history, it situates itself inside history. It uses a language situated on a specific place in the genealogical tree of the evolving Indo-European language family; it refers to a

specific region with its typical fauna and flora, rivers and mountains, tribes, wars, marriages, individuals with ancestors, and descendants. “In fact most Indologists regard *Sudas*, the hero of the battle of the ten kings celebrated in the *Rig Veda*, as a historical figure.” (Bhargava 1998:i) The tendency among some Hindus to take scriptural data literally is ridiculed by scholars, but the attitude of ignoring these data or dismissing them as just fantasy is equally untenable.

The historical data of the Vedic period itself allows for a relative chronology within the *Rig Veda*, as discovered by India’s path-breaking historian Shrikant Talageri. The internal logic of the Vedic books, principally the genealogical data – sometimes details of the linguistic development, sometimes glimpses of the underlying *Sitz im Leben*– reveal a sequence (Talageri 2000:35-93, building on Oldenberg 1894). The oldest period consists of Book 6, then Book 3, then (though partly overlapping) Book 7. This is followed by Book 4, then Book 2, the middle period. The late period starts with Book 5, the youngest of the “Family Books,” each one written by a family of seers. Book 8, with a broader and more westerly horizon, provisionally completes the series. A collection of separate hymns covering the period of Books 4-2-5-8 is Book 1. (Here, I am tempted to break ranks with Talageri, as there are indications that Book 1 reaches even farther back; notably, that *Dirghatamas*, seer of RV 1:140-164, belongs to the very first generation of Vedic poets, contemporaneous with Bharadvaja, main seer of Book 6; but also counter-indications; while Agastya, seer of RV 1:165-191, is contemporaneous with Vasistha, seer of Book 7.) These 8 formed a first corpus of hymns.

A collection of hymns related to the psychedelic brew Soma forms Book 9, and a distinctly younger collection of hymns constitutes Book 10. This latter is part of a younger culture

shared with the *Yajur-* and *Atharva-Veda* (the *Sama-Veda* mostly consists of hymns of the *Rig Veda* put to music). The *Yajur-Veda* reaches down to the age of the dynasty's fraternal war related in the *Mahabharata*, ("great [epic] of the Bharata clan"), and the youngest layer of the *Rig Veda* likewise, mentioning King Shantanu, the great-grandfather of the war's protagonists, in hymn 10:98. It was their grandfather (or Shantanu's stepson) Krishna Dvaipayana, a.k.a. Veda-Vyasa, who closed the Vedic corpus by giving it its definitive structure. The last king mentioned in the Vedic corpus is Vyasa's biological son Dhrtarashtra, father of the Kaurava participants in the battle.

The *Rig Veda* contains a few references to a pre-Vedic period. People do not know the future, so even the Vedic seers have little to say about later centuries, but they do discuss the past. Contrary to a revealed scripture existing from all eternity, the *Rig Veda* refers to its own prehistory.

It mentions the patriarch Manu some forty times: as an ancestor, as the Father of Mankind, and, implicitly, as a law-giver – once even explicitly (RV 1:128:1-2: "by Manu's law"). The extant text of his *Manavadharmashastra* hardly predates the Christian age, but the idea of a normative system established anciently by Manu, though its details must have evolved, was already present in the *Veda*.

It also frequently mentions the matriarch *Ila*, ancestress of a string of related tribes including the tribe whose poets composed the Vedic hymns as well as the tribe that was to compose the Iranian scripture *Avesta*. It mentions several times her son Pururavas, (addressee, with nymph Urvashi, of hymn 10:45), and two later ancestors, *Nahusa*– who is said to have made the crucial move to the Sarasvati basin where the Vedic seers were to live– and his son, Yayati. It mentions the king Bharata, who

apparently presided over the start of the Vedic corpus, in RV 6:16:4 (already as a memory: “Bharata of old”) and 7:8:4. Two of his sons are mentioned as having composed the early hymn RV 3:23, and are named in the hymn itself.

It should be clear that the Vedic seers had a sense of history. It shone through even when they were not referring to history and were just praising the gods.

### **Historicity of the *Puranas***

The stray Vedic references to historical persons broadly concur with the more detailed account given in the *Puranas*. This very large corpus, committed to writing mostly in the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium CE, is a notorious mixture of myths, embellished history and sometimes a really historical core. The royal genealogies, in particular, were a genre subject to careful memorization— and this, among many peoples, not just the ancient Indians. They may very well have that historical core. The Puranic tradition, even if not in written form, existed already “in the Upanisadic period if not earlier” (Siddhantashastree 1977:8) and was mentioned in the *Mahabharata* (18.6.97, “eighteen *Puranas*”) and in the *Chandogya Upanisad* (7:1:2-4).

A researcher into the degree of historicity of the *Puranas* argues: “Fortunately the Puranic genealogies from the time of the founder of Buddhism onward can be tested by the evidence supplied by the Buddhist and Jain literature, dramas and inscriptions. (...) the mistakes regarding the names, the order of succession and the regnal years of kings are certainly not many.” (Bhargava 1998:2-3) Indeed, those mistakes (or at least differences, as the mistake may equally be in the Buddhist etc. lists) indicate that we are dealing with independent sources, not copying from one another.

“If the Puranic genealogies from the time of the Buddha onward are almost faultless, the presumption naturally is that the earlier genealogies too are not mere figments of the imagination. (...) In the first place, a large number of these names occur in the Vedic literature which is quite independent of the *Puranas*. Secondly, even those names which do not occur in the Vedic literature are so archaic that they could not have been coined by the authors of the present *Puranas* in whose time the style of names had completely changed.” (Bhargava 1998:3-4)

Summarizing one of his further arguments, we may mention that the division of the *Rig Veda* in earlier Books and a later 10<sup>th</sup> Book is mirrored in the *Puranic* order of early kings named in the early Books and their descendants named in the 10<sup>th</sup> Book or later Vedic literature. Similarly, the Hindu belief that the four Vedic hymn collections were completed just before the Bharata war is confirmed by the non-mention in the Vedas of any king who, according to the Puranic genealogical lists, is younger than Dhrtarastra, father of the Kaurava party in the war. Similarly, the Great Upanishads never mention any king who the lists date as post-Buddha. Finally: “There are numerous synchronisms recorded in the Vedic, *Puranic* and epic literatures which are in consonance with the arrangement of names in the dynastic lists of the *Puranas*. These facts clearly establish the correctness of the arrangement of names in the *Puranic* genealogies.” (Bhargava 1998:5)

To be sure, the larger *Puranic* literature pretending to be historical shows some expected flaws typical of this proto-historical genre. One, for instance, is an anachronism, particularly, the projection of concerns typical of the editors’ own society onto the ancient past. Thus, the conflict between the Vedic seers Vishvamitra and Vasistha is famously spun in terms of caste rivalry. In classical Hindu society, this was an uppermost concern, but in the Vedic

original (RV), this was not the issue at all and plays no role in the seers' conflict, which had another cause.

Another distortion, or fanciful invention, is the story of the matriarch *Ila*'s sex-change: she is said to have been Manu's son Sudyumna, who found himself transformed into a woman. A scholar speculates that Sudyumna is the same person as *Ila*'s son *Pururavas*: "*Manu* desired that his first child should be a son, whereas his wife desired a daughter. Their first child was a girl. (...) *Ila* gave birth to a boy named Sudyumna (...) He could not ascend to the throne because of being [Manu]'s daughter's son. Sudyumna, therefore, was appointed to rule Prasthanapura (...) This has been mentioned in the form of allegory, which runs thus: *Ila*, the first child of Manu, herself was transformed into a man, and then again into a woman (...) But when we carefully consider all the different descriptions in different *Puranas* and epics, we can easily find the historical fact." (Siddhantashastree 1978:35) In the original Vedic story; however, she plays a prominent role as deified ancestress, but no reference whatsoever is made to any sex-change intrigue.

These distortions are common fare in any appropriation of ancient history by later writers, and only corroborate that we are dealing with authors really trying to do history, though it was an embellished and ideologically streamlined history. So, we have to treat would-be historical information from the *Puranas* with care; but with that caveat, we dare provisionally to draw upon at least the Puranic genealogies. These are the hard core of their pretended narrative of the past.

### **Early history in the *Puranas***

The Puranic account that defines the relation between the Vedic people and the proto-Iranians starts with Manu, who established

his kingdom in the North-Indian town of Ayodhya after having survived the Flood. His direct succession went through his eldest son *Iksvaku*, founder of the Solar Dynasty, who remained in Ayodhya where his descendant Rama was to rule. Most *Ksatriyas* in the Ganga plain, including Rama, the Buddha, and the Gupta kings, claimed to belong to this Solar lineage.

One of Manu's other heirs was his first-born, daughter Ila, whose son *Pururavas* (see RV 10:95:18) started the Lunar Dynasty. It was originally based in Pratiṣṭhanapura near *Prayaga* (Siddhantashastree 1978:14). Their descendant Nahusa moved westwards to the Sarasvati basin (alluded to in RV 7:95:2). His son Yayati had five sons, who became the patriarchs of the "five peoples" (RV 6:51:11), the ethnic horizon of the Vedas: *Puru*, *Anu*, *Druhyu*, *Turvasha* and *Yadu*. According to a later myth, *Puru* or *Puru* was the youngest but was rewarded with the privileges of primogeniture because of having lent his youth to his father, who had become impotent. At any rate, his tribe occupied the centre when the five tribes were given their historical locations, the centre being the Sarasvati basin. Anu's tribe occupied the area north of it, Kashmir.

Within Puru's tribe, the Pauravas, then, king Bharata, started the Bharata clan, the backbone around which the Vedic tradition was to grow. According to later (and sometimes trustworthy) tradition, he was the adoptive father of the first-generation Vedic seer, Bharadvaja, grandson of Angiras, the principal author of the oldest RV Book. This Bharadvaja was born from the same mother as another prominent first-generation seer, Dirghatamas (Nagar 2012:93, referring to *Matsya Purana* 49:25 and 49:30). As a grown man Bharadvaja became court-priest to King Divodasa (RV 6:16:5), an ancestor to Vasistha's patron Sudas ("Sudas's father Divodasa," RV 7:19:25), whom we shall get to know as the hero of the principal battle with the proto-Iranians.

Near the time of the very first Vedic hymns, according to the *Puranas*, a war erupted between the *Druhyu* tribe in Punjab and its eastern neighbours, mainly the *Pauravas* in Haryana and the *Anavas* in *Kashmir*, ending in the westward expulsion of most *Druhyus* (Pargiter 1962:298, Bhargava 1971:99, Pusalker 1996:283, Talageri 2000:260 with reference to the *Puranas: Vayu* 99:11-12, *Matsya* 48:9 etc.; and Talageri 2008:247). Their place in West-Punjab was taken by the *Anavas*.

Talageri (2008:218, 246-250) has shown that there is plenty of evidence in the Vedic stories for an Indian origin and for several Vedic-age emigrations from India. Even the earliest emigration, of the *Druhyu* tribe defeated by the proto-Iranian *Anavas* and the Vedic *Pauravas* with the help of the Solar king (who had a *Paurava* mother) *Mandhatr*, only happened shortly before the Vedic narrative starts and is still remembered in a few hymns (1:107:8, 6:46:8, 7:18, 8:10:5, 10:134). Even the later *Puranas* report that the *Druhyus* went west (from Punjab) and set up kingdoms there. Thus, *Gandhara* in Afghanistan is said to be named after one of the *Druhyu* chieftains. (Pargiter 1962:262)

So, if any of this is correct, the emigration of IE-speaking populations from their Indian homeland becomes less mysterious. This is better than any scholar of IE had expected: the IE dispersal is borderline-historical. It does not have to be speculatively reconstructed from scratch or from mute archaeological finds, but is repeatedly hinted at in the texts. The later emigration of the Iranians and the West-Asian Indo-Aryans is more fully described and leaves its traces also in features such as their naming systems and the verse forms as well as the evolving vocabulary, as shown by Talageri (2010:3-80).

At any rate, the stage is now set for the *Anava-Paurava* confrontation.



## **Arya and Dasa**

The *Rig veda* always refers to the *Pauravas*, whether friends or enemies (traitors), as *Arya*. They never do so for non-*Pauravas*, not even when praising them as meritorious allies. This term, often analysed for ultimate or somehow profound meanings, has the effective meaning of “compatriot,” “fellow citizen,” “us” (as against “them”) – in Vedic as well as in Iranian and Anatolian (Mallory & Adams 2006:266, Talageri 2000:154-160, Elst 2013). As Fortson (2004:187) writes, the term was a “self-designation of the Vedic Indic people,” equally used in self-reference by the Iranians. This means that the Vedic people considered themselves *Arya* and the Iranians as *an-Arya*, while the Iranians considered themselves *Arya* (hence the name of their later country: *Iran* is an evolute of *Airiianam Xshathra*, “domain of the Aryans”) and the Vedic or *Paurava* tribe as *an-Arya*.

*Dasa* originally had a neutral meaning, “man,” like when an army officer speaks of his soldiers as “my men.” It was still used in that sense in some Iranian dialects and became the name of an Iranian tribe known to the Greeks as *Dahai* (Indo-European/Sanskrit becomes Iranian *h*, cfr. *Sindhu* becoming *Hindu*). It already acquired a pejorative meaning, existing alongside the neutral one, in the references to enemies in the earliest layer of the *Rig Veda*. Thus, “subdue the tribes of *Dasas* to the *Arya*” (RV 6:25:2). There was a victory by the Vedic King *Divodasa* over “the *Dasa Shambara*” (RV 6:26:5, also mentioned as his defeated foe in 6:43:1, 6:47:21 and later in 9:61:2), all while *dasa* was an element of the winner’s name, “divine fellow.”

## **The Battle of the Ten Kings**

In the oldest layer of the *Rig Veda*, the *Anavas* are still treated as friends. Thus, in hymn 6:27, Indra’s help is invoked for

*Abhyavartin Cayamana*, who has an Iranian patronymic and is a descendent of *Prthu*, ancestor of the Iranian Parthians. But this friendship does not last. In West (present-day Pakistani) Punjab, a confrontation developed between Vedic King *Sudas* and a confederacy of ultimately ten tribes, mostly Iranian.

Possibly after a rivalry (about which the facts are not given) with *Sudas*'s court priest Vishvamitra, Vasistha becomes the court priest himself. Vishvamitra is the main composer of the *Rig Veda*'s Book 3 including the single most famous Vedic verse, the *Gayatri mantra* (RV 3:62:10, a prayer to the rising sun). The major historical event treated in his hymn collection is his aid as court priest to *Sudas* in the victory over the *Kikatas* in the east (RV 3:53). In spite of this success, he seems to have been replaced as royal priest by Vasistha, who stars as the King's decisive helper in the subsequent "Battle of the Ten Kings" (*Dasharajna Yuddha*). This battle is the topic of his hymns RV 7:18/33/83 and a number of allusions elsewhere.

The coalition comes from the west, from the basin of the Asikni river, the present-day Chenab, to attack *Sudas* on the riverside of the *Parusni*, the present-day *Ravi* (7:18:8-9). The word "attack" does not really imply that the coalition was the aggressor, though the Vedic people saw it that way. It may just as well have been a tactical counteroffensive within a war in which *Sudas* himself was the main aggressor. Our knowledge of this conflict is just too sketchy and moreover based on a partisan source. At any rate, as Talageri (2000:420-424, 2008:350-369) has forcefully argued, this was not a battle between good and evil, as many Hindus assume, just a regular war for conquest. Both parties tried to justify their own stand ideologically, but these Hindus have to base their opinion on the only version still extant, that of *Sudas*'s camp through his court priest, Vasistha.

The tactical moves mainly pertain to the military use of the river: it seems the coalition surrounded *Sudas's* army, that it escaped by fording the river (“Indra made the river shallow and easy for *Sudas* to traverse,” RV 7:18:5, “fordable *Parusni*,” RV 7:18:8), that the coalition fell into disarray while trying to cross the river, that some soldiers drowned while others were overtaken in hot pursuit. Their leader *Kavasa* drowns, along with *Druhyu* (RV 7:18:12). *Kavi* “dies” (RV 7:18:8), *Bheda* first escapes but later is killed (RV 7:18:18-19), and one *Devata* is also killed (RV 7:18:20). Both the legitimate enemy and *Sudas's* tribesmen siding with the enemy were defeated: “Ye smote and slew his *Dasa* and his *Arya* enemies and helped *Sudas* with favour, *Indra-Varuna*.” (RV 7:83:1)

At any rate, the outcome of the battle is a clear victory, for the enemies are killed, dispersed or thrown back to the west, to the *Asikni* basin: “*Agni* chased these *Dasyus* in the east and turned the godless westward” (RV 7:6:3). They leave their possessions behind and (part of) their land is occupied to become part of the *Paurava* domain.

### Who were the enemies?

The Vedic text gives quite a bit of detail about the enemy coalition. The ethnic identity of the enemies, often treated as a mystery (if not filled in as “obviously the black aboriginals”), is in fact crystal-clear.

*Sudas*, the *Trtsu*, defeats the *Pauravas's* western neighbour among the five tribes, the *Anavas*: “The goods of Anu’s son he gave to *Trtsu*.” (RV 7:18:13) In the next verse, the *Anavas* are mentioned again, together with what remained of the *Druhyu* tribe, as having been “put to sleep.” The enemies include *Kavi* and *Kavasa*, the enemy tribes *Prshu*, *Prthu*, *Paktha*, *Bhalana*

(RV 7:18:7) are collectively known as *Dasa*, some of them as *Pani* (lambasted already in 7:6:3), and their priests as *Dasyu*. Practically all the names of enemy tribes or enemy leaders are Iranian or pertain to tribes known from Greco-Roman sources as Iranian: *Kavi*, the name of the Iranian dynasty still featuring in *Zarathushtra's Gathas* (e.g. *Gatha* 51:16, Insler 1975:107); *Kavasha/Kaosha*; *Dasa/Dahae*; *Dasyu/Danghyu*; *Pani/Parnoi*; *Anava/Anaoui*; *Parshu/Persoi*; *Prthu/Parthoi*; *Paktha/Pashtu*; *Bhalana/Baluc/Bolan*.

A few are not, at least at first sight, and it is, after all, a heterogeneous coalition. But names like *Bheda*, while not conspicuously Iranian, are not recognizably Dravidian or Munda either, and none of these names is.

On the same pattern, we later get the theological contrast between *Asura* and *Ahura*. The first seers, including *Vasistha*, still use the word in a positive sense, as “lord” or “powerful one”: one of his hymns for *Agni* starts out as “praise of the *Asura*” (RV 7:6:1), and he calls *Agni* again “the *Asura*” (RV 7:30:3), while *Indra* provides *Asurya*, “lordliness,” “manliness” (RV 7:21:7). Yet, he also calls *Agni* the “*Asura*-slayer” (RV 7:13:1): this could be neutral, meaning “even mightier than the mighty ones,” but it could also signal the shift from positive to negative.

In the later hymns and in Hindu literature ever since, *Asura* has served as the usual term for “agent of evil,” “demon,” but still with a dignified status and an unmistakable dexterity, in distinction from the lowly *Raksasas*. In Buddhism too, *Asuras* are associated with powerful quasi-human emotions, especially jealousy of the gods, but do not inhabit one of the hells where the Hungry Ghosts and other lowly creatures dwell (Krishna 2014:60-61). Conversely, in the Iranian tradition, they retain their divine status and it is the *Deva/Daevas* who get demonized.

Though clear enough, Iranologists generally keep labouring under the notion that early Avestan history is a mystery. By contrast, Parsi scholars candidly link the Battle of the Ten Kings (and the subsequent *Varsagira* Battle, cfr. infra) to early Avestan history (Hodiwala 1913:12-16, quoted by Talageri: 2000:216-217). Others create a confused picture, theorizing e.g. that the Vedic tribe consisted of Aryan invaders penetrating India eastwards, and that the *Dasas* were either aboriginals or earlier invaders resisting the western newcomers.

Thus, *Dasas* and *Dasyus* were “people and cultures either indigenous to South Asia or already in South Asia – from wherever or whenever they may have come – when the carriers of *Rig vedic* culture and religion moved into and through the northwest of the subcontinent” (Jamison & Brereton 2014:56). The thrust of *Sudas*’s Vedic Aryans was towards “the region to the east (...), the *Ganga-Yamuna Doab* to which the *Bharatas* advanced (...) In this country of the *Dasas* and *Asuras*.” (Pradhan 2014:188)

Yet, nothing in the text supports this idea that the Vedic people came from the west and the *Dasas* from the east, or that the *Dasas* mentioned lived across the Yamuna, or that the Vedic people were intruders while the *Dasas* were the established population, or that the Aryans even outside the context of this battle were on the move from west to east. On the contrary, twice and in two different ways, the source text says it is the *Dasas* and *Dasyus* who came from the west. It says that they have come to the “east” for a fight and that these “godless ones” are turned back “westward” (7:6:3); and it has them come from the westerly *Asikni/Chenab* river valley to challenge and fight *Sudas* on the shores of the easterly *Parusni/Ravi*. That does not mean they were intruders into India, though: it is a big country, and it is most unlikely that any of the warring parties

identified with India as a whole (as opposed to their own slice of it) as “their” country.

Even Pradhan, otherwise very careful to toe the orthodox line, breaks ranks with his Western mentors by accepting as simply obvious the Iranian identity of the Ten Kings, e.g.: “their Indo-Iranian past gave the *Dasas* the institution of sacrifice” (Pradhan 2014:124), “their Aryan antecedents become clear from the *Avesta* and the Greek historians’ notices of the Dahae and the Parnoi” (Pradhan 2014:132). He silently passes over the improbable implication that this would put the Iranians where he had earlier located the Ten Kings, viz. east of the Yamuna, a rather unorthodox hypothesis.

Other Indian authors too have made this Iranian identification. Thus, in an otherwise confused account, Verma & Verma (1994:4) assert, nonetheless, that the *Pakthas* are “today’s Pakhtuns” while the *Bhalanas* “were associated with the Bolan Pass” and the *Parshu* were “a people of ancient Persia” (1994:9).

So everything, including a western-neighbourly location, points to the Iranians. Nothing is there to deny it, nothing points to anyone else.

### **The enemies’ religion**

The heroes of this hymn, the *Trtsus* (a clan around seven successive Kings belonging to the broader *Bharata* dynasty, including *Sudas*), are *Aryas* and supported by Indra. The enemy camp as a whole is deemed *anindra*, “without Indra” (7:18:16), in a verse that seems to furnish the first instance of this term. Later books use this as a standard allegation of the enemies: “Indra-less destructive spirit” (RV 4:23.7), “how can those without Indra and without hymns harm me?” (RV 5:2:3), “enemies without

Indra,” truth-haters (RV 1:133:1), “my enemies without *Indra*” (RV 10:48:7), “Indra-less libation-drinkers” (RV 10:27:6, according to Geldner 2003/3:166, a “reminiscence of 7:18:16”).

Included in the enemy camp are the *Dasyus*, described as “faithless, rudely-speaking *Panis/niggards*, without belief, sacrifice or worship” (RV 7:6:3). Other seers call them “without sacrifice” (RV 1:33:4, 8:70:11), “without oath” (RV 1:51:8, 1:175:3, 6:14:3, 9:41:2), “riteless” (RV 10:22:8), “godless” (*adeva*, RV 8:70:11), “faithless” (RV 1.33.9, 2:22:10), “prayerless” (RV 4:16:9), “following different rites” (RV 8:70:11, 10:22:8). All these are properties pertaining to religion. *Dasyus* are the *Dasas*’ priests and the special target of *Vasistha*’s ire. In fact, opposition to the *Dasyus* is a general Vedic trait: “*Dasyus* never figure as rich or powerful enemies. They are depicted as sly enemies who incite others into acts of boldness (6:24:8) (...) The *Dasyus* are clearly regarded with uncompromising hostility, while the hostility towards the *Dasas* is relatively mild” (Talageri 2000:253).

*Sudas*’s court priest is less interested in and less incensed against the *Dasa* warriors who do the actual fighting, and more in the *Dasyu* ideologues who have turned the battle in a competition between different pantheons and different ways of pleasing them.

The Iranian religion fits *Vasistha*’s description. The Vedic seers saw a very similar religious practice and a very similar worldview, of people whom they understood in spite of a different accent, and therefore were extra sensitive to the points where the *Athravans* had “deviated” from the Vedic standard. Consider: the Mazdeans are “without fire-sacrifice”: they do not throw things into the sacred fire, because they hold it even more sacred than the Vedic sacrificial priests, who still use it as a channel towards the gods. An Avestan *yasna* is not a Vedic *yajna*.

They do not worship the *Devas*, whom they have demonized: *Daeva* effectively means “devil.” Conversely, the Vedic Aryans originally worshipped but ultimately demonized the *Asuras* (Hale 1986). Among the gods, Indra in particular was identified with the principle of Evil or Falsity, though his substantiated epithet *Verethraghna* (“*Vrtra*-slayer”) was separated from him and remained popular.

We may speculate that in an earlier confrontation, Indra did not give them victory, so they demonized him, turning him into the “angry spirit,” *Angra Mainyu*. Vedic *Manyu* (addressee of RV 10:83-84) was a name of Indra in his aspect of fury and passion. *Angra* seems to be a pun on the *Angiras*, the clan of his priests. (In the subsequent *Varsagira* battle, the Bharata enemies of the Mazdeans call themselves *angirobhirangirastama*, “most swift/*angiras* among the swift/*angiras*,” RV 1:100:3.) Alternatively, the far Northwest of the Subcontinent has no clear monsoon, a time opened with a thunderstorm signified by *Indra*. During their migrations as sketched in the *Puranas*, the *Anavas* are said to have moved from the Western Ganga basin, which has a monsoon, to Kashmir and then West-Punjab, where the memory of a monsoon must have faded, so *Indra* became less relevant and easily identified with the people from monsoon territory.

Another element that may have played a role here, is Vasistha’s stated opposition to magic: “Let the heroes (...) prevail against all godless arts of magic” (RV 7:1:10), “Against the sorcerers hurl your bolt” (RV 7:104:25). Human experience teaches the perfect compatibility of this “skeptical” position with the fact that his own sacrificial rituals believed to be the cause of battlefield victories equally amount to magic. At any rate, this cursed sorcery was identified with the *Asuras*, who are often depicted in later Puranic stories as more resourceful than the *Devas*. Magic



sits at the centre of the *Atharva Veda*, named after the kind of priest dominant among the Iranians, the *Athravans*, and held in lower esteem than the *Veda-trayi*, the other three Vedas. In this case, it is not yet clear what was cause and what was effect: magic (from *Magoi*, the Greek name of the Iranian priests) was associated with the Iranians, and both the one and the other were mistrusted.

Finally, on the Vedic side, it is possible that Varuna's identity with the enemies' god *Ahura Mazda* had something to do with his decline and gradual disappearance from the Vedic horizon: "One notices the decline of Varuna in Book X, which has no hymn for him (...) If he is seen in his glory in some of the Family Books, Book X registers his decline and subordination to Indra." (Pradhan 2014:153-154) At any rate, he did decline, both in power and in moral stature: "Varuna, who is now second to *Indra* unlike in VI, VII and IV, is reduced to singing his praises (...) Varuna of Books X and I acquires semi-demoniacal features which he did not have in the Family Books (...) the former guardian of immortality is now associated with the world of the dead (...) unlike in the early *Rig Veda*, the [later] *Samhitas* treated Varuna with dread" (Pradhan 2014:156).

This is only a partial and gradual demonization of Varuna the Asura, nothing like the radical demonization of *Indra*, the *Daeva*. But this is commensurate with the fleeting *Paurava* war psychology as against the deep grudge the *Anavas* bore after their defeat.

### **Who the enemies were not**

None of the names or nicknames associated with the Ten Kings, their tribes or their religion is attested in Dravidian, Munda, Burushaski, Kusunda, Nahali, Tibetan or any other nearby language. Most of them, by contrast, are completely transparent as Iranian

names. Similarly, their stated religious identification points to the Mazdean tradition. Yet, quite a few translators and students of the Vedas insist that they are the “black aboriginals,” with full academic sanction, e.g., “Indra subjected the aboriginal tribes of the *Dasas/Dasyus* to the Aryans.” (Elizarenkova 1995:36)

The first reason is that those targeted by *Vasistha* are *mrdrhvac* (RV 7:6:3), “babblers defective in speech” (Wilson), “rudely-speaking” (Griffith), “wrongly speaking” (*misredend*, Geldner), or “of disdainful words” (Jamison and Brereton). This is not normally said of people speaking a foreign language, but of people who are comprehensible yet do not use the accent or the sociolinguistic register we are used to. Still it is popularly thought that this refers to foreigners, the way the European settlers in America considered the Amerindians alien.

The second reason is the frequent use of the word “black” as referring to the enemies, enemies: the *asikni visha*, “the black tribe” (7:5:3, apparently repeated in another anti-“godless” verse, 9:73:5, *tvacam asiknim*). But the use of “black” is not as pregnant with sinister racist implications as it is often made out. Hock (1999) shows that this is but an application of a universal symbolism relating whiteness or lightness to what is good or friendly, and darkness or blackness to what is threatening, inimical or evil. In the writer’s country, Belgium, collaborators with the German occupier during World War II were called Blacks (“*zwarten*”), resistance fighters Whites (“*witten*”). Colour symbolism in India has many applications unrelated to race, e.g., the “white” and the “black” *Yajur-Veda* are merely the well-ordered and transparent c.q. the miscellaneous and labyrinthine parts.

Moreover, in *Vasistha*’s case, we are probably dealing with a pun, a *double-entendre*: *asikni* means “black,” but it is also the name of a river, *Asikni*, “the black river,” which happens

to be the river were the Ten Kings came to do battle. This is a normal type of hydronym, e.g. the *Thames* in England and the *Demer* in Belgium mean “dark (river)” as well, both names being cognates of Sanskrit *tamas*, “darkness”; just as rivers may have colour names referring to their lighter aspect, e.g. the Chinese *Huanghe*, “Yellow River.” So, “dark tribe” here means “tribe from the Dark River.”

In this case, the unimaginative interpretation of this pun as indicating a black skin colour in the enemy, has been unusually consequential. The British-colonial as well as the Nazi-imperial narrative was that the presumed “White Aryan conquest of India from the Black Aborigines” illustrates the colonial and racialist view that superior races should rule over the inferior races and that master races should preserve their purity. All this could have been avoided if the Vedic words for “black” (*asikni*, *krishna*) had been interpreted properly. There was no racial difference between *Dasas* and *Aryas*, and Iranians (or even Kashmiris) are not black. They are, if anything, whiter than most Indians are.

### **The Varsagira battle**

A few generations later, another battle pitted the same tribes against each other. The centre of *Anava* culture had by then decisively shifted from Punjab to Afghanistan, and the confrontation took place on the then borderline between Vedic-Indian and Afghan-Iranian territory, beyond the *Sarayu* river (RV 4:30:18) near the Bolan pass in southern Afghanistan. The battle was very briefly sung esp. in RV 1:100, but may be alluded to elsewhere. It features *Rjashva* the *Varsagira*, i.e. “descendent of *Vrsagir*” (RV 1:100:16-17), with *Sahadeva* (descendant of *Sudas* and father of *Somaka*) and three others, as defeating “*Dasyus* and *SHimiyus*.” The *SHimiyus* are one of the enemy

tribes in the Battle of the Ten Kings; the *Dasyus* are the priests of the enemy camp.

The result of this “victory” is that the Kings of both sides survive the battle (as we shall see), that the division of territory remains the same, and that the chroniclers of both sides can give their own versions to claim victory. So, with the benefit of hindsight, the war in this case seems to have been pointless. In the Vedic account, it does indeed conclude the period of conflict. *Bharata* expansionism into Afghanistan seems to have been overstretched, and subsequent generations left it to the Iranians: “Good fences make good neighbours.” This way, the battle ushers in a period of peaceful coexistence forming the setting of books 2, 5 and 8.

The Avestan version of the same battle first of all *exists*. That means there are two accounts of one event. It makes *Zarathushtra*’s patron *Vishtaspa* (mentioned by *Zarathushtra* himself as his friend, follower, and champion) fight against “*Arjasp*” or “*Arejataspa*,” meaning the Vedic King *Rjashva*., as well as against *Hazadaeva*, *Hushdiv* and *Humayaka*, meaning Vedic *Sahadeva* and his son *Somaka*. This is related in the *Aban Yasht*, Yt.5.109, 5.113, 9.130, in which *Vishtaspa* prays for strength to crush the *Daeva*-worshippers including *Arejataspa*; and much later in the medieval epic *Shah Namah*, esp. ch.462. (Talageri 2000:214-224, elaborating on Hodiwala 1913). In the Avestan version, the Iranians are victorious in the end. Unlike in the Battle of the Ten Kings, here the outcome is clearly less black-and-white.

A related Vedic hymn could be read as mentioning King *Vishtaspa*: “*kimistashva istarashmireta ishanasastarusa rnjate nr na*” (RV.I.122.13). Wilson, like the medieval commentator *Sayana*, identifies it as a name: “What can *Istashva*, (what

can) *Istarashmi*, (what can) those who are now lords of the earth, achieve (with respect) to the leaders of men, the conquerors of their foes?" Similarly, translator Geldner: "Werden *Istasha*, *Istarashmi*, diese siegreichen Machthaber, die Herren auszeichnen?" ("Will *Istasha*, *Istarashmi*, these victorious sovereigns, honour the lords?") Other translators have tried for a literal translation, not as names, but the results make little sense.

Western Iranologists are of the opinion, or implicitly assume, that RV 1:122 admittedly does mention one *Istasha*, but that this cannot be *Kavi Vishtaspa*, the royal patron of court priest *Zarathushtra Spitama*. Some Parsi und Hindu authors, by contrast, consider the name and this person to be linked through phonetic transposition (not necessarily etymologically correct) from the Iranian to the related Vedic dialect. They think that this is one of the rare cases in ancient history where an event with its protagonists is mentioned in two different sources, representing the two opposing camps of the event itself.

*Istasha* would mean "chosen horse," "elite horse," and Indian Sanskritists do explain the name this way. However, this seems to be a folk etymology. The Iranian original, *Vishtaspa*, has been analysed by Oswald Szemerényi (cited by Schwartz 2006:57) as "unyoked horse." Originally, this was thought to be an apotropeic name, i.e. a purposely negative name meant to keep evil spirits at a distance, in this case "horse unfit for pulling a cart," "good-for-nothing horse." But this is not necessary, it may simply mean, "(owner of a) free-roaming horse."

At any rate, Szemerényi's basic interpretation of "unyoked horse" may explain a hitherto mysterious passage. A hymn significantly referring to battles against those without *Indra* and without *Devas*, says: "the captor shall yoke the unyoked bullock." (RV

10:27:9, tra. Griffith) The Vedas contain numerous puns and metaphors, many of them unidentified or not understood. This passage may be one such not-yet-understood pun.

### **Consequences for the age of Zarathushtra**

Since the classical Greeks, it has been common to date *Zarathushtra* to the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, hardly a few generations before the Persian wars. In popular literature, this date is still given, but scholars have now settled for an earlier date: “The archaism of the *Gathas* would incline us to situate *Zarathushtra* in the very beginning of the first millennium BCE, if not even earlier.” (Varenne 2006:43) But how much earlier? According to a leading scholar Skjaervø (2011:350), “Zoroastrianism (...) originated some four millennia ago.”

Well, we bet on an even earlier date. If *Zarathushtra* was contemporaneous with the *Varsagira* battle, and at any rate with the *Rig Veda*, he must have lived either in ca. 1400 according to the Aryan Invasion Theory (AIT). The fact that the Vedic people had the Iranians as their western neighbours and fought with them, does not by itself prove anything about the homeland of their language family, and is in itself compatible with the AIT. But for other reasons, the AIT has been argued to be wrong (Kazanas 2015:268, Talageri 2000 and 2008), and if we go by the Out-of-India scenario, the events from the *Rig Veda*’s Family Books are lifted back into the third millennium.

Independent of the relation with Vedic history, the *Avesta* itself gives more reasons for *Zarathushtra*’s ancientness, though not dated with precision. The first chapter of the *Vendidad*, discussed in Gnoli 1985:24-30, lists sixteen countries fit for Iranian habitation: most are parts of Afghanistan or due north of it (but not towards the Aral Lake, as the Aryan Invasion Theory would make you

expect, nor the more westerly historical habitats of the Medes, Persians and Scythians), two are parts of Northwest India. These are *Hapta Hendu*, the “Land of Seven Rivers,” roughly, Punjab; and *Airiianam Vaejo* (the “Seed of the Aryans”), the first habitat after the *Anava* ethnogenesis, which is *Kashmir*: “Given its very Oriental horizon, this list must be pre-Achaemenid; on the other hand, the remarkable extendedness of the territories concerned recommends situating them in a period much later than the Zoroastrian origins. (...) one or several centuries later than *Zarathushtra*’s preaching.” (Gnoli 1985:25)

The Out-of-India Theory (OIT) posits a higher chronology than the AIT, and lifts the Vedic events at least a thousand years deeper into the past. This finding about battles against India-based Iranians and notably against *Zarathushtra*’s patron *Vishtaspa* in the Vedic record forces the “prophet” into the third millennium. *Zarathushtra* this early, that will take some getting used to.

### **Consequences for “*Zarathushtra*’s reform”**

The picture of Zoroastrianism has long been that first, there was an Indo-Iranian religion roughly equal to what we find in the Vedas, with an emphasis on ritual, and then *Zarathushtra* came and changed everything. He shifted the focus to morality and the notion of good and evil. He demonized Indra and all the *Devas* but exalted *Varuna*, the god of the world order, as the supreme God, *Ahura Mazda*, thus becoming a monotheist. He also abolished the fire sacrifice and “purified” the fire.

So, he was a religious revolutionary? Those familiar with the usual life stories of Jesus and Mohammed will recognize the type: “The tradition is undoubtedly truthful when it affirms that *Zarathushtra* immediately encountered opposition from his peers, the priests of the established religion. (...) So in preaching

monotheism, in attacking the *Daevas* (one of the two divine 'clans') and in electing only *Ahura Mazda* Supreme God, *Zarathushtra* 'broke the temple columns'." (Varenne 2006:40)

This idea is still very popular, but has been superseded. First of all, it is not true that *Zarathushtra* introduced monotheism: "The pantheon was never eliminated, and Zoroastrianism, in some sense, at least, remained a polytheistic religion throughout its history." (Skjaervø 2011:350) At the very least, *Mithra* and *Anahita* remained popular deities.

*Zarathushtra*'s life story too is anachronistic. According to Zoroastrian tradition itself, much of it was only committed to writing in the Christian age (Arsacide and Sasanian periods and especially after the beginning of Muslim rule) and hence not necessarily reliable, says that *Vishtaspa*'s war against the "Turanians" led by *Arjasp* was provoked by the latter, viz. by his burning down the city of *Balx* (present-day *Mazar-e-Sharif* in the northernmost corner of Afghanistan): "Arjasp, knowing that this city was without troops, had sent his son Kehram to plunder it. (...) The victorious Turanians burned the *Zend-Avesta*, slit the throats of the priests serving the *Atesh-gahs* [= fire-temples], and quenched the fire with their blood." (Varenne 2006)

According to Firdausi's medieval *Shah-Namah* epic, this was when *Zarathushtra* himself, at 77, was killed by an invading soldier. Next, the heroic warrior *Gustasp* (apparently the same as *Vishtaspa*) put *Arjasp* to flight, but was later encircled by *Arjasp*. So we see Iranian tradition reporting several victories by their enemy; in a tradition of boastful pride, we would only expect this admission of defeat if it was true and known to be true by the target audience. However, all is well that ends well: the young hero *Espendiar* saved the day and killed *Arjasp*, a scenario not recorded in the *Rig Veda*.



This account is obviously anachronistic, e.g., it presupposes book burning, which in turn presupposes the existence of books in *Zarathushtra's* society. Yet, everything indicates that his society was illiterate, and at any rate that the transmission of his religious corpus was purely oral until well into the Common Age: "Avestan is written with an alphabet created expressly for the purpose of committing the corpus to writing (...) between the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> and the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century." (Martinez & de Vaan 2014:4) For centuries, perhaps millennia, after its composition, *Zarathushtra's* hymnal collection and other parts of the *Avesta* had been learned and passed on by heart, like the Vedas. So there was no question of book-burning: to destroy a text, you had to kill the whole class of *Brahmanas* c.q. *Athravans* or *Magoi*.

In this case, though, there is a silver lining to the (temporary) defeat: it confers martyrdom on *Zarathushtra*. Christ's martyrdom was wellknown by the time these texts were written down, and at any rate, as Varenne (2006:42) remarks: "prophets who die in their beds are less prestigious than those who get killed for their faith!" Among South-Asian priests, this kind of martyrdom was uncharacteristic. There are many unknowns here, but on balance, we consider it probable that this story was added when the centre of gravity of Iranian culture had shifted to West Asia, where such martyrdom was more common. Even at the hands of the later Zoroastrians themselves, such martyrdom is not unknown, e.g., the execution of Mani, founder of Manicheism, 3rd century CE, by Sasanian head priest Karter. Thus, this narrative imitates West-Asian models and has little to do with older Indian realities.

What also sounds West-Asian is the classical story of a wandering preacher who finds God during a lonely retreat, then seeks to convert the nobility, gets rebuked, and finally finds favour with

*Kavi Vishtaspa*, and that only after being imprisoned by him and doing a miracle. (Mole 1993:57-65) More likely, the *Spitamās* had already been serving the *Kavi* dynasty as hereditary court-priests for several generations. Family is very important here, and probably the doctrine for which *Zarathushtra* became known was already a family “property” for generations, partly even common to the *Anava* tribe as a whole.

Among other items in doubt is the location of the “prophet” and his patron in Northern Afghanistan. The hard data in the oldest layers of the Avesta do not locate him outside the Helmand area in Western Afghanistan. Later history has back-projected on his life the locations of new centres of Iranian culture, such as Sogdia (nowadays highlighted by the Zoroastrian-Revivalist government of Tajikistan), Azerbaijan and, here, Bactria. In between the later accretions full of embellishments and back-projections, the line of genuine ancient tradition is very thin – all the more reason to take serious what little information on early Zoroastrianism that we can glean from Vedic literature.

In the historiography of religions, the reconstruction of *Zarathushtra*’s life is an important topic, but gaining clarity about it is marred by the paucity of material, the later inclination to competitive hagiography, and the distortive influence of West-Asian models. For now, we may agree that here, the core of genuine facts is hard to discern underneath these distortive elements. Among the few certainties, we have the eastern, Afghan location of *Zarathushtra* and his patron *Vishtaspa*, and their opposition to *Indra* and the *Daevas*.

But even here, the traditional picture has got to be amended. The reforms often associated with *Zarathushtra*, viz. Mazdeism being *anindra*, *adeva* and *ayajna*, (godless, *Indra*-less and without fire sacrifice) were already proverbially associated with

the Iranians during the Battle of the Ten Kings, several generations earlier. Probably his *Spitama* ('white-clad') family was already serving as hereditary court priests of the *Kavi* dynasty. Hence the apparent pun on this family name in the reports on the first battle: *shvitnya* (RV7:33:1 and 7:83:8, explained in 7:33:9 and 7:33:12, identified as a pun by Talageri 2000:213-214).

This, then, is one of the more important Iranological insights that follow from this Vedic information. The points on which Mazdeism differs from the Vedic tradition are not innovations propagated by a lone prophet, but predated *Zarathushtra* by generations. He was only the spokesman of already existing community, but became famous because he took the trouble of casting his ideas into poems. It was already a collective heritage of a large community among the *Anavas* including the *Kavi* dynasty. How that heritage in turn came into being, is beyond even our Vedic sources, but it does not require a specific cause or reason. "Vedic" India was culturally a diverse landscape where every community had its own religious idiosyncrasies, all the while also having many practices and ideas in common. The Vedic tradition came about as one of these sister traditions, essentially on par with what became the Avestan tradition.

## Conclusion

It has become entirely certain that the Iranians feature prominently in the *Rig Veda*. Their conflict with the Vedic Aryans is described in some detail, leading to the predominance of the latter in an ever-larger territory, and to a relocation of the Iranian mainstay to Afghanistan and countries further west.

A slight bit less certain, but for all practical purposes undeniable, is that the Vedic account even refers to king *Vishtaspa* and his famous employee, *Zarathushtra*. This implies that they can

be dated relatively, viz. as old as the middle period of the *Rig Veda*. This should put an end to the bizarre situation that scholars of Iranian are in the dark about the founder of the tradition they study, doubting not only his age and location but even his existence.

At the same time, we learn that *Zarathushtra* was not the founder. He became the celebrated spokesmen, through his hymns, of a worldview that flourished among his tribe. The genesis of this worldview is still to be traced, but disappears behind the horizon of Vedic beginnings.

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2

**SOME KUSHANA IMAGES OF  
KARTTIKEYA FROM MATHURA**

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The study of the Karttikeya *icon* throws new light on the history of the deity. The Kushanas were worshipers of Karttikeya. Karttikeya images are found in Mathura dating back to the 1<sup>st</sup> CE belonging to the Kushana period. The Kushanas, to quote Asim Kumar Chatterjee, “were a martial race, and found in him their ideal god”<sup>1</sup>.

In the early Kushana art of Mathura, Karttikeya is represented with simple iconographic features. He stands with two-arms holding a spear in his left hand, the right hand raised in the *abhaya* pose with the cushion decoration between the back of the right hand and the shoulder. The hair is arranged in long strands, combed back and falling on the nape and shoulder. The head is usually crowned but in some cases, the hair is arranged in a topknot. Various types of headgear are found on Karttikeya, typical of the period. They are:

- an elaborate turban
- an ornamental disc work in front of *jata* or knot of hair
- the fillets or bands tied on the forehead
- the Scythian pointed cap was frequently used.

The *urna* is sometimes indicated by a raised dot between the eyes wide open.

The expression on the face hints at a smile, while some stiffness is suggested by the posture. The chest is prominent and the navel deep. Along with the crown, other ornaments – earrings, torque, armband, flat triangular necklace, bracelet, all typical of Kushana art – adorn the image. The upper part of the body is bare. The thick twisted *uttariya* (scarf) is worn at an angle, from around the upper part of the right leg to the left hip with a thick knot at the hip. The lower garment reaches below the knee and a waistband fastening it terminates in a double knot to the right or left side, with two fillets from the knot hanging down on the thigh. The model has been derived from the early standing Kushana Bodhisattva types, with the exception of the spear.

There are some important sculptures, which are worth consideration:



No. 2949 of the Mathura museum is the earliest image of Karttikeya belonging to early Kushana period. It bears on the pedestal an inscription saying that it was installed in the 11<sup>th</sup> year of Kanishka's reign (89 CE) (Plate 1). It is a very impressive piece of sculpture and one of the finest specimens of Kushana art. This is the earliest two-armed image of Karttikeya with inscription, which makes it unique.

Plate 1



The stone image of Karttikeya recovered from the Mansawala well at Palikhera has a small beard and his hair arranged in a topknot. (Plate. 2) The beard is a rare sight in a deity.



Plate 2



Plate 3

The stone image of Karttikeya from Mathura belonging to the early Kushana period is now in the National museum, Delhi (Plate. 3). In this image, a scarf is suspended on the left wrist.

The bronze image from Sonkh (2<sup>nd</sup> century CE) showing Karttikeya standing holding a spear in his right hand, the left resting on the hip (Plate 4) is now in Mathura museum.



Plate 4

These are rare variations in early iconography and suggest that the agamas and shilpa shastras had yet to be formulated. The differences are an indication of the fashions of the period, and the freedom that the artist had to express himself.

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3

**PARA VASUDEVA NARAYANA**

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This iconic representation of Vishnu is known by various names: *Vaikuntha*, *Vaikunthanatha* (Lord of Vaikuntha), *Caturmurti* (four-fold representation), *Caturanana* (four-faced), *Para Vasudeva Narayana*, *Vishnu Caturmurti*, *Vishnu Caturanana* and *Vaikuntha Caturmurti* (four-faced Vaikuntha). The use of Vaikuntha in the name also suggests that the form represents the *Para* (Ultimate Reality) form of Vishnu

The *Pancaratra* text *Jayakhya Samhita*, describes the images of Vaikuntha with human, lion, boar and fierce heads and its worship (Bhattacharya, 1967: 46). We find more information about the form of Vaikuntha in the following literature: *Parameshvara Samhita* (19,541-43), *Ishvara Samhita* (21, 579-581), *Paushkara Samhita* (38, 300-302), and *Padma Samhita* (10 – 11). The *Vishnudharmottara Purana*, refers to Vaikuntha with eight hands and four faces in four cardinal directions. Each of these faces is endowed with two hands holding the wheel and the mace for Vasudeva, the pestle and plough for Samkarshana, the bow and the arrow for Pradyumna, and the shield and the sword for Aniruddha. The eastern face is placid, the southern is that of a lion, the western is fierce (Kapila) and the northern is that of a boar (Shah, 1961: I, ch.44 & 85). The *Bhagavata Purana* (VIII. 5, 4.) and the *Vishnu Purana* (III, 2-4) record that Vaikuntha was born of Vikuntha, the wife of Sage Subhra;

the *Mahabharata* (*Vishnusahasranama*, verse.57) enumerates Vaikuntha as one of the epithets of Vishnu.

The Narasimha and Varaha heads found on the Vaikuntha *Caturmurti* form is transference of the incarnation aspect to the more philosophical, that is, the *Vyuha* aspect. Banerjea points out that the lion and the boar faces are primarily associated with *PancaratraVyuha* and not with the Narasimha and Varaha incarnations (Banerjea, 1956: 410). However, the growing importance of these two incarnations resulted in their being the preferred forms of the *Caturvyuhamurti*.

The earliest *Caturmurti* or Vaikuntha image found so far belongs to the second century BCE, Sunga period (Srinivasan, 1979: 41). This sculpture was found at Bhita, Uttar Pradesh, and is now in the State Museum, Lucknow (Fig.1). The important feature in this image is that it has been sculpted in the round. On all four sides, one can see the four faces by circumambulation. Although the image has four heads, one side of the head has a crown and heavy ornaments, which make it prominent. This figure must be Vaasudeva, his right hand in *abhaya mudra* and



Fig. 1. Left to right: Vasudeva, Narasimha as seated lion, Varaha, Kapila, 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BCE, Sunga, Bhita, Uttar Pradesh.

the left hand holding a decorative jar. He wears both upper (*uttariya*) and lower garment (*dhoti*). To the right, we find a damaged human head and below that the theriomorphic form of Narasimha as a seated lion. On his right appears another full standing figure without a crown and his hair is parted in the middle and falls in strands on either side of his shoulders. Both the hands are broken, the attributes are not clear. Adjacent to the left side of the crowned figure, there is a defaced human head and below that a theriomorphic form of Varaha in standing posture. He is in the attitude of worshipping Vasudeva with two of his hands in *anjali mudra*.

Another image of Vaikuntha belonging to the third century CE, Kushana period is from Sapta–Samudri well at Mathura (Fig.2). Although the image is in a highly damaged condition, enough remains of this statue to ascertain the Vaikuntha iconography. The bust of Vasudeva has four arms, the natural right hand is in *abhaya mudra* and the left holds a conch. In this sculpture, Samkarshana is directly represented instead of his theriomorphic form of a lion that explains the concept of the *caturvyuhamurti* form practiced in the Kushana period (Srinivasan, 1979: 40).



Fig. 2. Vaikuntha Caturmurti, 3<sup>rd</sup> c. CE, Kushana, Mathura.

During the Gupta period, Vaikuntha images were available in plenty, according to Puranic accounts. An early bust of Vaikuntha datable to the fifth century is in the National Museum, New Delhi. Two small images from the Mathura Museum, no. 771, and No.D.28, depict the lion's head to the right and the boar's head to the left, thus reversing the position of the animal heads. It appears from some of the Gupta images from Mathura that there was no rigidity about the position of animal heads of Vaikuntha in this period (Agarwala, 1972: 13).

This *Caturmukha* form of Vishnu is described as *Caturatman* in the *Rajatarangini* (IV, 500, V, 25) of Kalhana. The iconography of *Vaikuntha Caturmurti* was influenced by the Gandhara tradition, which impacted the iconographic depictions of sculptures of Northwest India, particularly those made in Kashmir. A Vaikuntha image from Avantipur is a good example of the Kashmiri style, housed at the Srinagar Museum (Fig.3). A dagger is tucked in the waist belt of the God, and the third eye on the forehead of the fourth face at the back is noteworthy.



Fig. 3. Vaikuntha, 9<sup>th</sup> c. CE, Avantipur, Kashmir.



Fig. 4. Vaikuntha, 9<sup>th</sup> c. CE, Prince of Wales Museum, Mumbai

A ninth century CE fragmentary Vaikuntha *Caturmurti* in the Prince of Wales Museum, Mumbai, illustrates the classic Kashmiri type (Chandra, 1974: 29) (Fig.4). The central figure has a human face wearing an elaborate triple crested crown. The body is ornamented with earrings, a necklace, the *yajnopavita*, and the Srivatsa mark on the chest. On the right of the central face of Vasudeva is projected the head of a lion, and to the left, that of a boar. On the reverse appears the fierce-looking face of Kapila.

A standing Vaikuntha at the National Art Gallery, New Delhi is a good specimen of a bronze icon of this god from Kashmir (Fig.5). The Vaikuntha bronze from the Hari Rai temple at Chamba is a masterpiece and it is under worship. A Lakshmi-Vaikuntha from Kashmir is a seated figure on Garuda (Fig.6). Vaikuntha has four arms, with lion and boar faces projecting on either side of his neck. Lakshmi is seated to the left of Vaikuntha who is lifted by a four-armed Garuda.

The Western Indian Himalayan images of Vaikuntha are also more in number. A stone image from the Chamba Hills is preserved in the Bhuri Singh Museum. The three-headed *Garudaruda* deity rests his upper hands on the heads of standing personified attributes of the mace and wheel. The deity rests



Fig.5. Vaikuntha, 9<sup>th</sup> c. CE.  
National Museum, New Delhi



Fig.6. *Garudarudha* Vaikuntha,  
9<sup>th</sup> c. CE, Chamba

his legs on the uplifted hands of Garuda while his personified cognizance, the *Cakra Purusha* and *Gada Devi*, are supported on the wings of the bird. A few early Vaikuntha images of this kind have been found from the Kangra region of the Punjab. An eighth century temple at Masruru and a medieval temple of Siva at Baijanath preserve Vaikuntha images (Agarwala, 1972: 18).

The antiquity of Vaikuntha Caturmurti sculpture belongs to the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BCE, but the iconic evidences found so far suggests that its present form developed during the Gupta period, around the 4<sup>th</sup>—5<sup>th</sup> c. CE. The presence of Vaikuntha Caturmurti, found in Kashmir and North-West India, suggests that the worship of Vishnu in this form developed as a cult between the 8th to 10th c. CE. The icon received royal patronage from King Avantivarman, the founder of the Utpala dynasty (reign: 855-883 CE); temples built in his reign often depict *Vaikuntha Caturmurti*. He became the tutelary deity of the Karkotas and Utpala dynasties of Kashmir.



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## **PALLAVA-KADAMBA INTERLUDE IN KERALA: AN EPIGRAPHICAL STUDY**

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### **Abstract**

*The Pallavas and Kadambas were the two prominent dynasties who once decided the course of the political history of not only the Deccan, but the entire peninsular India. There is a general consensus among the historians that the ancient Chera Empire declined around the 5<sup>th</sup>—6<sup>th</sup> century CE largely due to the decline of the Roman Empire and its trade with the east. History of the Kerala country during the period between early Cheras and the Kulasekaras of Mahodayapuram (later Cheras) still remain the “terra incognita” due to the fragmentary evidence and lack of problem-oriented research. In addition, we have the “Kalabhra interregnum” between the two Chera dynasties, which is identified as “a long historical night.” Epigraphic sources like the Nilambur plates of Ravivarma Kadamba along with another short label inscription of Vishnuvarman of the same dynasty from Edakkal cave in the district of Wayanad throw fresh light on the aforementioned subject. Together with two more early Pallava grants from Palakkada and Dasanapura, these early inscriptions open a new chapter in our understanding of the Kadamba –Pallava interlude in the Kerala country.*

## Introduction

History in its broadest sense, in the words of E.H.Carr “is an unending dialogue between the present and the past.” The historical past as gleaned from the evidences, which cannot be altered but can only be reinterpreted in the light of new theoretical and methodological developments. In the case of Kerala history, especially of ancient Kerala history, a historian will face the problem of meagre historical evidences. Along with it, most of the researchers of Kerala history depended on the legendary accounts and ignored the epigraphical evidences found in the neighbouring Tamil and Kannada regions and their relevance to the reconstruction of the Kerala history. On account of that, there is a huge gap in the reconstructed history of Kerala particularly the period between the ancient Cheras and the later Cheras. Some of them have viewed that period as a *Dark Age* of Kerala history due to the so called *Kalabhra interregnum*. And some others labelled it as the *terra incognita* due to the availability of fragmentary evidence. But it should be remembered that the Kerala region never maintained a distinct political identity from the Tamil and Kannada regions, and that the political hegemony of the ruling dynasties of the Tamil and Kannada territories spread into the Kerala region also. Keeping this hypothesis in view, the present paper attempts to study and analyse the epigraphical data of the Tamilnadu and Karnataka regions to understand the political and cultural developments in the history of Kerala.

The Pallavas and Kadambas were the two prominent dynasties that once decided the political destinies of peninsular India, particularly during the period between the 4<sup>th</sup>—9<sup>th</sup> centuries CE. Here the present researcher will attempt to throw light on the so-called dark and empty corners of ancient Kerala history by analyzing the epigraphic sources like the Nilambur plates of

Ravivarman Kadamba along with another short label inscription of Vishnuvarman of the same dynasty from Edakkal cave. Along with these, two more early Pallava grants from Palakkada and Dasanapura open a new phase in the understanding of the Kadamba-Pallava interlude in the Kerala country.

### **The short label Sanskrit Inscription of Edakkal Cave**

To understand the political presence of the Kadamba in the Kerala region, a couple of inscriptions are very useful. These were not properly understood and analysed before. The Edakkal cave carvings and inscriptions are well discussed among scholars from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Fawcett reported this site in 1896 and published his findings in 1901<sup>2</sup>. The short label Sanskrit inscription was deciphered by Hultzsich as “*sri-vishnuvarmma[nah] kutumbiya-kula-var[d]dhanasya li[kh]itha[m]*” (*the writing of the glorious Vishnuvarman, the elevator of the Kutumbiya family*). Hultzsich opined that the script belongs to the Early Chalukyan or pre-Chalukyan period 500 CE<sup>3</sup>. C.A. Innes also agreed with Hultzsich<sup>4</sup>. Raghava Varier has opined that it is an evolved form of Brahmi common to the Early Kadamba inscriptions<sup>5</sup>. M.G.S. Naryanan assigned it to the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> century CE and also passingly mentioned that this inscription belongs to the Kadamba King Vishnuvarman<sup>6</sup>.

Hultzsich’s translation of the word *Kutumbiya-Kulavardhana* may rightly be read as *Kadambiya-Kula-vardhana*. We have a number of epigraphic evidences related to the frequent use of *Kadamaba-Kula*, their family name in the Kadamba records. The famous Talagunda pillar inscription of Santhivarman uses twice the word *Kadamba-Kule*<sup>7</sup>. The Nilambur inscription of Ravivarman Kadamba mentions the same as *kadambakula-bhyantaragatonyo* (*member of the Kadamba Family*)<sup>8</sup>. The epithet *Kadamba-Kula Kamala-Marthanda* (sun to the lotus,

the Kadamba family) can be found in more than six inscriptions from Belur in Hassan district, and two from Sorab taluk of Shimoga district<sup>9</sup>. A number of other epithets start with Kadamba-Kula like *Kadamaba-Kula-Tilakam*, *Kadamba-Kula-Kumudin*, *Kadamaba-Kulojvala*, *Kadamaba-Kula-Vira*, *Kadamaba-Kula-Gaganagabhastima*, *Kadamba-Vamsa-Vardhana*, etc<sup>10</sup>. Vishnu varman of this short label inscription could be the ruler belonging to the collateral branch of the Kadamba dynasty. He was the son of Krishnavarman I, founder of the Triparvarta<sup>11</sup> branch of the Kadamba dynasty and also was the contemporary of Ravivarman (500 to 537 CE) of the main branch of the Kadamba house ruling from Banavasi.

The Birur copper plate grant of Vishnuvarman<sup>12</sup> dated C.450 CE clearly shows that he was the provincial governor of the southern province under his father Krishnavarman and became the first independent ruler of this branch after his father. The Hebbat grant of the same ruler speaks about a *Brahmadeya* Grant, issued in the fifth year from his camp at Kudalur (*Kudalur-adhishthane*)<sup>13</sup>. *Kudalur* might be the Kudallur in the Ottappalam taluk of Palakkad district, which is the place of confluence of the rivers Bharathappuzha and Thootha<sup>14</sup>.

Inscriptions of other Kadamba rulers like Mrigeshvarman, Ravivarman, etc., which are available in the southern part of Mysore and contiguous regions show that their political hegemony extended to the south of Mysore including Kerala too. Regarding the date and regnal period of Vishnuvarman Kadamba, there is no unanimity among the historians. However, Sathianathaier proposed the period between 485 to 497 CE, i.e., last quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century CE, as the regional period for him.

### **Ravivarma Kadamba and the Nilambur Copper Plates<sup>15</sup>**

The second inscription that belongs to our discussion is the Nilambur grant of Ravivarman (500-537 CE). Physical presence

of this record in Nilambur issued from Banavasi make certain his role in the southern part of the Kadamba territories including Kerala, which were under the dominance of Vishnuvarman.

The Palasika grant of Ravivarman says “*that mighty King, the sun of the sky of the mighty family of the Kadambas-who having slain Sri Vishnuvarman and other Kings, and having conquered the whole world, and uprooted Chandadanda, the lord of Kanchi, had established himself at Palasika...*”<sup>16</sup>. Another un-dated Kadamba record also says that Mrigeshvarman became “*a fire of destruction to the Pallavas, and Ravivarman as having conquered the whole earth by slaying Sri Vishnuvarman and other Kings*”<sup>17</sup>. The Hebbata grant mentions that Vishnuvarman was installed on the throne by the Pallavas along with the Kadamba King Santhivarman (*srikrishnavarmma-maharajasya-jayeshta-priya-tanayenaaneka-samara-sankatopalabdhavijayena-sarvva-sastra-kala-paragenasamyak-praja-palana-dakshinasatyasandhenaparama-brahmanyena santivarma-maharaja-pallavendrabhishiktenasri-vishnuvarmma-maharajena*)<sup>18</sup>. This also proves that up to the period of Santhivarman of Banavasi, there was no conflict with the Triparvarta branch of the Kadambas and the skirmish started only since the reign of Mrigeshvarman, and this reached its zenith during the time of Ravivarman, son of Mrigeshvarman. These inscriptional evidences attest to the role of the Pallavas in the internal political conflicts of the Kadambas and it is not unreasonable to suppose that during this conflict, Vishnuvarman had lost his life. The Nilambur grant must have been issued only after the defeat of Vishnuvarman along with the Pallavas.

### **Pallava grants from Palakkada and Dasanapura**

Two un-dated early Pallava copper plate records issued during the reign of Simhavarman from Dasanapura and Palakkada in

his 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>regnal years respectively add strength to the aforesaid facts<sup>19</sup>. One of them was issued from “the glorious and victorious locality of Palakkada” by the command of Yuvaraja Vishnugopa Varman in the eleventh regnal year of King Simhavarman and is addressed to “those who dwell in the village of Uruvupalli in the country of Munda” and granting them 200 *nivartanas* land along with another 200 *nivartanas* to the gods at Kandukura which was situated in the mid of the land issued to the people of Uruvupalli. It also says that the Kandukura gods were founded (might be a monastery or temple) by the general Vishnuvarman and handed over to the Pallavas.

The second grant under discussion records the donation of the village Mangadur in the country of *Vengorashtra*<sup>20</sup> to certain Brahmans “*from the glorious and victorious city of Dasanapura*” by Simhavarman himself. Dubreuil assigned Palakkada and Dasanapura records and its rulers to the period between 400 and 500 CE<sup>21</sup>. On palaeographical grounds, Fleet assigned the Palakkada plates to 5<sup>th</sup> century CE and also said that the inscription was issued from their capital city – Palakkada itself<sup>22</sup>. Dasanapura or Dasanuru could be the modern Dasanur village in the Nanjangud taluk of southern Mysore, which is not far from the present day-north eastern border of Kerala<sup>23</sup>.

Scholars have diverse opinions about the geographical location of Palakkada of the Pallava grant. Subodh Kapoor located it with the modern village of Palakaluru in the Guntur taluk of Andhra Pradesh<sup>24</sup>. Jouveau-Dubreuil puts forward the reason that Guntur is far from Kanchipuram<sup>25</sup> and also Palakkada, Dasanapara and Menmatura are not in the Guntur District. On the contrary, we have to remember that the Edakkal inscription of Vishnuvarman has also the same cave character features of the Palakkada and Dasanapura records. On these grounds, both Palakkada and Dasanapura are to be identified within the

south of the Mysore only, not in the far off region of Andhra, where by 6<sup>th</sup> Century CE, the political authority of the Pallavas disappears.

The Palakkada plates had a crucial description that in the centre of Uruvapalli village, another 200 *nivartanas* land was endowed to the gods of Kandukura, which was founded by a general Vishnuvarman and later handed over to the Pallavas. The Hebbata grant discussed above proves that a Pallava ruler installed Vishnuvarman Kadamba, the rebel ruler to Ravivaraman Kadamba of Banavasi, in the throne. These lead us to infer the fact that the Vishnuvarman of the Kadamba dynasty was installed by a Pallava ruler, and that the general Vishnuvarman of the Pallava Palakkada grant were one and the same. Moreover, we said that the Hebbat grant of Vishnuvarman was issued in the fifth regnal year from his camp at Kudallur, and corroborating it with other inscriptions of the period helps us to locate the place Kudallur in the district of Palakkad.

Likewise, Chandadanda, the lord of Kanchi who was uprooted along with Vishnuvarman by Ravivarma Kadamba finds mention in one of the records of the latter's endowment to god Jinendra, possibly the Skandavarman-II who was also mentioned in the Palakkada record. The Palakkada record gives the genealogy of some early Pallava rulers namely Skandavarman-I, his son Viravarman, his son Skandavarman-II, his son Yuvaraja Vishnugopa Varman, and the ruling monarch Simhavarman<sup>26</sup>. Fleet views that the ruling Pallava monarch Simhavarman was probably the son of Skandavarman-II and also the elder brother of Yuvaraja Vishnugopa Varman<sup>27</sup>. If this is accepted, Simhavarman must be ruling from Kanchipuram, the capital simultaneously. Vishnugopa Varman from Palakkad was Yuvaraja because this grant was issued on the command of Simhavarman. Here we have to remember the opinion of Jouveau-Dubreuil that during 400-550



CE, Pallava kingdom was divided into two, the first one comprising Tondaimandalam with its capital at Kanchi and the second one comprising the Kerala territory Tambrapa, Palakkada, Menmatura and Dasanapura as its capitals<sup>28</sup>.

However, Chandadanda, the lord of Kanchi who was defeated and might have been killed along with Vishnuvarman at the hands of Ravivarman, could be Skandavarman-II, father of Simhavarman and Vishnugopa Varman. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the name Skandavarman can be pronounced as Chandavarman or Chandravarman. In this juncture, we have to note a fact that we have evidences associated with an early Pallava ruler namely Chandadanda alias Chandravarman who issued grants to the Brahmins in the Prakrit language between 300 to 400 CE<sup>29</sup>. Here we have to consider the opinion of a renowned scholar, K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, that the name *Chandadanda* was only a substitute for the term Pallava, and he also views that it might be to denote Vishnuvarman as well<sup>30</sup>. But his second opinion does not appear logical because the record of the grant by Ravivarman to god Jinendra clearly describes that Chandadanda was the *Kanchipati* or the lord of the Kanchi<sup>31</sup>. We have the names of some Pallava rulers suffixed by terms like *danda* and *chanda* such as Ugradanda, Atiranachanda and so on<sup>32</sup>.

The Temple for Kandukura gods founded by the general Vishnuvarman was possibly built at the time of Skandavarman-II and also we have to remember the fact that the ultimate aim of Vishnuvarman was the throne of Banavasi that was under the iron hand of Ravivaraman and, for that purpose, Vishnuvarman probably enjoyed the support of the Pallavas because Ravivarman was the chief enemy of both. There is a possibility that the southern part of Mysore, including Wayanad and other parts of Malabar region, were once under the control of Vishnuvarman;

simultaneously, the Tamil land, along with the present Palakkad region, was dominated by the Pallavas. But at the same time, in the case of Vishnuvarman, there is good reason to suppose that he had subordinate status under the Pallavas. However, Kadamba records related to Ravivarman prove that he uprooted these two powers and the Nilambur grant clearly shows his authority to issue land endowments and conduct sacrifices in these areas. Hence, we can safely say that at least up to the reign of Ravivarman, the whole Malabar region was under the influence of the Kadambas of Banavasi. However, later records show that their position was in a deplorable condition and, in the north, they were crushed by the Chalukyas of Badami and in the south by the Pallavas of Kanchi. In Kerala, the fate of the successors of Ravivarman must have been the same.

### **The architectural evidences**

The inscriptional evidences discussed above strongly support the hypothesis that the Pallavas had political control over the Kerala country. Further supportive evidence is identified in the temple art and architecture datable to the Pallava era.

Early Pallava temples are rock cut ones especially up to the period of Mahendravarman-I. Some rock cut shrines such as Kallil in Ernakulum district, Irunilamkode and Kaippuram-Bhrandanpara in Palakkad district, Trikkur in Trissur district, Kaviyur in Pathanamthitta district and Thirunanthikarai in the present Kanniyakumari district clearly show Pallava influence. Kaviyur rock cut structure has many similarities with the cave temples at Mandagapattu in Villupuram district and the Trichinopoly rock-cut shrine of the Pallavas especially in the *Dwarapala* reliefs and the typical veranda, rectangular pillared hall, small square chamber and the cave pillars. The *Dvarapala* of Kaviyur, according to Ramanatha Ayyar, is “*limb for limb a replica of*

*the door-keeper guarding the entrance at the left in the Mahendravarman cave at Trichinopoly. His head dress is tall and conical and from beneath it, his locks fall in picturesque curls on his shoulder. He leans with an aggressive attitude on a formidable club, round which a cobra has entwined itself*<sup>33</sup>.

Relief sculpture on the right side of the *Dvarapala* in the Kaviyur is similar to Mandagapattu and Trichinopoly with the features of *Jatamakuta* address, hands intersected on his chest and head bent a little with a respectful posture. Stella Kramrisch identified it with “*the Pallava chieftain in the rock cut Siva temple of Kunandar Koyil in Pudukottai*”<sup>34</sup>. T.A. Gopinatha Rao assigned the sculptures and the cave to the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE and at the same time A.S. Ramanatha Ayyar says that it can “*be assigned to the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century if not earlier, although a tendency to give it a slightly earlier age is justifiable from its close resemblance to early Pallava work*” and he also views that the early Pallava style of architecture came to Kerala through the invasion of Narasimhavarman-I (630-668 CE)<sup>35</sup>. However, there is a good possibility of assuming that the Kaviyur rock cut temple was built during Pallava ascendancy in Kerala particularly at the time of Mahendravarman-I (600-630 CE) and if it is true, we have to support the approximate date assigned by Gopinatha Rao as the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE.

In the case of the rock cut temples at Irunilamkode, Bhrandanpara, Trikkur, and Thirunanthikarai, which look like unfinished examples similar to the structural stone temples like Kaithali Siva temple at Pattambi and Kattilmadam stone structure (might be a Jain basti). All these vestiges indicate the influence of a dynastic change from the Pallavas to someone else, probably the Chalukyas of Badami and to their native subordinate rulers. In the case of structural temples, Melekkavu Siva temple at Poothadi in

Wayanad has a close resemblance to the Pallava *ratha* style of temple construction. During the Pallava ascendancy from Kanchi in south India, Kerala had definitely been under their dominance like the rest of peninsular India with an interim period filled by the Chalukyas of Badami<sup>36</sup>.

Regarding sculptures, clear-cut Pallava features like round face, fine proportionate body and the lengthy hands and legs can be identified in the idols of Jain Tirthankaras from Velikadu near Mundur and Alattur in Palakkad district and Chitharal near Nagercoil. The Chauri porters of the images of Padmavati, Mahavira and Parsvanatha at the Kallil Jain Basti (now a Hindu shrine) near Ernakulum district “*have the simplicity and lyrical quality of the Pallava sculpture.*”<sup>37</sup>. The figures in the sanctum sanctorum of the Trikkur rock cut shrine are “*simple, slender with few ornaments, three tiercrowns and thick single strand yajnopavita falling over the right hand,*” and must be the features of early Pallava along with Chalukya sculptures<sup>38</sup>. Moreover, some Vishnu images at Trissur museum and some other got from the Thiruvanchikulam Siva temple, Karthikapalli in Vadakara taluk and one broken image from Balusseri which was discovered by M.G.S. Narayanan himself detailed the clear Pallava iconographic features; similarly a Ganapati image of Kizhthali temple near Kodungallur exposes the early Pallava style<sup>39</sup>.

However, most of the above said features in the field of art, architecture and sculpture originated only during the height of Pallava ascendancy on Kerala particularly after Mahendravarman-I and his successors. After the suppression of the Kadambas and the early Cheras on Kerala soil, they established their full-fledged supremacy and the monuments like Kaviyur, Kaithali, Kattilmadam, etc. could be the products of that period, only to be interrupted by the Chalukyas of Badami like in the rest of

the peninsular India, especially from the period of Pulikesi-II and Kirtivarman-II. Based on these facts, we can suppose that once the Pallavas were the makers of the political history of Kerala and the historical place namely Palakkada or the present Palakkad might be an important hub of their activities and perhaps sub-capital as well.

## **Conclusion**

In short, the above mentioned factors helps us to reach an inference that the name Vishnuvarman in the Edakkal cave inscription must be the Kadamba ruler, who reigned in the southern part of the Kadamba Kingdom from Triparvarta. With the support of the Nilambur plates of Ravivarman Kadamba of Banavasi makes certain the fact that both rulers had their own political sovereignty over the Kerala country at least in the present Malabar region during the period between the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century CE to the first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century CE. On the basis of the aforesaid facts and discussion, we have to refute the words that, “but no good grounds exist for identifying the Kerala sovereign either with the Kadamba King or with the conquered foe of Ravivarman” such as Vishnuvarman by C.A. Innes<sup>40</sup>.

Furthermore, the Palakkada and Dasanapura grants of the early Pallava rulers along with the later Pallava architectural and sculptural features found in Kerala clearly helps us to establish the Pallava political presence in this region. After the final defeat of the Kadambas at the hands of the Pallavas opened a new epoch exclusively of the Pallavas in peninsular India including the Kerala country but with some bloodstained interventions of the Chalukyas of Badami. However, the inscriptional evidences enumerated and analysed above indicate that the early history of Kerala from the 5<sup>th</sup> Century CE onwards, is in fact the history of the Kadambas and Pallavas, and that the latter presence in

Kerala continued up to the emergence of the imperial Cholas and Pandyas in the Tamil region and the Cheras or the Perumals of Kerala exclusively in the Kerala country during about 9<sup>th</sup> century CE. The so-called historical night in the history of early Kerala can now be identified as having two important dynastic affiliations from the adjoining Karnataka and Tamil country, which played a significant role in the political developments as well as cultural and artistic contributions of the Kerala country. These findings are helpful in the bridging of the glaring and conspicuous gaps in the history of early Kerala and can rightly be called a *historical dawn*.

## Notes

1. This paper is the revised and enlarged version of the one presented in the Political History Session of the South Indian History Congress held at Kakatiya University, Warangal during February 20-22, 2015.
2. Indian Antiquary, Vol. XXX. 1901. p.412.
3. *Ibid.*,
4. Innes, C.A. 1933. Madras District Gazetteers: Malabar. Madras: The Superintendent, Madras Government. p.33.
5. Kerala Archaeological Series. 2010. Thiruvananthapuram: Department of Archaeology, Government of Kerala. p.14.
6. Naryanan, M.G.S. 2013 (reprint) Perumals of Kerala. p.103.
7. Epigraphia Indica, Vol. VIII. 1905-1906. 1981. reprint. V.3, 8. p.32.
8. *Ibid.*, L.11, p.10.
9. Epigraphia Carnatica, Vol. V. part. I. 1902. Mj. 18, Epigraphia Carnatica, Vol. VIII. part. II. 1904. Sb. 187, Sb. 221, Sb. 222, Sb. 262, Sb. 276.
10. Epigraphia Carnatica, Vol. VIII. part. II. 1904. Sb. 58, Sb. 306, Sb. 325, Sb. 328, Sb. 345, Sb. 465, Sa. 55, Sa. 159, Indian Antiquary, Vol. I. 1984 (reprint) V.2. p.363.

11. Triparvarta could be the ancient name of Halebidu, the historical capital of the Hoysalas. Moraes George, M.1931. *The Kadamba Kula: A History of Ancient and Medieval Karnataka*. Bombay: B.X. Furtado & Company. p.38.
12. Vishnuvarman, the elder son of Krishnavarman ruling the southern province ornate with his widely spread umbrella, and performer of the horse sacrifice... (“.....*Vikasita-sach-chhatravatamsa-dakshinapatha-vasumati-vasupaty-aswamedha-yaji-sri-Kishnavarman-dharmma-maharaja-jyeshtha-tanyena.....sri-Vishnuvarman-dharmma-aharaja.....*”). *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol.VI. 1901. Kd.162. But Moraes George wrongly interpreted the content of the Birur inscription as Krishnavarman himself was the provincial governor of the south. *Op.cit.*, p.370. The village Birur is located in the Kadur Taluk of Chikkamagaluru district of south-western Karnataka.
13. *Annual Report of the Mysore Archaeological Department for the year 1925*.p.98.
14. *Kudallur is derived from two words koodal and ur (the place/settlement of confluence)*. Geographically, this place had an important role in the history of Kerala on account of its strategic location at the junction of Palakkad gap which connects the trade route to the riparian corridor of Bharathappuzha River and the Sea ports in the west coast especially with the Tyndis (modern Kadalundi or Ponnani). Besides, this inscription, the *Keralolpathi* and *Keralamahatmya* traditions of Kerala Nambuithiri Brahmins narrate a tradition that sixty four Brahmin hamlets were established by Parasurama between Gokarna and Kanniyakumari and thirty-two among them were in Tulu country and the rest in Kerala proper. Most of the settlements were identified and among them, Alathur, Chockiram alias Sukapuram and Panniyur can be located in and around of the present Kudallur at Palakkad.

15. A set of Sanskrit copper plates found by a tribal man from a place known as Gramam Kadavu on the banks of the river Chaliyar in the Nilambur taluk of Malapuram district of Kerala. It was collected from the Raja of Nilambur Mr Tacharakkavil Manavkraman Tirumulpad and published by T.A. Gopinatha Rao and G. Venkoba Rao. *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol.VIII.1905-1906,1981. reprint.pp.146-147. As per the inscription the endowment mentioned as *Mutlaginamadheya-Palli-Makavusahitam* which means the “Palli or the Sramana hamlet named Multagi including the Melkavu.”
16. *Indian Antiquary*, Vol.VI.1984, reprint.pp.29-30.
17. *Indian Antiquary*, Vol.V.1984, reprint.p.50.
18. We can find an unintentional mistake in the original translation of the above-mentioned lines such as Santhivarman as the Pallava ruler. *Annual Report of the Mysore Archaeological Department for the year 1925. Op.cit.,* Santhivarman must be the Kadamba ruler who set up the Talagunda pillar inscription. *EI*,Vol.VIII. *Op.cit.,*pp.33-36. Birur copper plates say that Santhivarman as the elder brother and *Jyeshthapita* of Krishnavarman and his son Vishnuvarman respectively.It also says that he is ruling from Banavasi. *EC*,Vol.VI.*Op.cit.,*. At the same time, the present inscription also says that Vishnuvarman was installed by a Pallava ruler but the name of the ruler is not mentioned in the record, instead it uses the term *pallavendrabhishikten* and the collective meaning of the lines above mentioned that “Vishnuvarman, the elder son of Krishnavarman was installed in the throne by his uncle Santhivarman along with the Pallava ruler.” Moreover, we don’t have any Pallava or other records which mentions the name of a Pallava ruler Santhivarman. One the bases of that, both Santhivarmans are the same.



19. *Indian Antiquary*, Vol.V.*Op.cit.*,pp.50-53,154-157.
20. In this connection, we have to mention a Tamil-Brahmi inscription from Edakkal cave which assigned to about 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE on paleographic grounds and read by Iravatham Mahadevan as “*Kaccavanu Catti of Venkomalai*” (*Venkomalai Kaccavanu Catti*). Mahadevan, Iravatham.2003. *Early Tamil Epigraphy: From the Earliest Times to the Sixth century AD*. Chennai: Cre-A and Harvard University: The Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies.pp.9-478. The term *Venkomalai* and the *Vengorashtra* of the Dasanapura copper plate possibly have some connections and the former could be the same as the latter or it was a part thereof. The *Vengorashtra* must be an administrative province of the Pallavas which comprised at least the present Malabar territory.
21. Jouveau-Dubreuil,G.1920. *Ancient History of the Deccan*. Pondicherry: Sold by the Author p.65-66,70,98.
22. *Indian Antiquary*, Vol.V.*Op.cit.*,p.50.
23. Place namely Dasanapura can be the same Dasanuru and they find mention in the Mercara plates of the Ganga ruler Kongani-Mahadhiraja which dated about 466 CE. It says that the place namely *Badaneguppe* is the junction of the three paths to *Multagi*, *Koleyanuru* and *Dasanuru* and it has the description of the name of some more villages such as *Uyambali*, *Talavana*, and *Pirikere*. *EC*, Vol. I.1914. Revised edition.Cg.1, *IA*,Vol.I.1984.reprint.pp.360-366, Lewice Rice,B.1983.reprint. *Mysore Inscriptions*. p.283. *Multagi* also mentioned in the Nilambur Plates can be located at Muthanga in Wayanad. *Talavana* has been already identified by the scholars as the Talakad, the capital of Ganga dynasty which is situated in the south east of Mysore. *IA*,Vol.I.*ibid*.p.365.*Pirikere* might be the same *Pikira*, the village granted by the same Pallava ruler

mentioned in the Palakkada and Dasanapura inscription through the Kanchipuram grant (also known as Pikira grant). *EI*, Vol. VIII. *Op.cit.*, pp.159-163. In the case of *Uyambali*, might be the same *Uruvupalli* village of Palakkada grant. Corroborating with these all records we can reach a reasonable conclusion that it must be situated nearby areas.

24. Kapoor, Subodh. 2002. ed. *Encyclopaedia of Ancient Indian Geography*. Vol. II. New Delhi: Cosmo Publication. p.510.
25. Jouveau-Dubreuil, G., *Op.cit.*, p.66.
26. *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. V., *Op.cit.*, p.50.
27. *Ibid*, pp.50,154.
28. Jouveau-Dubreuil, G., *Op.cit.*, p.69.
29. Lewis Rice observes that the ruler named Chandadanda alias Chandravarman was the same ruler who was defeated by Ravivarman Kadamba. Lewis Rice, B. ed. 1879. *Mysore Gazetteer, Vol. I. Mysore in General*, pp.304-305. But the ruling period of Ravivarman had been approximately proved by the scholars as the period between the end of the fifth century to the first part of sixth century CE and due to this reason, there is no suitability for this observation.
30. Majumdar, R.C and Altekar, A.S. ed. 1954. reprint. *The Vakataka Gupta Age*, p.224.
31. *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. VI. *Op.cit.*, pp.29-30.
32. Lewis Rice, B., ed. 1879. *Op.cit.*, p.304.
33. *Travancore Archaeological Series*, Vol. V. part. I. 1924. p.4.
34. Narayanan, M.G.S. *Op.cit.*, p.368.
35. *Op.cit.*, pp.1,5-6.
36. *Op.cit.*, p.367. M.G.S. opened that the “Pallava techniques were transmitted to Kerala through the Pandyas.” This may not be accepted at least in the case of aforementioned temples and structures.
37. *Ibid*, p.369.

38. *Ibid.*
39. *Ibid*, pp.374-376,396.
40. Innes, C.A., *Op.cit.*,.

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## **TEMPLE MANAGERIAL GROUPS IN EARLY KERALAM**

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### **Abstract**

*The sixteen temple managerial groups which the author could identify from the inscriptions belonging to the geographical region of Keralam, namely poduval, agappoduval, purappoduval, taliyalvan, anaival, devarkanmi, koyilkanmi, variyar, kanakku, bhandaram/ sripandaram/ sribhandaram, kavadi, karanattar, varippulli, ulliruppu, samanjita/camanjita, and kil samanjita/ kil camanjita richly benefitted from their close association with the authorities of power like urar, ganattar, and were seen in the limelight of daily events, festival and special occasions in connection with the temples. The hereditary official positions connected with the temples enabled the managerial occupational groups to grow into castes in gradual transformation. The aspect of temple proliferation and its institutionalization is indisputably intermingled with the origin, growth, diversification, and spread of these castes.*

### **Introduction**

This paper is an attempt to list, classify, and historically contextualize the various social groups that did managerial services in the temples of the Keralam region focusing on 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> century CE period. This paper argues that the managerial groups, though

entrusted with privileges and authorities over many other occupational groups associated with the temples, were equally subjected to monitoring, correct discharge of duties, and fines and penalties in case of default. The elements of hierarchy, patronage, variations in the scale of wages and remuneration, donations made by them and for them, rules and regulations in strict monitoring of the sacred duty, and frequent contestations between and among these social groups are concerns of this paper. The paper also argues that a clear social gradation is seen among the groups based on occupations which, at a later stage, would have led to the formation of castes.

Kesavan Veluthat<sup>1</sup> has looked at the temple occupational groups of *poduval* and *variyaar* and their possible fall from a higher status, and concludes that they had not emerged as castes with any fixed function and status in the age of the Ceras (CE 800-1100). Rajan Gurukkal<sup>2</sup> has analysed the role of temples and the temple centred villages in the proliferation of occupational groups resulting in the subsequent social stratification into caste groups.

Prof. M.G.S Narayanan<sup>3</sup> calls those who were employed in temple service under the Brahmins like the *potuval*, *vaariyar*, *pataraar*, *cakyar*, *nambiyar*, *nangaiyar*, *uvaccar*, or *kottikal*, seen in the Cera inscriptions as *antarala* (intermediary) castes. The *antaralas* took their place in between the Brahmins and Sudras. M.R.Raghava Varier<sup>4</sup> mentions a number of occupational groups, the influence of temples and number of non brahmanical ritual groups and how their occupation was affected by colonization. K.N.Ganesh<sup>5</sup> has written about the distinct occupational groups of Keralam seeking their geographical, social and economic background. Many of the historians, though having attempting to study the groups in terms of occupation, have however been limited in providing a complete taxonomical classification of them. Most of them have treated them as a part of the caste system in the region rather than as occupation bound groups.

From a study of the inscriptions belonging to the geographical region of Keralam, we are able to identify the following sixteen managerial groups

SlNo.	Name of the Group	Nature of Occupation
1	Poduval	Temple manager
2	Agappoduval	Manager in charge of temple properties and jewels, being attached to the sanctum ( <i>aganaligai</i> )
3	Purappoduval	Manager entrusted with duties outside the temple
4	Taliyalvan	Temple manager
5	Anaival	Sudra who conducted festivals from the revenue collected for temple lands
6	Devarkanmi	Manager of temple affairs
7	Koyilkanmi	Temple officials incharge of temple lands and revenue
8	Variyar	Temple manager in charge of various affairs
9	Kanakku	Accountant
10	Bhandaram/ Sribhandaram/ sripandaram	Temple accountant
11	Kavadi	Accountant
12	Karanattar	Manager, writer, scribe
13	Varippulli	Accountant
14	Ulliruppu	Tax and revenue official
15	Samanjita/ Camanjita	Accountant
16	Kil Samanjita/ Kil Camanjita	Assistant accountant

*Poduval* is the temple related occupational group about whom the maximum number of references is obtained from the inscriptional sources. The term *poduval* indicates a class of officials and may be rendered into “arbitrators or middle men.” There were several orders of *poduval* that is, *agappoduval*, *purappoduval*, *urpoduval* etc., who were significant officers of the managerial class with authority to protect the temple lands and the tenants attached to it. Such of the *poduval* who were connected with the temples, like most other temple-servants, developed into a caste falling under the main division of *ambalavasis*<sup>6</sup>.

“Agappoduval,” suggests Gopinatha Rao<sup>7</sup>, “ is also known as *muttadus*, who should have sprung from the official denomination of *Perumudaiyan* whose functions were sometimes shared by a section of the *poduval* and *ulpadan* who were in charge of the transactions connected with the inner apartments of the temple.” Rao also doubts that the *perumudaiyan* was a temple official in charge of the outer precincts.<sup>8</sup>*Ulpadan* is said to be one who is in charge of the transactions connected with the inner apartments of temples and *Ulpadan* seems to correspond to the term *unnaligaiyar*.

They were entrusted to collect the revenue due to the temple and, often, to conduct the daily offerings and particularly the special festivals in temples. We come across many instances where the *poduval* was strictly restricted from indulging in undue intrusion in the finances of temple. Often, this group formed links with the *urar*<sup>9</sup> and were reported to have caused disturbance to the tenants, demanding extra income from them, destroying their property and ejecting them from their lands. This was an influential temple group, close to the King, whose powers were constantly checked. They were mostly the group that was a catalyst to the majority of conflicts among the temple groups and brewing contestations from the part of the service oriented temple groups.



The *poduval* is seen as manager of land grants to the temple, manager of festivals and all intricate details related to the grant and the feeding. The Peruneyil inscription of the 11<sup>th</sup> c CE<sup>10</sup> registers a gift of paddy and land by Ediran-Kaviran of Jnavarkkadu to the hands of *poduval* of the temple of Peruneydil with the *tirunalganattar* (body of men managing the temple festivals). This gift was to feed one thousand brahmanas during the 10 days of festival in *Kanni*. The same inscription mentions the terms *variyaar* and *vila variyaar*. Separate days for duty were fixed for the *vila variyaar*, mostly the *variyaar* in charge of *vila* (the festival). There may have been more than one *vilavariyaar*. The *poduval* with Ediran-Kaviran and the *variyaar* were in charge of this feeding every year. The *poduval* shall see that the *vila-variyaar* brings things for feeding each day before 12 noon and measure it before him.

This included two bunches of unripe plantain, one bunch of plantain fruits, ten coconuts, two kinds of vegetables, two *nali*<sup>11</sup> of pure salt, two *palam*<sup>12</sup> of good tamarind, five *nali* of good curds, and ten *nali* of good buttermilk for the feeding. After the feeding, the *variyaar* had to initiate the *bali* procession with the *poduval*. The *poduval*, along with *tirunal-ganattar*, was to expend according to the scale of expenses fixed by Ediran Kaviran for this festival without default and at the stated times, and he was liable to a fine of one hundred *kalanju*<sup>13</sup> of gold to the *koyiladhikari*<sup>14</sup> in the presence of the ministers, 50 *kalanju* of gold to the ruler of the district, and 12 *kalanju* to the *valkkaivalumavan* (immediate controlling authority) along with the *tirunal-ganattar*. The inscription<sup>15</sup> also says that in case Ediran Kaviran and his successors became incapable of cultivating the land and measure out paddy, the *poduval* with *ganattar* could take up the cultivation and supply the paddy. They would also protect Ediran Kaviran and his male and female relations.

The Tiruvalla copper plates<sup>16</sup> also records the individual names of people who acted as *poduvals*, like Narayanan Tirisampakan of Nalarpalli, who performed the duties of the *poduval* and *karanmaikkar*<sup>17</sup>. The *poduvals* in the Devidevechuvaram temple with members of the *sabha* and officers of the *pillaiyar* (King) were in charge of inspecting the *virutti*<sup>18</sup> lands and house-site gardens allotted to various temple servants<sup>19</sup>. The *purappoduval* and twomembers of the assembly had to collect incomes set apart for the expenses in the sanctum and administer proper conduct of the expenses. He could receive *twonali* of clean rice as measured by the *madai*<sup>20</sup> for this. As per rule, every night after *sribali*<sup>21</sup>, the door of the temple is to be locked, the *kuchchil* and *talakkal* and the (*kuchchilavumtakkolum*–lock and key) handed over to the *purappoduval*<sup>22</sup>. The *agappoduval* in this temple was made to lie within the temple in the nights after *sribali* as per rule<sup>23</sup>.

*Taliyalvan*<sup>24</sup> who were temple managers in the 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> centuries, constituted gifts of lands to temples, and took part in the company of the great men of the assembly for major decisions regarding the temple. Devarkannmis, as seen from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century inscriptions, managed the temple lands that were exempted from taxes and conducted the sacred feeding<sup>25</sup>. We come across *anaival*, the sudra religious mendicants in charge of specific duties such as the conduct of certain temple festivals in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. For this purpose, they were entrusted with some revenue collected from the temple lands<sup>26</sup>. Koyilkanmi, who were managers of the temples in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, managed the income from *cherikkal*<sup>27</sup>lands for daily worship and drew deeds of land transactions for *toranam*<sup>28</sup>.

*Variyars*<sup>29</sup> as a significant temple managing class right from the 10<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries CE being officials managing temple lands, administering the rent from them, being signatories of noteworthy

temple deeds, in charge of the temple treasury (*pandaravariyam*) and special festivals (*vila variyar*) are seen in the inscriptional records. *Variyam* in its form in many phrases of the inscriptions meant “supervision, management or duty,” as in *puraiyidam variyamudaiyavaral* (those who supervised the garden lands attached to the houses), *adikkinra variyanmar* (those in charge of the sweepers), and *kulattalivagattinul variyancheyyumavan*. The Suchindram inscription of Rajaraja the First (999 CE)<sup>30</sup> records that the *mahasabha*, which was managing the business of the temple of Mahadevar in the *brahmadesa* of Nanjinadu, took a decision to appoint two *variyaars* to manage the business of the God. They were to get a suitable remuneration of paddy.

The inscriptional evidences over the 10<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries CE shows that the position of the accountant was one continuously patronized by the Kings over centuries. Often, the accountant was named after the King or the God they served. The wages were sometimes in cash and sometimes in kind. *Kanakku* comes as a generic term to denote the accountants, while terms like *bhandara-kanakku* and *sripandarattu kanakku* denoting treasury accountants and *alaya-kanakku* showing that temple accountants referred to in the inscriptions. *Kanakku* stands for *vari*, of which it is a synonym, and *pulli* means a person. This derivation of the word *Kanakkupillai* shows that it can be applied to any person doing the duty of an accountant and had no connection with Pillai. *Kanakku* in modern Malayalam means mathematics, signifying addition, subtraction, etc. *The Sabdataravali*<sup>31</sup> says that *kanakku* was a title given to *nayars* and *vellalas* in Travancore.

*Kanakku* have been an indispensable part of the temple, be it different posts like *sripandarattu kanakku*, *bhandara-kanakku*, *alaya-kanakku*, *kavadi*, *karanattan*, *samanjitan*, *ulliruppu*, *meleluttu*, or *antaiccelavuvayikkumavan*. Their status

of birth was significant as belonging to *Kaniyalar kula*, caste of *devaputras* or of belonging to the *Kausika gotra* and *Bodhayana Sutra*, or being member of the *Koda kula sabha*<sup>32</sup>. Their appointment was many a time made by the King, sometimes nominated by someone who was close to the King. The high sounding titles attached to the individual names of the accountants are an indication of the royal association and patronage meted out to them. They wrote inscriptions, were party to major economic and land transactions of the temple and were even permitted to levy the tax and utilize it for them. They could collect fines from the tenants and Brahmans residing in the *agaram*.

It was recorded in the Tirunandikkarai inscription of Vijayaragadeva of the 10<sup>th</sup> c CE<sup>33</sup> that the *kanakkar* were among those present when Kilanadigal, the daughter of Kulasekharadeva and queen of Vijayaragadevan gave thirty *kalanju* of gold for maintaining a perpetual lamp in the temple of Tirunandikkarai–Bhatara.

The 13<sup>th</sup> c. CE Arrur plate of the Travancore King Vira Ravi Udayamarttandavarman (CE 1251)<sup>34</sup> records say that the King did not go to *pallivettai* (royal hunting expedition) and *arattu* (ceremony of bathing the God in the river) without the accompaniment of *sripandaram*, who was in charge of the sacred treasury. This inscription recorded that the King Vira Ravi Udayamarttandavarman conferred the right of *koyinma*, *uranmai-sthana* and *ayudhakarya* in the Mahadeva temple on Ravikeralavikkrama Udaiyar who belonged to *kaniyalar-kula* (*kanakkan* caste– accountant caste) and conferred these rights on a hereditary basis to him. He was to collect the incomes from all sources accruing to the temple treasury and was put in charge of the annual festivals of the temple. It is so evident that the selection of *sripandaram* was done on the basis of his birth, the pleasure and personal favour was so prominent

in the selection. We do not come across evidences to prove that the *sripandaram* changed after every three years, as there was with the terms of service for the ritual groups. The sacred treasury would have been so significant to the royal authority that the keeper of the money was selected directly and would enjoy rights conferred by the King.

### **Wages and Remuneration**

The temple managerial groups received *virutti*<sup>35</sup> for their services. Often, lands were granted by the ruling kings as *karanmai*<sup>36</sup> to selected individuals who defrayed the expenses of the salary. The temple servants were also given *jivitam* rights (right of cultivation) over lands. The wages and remuneration given to the managerial groups had clear indications of hierarchy within the groups.

The Kollur *madam* plates record the land Mamballi Pullal in SIRRARRANGARAI village with 20 *parai* paddy, Orumaivilai land in KARAMANAI-SIRRARRANGARAI village of twenty one and a half *parai* as the *agappoduvalvirutti*<sup>37</sup>. To the *purappoduval*, a total of 16 lands in different villages had to give the *virutti* ranging from one fourth of the produce to 25 *parai* or 5 *parai* of paddy. In the same plates, the *virutti* provided for the *ur poduval* is also mentioned. In Orriyur village, Munnattarai land is to yield 22 *parai* of paddy. Ayiravilai land in Ilambel village had the assignment of 10 *parai*, a total of 32 *parai* paddy. The closer the nature of duties in relation to the *sanctumsanctorum*, the higher was the wages.

The *variya*r as a temple servant of Kilimanur temple received 5 *nali* of rice, the highest amount from the total daily offerings prepared with 31 *nali* and one *uri*<sup>38</sup> of rice among the other temple servants like *tirupallittayam* (flower supplier),

*tirumanikaval* (watchmen), *tevadichchi* and *uvachchar*<sup>39</sup>. *Variyan* had to pay one *achchu*<sup>40</sup> to the temple as *adiyara or padakannikka* (entrance fee)<sup>41</sup>.

There were evidences of hierarchy in the position of *samanjitan* as the terms *samanjitan* and *kil-samanjitan* indicate by their meaning, *kil* denoting one/which is below. The Tiruvalla copper plates<sup>42</sup> mention the *kil-samanjitan* as receiving 4 *nali* of rice during the Onam festival in the temple of Tiruvallavalappan.

### **Donations by the Managerial Groups**

The inscriptional references are rich with instances of donations made by the managerial groups to the temples. One Cochin inscription from the Vishnu temple at Tirukkulasekharapuram of the 11<sup>th</sup> c CE<sup>43</sup> records that, a guard of the temple treasury by name Polan-Iravi from Venbala-nadu, gifted 5 *kalanju* of gold to the temple.

The Kesavapuram inscription of Ko.746 (1571 CE)<sup>44</sup> records that the *Kanakku*, Vikkiranman Devan of Koyilpuram with a member of the *samudaiyam* (assembly) completed the work of the *mandapa* in the Vishnu temple of Kesavapuram. It may be possible that he donated towards the work or that he supervised the accounts of the construction.

A. Vettikkavila inscription of the Kollam year 824 (1649 CE) records that the *Kanakku* of Valakkarai, Kandan of Avanapparambil set up the *balikkal* in the Krishna shrine at Vettikkavila in Kottarakkara taluk of the Quilon division<sup>45</sup>. A Tiruvidaikkodu inscription dated Kollam year 835 (1660 CE)<sup>46</sup> mentions a temple accountant of the Mahadeva temple of Tiruvidaikkodu, Perumal-Tanuvan, who erected a rest house near Nachchiyarkulam. This Perumal Tanuvan belonged to the

community of Daivaputra. A.S.Ramanatha Ayyar while discussing *devaputras* opines that “the donor who is stated to have belonged to the caste called *devaputras* of the Kalkulam temple (*Nayinar kalkulattu-madevarkoyilil devaputraril kanakku*) was perhaps a *devadasa*, a temple man servant<sup>47</sup>.”

The stone inscription of Tirukannankodu mentions the gift of Kaman Narayanan, the *variyan* of the village of Tirukannankodu to the temple<sup>48</sup>. He gave one lamp and 5 buffaloes. The income from the buffaloes would have been used to light this perpetual lamp. The donor may have been one of the members of the committee appointed to supervise the village (*variyan*).

### **Royal patronage**

An assessment of the royal patronage meted out to the temples and managerial groups shows that almost all the kings were Hindu kings. The pattern of courtly patronage was brahmanic in nature, and the ritualistic element was much in play. There was clearly what Romila Thapar calls “state supervision”<sup>49</sup> in the affairs of the temple. The role of the *devarkanmi*, *ulpadan*, and *perumudiyar* (state officials) in association with the management of revenue affairs of the temple shows this. We so far have clear evidences that some of the groups like accountants were appointed on a hereditary basis. There were definitely some yardsticks to select the people to serve in the temple. High birth can be one as is evident in some cases.

The control of the State also showed royal control over the groups. Evidence of a rivalry between King and God is absent. The king was often portrayed as the disciple of God. The nature of patronage in terms of the Keralam region shows a mixed clientele of temples and courts. For patronage<sup>50</sup> in the case of individual donations, the nature of engraving of names of the

donor was clearly seen and made public. Instances of collective and community initiatives of conferring of privileges show how much donation to temples may have been considered a symbol of status. It may also point to the upward social mobility of certain groups. It also brings into attention elements of power play by the royal, state and village authorities on the institution of the temple and the temple occupational groups. The managerial groups richly benefitted from their close association with these authorities of power and were one group who were seen in the limelight of daily events, festival and special occasions in connection with the temples.

## Conclusion

The hereditary official positions connected with the temples enabled the managerial occupational groups to grow into castes in gradual transformation. The aspect of temple proliferation and its institutionalization is indisputably intermingled with the origin, growth, diversification and spread of these castes. The features of heredity, hierarchy and *jati* endogamy together with patronage, regular or irregular wages, the conflicts and contestations and their power to give donations as featured in the groups played a significant role in shaping them as caste groups.

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- social stratification.” See Rajan Gurukkal, *The Kerala temple and early medieval agrarian system*, Vallathol Vidyapeetham, Sukapuram, 1992, p.61.
3. M.G.S.Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala, Political and Social conditions of Kerala under the Cera Perumals of Makotai (c800-1124 AD)*, Xavier Press, Calicut, 1996, p.153.
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  5. K.N.Ganesh, *Keralathinte Innalekal*, Department of Cultural Publications, Government of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 1997.
  6. Ethnographic sources call them as *muttatus* or *mussatus* in Travancore and Cochin and Poduvals or Akapoduvals in North Malabar. In Malabar, Pura *poduvals* are said to be of two classes, *chenda poduvals* who are drummers closely connected to *marars* and *mala poduvals* or garland *poduvals*. Mutttau in North Malabar are said to be descendants of a Sivadvija man and pure Brahman girl. It is also said that they lost caste because they ate rice offered to Siva, which is prohibited by rules. The Ambalvasis as a caste are divided into thread-bearing Ambalavasis and threadless Ambalavasis. See L.K. Anantha Krishna Iyer, *The Tribes and Castes of Cochin*, Vol.1, Cosmo Publications, New Delhi, 1981; Edgar Thurston and T.K. Rangachari, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol.3, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1993.
  7. T.A. Gopinatha Rao, *Travancore Archaeological Series*. (hereafter TAS) Vol. 3, Department of Cultural Publications, Government of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1992, p.164.
  8. Inscription of Indesvarankodai dated 960 C.E from Tirukkakkarai in Changanasery, TAS, Vol.3, No.36, p.170.

9. Assembly which administered a non-brahmanical village
10. Peruneyil Inscription of 11th c. C.E. From Peruneyil, a suburb of Changanaseri , TAS, Vol.5, No.11, p.36.
11. A measure chiefly of rice
12. A measurement for items like tamarind
13. Weight of gold used for higher transaction
14. Koyiladhikarigal / Koyiludaiyar are officers of the King
15. Peruneyil Inscription of 11th c. CE. From Peruneyil, a suburb of Changanaseri , TAS, Vol.5, No.11, p.36.
16. Huzur plates of Tiruvalla from Tiruvalla dated 11th or 12th centuries C.E, TAS, Vol.2, p.3, and p.154.
17. Karanmai/ karayma– right of cultivation, office of a *karalan*, a freehold
18. Allotment of land as service tenure, usually with hereditary rights
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24. Inscription of the rock-cut cave at Tirunandikkarai of 8th c CE in Kalkulam Taluk of Padmanabhapuram division, TAS, Vol.3, No.54, p203; Tirunandikkarai inscription of Vijayaragadeva of 10th c C.E from Kalkulam Taluk of Padmanabhapuram division, TAS, Vol.4, No.38, p.145; Kollur Madam plates of Udaiya Marttanda Varman of 1189 CE from Kilimanur in Chirayinkil Taluk, Trivandrum, TAS, Vol.4, No.7, p.36.

25. Inscription in the Pannippakkam temple from Siva temple of 9th c CE at Kodainallur near Manalikkurai in Kalkulam Taluk, TAS, Vol.3, No.20, p.66; Suchindram Inscription of Rajaraja I from Suchindram, Travancore dated 999 CE, TAS, Vol.4, No.20, p.130; Stone inscription at Tirukkannankodu from Eraniel Taluk dated c 11thc CE, TAS, Vol.3, No.29, p.78; Kilimanur copper plates of 1168 CE from Trivandrum, TAS, Vol.5, No.24, p.74.
26. Suchindram plate of Kollam year 621 from Suchindram, TAS, Vol.5, No.53, p.169. A.S. Ramanatha Ayyar says that the name *anaival* was later given to the Brahman managers of the temples. But in this inscription, the *yogipparadesis* were apparently Sudras. A.S. Ramanatha Ayyar, Vol.5, *Op.cit.*, p.168.
27. *Cherikkal / serikkal* – gift of lands by King / crown land
28. Record of Kodaivarman of Kollam 715 from Tiruvelunnannur in Velunallur in Kottarakkara Taluk, TAS, Vol.5, No.17, p.53. This inscription was regarding the lands of the subordinate of Sri Vira Kodaivarman Tiruvadi given for the maintenance of an arch of lamps (*toranam*) and a deed, *toranataraguvilai-yola* was drawn up and given by the *koyilkanni* to the God Endalayappan of Tiruvelunnennur. Record of Kodaivarman of Kollam 715 from Tiruvelnnannur in Velnallur in Kottarakkara Taluk, TAS, Vol.5, No.19, p.55.
29. The ethnographic records say that the *variyars*, *pushpakans* and *pisaratis* are said to constitute the three original garland making castes of Malabar, appointed by Parasurama. They follow the ceremonies of the Brahmans and mainly work in Saivite temples as opposite to *pisaratis* who are associated with Vaishnavite temples. See Edgar Thurston and T.K. Rangachari, *Op.cit.*, p, 324.
30. Inscription of Rajaraja I from Suchindram, Travancore, TAS, Vol.2, No.1, p.1.

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33. Tirunandikkarai inscription of Vijayaragadeva from Kalkulam Taluk of Padmanabhapuram division, TAS, Vol.4, No.38, p. 145.
34. Arrur plate of Vira Ravi Udaiyamattandavarman dated Kollam 426 from Arrur in Padmanabhapuram Division, TAS, Vol.4, No.15, p.86.
35. Allotment of land as service tenure, usually with hereditary rights.
36. *Karanmai* was a perpetual lease by which lands are made over by the trustees or managers of temples to those who are employed for the performance of certain duties therein. T.A Gopinatha Rao, Vol.2&3, *Op.cit.*, p.139.
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38. A measurement, half of *nali*.
39. Kilimanur copper plates of 1168 CE from Trivandrum, TAS, Vol.5, No.24, p.72.
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42. Huzur plates of Tiruvalla from Tiruvalla dated 11th or 12th centuries CE, TAS, Vol.2, P.3, p.149.

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47. *Ibid*, p.147.
48. Stone inscription at Tirukkannankodu from Eraniel Taluk dated c 11thc CE, TAS, Vol.3, No.30, p.78.
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**6**

**IRRIGATION AND WATER SUPPLY  
DURING THE KAKATIYA PERIOD**

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The Kakatiyas ruled over Andhradesha from about A.D.1150 to 1323A.D. The chronology of the Kakatiyas can be traced to the beginning of the ninth century A. D. and for nearly two centuries, they were referred to as the officers of the Rashtrakutas. After the rule of the Rashtrakutas, Kakatiya Beta I [A.D.1000-1052] started his rule from Anumakonda as the subordinate of the Western Chalukyas. Prola II was the first independent King of the dynasty. From then on until A.D. 1326, a period of more than two centuries, the Kakatiyas held sway over Andhradesha. Ganapatideva was the greatest of all the Kakatiya rulers, who in a long reign of sixty years, was able to build an empire, the first of its kind comprising the entire Andhradesha. Prataparudra, Rudrama's grandson was the last king of the dynasty. The glorious rule of the Kakatiyas in Andhra ended when their kingdom was taken over by the Delhi Sultans.

The Kakatiya rulers as well as their subordinates strove to provide water facilities for the promotion of agriculture on a large scale. They were the first to realize that the red and sandy soils of the Telangana region were extremely fertile and eminently suitable for wet cultivation. The Kakatiya period witnessed more dynamic activity in the construction of irrigation works than the earlier times. Irrigational works may be classified into two types, natural

or *deva-matrikas* and artificial or *nadi-matrikas*. The natural sources of water supply were the rivers and rains. The artificial irrigation works were of three types; 1. Wells including *doruvu* wells on riverbanks, 2. River channels, rivulets and tanks or reservoirs formed by building embankments across two hills, and 3. Streams and canals. Amongst the three types of artificial irrigation works, tank irrigation occupied a unique place during the Kakatiya period.

### Well irrigation

Generally, well irrigation was preferred in the areas where river irrigation was absent. The water from the wells was known as *uruni-kulam*. The people used this well water for their daily purposes. Drawing water by means of *etamu* or *mota* was also in vogue in those days. They were called *ratanas*. The Hanumakonda inscription refers to the use of *etam*. Bullocks were generally used to lift the water from deep wells<sup>1</sup>. A record from Doshapadu dated A.D. 1254 records the gift of a *ratana* with necessary wood and bullock<sup>2</sup>. But where water was not very deep, men also lifted water from the wells. Reference to *ratanas*, which is lifting water with a pulley device, is very common in the inscriptions. It seems that these *ratanas* were let out for by the owners of the wells to the neighbouring landowners. The gifts of *ratanas* were a source of income to the temples. The Sanigaram inscriptions of Beta I and Prola II refer to gifts of *ratanas* to Yuddhamalla-Jinalaya<sup>3</sup> and Madhupeshvara<sup>4</sup>. Similarly, in other inscriptions in the above said place, Dandanayak Kondamayya is said to have made a gift of *ratanas* to the god Bhimeshvara<sup>5</sup>. These evidences indicate that the money or grain collected towards the cost of the water supplied by means of *ratanas* was the gift to the said deities. We have few records for digging of wells during the Kakatiya rule. An inscription at Moripirala in Warangal dated A.D. 1181

states that Proli Reddi who belonged to the Viriyala family dug a well<sup>6</sup>. According to the Garuda inscription, a well was dug by Malla. The Velama chief Anavotanaya caused the digging of wells. A record dated A.D.1316 refers to a well that was dug by Malyakata. Another two wells dug at Gandikota and Vemulavada were during the Kakatiya period.

### **Tank irrigation**

The Kakatiya rulers laid solid foundations for tank irrigation in Telangana region. Inscriptional evidences show that a large number of artificial tanks were built by the Kings, queens, officials and feudatories during the reign of the Kakatiyas. The water was preserved in the tanks or reservoirs and distributed to the people for their daily life as well as for promoting agriculture. The terms *cheruvu*, *kolanu*, *madugu*, *tataka*, *Keri*, and *eri* mean a tank. In some places, due to their enormous size, they were called *ambudhi*, *sagara*, *samudra*, *mahapayodhi*, *vardhi*, *peemjeruvu*, and *sarovara*. The construction of a tank is looked upon as one of the seven meritorious acts (*saptasantanas*) which a man ought to perform during his lifetime. The Karimnagar inscription of Gangadhara, minister of Rudradeva<sup>8</sup>, the Ganapeshvaram inscription of Gangadeva<sup>9</sup> and several other inscriptions refer to *saptasantanas* namely the procreation of (a son), the composition (of a poem), (the hoarding of) a treasure, (the planting of) a grove, the marriage (of a girl to a Brahmana), the consecration of (a temple), and (the construction of) a tank. Tank digging was generally preceded by the installation of Varuna, the god of waters in order to ensure good supply of water by his grace. Along the course of a river, a point is to be chosen where it passes between two hills and a dam. Connecting the two hills has to be done with mud and stone, so as to form a big reservoir. The land that is to be irrigated by the tank water must be also fertile. Generally, the construction of tanks



was looked after by the ministers and feudatories. The Kakatiya rulers themselves constructed some tanks. According to the Motupalli<sup>10</sup> and Bayyaram<sup>11</sup> inscriptions, Kakatiya Prola I built a tank and named it Kesharitataka after his famous title *arigaja-kesari* (lion to the elephant-like enemies). It can be identified with the tank which is near the village Kesamudra or Kesharisamudra in the Mahbubabad taluk of Warangal district. The Motupalli<sup>12</sup> inscription of Ganapatideva states that this tank was like a representative of the ocean and the collection of all waters that were originally created.

The Hanumakonda inscription<sup>13</sup> states that Beta II constructed two tanks *setti-kereya* and *kesarisamudra* and on which occasion he installed the statue of god Varuna. He also built a tank named Sivapura<sup>14</sup> in Hanumakonda. An undated Kazipet inscription<sup>15</sup> mentioned that Prola II built a tank named *sarisamudra*. The Hanumakonda inscription also mentions that Prola II had caused some irrigational tanks to be dug, to which he made some gifts of land. According to the Hanumakonda inscription, Rudradeva caused to be dug a big tank in the middle of the town of Udayachoda and another at Panugallu in Nalgonda district which is close to the river Musi. The Telugu work *Pratapacharitra* mentions that the Kakatiya ruler Ganapatideva built several tanks at places like Nellore (*swarnala tank*), the Telugu Choda capital and Ganapuram in Krishna district. Ghanpur (Mulug taluk of Warangal) is another important tank (A.D.1213) which is located six miles away from Ramappa Lake close to the Godavari River built by Ganapatideva. The hydraulic particulars of the tank are earthen type of the bund, length of the bund was 7000 feet, the height of the bund was 48 feet, and the proposed irrigation of (1) Abi- 3094 acres (2) Tabi- 439 acres. It had five channels: (1) Solipet channel- 4 miles 3 furlongs, 1050 acres (2) Burrakayal channel- 4 miles 2 furlongs, 350 acres (3) Kotu channel - 3 miles 3 furlongs, 1084 acres (4) Pydi channel- 1 mile 5 furlongs,

405 acres. The total area of land irrigated by this tank was 3043 acres. The villages that benefited under this tank were Ghanpur, Mylaram, Karkapalli, and Bukkarayapalem. An inscription at Kondapaka in Medak<sup>16</sup> district dated A.D. 1199 refers to Ganapatideva and records a tank at Mantrakuta. The epigraph<sup>17</sup> Godisala (Upparapally) from Huzurabad taluk, Karimnagar district dated A.D 1236 records the installations of tanks at Pancharapalli. Prataparudra, the last ruler of the Kakatiya dynasty is credited with the construction of a big tank in the Pakala region.

The feudatories and other officials of the Kakatiya rulers, like their overlords, paid much attention to provide irrigational facilities for the promotion of agriculture on a large scale. The Malyala chiefs dug Bachasamudram (Bassamudram)<sup>18</sup>, Buddhunikunta<sup>19</sup>, Chaundasamudram<sup>20</sup>, Ganapasamudram, Kuppasamudram, and the Pakala tanks<sup>21</sup>. An inscription from the Kondaparti in Warangal district dated 1203 A.D. refers to one Chaunda who dug a tank named Chaundasamudra. The Pakala tank (A.D.1213) which is a famous tank in the Telangana region is located in the Ghanpur mandal of Warangal district at a distance of 12 km east of Narasampet and 50 km east of Warangal. According to a pillar inscription on this tank,<sup>22</sup> it was the fruit of the efforts put by Jagadala Mummadi, who was a distinguished warrior in the service of Ganapatideva. It is located in the basin of the river Maniar. The tank was constructed by joining two hills by a dyke, two thousand yards long, thus controlling the waters of the Pakala River. The combined drainage area of the lake is 80 sq. miles. The capacity of the tank is 2,452 Mc.ft. capable of irrigating about 17,258 acres. The catchment area of the site is 70 sq. miles free and 33 sq. miles intercepted. The huge dam built of laterite pebbles and red earth is one mile long with artificial channels. There are five channels taking water to the fields in different directions. The villages which benefited under this tank are Dharmaraopet, Ainapalli, Ghanpur, Pakala, Rangapur,

Sarvapur (Dwarakapet), Tungabandam, and Viraram. The width of the dam on the top is 30 to 50ft. The lake is not known to have dried up and crocodiles are said to be living in it. The inscription also refers to Ru (dra) Pragada, the Prime Minister of Rudradeva, who built the Biralagunta tank at Pakala. The royal chief Malli Reddi built a tank known as Mailasamudram. The Nagulapati inscription refers to one Katachamupati who dug Katasamudram. One Chouda dug Sabisamudram and Gowrasamudram.

The Recherla chiefs also constructed tanks in Nalgonda and Warangal districts. The chief Rudrareddi built the Ramappa tank at a distance of 44 miles northeast of Warangal, which is an excellent testimony to the skill of the Kakatiyas in irrigation works. It seems to have been constructed simultaneously with the famous Ramappa temple of Palampet. The area of the *ayacat* under this tank is about 5,000 acres. According to the inscription set up in the Siva temple near it, the lake was dug in A.D. 1213. It has two sluices namely, the tower sluice and tiger sluice. The length of the bund is 2,000ft. The extent of the total land irrigated is 4,350 acres. There are four channels of length 5miles 4furlongs, 2miles 5furlongs, 2miles 7furlongs and 5miles 4furlongs. In addition to the irrigation under the channels, an area of 1577 acres is being irrigated under the earthen mott across the seepage course of the lake. There are three motts namely Vasu mott, Kondapur mott, and Chelpur mott. The villages which benefited under this lake are Ventapur, Nallagunta, Laxmidevipet, Palampet, and Ramanjapur. Laknavaram tank is another big tank in Khammam district. It was constructed across the Laknavaram *vagu* and the surplus water goes by the name of Laknavaram River and joins the River Godavari directly. The lake was formed by closing three narrow valleys each with a short bund for a length of 2000. There is only one tower sluice. From this, the water flows through a natural valley for

about half a mile up to the lift, up the earthen dam called Saddimadugu. The irrigation channels starts from this lift up to the dam. It stores water flowing in an area of 75 square miles and irrigates about 3,500 acres of land. The villages from this tank are Laknavaram, Chalvai, Pasra, Bussapur, Rangapur, Rampur and Karlapalli. The Utturu inscription dated A.D.1215 states that Loki Reddi caused to build tanks named Lokasamudra at Utturu and Miriyalaguda tank in Nalgonda district. Chintalasangamam, Namasamudram, Visvanadhasamudram, Lakumasamudram, Kudikudiyacheruvu, Katyarecheruvu, Naredlacheruvu, Jagatkesarisamudram, and several tanks at Nagulapadu were built by the Recherla family (P.V.P. Sastry, *The Kakatiyas*, Hyderabad, 1978. p.145).

The Kayasthas were other important subordinates of the Kakatiyas. The Tripurantakam inscription refers to Ambadeva constructing two tanks in the village of Pedapulacheruvu<sup>23</sup> and another tank named as Ganapasamudram at Ganapuram<sup>24</sup>. Ghodayaraya Gangadeva, the prime minister of Amabadeva caused to build two tanks called Ambasangamam to be dug in the name of his master at Obali (Bali) and Utukuru respectively.

The Viriyala chiefs also built several tanks. The chief Malla built a tank and dug wells at Gumuduru<sup>25</sup>. The Katukuru inscription records that Viriyala Sura constructed a tank in the village of Ayyanavolu<sup>26</sup>. The Bothpur inscription records that a tank was built by Gundya. Amaya of the Induluri family constructed many tanks along the banks of the rivers Krishna and Godavari<sup>27</sup>.

The Chagi chiefs ruled over the Krishna-Guntur regions. An undated record of Muktyala in Krishna district states that, Potaraju built a tank, named after him as Chagi Potasangamam at Simhadri<sup>28</sup>. In the same district, an inscription from Mungapalli refers to another tank named Protasangamam which was built in Muppala.

Another inscription from Navabupeta refers to the tanks named Krottacheruvu, Potacheruvu, Tonacheruvu, Ravulacheruvu, Prantacheruvu, and Sanamgacheruvu, built by the Chagi chiefs.

Kota Gonka and Kama-II (Velanadu-600) built many tanks. Rompicherla may be identified with Rompicheruvu, and Pankatatakapuram probably derived its name from some big tank in its vicinity<sup>29</sup>. The Nagulapadu inscription mentions that several tanks were built by the Natavadi chiefs<sup>30</sup>. A chief named Bollayanakas of Mediapolis is credited with the digging of not less than seven tanks in different areas<sup>31</sup>.

Almost all the female members of the Kakatiya family and the women of various cadres had shown interest in providing water facilities and made donations too. Rani Rudrama, constructed tanks around Ambapuram, Ganapavaram, Ganapuram, and Rudravaram villages for providing water facilities to promote agriculture. She believed that the farmers were the backbone of the country and the development of a country depended upon the farmers. Mailama, sister of Kakatiya Ganapatideva and wife of Natavadi Rudra, constructed a tank at Matedu in Warangal district dated A.D 1117 and developed a township known as Bayyaram in the name of her mother Bayyaladevi and built a magnificent tank named Bayyaram tank (Khammam district) in A.D. 1194. It was one of the best tanks of the Telangana region and its engineering skill lies in selecting the place where one or two streams pass between hillocks. An inscription was found on a stone pillar lying on the tank bund, which belongs to the reign of Ganapatideva. It also records the founding of a new settlement called Dharmakirtipura, named after her epithet. The Dharmakirtipura seems to be no other than the modern Dharmapura near Bayyaram in Khammam district. Several villages like Kannayagudem, Bayyaram, Irasalapura, Dharmavaram, Kothapet, Satyanarayanapuram, and Gandhampally<sup>32</sup> were irrigated by the waters of the Bayyaram tank.

Paddy cultivation was well developed due to this tank. This tank is fed by three big streams which flow in three directions of a large plateau which forms the catchment area. Mailamba also constructed another tank known as Dharmasagaram<sup>33</sup> (Warangal district). She constructed the Muppavaram tank, the Tripurantakam tank and many other smaller tanks and dug canals, where habitations were developed in her name as Mailavarams. The Kundavaram and Nidigonda inscriptions<sup>34</sup> mention that the sister of Ganapatideva's named Kundamaba constructed tanks in Adilabad and Warangal districts. Both of these were named after her as Kundasamudram. An inscription dated A.D 1276 records that the queen Kuppambika, wife of Malyala Gundasenani constructed a tank in the name of her husband. The Pammi inscription dated A.D. 1234 records the constructions of Muppadikunta Maddekunta, Bhiramvarikunta and Madhavakunta tanks by Viriyala Nagasanamma<sup>35</sup>. According to Basavapurana, a female domestic servant named Chandavva, who was working as a daily wage earner, contributed her physical labour freely and voluntarily when the Government was constructing a tank. It clearly mentions that she did so aiming at religious merit. The tanks for drinking purposes were usually dug amidst a town or a village. The epigraphical evidences show that specific names were used to denote the tanks for the purpose for which they were put into utility –*kulam* (pond), *sunai* (pool), *uruni* (public pond), *uruni-kulam* (public water tanks), *thirumanjana* (sacred tanks), and *paraikulam* (ponds and wells) kept separately for each caste (Journal of Andhra Pradesh Archives, Hyderabad, 1973, p.57).

Tanks were granted as gifts to the gods. *Mahamandaleshvara* Jaggaddevarasa in his Vemulavada record dated A.D.1108 is said to have granted the gift of a tank called Illendu *kunta* to the god Harikeshvaradeva<sup>36</sup>. The Magatala record refers to the gift of Baddiraju tank to the god Svayambhu Mallinathadeva<sup>37</sup>.

## Canal irrigation

Canals or streams were also used for irrigation. They are generally called *utakaluvas*. A good number of such canals are mentioned in the records. An inscription of Ambadeva records that he was responsible for the digging of a canal called Rayasahasramallakalva from the River Cheyyeru at Antaranga and another canal named as Gandapenderakalva at Tadlapaka<sup>38</sup>. Kuppamba canal, Polireddy canal and Dadla canal were dug by the Viriyala chiefs. Musetikaluvais the canal fed by the River Musi; Aletikaluva is the canal dug along the River Aleru near Kolanupaka<sup>39</sup>, Kuchinenikaluva<sup>40</sup>, Ravipatikaluva<sup>41</sup>, Bommakantakaluva<sup>42</sup>, Uttamagandakaluva<sup>43</sup>, Utumkaluva<sup>44</sup>, Chinmtalakaluva<sup>45</sup>, are some more examples of such canals. One of the records at Amarabad in Mahabubnagar district dated A.D 1290 refers to the gift of a canal dug from the stream named Pogasirivagu, as *vritti* to the god Mailaradeva of that village<sup>46</sup>. This indicates that the income derived by suppling water to the neighbouring fields through the canal was endowed to the god.

The Kakatiyas introduced a new system of tenure called *dashabandham*, according to this an *inam* or copyhold was granted to a person for constructing, maintaining and repairing a tank on condition of paying in money or kind, one tenth of its produce to the King. During the Kakatiya period, *dashabhandham* or *dashavandha* was generally levied on the farmers at the rate of one *kuncha* per each *putti* of gross yield. It was generally known as *dashavandhamanya*. It was, in fact a land granted without tax, given to an individual or private person for the repairing or constructing of a tank or any other irrigation works. Some land irrigated under the tank was assigned to the tank-keeper as *manya*. In several cases, the people who were instrumental in digging the tanks made adequate provision to maintain them in a proper manner. When irrigation works were

damaged due to heavy rains, breaches and floods, the rulers took immediate action to repair such type of damages. The epigraphical records mention the purpose from all sections of the society who greatly contributed to the keep up of the irrigation works. The Amarabad inscription<sup>47</sup> states that a tank belonging to the temple of Svayambhudeva was repaired by way of raising its bund and increasing the capacity by a certain Malliseti. The records of the Kakatiyas do not mention clearly the private persons who took the responsibility to repair the irrigation works.

The Kakatiya rulers not only gave preference to the storage of water by constructing tanks, but also to the reclamation of forests for the inception of a new village. The forests tracts of Achchampet, Chennuru, Kalesvaram, Khammam, Kottagudem, Manthena, and Narasanapeta were founded by the Kakatiyas and under this category, the land reclamation policy had two aspects; firstly, the construction of a large networks of tanks for irrigation, reclamation of forests and formation of new villages and secondly granting these villages as *devadana* lands to the temples and as Brahmadeyalands to the Brahmanas. The Hanumakonda inscription dated A.D 1162 of Kakatiya Rudradeva states that he destroyed the forest of the King Cododaya and built an enormously and beautiful tank<sup>48</sup>. Rudradeva gave 14 *marturs* of wetland behind the Mailasamudram tank, which he constructed. Ganapatideva's Ganapeshvaram inscription states that Rudradeva destroyed many towns of his enemies and established many quarters in the city of Warangal, where respective inhabitants resided. He also built tanks and settled them with fresh settlers<sup>49</sup>. The same inscription also stated that the village called Vadlakurru and a tank named Bhairasamudram were constructed<sup>50</sup>. The Tripurantakam inscription states that Ganapatideva founded a village named Visvanathapura and a tank was built after clearing the forest. Another Kakatiya ruler, Pratapadudra also increased the extent of the cultivable land



by cutting down the forests and bringing large tracts under cultivation. Local traditions preserved in the Kaifiyats of several villages in the Rayalaseema refer to the deforestation of much of this country by the command of Prataparudra<sup>51</sup>. Land reclamation during the Kakatiya period was excellent. Stone was the chief material used for constructing the tanks which is mentioned in the Kalvatumu inscription.

The correct estimation of the cost of construction of artificial irrigation works cannot be made. However, large amounts of money were spent on these works. There were only a few inscriptions that mention the cost incurred for digging a tank. An inscription dated A.D. 1293 at Tripurantakam in Markapuram taluk of Prakasam district states that the construction of a tank called Kumarasamudram involved an expenditure of 241 golden *gadyanas* (*madas*) whilst two other tanks, both named Tripurasamudram cost 7 golden *gadyanas* and 156 golden *gadyanas*. These tanks were gifted to the god Tripurantakadeva. The same inscription also refers to the labourers received the wages in cash.

The tax called *niruvidi* was collected by the State for providing water facilities to the people. The Akunuru inscription of Rudradeva dated A.D. 1172 mentions that the tax *niruvidi* was collected from the people. Generally, the village assemblies settled the disputes.

To conclude, on the basis of the epigraphical evidences, it is clear that the construction of tanks were well developed during the Kakatiya period. Several great tanks were built and irrigate some thousands of acres in Telengana even today. Warangal, Khammam, Karimnagar, Nizamabad and Nalgonda districts flourished with water facilities as each village was endowed with one or two tanks. Ramappa tank stands as an excellent

testimony to the skill of the Kakatiyas in the planning and implementation of irrigation works of a high order. The hydraulic particulars of the tanks such as the Ramappa tank, the Pakala tank, the Bayyaram tank, the Ghanpur tank, and the Laknavaram tank reveal the nature of irrigation works taken up during the Kakatiya period. The engineering skills and the concern of the authors of the projects towards irrigation and agriculture at that time is commendable. In the Kakatiya administration, there seems to have been no special department or an officer to look after the works of irrigation. Moreover, most of these works were looked after by the ministers and feudatories. It is apt to conclude that the construction of irrigation work was not only to fulfil the desire of the rulers but also to improve the economic conditions of the State.

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## **TRADITIONAL HEALTH CARE IN ANCIENT INDIA WITH REFERENCE TO KARNATAKA**

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### **Introduction**

A study of history reveals that people in Ancient India were often confronted with health hazards. They stressed the need for good health and to preserve it against all hazards. According to Buddha, health is the greatest wealth and contentment is the highest gain. All the medical literature stressed this point. These medical works give preference to maintaining health in both body and mind instead of the eradication of diseases.

For the subject of study, we have sources in the form of a few inscriptions and religious and secular literary works. In Karnataka, these sources are insufficient number. Besides, in Karnataka, there are good numbers of folk versions which are yet to be explored.

### **II Health problems in Ancient India: nature and factors**

Health hazards haunted the people in Ancient India and caused much misery. They viewed the factors for the emergence of health hazards. These are environmental changes, domestication of animals, advent of agriculture and the coming of urban centres<sup>1</sup>. It is interesting to note that in each stage noticed a loss in efficiency in terms of energy transformed<sup>2</sup>. Further, disease

increased in the course of years and the nature of them caused problems.

With the advent of Buddhism, medical science in India turned into a rational study excluding magic and mysticism. It is also remarked that Buddhism is considered to be one of the earliest sources on medical science and for surgery. One of the interesting points in the history of medical science is the appearances of 98 unspecified diseases. This is known from the *Melinda Panha*<sup>3</sup> medical knowledge increased by leaps and bounds during the course of centuries. For instance, another Buddhist text, *Mahanedessa* mentions the diseases of the eyes, and body cholera, Madhumeha (diabetes), and leprosy. In addition to these diseases certain rare other diseases are mentioned in the text. For example, the causes of epidemics are also mentioned and explained in the text. The wonders of sexology and the five types of *Pandaka* (*eunuch*) are also explained in the same work<sup>4</sup>.

During the time of Susruta (fifth century A.D), diseases multiplied. He predicted unforeseen circumstances for the cause of diseases, even though the seasons were normal. The diseases caused by this situation, were polluted air, which was filled with harmful odours including those of poisonous flowers. Due to this, people might suffer from respiratory illness and fever regardless of their *Vata pitta* or *Kaphs* dispositions; similar ailments and distress could arise from homesteads; from contact with spouses, using beds, seats, used by others vehicles and riding on animals; and also from the wearing of inauspicious stones<sup>5</sup>.

Further, pestilences, epidemic, floods and draughts intensified health problems as known from the historical records, namely the Kashmiri chronicle *Raja Tarangini* of Kalhana. The natural calamity of these resulted in the scarcity of food, widespread death, disease and depopulation throughout the country<sup>6</sup>.

## The Solutions

One of the medical texts states that to overcome the diseases the sages assembled and thoroughly discussed the causes and the natures of the diseases and health hazards which befell humanity<sup>7</sup>. During the course of the discussions, the sages have taken into consideration the flora and fauna that have an affect human nature. They opined that the disease is not of the mind but of the body. *Rasa* is cause of all diseases and water is the basic cause for the diseases<sup>8</sup>.

With regard to the application and the use of medicines in the eradication of the diseases, one of the scholars assembled, Maitrey, asserted that they are not the cause for the recovery, on the other hand they are more in the nature of aids<sup>9</sup>. Further, the medicine should be administered according to strength, the age, nature of sickness and the kind of medicine as specified in the *Sastras*. Moreover, in the preparation of medicine, the exact proportion of different ingredients is to be followed<sup>10</sup>.

A sound dietary system was formulated. One of the formulations is that milk and fish should not be taken together. Its violation will result in sickness or sometimes death<sup>11</sup>. In the dietary system, *Okastayam* should be observed. In this system, the existing food system should not be replaced<sup>12</sup>.

Buddhist measures in tackling health care deserve our attention, as these are practical in outlook. One of the Buddhist texts, *Vinayapitaka* records that, in the Buddhist Universities, many physicians and surgeons dedicated their lives to the research and development of medical science. One such prominent person was Nagasena. In his work *Milindapanha* he says, “In this world and in the world of the Gods, medicine is one that keeps them away from suffering.” Further, the Buddhist texts mention

the causes of suffering and propose remedies. Nursing is stressed by the Buddhist works. Even the Buddha took himself an active interest in nursing sick persons. He was a votary of medicine and regularly attended on the sick in his camp<sup>13</sup>. His followers considered tending to the sick to be one of the religious obligations. The instructions pertaining to nursing are also stressed by the Buddhists. Buddha had recommended that a sick monk should get a well-balanced diet and proper medicine and should be looked after by a proper attendant. These measures gradually led to the emergence of the house for the sick *Gilanasal* (Hospital)<sup>14</sup>. The last institution gained prominence during the reign of Asoka.

### **The role of Kautilya in the removal health hazards**

Kautilya, Chandra Gupta Maurya's Prime Minister, took measures to eradicate health problems. For instance, Kautilya prescribes in his work *Arthashastra* that all buildings should be provided with remedies against poison. Under his direction, health became the responsibility of the Government. Therefore, a series of rules and codes concerning general health, medicine, duties and responsibilities of the physicians were formulated and enforced. Rules were formed for taking medicine.

A separate office was created. He had to store the articles brought in by the other departments such as agriculture. Further, he had to replace the old out dated medicines. Facilities were provided for women during their confinement<sup>15</sup>. Kautilya enforced stringent measures to keep up sanitation and cleanliness. For example, throwing dust on the street and collecting mud water in the street were not allowed. The violations of these regulations resulted in heavy fines. He took scrupulous care of the sanitation of the cities and towns. Whoever excreted faeces in public places of pilgrimage, reservoirs of water and the royal buildings were punished. However, when such excretions were due to the use of medicine and eradication of diseases, no such punishment



was imposed. Finally, defilement of the city with carcasses of animals was not allowed<sup>16</sup>.

From the first century A.D onwards, a few more rules and regulation concerning the eradication of diseases and care for health emerged. The most prominent person here to be taken into consideration is Charaka. He lived in the second century A.D (and was a contemporary of Kanishka<sup>17</sup>). He formulated his ideas on health care. He defined health as the equilibrium of the constituents of the body. It should be governed by a minimum need of medicine. Therefore, he stressed *Svasthavritta* (health routine). It includes a daily routine such rising from the bed, washing the face and teeth, brushing ablution and adornments in proper time and proper place. According to him, these promote health happiness and elegance. Further, Charaka mentions different kinds of clothes and things being used in daily life at that time<sup>18</sup>. Next, he stressed the need for following *rtucarya* (seasonal regimen). It prescribed appropriate forms of food, drinks physical activity, medical procedures, relaxation and general behaviour to suit each of the six seasons. The rules of *rtucarya* are elaborate. The strong point in *rtucarya* is that it represents the constant endeavour to restore a grand equilibrium of the body and the changing environment through dietary and other interventions<sup>19</sup>.

Next Charaka was aware of food and drink and their role in maintaining the health the system. These have as much therapeutic value as drugs in the health system. Besides, he recognized that all human activities – worldly, ritualistic and emancipatory– are rooted in food which plays a vital role in the practice of medicine. His menu was rich and varied. It included numerous varieties of food, varieties of meats and fermented drinks. Strangely, Charaka did not refer to the use of coconut oil although the coconut was grown in abundance in South India<sup>20</sup>.

Charaka stressed the importance of health and its care. For this, he formulated a certain code of conduct which had to be followed. One such rule is that physical activity should be the norm but it should not be to the point of exhaustion. Travel in unsafe vehicles should be avoided. While walking outdoors, squalid places should be avoided. An umbrella should be taken because it provides protection against the sun, rain and dust. It also gives a measure of strength during the travel. In company, one should desist from habits which violate decorum.

In social exchanges, words should be appropriate, to the point, and chosen with care. Women should not be the object of neglect or insult, but it would be prudent not to give them authority or to confide secrets to them<sup>21</sup>. Further, Charaka advocated that the code of conduct, must keep in step with tradition and customs. By observing the code of conduct, one could attain good health. And it was also possible to obtain mastery over one's senses<sup>22</sup>. Finally, Charaka realized the role of the mind in maintaining health. According to him "the mind performs analytical activity and provides a forum for the interplay of the three qualities of *Sattava*, *Rajasa* and *Tamasa*. A balanced mind would shun idleness..."<sup>23</sup>.

Other medical thinkers who followed Charaka, realized the importance of the medical code and conduct laid down by Charaka and, of course, suggested a few changes taking into consideration the time and circumstance. For instance, Susruta who lived in the fifth century A.D observes "Ways of disease control are purification, pacification diet and conduct, all properly given and observed"<sup>24</sup>. The rules of conduct that Susruta formulated are elaborate and touch all aspects of life. Prominent among these are the code of daily conduct, physical exercise, diet, personal and general conduct, forbidden activities like drinks, guidelines for sexual activity and the consequences of their violations. By observing these rules, one could ward off diseases<sup>25</sup>.

Despite the normal season and their regular sequence, Susruta expressed the fear of unexpected health hazards affecting humanity. Under such circumstances, one has to invoke the Gods by performing rituals for the pacification of the deities and virtuous conduct of charity and self-control, compassion and generosity<sup>26</sup>.

### **Health Care in Ancient Karnataka:**

The study of historical records available in Karnataka reveals that health care was given due importance both by the rulers and the common people. They stressed on keeping the purity of the environment. They realized the need for the proper maintenance of the ecology which is essential for avoiding health hazards<sup>27</sup>. These are known from the following works.

The *Lokopakara*, a Kannada work of Chavundaraya II composed in 1025 A.D, stressed the need for the purity of environment. The same work deals with diseases which cause health problems. The eradication of such diseases, water resources treatment in houses, natural calamities and their effect on humanity are discussed. Chapter VI of the same work concerns the plants, their protections and nourishments<sup>28</sup>.

Health care received the active attention of the Chalukya King Somesvara III and this is known from his work the *Manasollasa* (composed in the year A.D 1127-30). The work describes in detail the health aspects in a given environment and subjects like water management the development of garden, care for the piles and domestication of animals. Further, the same work treats succinctly all medical aspects. The same work also stresses the need for the protection of life style and is viewed in the same work<sup>29</sup>.

The inscriptions often cite ecological awareness and, health problems caused by diseases. The construction of tanks and

their proper maintenance and planting of trees are mentioned in a series of inscriptions. The diseases are not only mentioned in the inscriptions but also their eradication. For instance, an inscription dated in 1066 A.D. notes the distribution of medicine to sick persons in the Uttaresvara *Devalaya* (in the Dharwad district) of Karnataka<sup>30</sup>.

It is interesting to note that the rulers of Karnataka had their own *Vaidyas* who looked after the general welfare of the Kings and the people. We come across the *vaidyas*, namely Desimaniya Niakanta who was a court physician of the Kadamba King, Ravivarama. For the valuable service of the above-mentioned *Vaidya*, King Ravivarma granted a land site in the year 519 A.D.<sup>31</sup>. Similarly an inscription dated A.D 1199 refers to the court physician Nagadevaraya in the court of Tribhuvana Malla of the Goa Kadamba dynasty. The above mentioned court physician was an expert in toxicology<sup>32</sup>.

### **Conclusions:**

- I Health hazards affected the people. This gave much concern to the Kings, who formulated rules and regulations. The rules and regulations concerned the life style and the structure of the human body.
- II They stressed the necessity for proper daily life style (*Dina chariya*) and awareness of the seasons in relation to daily life.
- III The principle of moderation in all aspects is recognized as cardinal to overcoming of health problems.

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8

**FROM EGYPT TO INDIA AND CHINA –  
THE KARIMIMERCHANTS IN THE  
INDIAN OCEAN TRADE OF MEDIEVAL  
WORLD**

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The *Karimi* merchants were great traders and travellers of the medieval world and figure prominently in the Indian Ocean trade of the period, with their base at Cairo. They were famous for trade in spices and were intermediaries in that trade between east and west. They were very active in the trade with China also and had a crucial role in the international trade extending from the Red Sea to the China Sea, for about three centuries the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> century C.E. As traders in spices, they had close connections with the regions of their production and as such had a particular bearing with Kerala. However, no studies on them in connection with Kerala have appeared. This paper is an attempt at piecing together the information about these traders with special reference to their relations with the trade emporia of Kerala. We have contemporary records referring to the *Karimis* in the Geniza documents<sup>1</sup>.

The etymology of the word *Karim* is not clear. It is not an Arabic word. As the word is always preceded by an article, it must have been a general noun. *Karimi* refers to a convoy, a convoy of ships. They were a group of maritime traders bound together for professional protection during a period, when oceanic voyages were hazardous. A loose association of maritime traders, they owned ships and dominated the trade between India and the African coast for about three centuries. But they were



not a company handling goods<sup>2</sup>. “They were a conglomeration of merchants who combined their fortunes to mount annual trading fleets down the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf to the ports of East Africa and South India<sup>3</sup>.”

According to Walter J Fishchel, the *Karimis* seem to have come to Egypt during the closing decades of the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE. Matters in connection with the payment of *Zakat* by them are recorded on their arrival from Aden to Egypt in 1181<sup>4</sup>. They were a power to be reckoned with in Egypt during the period of the Ayyubids, Fathimids, and the Mamluks. Evidences from the *Geniza* documents push back the presence of the *Karimis* in Egypt to the early decades of the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE.

The taxes levied on the merchandise of the *Karimis* were an important source of income for the Egyptian government. In order to cope with the financial and administrative matters connected with the *Karimi* trade, the central government of Egypt had to create new offices and departments like the office of the controller of the spice trade of the *Karimis* (*Mustawfi-al-buharwal-Karim*) and inspector of the *Karimi* trade (*Ustadar and mutahaddith*) etc<sup>5</sup>.

The *Karimis* had government protection in Egypt and they had collaborations with the Kings whether they were Fathimids, Ayyubids, or Mamlukes. They enjoyed the protection of the Fathimid navy at ports like Aidhab, the famous *entrepot* of east west trade. This protection was due to financial reasons and not so much political and the merchants used to pay for such help<sup>6</sup>. The Ayyubids were very particular in providing infrastructural facilities of trade for the *Karimis* including port facilities and warehouses. But they did not interfere in their activities<sup>7</sup>. This reminds one of the features of administered trade as it prevailed in the emporia of trade in medieval Kerala also<sup>8</sup>. The Mamluk

Sultans had no powerful navy and they were dependent on the *Karimis* for ships<sup>9</sup>.

The age in which the *Karimis* flourished was the heyday of corporate bodies like guilds in trade. These traders were part of a corporate body called *Genossenschaft* dedicated to the trade in spices<sup>10</sup>. The *Karimis* used to set up warehouses called *Fandug* all along their trade routes and the *Karimi Fanduqs* at Aden, Jiddah, Qus, Aidhab, Fustat and so on have been famous<sup>11</sup>. The traders were headed by *Ra'ises*, who were a link between them and the government. The members of the association of *Karimis* conducted hostelrys of their own called *Sing Fandug* which were celebrated for the fabulous arrangements of luxury in them<sup>12</sup>.

Earlier, it was believed that the *Karimis* were a group of Islamic merchants only. However, recent studies show that they included Jewish merchants also. The Jews engaged in the Indian Ocean trade had intimate connections with them and they used to send their goods to and from the trading centres of Kerala in the ships of the *Karimis*. The Genzia documents testify to this<sup>13</sup>. The ship owners among the *Karimis* were called *Nakhudas*. Among the celebrated *Nakhudas* was Ramisht. He was so wealthy and influential that one of his agents brought back from Canton, merchandise worth 300,000 *dinars* in a single voyage. This *Nakhuda* seems to have provided for the covering of the Ka'aba with Chinese silk<sup>14</sup>.

Towards the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, European merchants were denied entry into the Red Sea. This protectionist policy favoured the rapid development of the corporate body of the *Karimis*. The *Karimis* obtained Indian goods either from Malabar or from Gujarat. It was the eagerness to participate in this trade that promoted the trade missions of the Sinhalese King Bhuvanaika Bahu to the Egyptian court in 1283 C.E.

The *Karimis* had commercial connections with the trading centres of medieval Kerala like Kollam (Kulum) and Pantalayani Kollam (Fandariana). Even though the most important goods transacted by them were spices, especially pepper, the *Karimis* dealt with many other items like silk, iron, copper, chemicals etc. The Geniza letters of the 12<sup>th</sup> century C.E. testify to the export of large quantities of pepper from Malabar to the West. For example in a letter the Jewish merchant chief Madmun b. Hasan in Aden placed an order with his counterpart in Pantalayani Kollam to buy “any available pepper from Malabar”<sup>16</sup>. In the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Jews used to travel and transport their goods in the ships of the *Karimis* and the Geniza documents reveal very lively sea traffic between India and the West. The *Karimis* and their ships acted as instruments of human mobility in the medieval world. The *Karimi* ships were popular as bearers of messages also. In the Genzia documents, there is many an instance referring to the letters sent in the *Karimi*. A letter from a Jewish merchant Madmun Shemarya b. David, chief of the Jewish merchants in Aden to a prominent Egyptian Jew begins thus: My letter to you has already been sent in the blessed *Karim*<sup>17</sup>...” The adjective “blessed” is part of a pious wish that “it arrives safely and may be crowned with financial success”<sup>18</sup>.

The traffic of *Karimi* ships from Kollam to Aden is also attested by the Geniza documents. A memorandum from Madmun b Hasan, a representative of the merchants in Egypt to Halfon ha levi b. Nethanel written in the year 1135 CE speaks of goods sent from the port of Kollam in the ship of the *Karimis*<sup>19</sup>.

Another merchant chief Mahruz, in a letter dictated by him on the day he was embarking for Malabar from Aden, to his nephew Sulayman b Abu Zikri Cohen states that he had bought for the addressee, his nephew, 60 *mann* of Tabashir (crystals extracted

from bamboo) which he had delivered to the representative of merchants at Aden, Madmun who would send it in a *Karim* which he found suitable<sup>20</sup>. In another letter from Mahrüz to Madmun, it is stated that 3000 bales of goods were sent in the *Karimi* of seven Jewish businessman<sup>21</sup>. The traffic of *Karim* ships from Kollam is attested to by another letter that the addressee was sending to his wife in Cairo with presents which included red silk, a slave girl, garments, a bronze basin etc. He said that he would send it with somebody travelling in the *Karim*<sup>22</sup>. Enormous quantities of oriental spices were carried in the *Karim*. But the *Karims* did not monopolise trade. There were hundreds of flotillas and ships carrying goods to and from India<sup>24</sup>.

Certain Geniza letters reveal the nature of the *Karimis* as a convoy of ships. Once the Caliph of Aden, al Malik al Miuzz Ismail (11 97-1201) raised the duties to be paid by the foreign merchants in his realm. He ordered that 15 out of every 100 *dinars* must be taken from every merchant both at the time of arrival and departure. But he ordered that “the *Karims* should remain unchanged” with no rise in tariff. Here the word *Karim* is used for the totality of India traders operating during one year<sup>25</sup>.

The *Karimis* were popular in Egypt. By the time of the Fathimids they had become a household word in Cairo and any woman married to an overseas trader could expect letters and things sent to her in the *Karim*<sup>26</sup>. The arrival of the caravan of the *Karims* was so important that it was registered in the chronicles<sup>27</sup>.

The goods transacted by the *Karimis* were noted for their high quality. The office of the spices al *Karimi* at Fustat supervised the various spices and other goods brought by maritime merchants. Goitein cites a letter in which a trader from the Coromandal coast informs his wife that he was sending her several items

of spices and fruits including  $7\frac{1}{2}$  *manns* of nutmeg, “which is better than anything found in the *Karim*<sup>28</sup>.”

The *Karimi* merchants were so important to the contemporary world that contemporary chronicles documented their names and activities. Names of some 201 *Karimis* are available in *Tujjar al Tawabil fc Misr fial’ Asr al Mamluki* of Abd al Ghanial A squar. In a recent article, Sato Tsugitaka narrates the history of certain powerful *Karimis*<sup>29</sup>. The influential *Karimi* families detailed by her – those of al Mahalli, al Kharrubi and Ibn Musallam – reveal many an aspect of these merchant groups. The *Kharrubis* were wealthy merchants originating from Kharrub square in Fustat. The family activities of these merchants lasted for seven generations from Salah al Din al Kharrubi of the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century to Fakhr al Din Sulayman, who was imprisoned due to his large debts in 1460 C.E. The history of this family shows the ups and downs. During the period of the Karrubi brothers Salah al Din Ahmad Ibn Muhammad and Badr al Din Muhammad Ibn Muhammad (14<sup>th</sup> century), concrete description of the Kharrubi appeared in Arabic chronicles and biographical works. Outstanding *Karimi* merchants were honoured by the ruling powers by conferring titles and honours on them. Among the Kharrubis, Siraj al Din Badr al Din, Umar ibn Salah al Din and Nur al Din Ali ibn were granted the titles of “Khawaja.” Sultan Baruq granted the title of Ra’iul Tujjar to Zaki al Din in 1384<sup>30</sup>.

Badr al Din Muhammad constructed the al Madrasah al Kharrubian on the outskirts of Fustat. Khawaja Nur al Din Ali was one of the most famous merchants in Egypt. He seems to have gone to Mecca several times for both trade and pilgrimage. He was the owner of a school near the banks of the Nile in Fustat. The sphere of activities of the Kharrubis was Fustat, Cairo, Mecca, Yemen, and so on<sup>31</sup>. They brought spices from Aden

to Cairo, Alexandria and Damascus and traded in spices, timber, textiles, precious stones, wheat, sugar, pottery etc. The *Karimis* engaged in slave trade also. Sato Tsugitaki speaks of the collaborations between the slave traders and *Karimi*. The slave traders functioned on an individual basis but they worked as groups<sup>32</sup>.

The *Karimis* were engaged in industrial production also. The *Karimis* had four sugar refineries at Fustat. Two of these belonged to the Kharrubis. The *Karimis* were the sugar exporters also. Sugar was a luxury item during that period and this luxury trade brought them immense profit<sup>33</sup>.

After the 12<sup>th</sup> century C.E., the *Karimis* seem to have been very active in the trade with China. They were drawn to the trade in Chinese silk and porcelain. Contemporary records speak of a Bzzaldean Kulami *Karimi* who had been to China five times and amassed wealth through the trade in silk and pottery<sup>34</sup>. The *Karimi* were called *Tazi* or *Dashi* in China, meaning merchants from Arabia Zhao.

Ruqua's *Zhu fanchi* speaks of an affluent *Karimi* merchant of South Quanchow, known for his philanthropic activities. He was very particular in retaining the customs of the Arabians and seems to have built a cemetery for Arab merchants, near Quanchow<sup>35</sup>. The Sung period was the heyday of the *Karimis* in China. A very powerful *Karimi* named Pu Luoxin was conferred the title of Chen Xin Lang (Government entrusted official merchant) by the Sung court. He was also granted the license for importing frankincense worth 300,000 *guans*. The study of Bai Shan yi shows that the *Karimis* had a leading role in the merchant community of the area<sup>36</sup>.

The wealth of the *Karimis* was proverbial. In order to show the wealth and prestige of the merchant chiefs of Daulatabad,

Ibn Battuta compares them to the *Karimis*<sup>37</sup>. The *Fanduqs* of the *Karimis* were noted for the luxuries in them. In China, they lived in luxurious houses and were the envy of native traders. They spent so lavishly that the Sung emperor was very particular in having a watchful eye on their dealings<sup>38</sup>.

As in China, in Egypt also the *Karimis* were noted for their philanthropic activities and social services. They used to set up educational institutions, hospitals etc. At Mecca and Cairo, they patronised men of letters<sup>39</sup>. One of the agents of the Jewish ship owner Ramisht brought to Canton merchandise worth 500,000 *dinars*. Ramisht was so wealthy that he provided for the covering of the Ka 'aba with Chinese silk<sup>40</sup>.

The *Karimis* were engaged in banking also, and this to an extent caused their decline. In 1398 C.E., the *Karimis* gave a massive loan to the Mamluk Sultan for the defence of the country from the invasion of Tamerlane. In return, they were given the monopoly of trade in the Nile-Red Sea Canal. But Sultan Al Ashraf Barsbay (1422 – 1435) nationalised the Nile Red Sea canal and with this single stroke, they began to decline<sup>41</sup>. The Mamluk regime punished the *Karimis*. They favoured the European merchants from whom they got commodities of military importance such as timber and iron. Sultan Barsbay established state monopoly in trade, hence the *Karimi* were forced to buy imported goods at a high price. Up to this time, they used to get the same from Alexandria. The King issued orders prohibiting the *Karimi* in selling goods to the Muslims of his realm. This affected their fortunes and they became mere agents of the Mamluk Sultans. This made the *Karimis* flee to Jeddah. The fluctuations in the money market also affected them adversely, “Sudden and severe changes in the rate of exchanges would be felt as a calamity.” It might have affected the *Karimis*<sup>42</sup>. With the discovery of the Cape route and the advent of the Portuguese

to the Indian Ocean regions, the decline of the *Karimis* became complete by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century C.E.

The *Karimis* played a historic role as the suppliers of spices of the east to the regions of the west. Following their decline, their role was taken up by the European trading companies.

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## **RITUALS AND FESTIVALS IN SRIRANGANATHAR TEMPLE DURING THE PERIOD OF VIJAYANAGAR**

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The temple is manifestation of the supreme power in which the rituals played an active part. It is often said that rituals are actions that lead to contemplation, which in turn, leads to a security of consciousness that offers to one from the mundane life. The *agamas* prescribe the rituals. These *agamas* mention that God is divinity, and divinity will be obtained through the performance of the rituals to the icons. *Agamas* give importance to the iconic forms and rituals.

### **Rituals of the Temples<sup>1</sup>**

Worship in a temple is a complex of ceremonies that include the rituals and the festivals. Rituals are done to preserve the spiritual power of God. Festivals are meant for the attraction of the devotees. Rituals are the activities that include the preparation for the day's worship. They are:

1. Cleaning the enclosure of the whole temple.
2. Cleaning of the vessels for use in worship
3. Removal of the old flowers from the image in the *sanctum*.
4. Collection of fresh water for the day's ritual
5. Preparation of the sandal paste
6. Collection of some specified herbs to be put into ritual water like *nigh* and *padya*,

7. Gathering of flowers for decorating the image and trimming the oil lamp in and around the *sanctum*.

*PUJA* - The meaning of the word *puja* is the fulfilment of the prescribed rituals, and the obtainment of the knowledge of the Divine. It is variously called *saparaya*, *archa*, *varivasya*, *paricharya* and *upsana*. There are sixty-four *upasanas* listed in the texts like *Tantra-sarasiddha-yaurala*. Normally, sixteen kinds of pujas are performed on a day-to-day basis to show reverence to the Deity. They are:

1. Seating (*asana*);
2. Welcoming (*svagata*);
3. Offering water to wash the hands (*arghya*);
4. Offering water to sip and rinse the mouth (*archamana*);
5. Providing a bath (*snana*);
6. Offering fresh clothes and decorations (*Vasava-bhusnama*);
7. Offering fresh sacred thread (*yajna parita*);
8. Offering aromatic substances like sandal paste (*ganaha*);
9. Offering flowers (*pusbha*);
10. Burning incense (*dhupa*);
11. Waving lights (*dipa*);
12. Offering four kinds of food (*nai vedya*);
13. Offering *tambula* (betel) leaves areca nut, camphor and spices;
14. Prostrations (*namaskara*);
15. Along with circumambulation (*pradakshina*);
16. Send off (*vi sarjan*).

## **Festivals**

The Lexicon Amara-Kosha gives meaning to the festival as *Kshana* (great moment) *uddharsha* (excitement) and *mahah* (auspicious occasion). The Uttara Karanagama explains in the

sense of wisdom, *Purushotama –samhita* as an excellent. Festivals give chances for group feeling and participation, and to channelize the individual energies towards a common social concern. Joint families and rural communities encourage these festivals for social, economic as well as spiritual purposes.

The temples have their own festivals apart from the household festivals. They are meant to contribute to the all-round prosperity of the people as well as the nation. The text *Padma-Samhita* tells us that the Gods in olden days celebrated their victory when they defeated the demon *Vrtra*, and that this was the origin of and model for festivals in the worlds of mortals. Another text *Sriprasna* informs us that *Indra*, when he defeated *Vrtra* in the battle, celebrated the glory of the great God *Vishnu* who in fact gave *Indra*, the strength and guidance. There are three kinds of festivals:

1. *Nitya*– The annual festivals conducted according to the month and fortnight, which are considered auspicious.
2. *Naimittika*– Festivals conducted for pacification in situations like earthquakes, eclipses, fall of meteor, and appearance of strange objects in the sky.
3. *Kamya*– Festivals conducted to commemorate the buildings of the temple, and of the installation of the main icon.

With this theoretical background, this chapter will put forth the rituals and festivals that were performed in the Srirangam temple during the Vijayanagar period.

## **Rituals of the Temple**

### **Lighting the Temple**

Lighting the lamp (*Tirunanda Vilakku*) was considered an important ritual activity of the people in *Vijayanagar* times. As

the lighting of lamp needs sources of revenue, the donor who wanted to donate the lamp (he/she) did not merely donate the lamp, but donated some source of revenue. In this case, the donor donated cows. From the maintenance of cows, they got ghee, and the ghee would be supplied to the lamp. The granting of lamps was in two categories: *Tirunandavilakku* (sacred perpetual lamp) and *Tiruvilakku*<sup>2</sup> (sacred lamp).

### Offering Dishes

Offering dishes for God is a noted ritual. In the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, in the year 1386 C.E., milk dish was popular<sup>3</sup>. Special dishes next came into usage. In the earlier years, lamp was offered singularly. But in due course of time, the donating of lamp was accompanied by a milk dish. Presenting a dish in front of God was called *Talikai*. The dishes began to enlarge from an ordinary milk dish to coconut dish, fruit dish, vegetable dish, salt dish, pepper dish, and ghee dish. Sometimes, the inscriptions instead of specifying the dishes with particular names commonly refer them as “all dishes.” The dish ritual was established by an individual. For that purpose, the donor purchased the land from the temple itself. It was called *Senapati Peruvilai*<sup>4</sup>. Offering four kinds of dishes (*Talikai nalu*) was popular one. It contained: vegetable dish, cereal dish, coconut dish and fruit dish. From one dish, *SriVaishnavar* (the priests) of Ramanjua *Kutam* were fed.

In some inscriptions, the term *Talikai* is not found and instead the term *arivanam*<sup>5</sup> is found. This *arivanam* consisted of the dishes like vegetable dish, fruit dish, milk dish, ghee dish and camphor. The king Krishnadevaraya who came to Srirangam for worshipping God, provided *taligai* for a whole day. That *Taligai*<sup>6</sup> was consisted of fifteen varieties dishes. For each *taligai*, the following dishes were offered: cereal dish, ghee dish,

lump sugar dish, and vegetable dish. In the early morning curd–rice (*musaroderam*) was offered to God. It is found that the numbers of dishes were increasing in due course of time. A dish is to be noted specifically. At late night, God would be taken to the temples inside and food would be offered to Him. That ritual is called *Tiruvathasamam*.

### **Garlanding**

Garlanding was another major ritual facility to God. This was in continuance of the dish offering. In order to present the dishes, the donor aimed at creating a garden. So, for making a garden, the donor purchased the land from the individual and donated it to the temple treasury. An inscription indicates that the garlanding ritual was always accompanied by the offering of a coconut dish and a vegetable dish.

### **Other Rituals**

Civic ruitment (*pulukkukappu*) was another ritual. Offering water (*kudinir*) was considered another ritual. Once it was done by Srinivasa alias Bhatta Sriranga Garudavahana son of Alagiyamanavala Mangala carya who was one of the bhattas-(Kottu) of the temple. This happened in the time of Irandakalamedutta-PerumalKudal Charavala Nambi alias Uttamanambi-Pillai. The donor is stated to have revived the hospital *arogyasalai* which had been in the charge of his ancestor Garuda-Vahama-Bhatta and which had been destroyed by a fire.

The rituals made by the individuals were a permanent measure. An inscription found on the inner wall of the *Aryabhatal, vaasal*, mentions that, donation of vegetable food to God was forever. The word *en enraikum* indicates this idea. Another phrase *chandradyaiavaraiyum* means “as long the sun and the moon

exist,”and indicates that the donation was a perpetual one. The arrangement of the ritual was called *Kattalai*.

### ***Nayak's Favorite Rituals***

The Nayak rulers had a fascination to garland offering and food offering rituals. An inscription found in the second *Prakara* south wall mentions that Chikka Narasa son of Narasa Nayaka in relation with the ritual. Moreover, the offerings were made only on some occasions. The Nayaka grant was made on the occasion of a lunar eclipse. So, this inscription intimates that the individual who made offerings to God had some ulterior motive, about which the inscription states nothing.

### **Rituals in the *Mandapas***

*Upayam*, *Kattalai*, *Kaingariyam* are the words used to denote donation. The offerings of dishes were made at times whenever God was present in the *mandapam*, and taking sacred food. Inscription records this as “*Mandapathil Eriyaruli amuthu ceyyir podiyinale*”. An inscription of the second *Prakara*<sup>7</sup>, *Chandan Mandapa* tier records that, God was made to be seated in one of the *mandapams*, which had been constructed in the memory of the individual who had died on that day. The inscription further mentions that, Periya Rampparand Siru Ramappara had offered God who had taken His seat at Vasavappa Nayakkarmandapa at Guhapriayan on the day of the death anniversary of Vasavayya Naykkar. During the day of *Rama Navami*, too, God was taken and seated in a *mandapa*.

### **Rituals in the Grove**

Forming a grove was considered a ritual of the temple. Groves were formed because God would be seated in this grove. It



was considered that if God was seated in this grove, it would be blissful and bring prosperity to the family. An inscription found in second *Prakara* mentions that, a special endowment (*SirappuKattalai*) was created for the arising of God in the grove. The offerings were called by the names *Upayam* and *avasaram*. Apart from the above God was taken for hunting. This ritual was called *Padivettai*.

### **Donation of the Village**

Donating for the ritual was considered the highest ritual. Inscriptions record the sons for showing their gratitude to God Ranganatha who favoured their father with eternal bliss. (*Vaikunthaprapti*) made their donations. The point is that when the donor made some offerings, he would be given a share from the offerings by the temple. It was also considered a ritual to give that share to some ritual persons. To donate during the monthly asterism of *Uttara-Phalguni* is another ritual. Apart from the routine dishes like milk, curd rice, there is also an increase of sweet dishes.

### **The Role of the King in the Rituals**

The rituals were performed due to the insistence of the King. An inscription dated 1530 C.E. records that, at the insistence of the king Krishnadevarayar, an individual by name Nayanar Pillai, made a donation to the temple. This too was done for the merit of his brother Ananthalar Pillai. Here the donations were not routine offerings like dishes. Instead of this, gold and utensils were donated. Daily offerings were common. But apart from that, certain astrological significant dates were considered auspicious, which would be considered ritual days for God. The days when God was taken in a procession were considered an important ritual. An inscription found in the *Mudalvar* shrine,

records a gift of land in Sundarasanapuram as *polituttu* for offerings during the *Tiruppavitrattirunal*<sup>8</sup> and *Sattumuraittirunal*, when the God was taken to the *Mudalvar-tiru mandapam*.

### **Rituals and Gold**

An inscription of the second *prakara*, North wall contains some interesting information. It records that Chennaya Balayadeva *Maharaja*, bearing the epithets such as Uraiyur Puravarddhisvara, Cholakulatilaka, and Kaveri-vallabha, set up the Utsavaimage of Uraiyur-Valli-Nachchiar and provided for worship and offerings by creating the following endowments:

1. Eight hundred and twelve *pon* yielding an interest of 146 *pon* per year at 18%, i.e.,  $11\frac{1}{2}$  *panam* per 100 *panam* per month, for offerings of two dishes daily to Nachchiar and two dishes daily after the *rayar-avasaram* to Perumal.
2. 60 *pon* for raising a garden for the goddess to halt on the occasion of the 8th day of the festival in the month of *Masi* arranged by *Krishnaraya* and,
3. 60 *pon* the interest on which was to be utilized for food offerings to *Perumal* on all occasions of his visit to the garden mentioned above.

### **Ranganayaki Rituals**

Not only were provisions made for Sri Ranganatha, but also for Goddess Ranganayaki. An inscription dated to 1531C.E records that some provision was made for worship and offerings to the Goddess Ranganayaki in the name of Ellamarasar.

### ***Bhupati Udaiyar's Festival***

In this temple, there were the festival days established by Bhupati Udaiyar. It was conducted for several days, and on the fourth

day, the God was seated in a *Tirumandapam*. An inscription found in the second *prakara*<sup>9</sup> Senai Mudaliyar shrine records a gift of gold donated by Timmayanagar son of Obalayya of Kundur a traivarnika-Vaishnava of Suidakula-gotra, and a disciple of Ramanuja-ayyengar of Kundur to God Ranganatha on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of the festival conducted in the name of Bhupati-Udaiyar. This festival seems to be a grand one because there were so many dishes offered to God. There was also a Kattalai in the name of him. The establishment of the Bhupati Udaiyar festival is called Taitirunal, which was conducted during the Tamil month *Tai*-(Christian month January). The God appeared in the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of this festival.

### **Recreation–Vidaiyarri Festivals**

An individual Kandadai Ramanujaiyengar, the disciple of Kandadai Mahadevayyengar had donated two sets of gold pieces 80 and 40 to the temple. It is stipulated that from its interest, the services should be made on the occasion of the sacred bath of God in the Alagiya Manavalantirumandapam and the recreation (Vidaiyarri) of God on the day following the *Pushpayagam* in the Viruppana Udaiyartirunal in the month of Chittirai. This inscription further indicates that Viruppana Udaiyar had instituted the festival (tirunal) in the month of Chittirai.

### **Tai Festival**

During the Tamil month of *Tai*, (January) there was a festival. It was celebrated for five days<sup>10</sup>. Each day there was a donor. At that time, God was present in a garden. Recitation of the Vedas was also considered a festival (*Vedaparayane*). It happened for eight days. It happened for many purposes. It also happened also for the merit of the king. The halting of the deities at the garden was also considered a festival.

### **Ramanavami Festival**

*Rama Navami*<sup>11</sup> festival is an important one to this temple. An inscription found in II *prakara* East Wall dated to 1535 C.E. mentions that an individual by name Om Karaja Chenneya Balayadeva Maharaja, who had a number of birudas such as Uraiyar-Puravardhi Svava, *Cholakula-Tilaka*, had donated for the celebration of God Ranganatha.

### **Chittira Mandapa Festival**

An inscription found in second *prakara* east wall mentions that in the year 1537 C.E. a festival of Kausika took place. At that time, God would halt in the *mandapa* of the pictured hall (*Chittira-mandapa*). During this halt, many dishes were offered to God, like sweets, sandal, and betel nut.

### **Enlargement of the Mandapa for the Festivals**

At times during the festival times, the people would be assembled in larger numbers and so, the *Mandapa* would not be adequate to accommodate the deity. It is mentioned in one inscription, as the four-pillared mandapa was found insufficient to accommodate the deity. On the 7<sup>th</sup> day festival called *Ellaikkarai-tirunal*<sup>12</sup> Sankarasa son of Avasara, Mallarasayyan enlarged the *mandapa* into a sixteen-pillared and provided offerings to the God as a gift of Achutadeva Maharaya.

The festivals take place year after year. During the Tamil month of *chittirai*, the king Achututharayar's festival occurred. At that time, God was seated at *Uraiyur mandapa*. These Vijayanagar inscriptions mention that Madurai Nayaks were also involved in this temple. An inscription<sup>13</sup> found in the III *prakara*, east wall, mentions that Tirumalai Nayakkar, who was the son

of Visvanatha Naicker, had built a *mandapa* for the appearance of Godat Triuvaranga garden.

### **Charity for the Festivals**

The kings accepted the charity concept of making donation for the festival, and granted lands for this purpose. It is mentioned in an inscription that the King Achutaraya Maharayar and Chikkarayar, gifted the villages, for the various offerings to the God Emberumanar Tiruvengadanathar at Ellaikkarai, consecrated by TirumalaiNayakar, son of KachchiViswananthaNayakar. The commanders of the Vijayanagara king also instituted some services to the God, in the name of the king. The example was the donation made by Srirangappanaicker, son of TuluvaVengalaNaicker, who did *Kaval* duty (*padiservai*). The yearly recitation of the Vedas and Tiruvayamoli (*periyatiruvadiyana Veda parayanam*) took place for days. At that time, the individuals donated for the expenses of those recitations. The *Vidaiarri* festival was another one. It is a recreation of the king. During the period of Sadasivaraya, ChikkaTimmarayadeva Maharaja, routed Kuruvanniyar and restored the worship at the temple for providing civic anointment (*Pulugukappu*). For this, he granted many lands from his *Nayakkadanam* (fief).

### **Motivation of the festival**

The festivals motivated many individuals to present costly materials to the temple. An inscription found in the third *prakara*, inner wall, which is written in Sanskrit in Grantham characters, mentions that Nalla-Timma, the brother of Vitthalaof the Aravidu family, made a Chandra-Prabha Vahana in silver while Anobaladikshita of Krishnapuram, probably their guru, presented a golden *surya prabha* to the God for God's processions during the festivals. Another inscription refers to the fact that *Vitthala DevaMaharaja*

presented a *Sarva Manya* gift of land for Masifestival in the temple.

An inscription of the fourth *prakara*<sup>14</sup>, south wall, right of the *Arya Bhattal-vasal*, registered a gift of village exclusive of the lands in it had been already endowed as *manya* by Vitthaladeva-Maharaja, son of Timmaraja of Atreya-gotra Apastamba-sutraand yajus sakha for worship and offerings during the deity's halt at the *mandapa* at Tandagai in the garden .On the second day of the festival another endowment of some lands in another village for daily offerings to God Vittalesvara was consecrated by the donor in the year Paridapi. But in the inscription, the festival name is not mentioned.

### **The merit of donating lamp and ghee:**

Despite the appearance of many rituals in the temple, the ritual of burning the lamp, and donating *ghee* or the cows for facilitating the lighting of the lamp was considered an important one. An inscription records a gift of cows for a lamp to the temple by Suryadevar Paliyappa Manradiyar, a merchant of Erulapura-nagaram. It was considered a festival day when the God was seated at the temple of Sudikkodutha Natchiar.

### **Celebration of Festivals in the Temple:**

The celebration of festivals in this temple took place with the collective effort of many people and with the pooling of resources. In this function many service personnel participated. The service personnel of the temple were: the weaver, the painter, *nambiyar*, *kaikolar*, cook, the paddy measurer, the readers, policeman, and potters. In these festivals, *ghee* was mainly used. Apart from this, the other products used were: paddy, betel leaves, coconut, sandal cloth and turmeric. During the month of *Pankuni*, the

festival days had become common .An inscription found in Kurattalvar shrine, west wall, proper right records an endowment of a sum of 2000 *chakra varahas* towards the purchase of a village and another of 1000 *chakra varahas* in the year *Kalayukti* by Sriranga Raja, son of Pochiraja of Atraya-gotra, Apastamba-gotra, and Yajn-sakhha for the worship of Kurattalvar and conducting the *tirunakashatra* (natal asterism) and the *tiru vadnyana* festivals of *bhattars*.

### ***Adi-Brahma* Festival**

*Adi-Brahma* festival was another festival. On those days God was taken to various places. The donors had a belief that if they made some grants to the festivals, they would get certain benefits from God. This sort of idea prevailed not only among the southern people, but also among the northern people. An inscription at the fourth prakar<sup>15</sup>, south wall, proper right of the *Arya Bhattal-Vasal*, records a grant of 13/8 *Veli* of land at Vikkramangalam as *tiruvidaiyattam* and assessed to yield 18 *pon* per annum, towards provisions for the deities halt at *ammaiyar-pandalin* Tirumudikurai en route to Guhapriyam and offerings to God on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day's festivals of the *Adi-brahma* festival by Konet obalaraja of the lunar race .

### **Festivals and Rituals related to Vijayanagar Kings and the Nayaks:**

#### **Krishnadevarayar's Festival**

The Vijayanagara King Krishnadevarayar was the first to create a festival called *Brahmotsavasam* during the Tamil month of *Masi*. This festival was later changed into "*Teppatirunal*." An inscription found in Raja *Mahendran* north wall mentions that, a chieftain of *Uraiyyur* who had the titles *Uraiyyur Puravara-*

theswaran, Chola Kula Tilakan, Kaveri Vallaban had formed a garden by name Uraiyur Valli Natchiar garden. There he established Uraiyur Natchiyar to be situated. In this garden, Sri Ranganathar came to the function of *Masi Brahmothsavasam*, which had been instituted by the king KrishnadevaMaharayar. The next ruler, Achutadevarayar had performed first coronation in this temple itself. Within the year, there was a rebellion in the southern Pandyanadu. So he immediately came to the southern area. For his military operations, he selected Srirangam as his base<sup>16</sup>. The present *VeniVilas* printing press was his residence. There are fifty-six inscriptions(a huge number) related to the king Achutadevarayar which mention the various activities of the king. During this stay, the wives of Achutadevarayar had done many activities for the temple. Tirumalamba, wife of Achutadevarayar had composed an epic *Varathambika Parinaya Sambvi*. She also had composed another literature *BhaktaSanjeevi*. This queen, in order to enact this drama, gave a land donation to the *Sri Vaishnavar*. In this temple, Achutadevarayar performed the ritual of *Tulabaram*. A Sanskrit poem-inscription mentions the king Achutadevarayar in the following words:

One who ruled the country by the merit of good deed, be friend to all the chieftain surrounded by soldiers, have, a new fame and wealth of Achutarayar would not be equivalent to God Kubera (the God of wealth).

### ***Acutarayar's Judgement***

During his stay at Srirangam, Achutarayar, after his victory over his enemies implanted a pillar of victory in this temple. He also formed a settlement for the benefit of the temple. During his stay, a dispute came to his notice. There was a village by name Sembianallur. It belonged to Mazhanadu of northern boundary. At this village, Srirangam temple has a water source.



However, this village was actually claimed by another temple Tiruvanaika. Thus, a dispute prevailed between the Srirangam temple and the Tiruvanaika temple. However, the king found a clue for the settlement of the dispute. He found that, the water source belonged to the temple of Sriranganatadevar. Therefore, he concluded that if the water source belonged to the temple Sriranganathar then the whole village should belong to the Sriranganathar temple only. But the king did not want to disappoint the Tiruvanaika temple, so he gave another village as an exchange for the temple of Tiruvanaika.

### ***Achutarayar's Intention***

Achutarayar also made another ritual deed in the name of his son Venkatagirirayar, son of Varathachiyamman, wife of the king. On this day, sixty-seven varieties of sweets were made for the God Peria Perumal and the Goddess Periya Pirattiyar. Then those sweets were placed in the watershed (*Tannirpandal*), and in the other choultries of the streets, and were distributed to all the people without various distinction. This kind of extraordinary donation was made by the temple because the king Achutarayar had once expanded the irrigation source of Peruvalavan Vaykkal. Hence, by this measure, the temple lands got the water, and the dry lands yielded more produce. So in order to show its gratitude, the temple performed this ritual.

### ***Vaikasi Brahmotsavam:***

The king Ramaraja had instituted a *Brahmotsavam* during the month of Tamil *Vaikasi*. A detailed description of this festival is mentioned in one inscription. This inscription describes that at the opening day of the festival, a fire ceremony took place at *Chandanamandapam*. On the second day, the Perumal would sit in *Cherantha Velan Tirumandapam*. On the third day, God

would stay at western portion of Periatiru mandapam. On the fourth day God will sit at the eastern portion of Periatiru mandapam, and on the fifth day, at Sudikodutha Natchiyar shrine, and on the sixth day, at Muthalalwarkal temple *mandapam* and on the eighth day at the 16 pillars *mandapam*, of the bank . On the 9<sup>th</sup> day, the God would be taken in the chariot, and on the 10<sup>th</sup> day, there would be the great bath (*Tirthavari*). During this day, many personnel attended the ritual: the cook, the reader, measurer of the paddy, *Kaikolamuthali*, (weaver) dancer, watchman, potter, carpenter, iron smith, goldsmith, and sculptor. Apart from this, during the Tamil month *Ani*, there took place *Unjal Tirunal*, for Sri Ranganatchiar. When Sriranga DevaMaharaja II became as the ruler of Vijayanagar dynasty, Madurai was ruled by Krishnappa nayaka (1564-1572 C.E). At that time, the car festival (*Tiruter Utssavam*) took place in the name of Tirumalai Raja, son of Aliya Ramaraja.

### ***Panguni Brahmotsavam***

At *Brahmotsavam* held during the Tamil month *Panguni*, the God was seated at the following places.

1. 2<sup>nd</sup> day – *Mandapam Narasimhan Toppu*.
2. 3<sup>rd</sup> day – *Sudi Kodutha Natchiar* temple.
3. 4<sup>th</sup> day – *Vengalatchiamman mandapam*.
4. 5<sup>th</sup> day – *Virappa Naicker* garden.
5. 6<sup>th</sup> day – *Sevvappa Naicker* garden *mandapam*.
6. 7<sup>th</sup> day – *Chandana Mandapam*.
7. 8<sup>th</sup> day – *Mandapam* at the boundary bank-*Achutappa Naicker's mandapam*.
8. 9<sup>th</sup> day – Car.
9. 10<sup>th</sup> day – Rounding the streets.

An inscription<sup>17</sup> found in the *Raka Mahaderan* North wall, issued in the period of *Sri Venkatapathi*, mentions that, Visvanatha

Naicker (1529-64.C.E) the son of Krishna Naickar I (1564-1572.C.E.) his son Virappa Naickar (1572-1575.C.E.) and his son Krishnappan II (1595-1601C.E.) had given lands for the expenses of garland to God.

### Summary

The foregoing information clearly indicates that the rituals and the festivals of the God Ranganathar at *Srirangam* were performed very elaborately and lavishly. The king, the chieftains, the big persons of the villages vied with each other for granting to the rituals of the temple. Of all the rituals, the lighting of the lamp was considered a deed of merit. This habit continued unto the last period of the Vijayanagar time. Preparing and offering dishes were considered rituals of importance. Hence, the kings themselves opted for this. The purpose of these rituals is to heighten the spiritual power of God, and thereby get the merit of God's grace.

However, Srirangam temple is noted for the festivals. As per the above information, it is found that every month there festivals took place. These festivals continued for several days. Among the festivals, *Brahmotsavam* is important, because the kings instituted it. During these festivals, God would take seats in various *mandapas*, which caused for the construction of mandapa architecture in Vijayanagar times. On these occasions, many would be competing with each other. God's hunting (*Padivettai*) and his recreations (*Vidaiyarri*) are considered important. Some of the other festivals are *Tiruppavitrattirunal*, *Taitirunal*, *Chittirai tirunal*, *Vedaparayana*, *Rama Navami*, *Ellaikari-Tirukmal*, *Tiruvaymli*, *pulugu Kappu*, *AdiBrahma* festival and *Tirthavari*, *Tiruteer Utsavam*. The existence of the above rituals and the festivals indicate that during the Vijayanagar period, a different type of society and economy was emergent (A feudal setup) than that of the Pandya times (patriarchy slavery) as narrated by Noboru Karashima.

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## **THE PORTUGUESE-VIJAYANAGARA WAR OF 1558: A STUDY IN MILITARY HISTORY**

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### **Abstract**

*The Portuguese-Vijayanagara war of 1558 was the first serious confrontation between the erstwhile allies, the Vijayanagara Empire and the Portuguese Estado d'India resulting in the first major defeat of the Portuguese since their expansion in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. The process of how the Portuguese suffered the setback in spite of possessing superior technology merits a study of the tactics and military equipment used by the two sides and the strategies they employed. This research paper is an attempt to examine the military history of the war and explain its relevance to the larger historiography of India. It highlights the campaign of the Vijayanagara ruler Rama Raya who decided to open a war on two fronts that led to the dispersion of Portuguese resources, and so they were unable to resist him.*

### **Introduction**

The military history of India has focused largely on the rise of British power in India through its victories over the French and later the Indian rulers, neglecting other colonial powers such as the Portuguese, the Dutch and even the French. This situation has gradually begun to change.

The late 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the advent of the study of the Portuguese in India with works such as Frederick Charles Danvers' *The Portuguese in India: Being a History of the Rise and Decline of their Eastern Empire* and Richard Stephen Whiteway's *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India: 1497-1550*. These studies, which concentrated almost entirely on European affairs using Portuguese sources such as chronicles, memoirs and travelogues, opened the way for further research. After them came Robert Sewell's *A Forgotten Empire, Vijayanagar: A contribution to the History of India*, which is the first study by a European entirely devoted to an Indian kingdom and it included travel accounts of the Portuguese in India. In the following decades, scholars such as Henry Heras and C.R. Boxer also studied the Portuguese. In particular, Heras examined Portuguese interactions with Vijayanagara in his work *The Aravidu Dynasty of Vijayanagar*. Among Indian scholars, B. Seetharamah Shastry in *Goa-Kanara Portuguese Relations* and K.N. Chitnis in *The Keladi Polity* have shed new light on the relations between the Portuguese and Indian rulers. Another recent study of the military history of India is by Maj. Gen. Gurcharan Singh Sandhu in his *Military History of Medieval India* in which he examines the wars and battles of the medieval kingdoms including Vijayanagara in great detail with the related weapons and tactics.

The present research article is about the Portuguese-Vijayanagara war of 1558, a little-studied episode in the history of Portuguese interactions with India and the wider world of the Indian Ocean. It aims to study and match both foreign and indigenous sources in order to provide a complete picture of the period and events under study and also to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the individual works and to advance a plausible hypothesis of the events that occurred. The contemporary Indian sources like *Ramarajiyamu* and *Shivatattvaratnakara* barely mention

the war. Even Portuguese chroniclers such as Gaspar da Correia, Diogo da Couto and Faria Y Sousa do not give details of the happenings.

In order to get a better understanding of the background the article traces the rise of the Portuguese in India with the voyage of Vasco da Gama in 1498; and the Portuguese settlements in Goa and Santhome are described along with their interactions with Vijayanagara and other Indian kings leading up to the events of 1558. A detailed examination of the military technology available to the two sides is necessary to draw plausible conclusions about the course of the war due to the lack of consensus in the sources. The aftermath of the war also needs to be examined for its impact on Portuguese-Vijayanagara relations and its implications on the history of South India.

### **Early Relations between Vijayanagar and Portugal**

Vasco da Gama's arrival at Kappad, off the coast of Kerala, on May 17, 1498, is a watershed event in world history leading to the opening up of India and the rest of Asia to European influence and ultimately political domination. The motives of the Portuguese in undertaking this long voyage were three-fold. Firstly, they wanted to control the lucrative Arab-dominated spice trade between Asia and Europe, which also greatly benefited their rivals, the Venetians and the Genoese. The second driving factor was to undermine the Muslims, who were the sworn enemies of the Portuguese Catholic, by disrupting their trade and commerce. The Iberian Peninsula was emerging from the *Reconquista* of the Christians against the Moors in the 1400s and the crusading zeal against the Muslims was fresh in Portuguese minds. The Deccan Sultans and the Sultan of Gujarat, being allies of the Mamluks of Egypt and the Ottoman Sultan, were hostile to the Portuguese. The third factor was evangelical; the

Portuguese were eager to spread Christianity among the local populations of Asia and Africa. According to Christian legend, the people of India had already been Christianized by St. Thomas, the Apostle and the Portuguese viewed them as potential allies against the Muslims. When Vasco Da Gama landed and set out to explore Calicut, he was accosted by two Arab merchants who asked him in Castilian, “What the devil brings you here? In search of what have you come from such a long distance?” Vasco Da Gama replied, “We come in search of Christians and spices<sup>1</sup>.” Following his success, Portuguese Captains like Pedro Alvares Cabral came in his wake. At that time, the most powerful kingdom in South India was the Vijayanagara Empire, which is referred to as the “kingdom of Narsinga” in Portuguese records. This is, no doubt, a reference to the Saluva ruler Narasimha I, who was considered the most powerful monarch in the Deccan at the time. The kingdom is first mentioned by the pilot of the ship of Cabral in his voyage to India in 1500 based on the descriptions by merchants in Kerala. His account says that in the mountains of the country (the hills on which Vijayanagara was situated), there was a powerful monarch called the King of Narsinga whose subjects were not Christians<sup>2</sup>.

The Portuguese set up a naval hegemony in the Indian Ocean, which involved the setting up of fortified trading ports at select locations like Sofala and Malacca that could be supplied by ships, and the maintaining of garrisons on strategic islands such as Hormuz and Socotra. This was similar to earlier Venetian and Genoese enterprises in the Mediterranean<sup>3</sup>. Failing to establish such a fort in Calicut, the Portuguese set up outposts in Cochin and Cannanore, which were vulnerable to attacks and sieges. Hence, they were constantly on the lookout for a safe haven on the Indian coastline. At the same time, King Emmanuel of Portugal decided to consolidate his grip on the recently acquired conquests in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. In 1499, he declared that he was, “Lord of Guinea and the Conquests, Navigations



and Commerce of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia, and India<sup>4</sup>.” In 1505, Dom Francisco d’Almeida was appointed as the first Viceroy of the *Estado da India* (State of India) which initially consisted of Portuguese possessions in India and the African coast such as Kilwa and Sofala in Mozambique and later upto Malacca in the Indian Ocean. Along with the hostile Muslims, the Portuguese had to deal with pirates and sundry other marauders on sea and land. One of them was a Kanara chieftain based in the port of Honavar named Thimayya (called *Timoja* by the Portuguese), a privateer in the service of the Vijayanagara Kings who employed him to harass the shipping of the Deccan Sultans along the Kanara and Konkan coasts, and through him the first contact between the Portuguese and Vijayanagar was established which was by no means peaceful.

In 1502, Estevao da Gama, the brother of Vasco, sailed into Honavar, which was under the of Gersoppa who was subject to Vijayanagara, in pursuit of Thimayya and destroyed the ships in the harbour and set ablaze a part of the city<sup>5</sup>. At this time, Emperor Vira Narasimha of Vijayanagara was involved in conflicts with his refractory feudatories on the one hand and the Adil Shahi Sultan of Bijapur and the Qutb Shahi Sultan of Golconda on the other and so he was unable to aid his vassal, the ruler of Gersoppa. Also, he may have heard of the Portuguese routing the ships and armies of the Muslim rulers of Bijapur and Gujarat. So, he must have decided not to antagonize the Europeans anticipating them as allies against common enemies. Therefore, in October 1505, he sent Thimayya along with the Gersoppa chief Mallarayya (called *Merlao* by the Portuguese) to open negotiations with the Viceroy Almeida resulting in a treaty which enabled the Portuguese to erect a fortress at Anjediv and set up a factory in Mirjan, where they made a profit of 1000 *pardaos* (*pratapa varaha*, a gold coin used in the Vijayanagara empire) annually.

Later at the end of October, Vira Narasimha sent another envoy to Almeida at Cannanore. The chronicler Castanheda gives a complete description of the proceedings. The diplomatic retinue was received on board the personal ship of the Viceroy. This was probably done so that the Portuguese could retain the advantage in case of a surprise attack. The envoy congratulated the Portuguese on their recent victories and then proposed a full alliance between his sovereign and the King of Portugal, offering to help the Portuguese in building ships and also that they could build fortresses in any of the ports they desired, excepting Bhatkal. Furthermore, that the locals would furnish all the materials needed for construction. These terms were reiterated in a letter personally addressed to King Emmanuel. Finally, in order to seal the pact, Vira Narasimha offered the hand of his sister in marriage to the crown prince of Portugal<sup>6</sup>. The Viceroy was no doubt, very pleased by these offers but replied that he would await instructions from his King. Perhaps, he was more interested in the readily available spice trade in Kerala where already forts had been built.

By 1508, the situation had changed dramatically as the Portuguese were now at war with the Sultan of Gujarat and thus felt the need of a fortress on the Kanara coast. So Almeida sent Fr. Salvador Luiz, a Franciscan priest, as his ambassador to Vijayanagara in the company of Pero Fernandes Tinoco. The Portuguese often sent priests to negotiate with the local rulers not only due to their diplomatic skills but also to attempt to convert the ruler to Christianity. In his diplomatic mission, the Viceroy proposed to conclude an alliance as proposed in 1505 in exchange for the permission to build a fortress at Bhatkal, which had a fine natural harbour<sup>7</sup>. But Narasimha had by now consolidated his position by repulsing Adil Shah's attack and crushed rebellions within the empire and so was much more confident of his position. He agreed to peace and friendship with the Portuguese but was

unwilling to relinquish of Bhatkal which was the chief port of the empire, especially for the supply of horses which were vital for the war effort. Almeida was prevented from further negotiations due to the war with the Sultan of Gujarat. In any case, he was succeeded as Viceroy by Afonso d'Albuquerque in 1509 and died later the same year during the journey back to Lisbon.

Like his predecessor, Albuquerque initially concentrated on the Malabar Coast. At the end of 1509, he suffered a serious reversal against Calicut, losing over 60 men in the process. Eager for revenge, in February 1510, he sent another embassy under Fr. Salvador to the new Vijayanagara ruler Krishna Deva Raya, who had ascended the throne. The proposal was that the Vijayanagar armies would march against Calicut from the interior while the Portuguese would attack by the sea. After defeating Calicut, a similar expedition would be undertaken against the Deccan Sultans, not only ensuring their defeat but also destroying their trade. In return, the Portuguese would secure the entire horse trade for Vijayanagara, if the Emperor would give them permission to establish a factory at a favourable location between Bhatkal and Mangalore and fortify it<sup>8</sup>. Once again the reply given was non-committal, as the Emperor had no intention of relinquishing Bhatkal. During his stay, Fr. Salvador tried to impress on the monarch to convert to Christianity. This led to some coolness between them. However, Fr. Salvador was murdered in 1511 in Vijayanagara, allegedly by an agent of the Bijapur Sultan, who wanted to derail the negotiations. The capture of Goa in 1510 by Albuquerque convinced Krishna Deva Raya that it would be in his interests to establish cordial relations with them. Accordingly, he despatched an embassy to Goa in 1511 proposing an alliance as well as favourable terms in the horse trade. In response, an embassy under Gaspar Chanoca was sent to the royal court in 1512. He suggested that the Portuguese be allowed to build a fort in Bhatkal and that the Emperor buy

all the horses they had to offer at Goa<sup>9</sup>. Krishna Deva Raya did not reply immediately and it was only in November 1514 that a large diplomatic entourage arrived at Goa.

Costa says that the envoy was called *Retelim Cherim* (probably Radhalinga Chetty, the chieftain of Basrur) and was received by Pero Mascarenhas, the Captain of Goa, just outside the gates of the city<sup>10</sup>. From here, he was escorted to the Viceroy, who now ruled from the palace of the Adil Shah. All the Portuguese notables came out to greet him. After giving him the gifts, the envoy delivered to Albuquerque a letter from the Emperor inscribed in gold which proposed that the two powers join hands against Adil Shah and that Vijayanagara would purchase all the horses that the Portuguese had for sale. Albuquerque sent Joao Teixeira and Antonio da Sousa with the ambassador back to Krishna Deva Raya, stating that the Portuguese would support him in a war with Bijapur only if their soldiers were paid by the Emperor. The Viceroy was more flexible on the subject of the horse trade and said they would be sold at 30,000 *cruzados* (the Portuguese currency) annually provided they were collected at Goa than any other port<sup>11</sup>. The issue of Bhatkal did not come up as the Portuguese had now consolidated their position in Goa and it would never again become a contentious issue<sup>12</sup>. The Portuguese were given a free hand not only in their internal affairs at Goa but also in dealing with the Indian rulers, some of whom were vassals of Vijayanagara.

The greatest impact of the Portuguese in the affairs of Vijayanagara occurred in May 1521 during the Battle of Raichur between Krishna Deva Raya and Ibrahim Adil Shah. The siege of the fort of Raichur by the Vijayanagara army had become a stalemate. At this juncture, a band of Portuguese mercenaries under Christovao da Figueredo arrived on the scene and used their muskets to turn the tide in favour of Krishna Deva Raya<sup>13</sup>.

In gratitude, the Emperor seems to have bestowed the island of Salsette, free of all remuneration, to the Portuguese in 1522<sup>14</sup>. Generally, however, the Portuguese and the Vijayanagara forces did not take part in each other's battles with the Sultans. This was mainly because Portuguese strength lay in their naval forces with their technology while Vijayanagara's power rested on its army, which relied on overwhelming numbers. As a result, they had different objectives and rarely coordinated with each other. This set the pattern of relations between them until the clash of 1558. Most of the conflicts of the Portuguese with the coastal rulers were over tribute or trading concessions or the pursuit of fugitives. There was particularly a serious clash with Bhatkal in 1542 in which several Portuguese were killed<sup>15</sup>. However, these remained localised and did not impact the overall relations with the paramount power. Neither side wished to damage the mutually beneficial political and commercial relations with each other.

### **The Portuguese Settlement at Goa**

On February 17, 1510, the Portuguese Viceroy Afonso d'Albuquerque, who was seeking to establish a firm Portuguese foothold in India and persuaded by Thimayya of a quick and easy victory, attacked the mainland of Goa and took it in less than a day and led a triumphal procession into the fort up to the palace of Adil Shah, where he established his headquarters and set about organizing the administration and deployed troops among the populace with instructions not to loot or pillage<sup>16</sup>. Yusuf Adil Shah sent an army to recapture Goa which succeeded in occupying the mainland on May 23 with the support of the local Muslims. Albuquerque and his men fled to their ships and remained at anchor off the coast for several months. Ultimately, they had to retreat to Cannanore due to paucity of supplies. In the meantime, Yusuf Adil Shah died after a battle with the

Vijayanagara ruler Krishna Deva Raya and a succession struggle was going on in his kingdom. Upon receiving reinforcements from Lisbon along with soldiers at Cannanore and Cochin, Albuquerque started the assault on Goa on November 24 and captured the city. After leading his second triumphal march through the city in the space of a year, Albuquerque ordered that the Muslims of Goa, whom he blamed for his earlier defeat, be executed. His troops proceeded to loot and burn Muslim establishments and kill them, causing great destruction throughout the city<sup>17</sup>. The Viceroy carefully consolidated his position, built secure defences for the fort, and proclaimed the advent of the Portuguese empire with Goa as its headquarters.

Albuquerque died in 1515 but the consolidation of Portuguese rule continued and many buildings such as churches and residential quarters came up; the palace of Adil Shah was given a European makeover with a chapel and furnishings and designated as the Viceregal building. The moat was filled up and the surrounding land reclaimed to support the burgeoning population. By 1530, the King of Portugal made Goa, the official capital of the *Estado da India* (State of India) which included regions in Ceylon, Africa and the Malay peninsula. As a mark of its growing stature, it was made an archbishopric in 1557<sup>18</sup>. The city was surrounded by an extensive wall which expanded along with the settlement. There were three forts within the city – Sao Thiago at Benasterim in the south, Sao Joao Baptista at Mangueiral in the east and the fort of Danguim in the north-eastern corner of the wall. The fourth corner of the wall at Panelim was defended by a battery of cannon<sup>19</sup>. The three main gates of the city were those of the forts themselves. They were called *passos* because they led into Muslim territory and were heavily guarded by sentries who kept a lookout for invaders. The gate at Benasterim to the south was the most used by traffic as trade with Vijayanagara was conducted there on which the settlers depended for food

and other supplies<sup>20</sup>. People could enter or leave through the gates on the payment of the stipulated toll fees.

The city was divided into two sections – *Velha Goa* or Old Goa and *Nueva Goa* or New Goa. The former was the native quarter, whose population consisted mainly of Hindus and Muslims and free indigenous Christians along with other faiths. The people of each faith were governed by their own set of customs and laws. For the Hindus, there was an *adhikari* to administer them according to the Hindu holy books while for the Muslims, there was a *kazi* who settled disputes according to Muslim law. New Goa, which came into being in and around Panjim, was the place of residence for the Portuguese and their dependants. According to the French navigator Pyrard writing in 1611, this section had a perimeter of around 4-1/2 miles and was studded with Portuguese villas and verdant gardens, especially on the river banks<sup>21</sup>. There were an estimated 3500 houses (probably mansions) in the city of which 800 belonged to the Portuguese. This is excluding the number of churches and other houses of worship in the territory. There was also an asylum, which served not only for the disabled but also for the destitute women who had been cast out of home. In 1584, a University called *Collegio da Sao Tome* or College of St. Thomas was set up<sup>22</sup>. Unlike most other Portuguese enclaves in India, Goa was considered sovereign Portuguese territory and was thus fortified and it made its own laws.

### **Prelude to the War**

After the death of the Emperor Achyuta Deva Raya in 1542, the Vijayanagara Empire was in a state of turmoil due to rival claimants to the throne. Meanwhile, Martin Afonso da Sousa, Viceroy from 1542 to 1545, decided to extend Portuguese domination along the coasts. On the pretext that the queen of Bhatkal had arrears in tribute to the Portuguese and that pirates

preying on their shipping took shelter there, he decided to attack that port city. After a great deal of bloodshed, the queen agreed to the Portuguese terms. The amount to be paid as tribute was doubled and the Portuguese were to have control of the coastal waters off the city. Their only obligation was that they would not attack as long as the tribute was regularly paid<sup>23</sup>. This was no doubt a grave provocation for the empire as Bhatkal was the chief port of Vijayanagara, but the troubles within prevented the rulers from aiding their vassals.

In 1544, hearing of the rich temple at Tirupati on the eastern edge of the empire which contained vast amounts of wealth generated by the offerings of devotees as well as by commerce from the lands attached to it, Da Sousa despatched a fleet of 45 ships containing hundreds of men to loot the riches there. However, by now Rama Raya, Krishna Deva Raya's son-in-law, had vanquished all rival chiefs and strengthened his own position. He installed Sadashiva Raya, Achyuta Deva Raya's nephew, on the throne and proclaimed himself regent. From this time onwards, until his death in 1565, Rama Raya would be the most powerful person in the empire. He felt the need to keep a watch on the Portuguese due to their marauding activities. On receiving intelligence that the Portuguese intended to attack Tirupati, one of the holiest Hindu shrines, he immediately sent troops for its defence. When the Portuguese learnt that a whole garrison was stationed near the temple, ready to engage in battle, they were fearful of fighting such a formidable array and so sailed away to Kerala and sacked several temples along the Malabar coast<sup>24</sup>.

In Bijapur, the Sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah fell out with his brother Abdullah who fled to Goa. Ibrahim sent an emissary to da Sousa offering him territory and many presents if Abdullah was handed over, or else to be kept as far away from Bijapur as possible.



The Viceroy pretended to agree but only sent Abdullah to Cannanore and brought him back to Goa. The next Viceroy Joao da Castro again refused to hand over the prince. The Sultan sent his armies to attack the Portuguese at Salsette and Bardez, but they were repulsed<sup>25</sup>. Rama Raya must not have been pleased on hearing of these events because his ostensible allies were dealing on independent terms with his enemy, the Sultan. He tried to reconcile with the Portuguese.

On February 26, 1546, a new treaty was signed between the two powers agreeing on a non-aggression pact, swearing eternal friendship and confirming all territories held by each other. Rama Raya sent one of his chief generals to Goa accompanied by the usual retinue of nobles and retainers the next year to confirm the pact. The treaty drawn up stipulated that, firstly, they would aid each other during times of war, except against the Nizam Shah of Ahmadnagar who was on friendly terms with Rama Raya at that time. Secondly, the Portuguese would be obliged to sell all the horses in their custody to the Vijayanagara ruler who was similarly obliged to buy only from them with regular payment. Thirdly, all the Vijayanagara merchants would bring their goods to the ports at Honavar and Basrur. Here they would be sold only to Portuguese factors exchanging copper, coral, mercury, vermilion, and silks from China for them. Another condition was that the merchants could not sell iron (used to make weapons) or saltpetre (used in the preparation of gunpowder) to Adil Shah or his allies. These materials would be bought by the Portuguese themselves at fixed prices. Fourthly, the Emperor would not allow any Muslim ships to dock in his ports and all those which did so would be handed over to the Portuguese Governor at the nearest location. They also agreed to jointly attack Adil Shah, and all territories captured would be retained by Rama Raya – except those between Banda and the Cintacora river, which would be given to the Portuguese. The treaty was

signed and sealed on September 19, 1547. However, Da Castro was reluctant to attack Adil Shah because he hoped to extract concessions from that beleaguered monarch<sup>26</sup>.

Rama Raya was undoubtedly vexed that the Portuguese had not kept their side of the agreement. He sent another delegation in 1549 to confer with Castro's successor, Garcia da Sa, but again received no unequivocal assurances<sup>27</sup>. In 1555, the Bijapur Prince Abdullah, who resided at Ponda north of Goa, asked the Viceroy Pedro da Mascarenhas to support him in seizing the Bijapur throne. But Mascarenhas died before any action could be taken. The prince then took up his plan with the succeeding Viceroy, Francisco Barreto, who at once proclaimed him Sultan of Bijapur and sent troops to Ponda to support him. Ibrahim Adil Shah in turn formed an alliance with Vijayanagara and the allied troops attacked Ponda starting a war which continued through the winter of 1556 into 1557. The Sultan's forces were successful in capturing Abdullah but could not defeat the small Portuguese detachments at Salsette and Bardez and had to retreat to Ponda. Ibrahim's death later that year put an end to further hostilities. His successor Ali Adil Shah renewed the alliance with Rama Raya<sup>28</sup>. Though the Portuguese had not territorially gained from the conflict in 1557, their prestige had been considerably enhanced through the unequal combat and hence they were in a much stronger position to deal with the Indian rulers.

Meanwhile, the Portuguese were actively pursuing their missionary activities. In Goa, a number of Hindu temples were demolished and their idols smashed; churches were erected in their place by Christian priests. In 1542, the Franciscans built two churches in place of temples in Nagapattinam and around three thousand people in the vicinity were converted to Christianity. Elsewhere, the Hindu temples and other places of worship were ransacked or made to pay tribute. Often the Christian orders indulged in

forcible conversion of the people in the neighbouring areas or enslaved them. In 1555, the Portuguese Captain Alvaro da Silveira sacked Mangalore and destroyed and looted the temple<sup>29</sup>. Thus, many times the local people would flee from Portuguese-held territory leaving all their possessions behind<sup>30</sup>. The Portuguese would also regularly extract exorbitant payments from the Indian rulers. In trade and commerce, the merchants could deal only in Portuguese ports and on terms set by them. The Hindu chiefs regularly complained to the Vijayanagara ruler about the highhandedness of the Portuguese. But Rama Raya was reluctant to confront them as he was dependent on them for the critical supply of horses and weapons. But by 1557, when the royal troops allied with Adil Shah had been defeated at Salsette, Rama Raya felt that he had to cut the Portuguese down to size or risk losing his leverage over them. In early 1558, under the pretext that the Muslim merchants were taking shelter there, Mangalore was attacked by the Captain Luiz Mello da Silva, with a large number of people being either killed or enslaved<sup>31</sup>. Rama Raya could scarcely ignore such a flagrant act of hostility in his own backyard. Thus, the stage was set for the confrontation of 1558 between Vijayanagara and the Portuguese.

### **The War of 1558 and its Aftermath**

#### **Course of the War**

The historical sources on the war diverge considerably. The Indian sources such as *Ramarajiyamu* and *Ramarajana Bakhair* make no more than a fleeting mention of the war, only saying that Rama Raya chastised the Portuguese and do not go into details. This is understandable as they are mainly meant to be eulogies. However, two Indian epic poems written several decades apart, i.e. the *Shivatattvaratnakara* of Keladi Basavaraja written in the 1670s and the *Keladi Nripa Vijayam* written by Linganna Kavi in the early 1700s, say that an attack was made on Goa

in which the Keladi Nayaka played a key role. Diogo da Couto gives a more detailed account of Rama Raya's campaign against Santhome. However, the integrity of his writing is suspect. Of the ten books written by Couto, the sixth volume concerning the period under scrutiny was destroyed before publication and a revised edition was prepared by his brother-in-law. Similarly, the manuscripts for the eighth and ninth books were stolen before publication and now exist as an abstract. The tenth volume was not published till 1788, more than a century and a half after the death of Couto<sup>32</sup>. Writing in the 1650s, a priest named Fr. Fernao da Queyroz gives another version of the events at Santhome<sup>33</sup>. His book, *Conquest of Ceylon*, differs from Couto's account in several aspects but is useful in the checking of the veracity of the earlier work. Using these indigenous and foreign sources together the following hypothesis of the war emerges.

In the early summer of 1558, Rama Raya devised a strategy for his campaign. He divided his army into two sections—one under his personal command and the other under the command of his cousin Rama Raya Vitthala. This prince was an accomplished warrior and had shown his mettle in the wars against Travancore in 1544 and against the Pandyas in 1549<sup>34</sup>. He was to take his forces, probably around 100,000 troops with 10,000 cavalry and 100 elephants along with a few artillery pieces, and advance towards Goa in the company of the Keladi prince Dodda Sankanna Nayaka who was also a noted fighter, having crushed the rebellion of the Jambur chief Virupanna. Sankanna Nayaka probably had 20,000 troops and 1000 horses and 50 elephants. This whole division was supposed to lay siege to Goa from the south along the direct route where it was most vulnerable. During the first half of the year, the Portuguese fleets were in transit across the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Also the Viceroy Francisco Barreto, who ruled from 1555 to 1558, would not expect an attack from his purported ally Vijayanagara. But this assault was

actually a diversion. Rama Raya would command the main contingent of the army comprising approximately 500,000 troops in a campaign against Santhome of Mylapore. This seems to have been a calculated move. Firstly, Santhome was a very revered place in Portuguese sentiment and attacking it would send a powerful message; secondly, with the Portuguese forces in Goa tied down by Vitthala Nayaka, no reinforcements would be available to Mylapore, which was not fortified.

The Portuguese sources such as Da Couto and Faria Y Sousa mention only the campaign against Santhome. According to them, a Portuguese renegade from Santhome instigated Rama Raya to attack the place and seize its wealth, supposedly over 2,000,000 gold *pagodas* (the *pagoda* was a generic term used by the Europeans for gold coins in South India). Importantly, the name of this traitor is not mentioned<sup>35</sup>. The regent marched on Santhome with half a million troops and artillery. When the settlers there got wind of his approach, there was great consternation and a council was held by the city notables to decide the course of action. A merchant named Pero da Taide Inferno advocated resistance against the attackers. Others felt that resistance was futile due to the lack of fortification and therefore advised negotiation. Pero da Taide did not approve of this and left the city on a ship bound for Bengal. Four of the leading citizens of Santhome went to Rama Raya bearing a present worth 4000 *cruzados*. Again, the nature of the present is not given. Meanwhile, the city was decorated with flowers and rich cloth to receive the regent<sup>36</sup>. Instead Rama Raya set up his camp outside the city and then sent several captains to bring the residents of the place, irrespective of age and status, to the camp and detain them there, though not put them to any discomfort. Then all movable items in the city were brought before him but their cumulative value amounted to only 100,000 *pardaos*. Rama Raya was furious at having been deceived by the renegade and

ordered him trampled to death by an elephant. He agreed to release the inhabitants of the city provided a ransom of 100,000 *pagodas* be paid, with 50,000 on hand and the rest in six months. After taking his instalment, he took five of the leading citizens as hostages against the payment of the balance. He also ordered the return of the possessions seized to their respective owners. An incident which occurred is worthy of note i.e., a silver spoon was found missing from one of the houses in the city. The Vijayanagara captains made enquiries and ensured the return of the spoon to its owner. Rama Raya returned to his capital and released the five hostages, being pleased at their conduct<sup>37</sup>.

The above account is suspect for a number of reasons. The authors are vague about many details such as the date of the event, except for the year. Also, it is improbable that the Portuguese surrendered meekly without a fight as in all their previous hostile encounters, against the Hindus at Cannanore and Calicut and the Muslims at Chaul and Diu, they had put up a stout defence. Thirdly, writing a century later, Fr. Queyroz says that Rama Raya attacked Santhome and took the church relics and a portrait of the Madonna, but after reaching Chandragiri, the queen had a dream that great misfortune would take place if the relics were not returned. The regent hastened to comply. As Chandragiri became the Vijayanagara capital only in the 1600s, this is anachronistic. But the incident of the spoon is mentioned here corroborating Couto's account<sup>38</sup>. Considering that Rama Raya observed discipline in so small a matter as the spoon, assuming that this is true, it seems unlikely that his motive was to loot the place. It was more likely as an exercise in chastisement of the Portuguese due to their transgressions. It is also probable that the army surrounded Santhome but did not loot it except for the relics and the portrait in retaliation for the desecration of Hindu temples. Keeping in mind Queyroz's account, the Raya probably took five leading citizens hostage for ransom and

released them after payment. Resistance was light due to the undefended nature of the settlement and no serious confrontation occurred. Another reason for the Portuguese capitulation was that no reinforcements could be sent from the headquarters at Goa due to the siege by Vitthala and Sankanna. Though there is no mention of them in Portuguese accounts, the *Shivatattvaratnakara* and *Keladi Nripa Vijayam* state that the Vijayanagara armies captured Panjim and took the Viceroy captive to the Raya<sup>39</sup>. This is probably an exaggeration. The motive of defeating the enemies and capturing their leaders to present them to the sovereign is repeated in many epic poems in South India. If the capture of the Viceroy at Panjim happened as described, it is strange that no mention is made in Portuguese chronicles. But its mention in two Indian poems written decades apart and at considerable variance to each other suggests that there is a kernel of truth in this description. Therefore, it is most likely that the attack on Goa was a feint to draw the attention of the Portuguese while the main force would concentrate on Santhome.

This belief is strengthened by the affairs in the *Estado d'India*. The Viceroy Barreto had in the previous year repulsed an invasion by Adil Shah. Normally, laurels should have been coming in his way but in September 1558, he was succeeded as Viceroy by Dom Constantino da Braganca<sup>40</sup>. He returned to Lisbon in 1559 where King Sebastian appointed him Admiral of the Galleys which was a considerable demotion for a man once in charge of the Portuguese empire in India<sup>41</sup>. In all probability, his recall and demotion was due to his inability to resist the attack of the Vijayanagara forces. Evidently, the defeat and submission at Santhome along with the siege of Goa was a major loss of face for the Portuguese, which explains their reticence in documenting the events. The distortion of history for propaganda purposes was not new to the age. For instance, Couto says

that the chronicler Fernao Lopes da Castanheda originally wrote ten books on the Portuguese in India up to 1550 but two of them were destroyed on the orders of the Portuguese King due to their containing unflattering facts. Likewise, Couto's own works had to be retouched to please several influential people.

### **Aftermath**

The Portuguese were sufficiently chastised by Rama Raya's expedition and did not indulge in any hostile act for the rest of his reign. There are no more recorded attacks by the Portuguese against any of the vassals of Vijayanagara until the fall of the empire. Trade and commerce continued and the settlements grew in size and prosperity. Proselytising activities were kept in abeyance. The Portuguese started fortifying their settlements, which served them well after the disintegration of the Vijayanagara empire. In the meantime, the empire suffered a catastrophic defeat in the hands of the Deccan Sultans at the battle of Rakkasa-Tangadi in 1565. Rama Raya was killed and the capital sacked and destroyed. Though the empire survived in an attenuated form with its capital first at Penukonda and then Chandragiri, it never regained its former glory, which had serious implications for the Portuguese. Firstly, they lost a major trading partner. Secondly, they no longer had the autonomy or protection they enjoyed during the previous half a century. However, they had no immediate losses, could expand along the coast without checks, and again began their depredations.

However, in 1580, Portugal was conquered by Spain, who retained control over it till 1660. The subordination of the Portuguese empire to Spanish interests marked the decline of the *Estado da India* as fewer resources were allocated to the overseas stations. Also, by the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Dutch and English merchant fleets ventured into Asia, breaking the monopoly



of the Portuguese over the spice trade which resulted in a crippling loss of revenue for Lisbon. Along with this, there were several military setbacks. They were defeated by Venkatappa Nayaka of Keladi in 1618. In 1645, Keladi Shivappa Nayaka captured Mangalore from them. Around the same time, Shah Jahan expelled them from their outpost on the Hooghly River. In 1662, Santhome fell to the Qutb Shah of Golconda, later to the French, and finally to the British. By the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Portuguese holdings were reduced to the enclaves of Goa, Daman, Diu, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli on the Konkan coast. It is a curious twist of history that the decline of the Portuguese *Estado da India* coincided with, and to some extent corresponded to, the decline of Vijayanagara, which was finally destroyed by the Bijapur Sultan around 1650.

## **Conclusion**

The Portuguese-Vijayanagar war is a unique event in the history of South Asia, being the first complete defeat encountered by a European colonial power anywhere in the world. An intensive analysis of the events of 1558 is in order for many reasons. In spite of the military revolution in Europe, the Portuguese were unable to prevail against the traditional tactics of the Indian rulers. It proves that the local rulers could on occasion resist the new weapons and tactics of the Europeans and develop countermeasures. Therefore, the colonisation of Asia by the European powers was not a foregone conclusion. Also, though the navy could be useful for projecting power and staging attacks, it seldom could be used to retain territory. The experiences of the Portuguese in Asia were very different from those of the Spanish in the Americas, in that the former experienced stubborn resistance and had to settle for a naval empire as compared to the extensive land-based empire of Spain. The established civilizations of Asia could not be subdued with the existing tactics

and technology. As demonstrated by Vijayanagara Empire, they were equally capable of understanding global politics and taking advantage of the situation for their benefit.

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**THE DOCTOR RAJA IN  
PRE-INDEPENDENT INDIA:  
SAGRAM SINH BHAGVAT SINH OF  
GONDAL, SAURASHTRA**

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**Introduction**

The period 1770-1870 marked the rediscovery and validation of the traditional wisdom of India by the British. Warren Hastings, the Governor-General at Fort William in Calcutta, exhorted that the British needed to know the languages and culture of India for better governance (Morris 1894, McGetchin 2009). In response to that call, William Jones [1746-1794], Henry Thomas Colebrooke [1765-1837], and other Orientalists in Calcutta brought much of the forgotten and buried Indian knowledge and wisdom to light (Trautmann 2004). This phase in Indian history stimulated a cultural renaissance and an intellectual upheaval in India, triggering social reforms. For instance, Raja Rammohan Roy [1772—1833] publicly challenged the ritualistic thinking and societal idiosyncrasies, and paved the way for the arousal of a new social dynamic (Sharma 2002). One outcome of this cultural renaissance and intellectual revolution was the validation of Indian-medical knowledge and practice.

William Jones stormed the world by publishing an English translation of the traditional method to treat elephantiasis from original

Sanskrit texts (Jones 1807). Many similar efforts followed. German Indologists-Orientalists wrote commentaries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, reviving the disregarded Indian-medical knowledge: for example Rudolf von Roth<sup>1</sup> (1872) interpreted the information in the medical lexicon *Madanavinoda* (14<sup>th</sup> century, supposedly by *Madana Pala*) and surgical knowledge in the *Caraka-samhita* (estimated 300-500 AD, *Caraka*). For a detailed commentary, see Gangadharan (1982).

In such a refreshing context of cultural renaissance and intellectual arousal, the life, scientific, and literary contributions of Sagram Sinh Bhagvat Sinh (Fig. 1) of *Gondal* - a principality in the modern state of Gujarat - who qualified as a medical doctor in the later decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and wrote validating traditional Indian-medical knowledge.



Fig 1. Sagram Sinh Bhagvat Sinh of Gondal  
Formal photograph made in London during his visit to attend the Coronation of King George V in 1911. His mantle displays the star of the Knight Grand Commander of the Order of the Indian Empire.



## **Bhagvat Sinh of Gondal**

Bhagvat Sinh was born the fourth child of Sagram Sinh II, ruler of Gondal, on 24 October 1865. On Sagram Sinh's death in 1869, Bhagvat was named successor-in-principle to the throne of Gondal. Edward W. West, British Political Agent in Kathiawar, administered Gondal until 1884. Bhagvat completed his school education at the Rajkumar College, Kathiawar. He was formally installed the ruler of Gondal with the title *Takore Saheb* by West on 25 August 1884. Bhagvat liked medical science. He sailed to Scotland to study medicine on 26 March 1886, entrusting Gondal's administration to Divan Bezanji Merwanji (Dave 1889). He earned an M.B.,C.M. [*Medicinae Baccalaureus, Chirurgiae Magister*] title from the University of Edinburgh in 1892 (The Edinburgh University Calendar 1892—1893, p. 444). Submitting a dissertation entitled *the History of Aryan Medical Science*, he earned his M.D. (*Medicinae Doctore*), also from the University of Edinburgh in 1895 (The Edinburgh University Calendar 1895—1896, p. 640). He was elected a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh (F.R.C.P.,Ed.) in 1895 (Anonymous 1944). An unverifiable Internet site indicates that Bhagvat was the Vice-President of the Indian-Medical Association, probably in the 1930s. Bhagvat ruled Gondal until his death in 1944. He seems to have administered Gondal well and his "country" prospered during his reign. The *British Medical Journal* (Anonymous 1944) indicates that his people enjoyed the best health and his country was one that was best ruled. Several pre-existing taxes in Gondal were abolished and he managed the finances well with the revenue earned by the Dhoraji - Porbandar rail line built by him. Education for women was compulsory in Gondal. At the insistence of his principal queen, Nand Kunver, veil practice among women of Gondal was dispensed with. Infrastructural facilities were the best and the

maximum number of schools (e.g., Lady Reay Girls' School established by him) and colleges existed in Gondal, compared with the other princely states in the region then known as the Western India States Agency (Singh 1934).

Bhagvat was recognized with the title “Knight Commander of the Indian Empire” by the British Government in 1887 (aged 22), was decorated with a LL.D. (*h.c.*) by the University of Edinburgh, and D.C.L. (*h.c.*) by the University of Oxford, before he commenced his formal medical study in Edinburgh in 1887. The Royal Society of Edinburgh elected him a Fellow in 1909. He was a Member of the Royal Astronomical Society and a few other learned societies in Britain and Ireland. He published the *Journal of a visit to England* (Sinh 1886) and *a Short History of Aryan Medical Science* (Sinh 1896), and edited *Bhagwatagomandala* (Sinh 1944—1955) (in Gujarati). The *Bhagwatagomandala* is an encyclopaedic lexicon, which explains c. 280,000 Gujarati words in nine volumes. This task was carried out by a team of Gujarati-language scholars under the leadership of Chandubhai Bahecharbhai Patel; Bhagvat actively supported Chandubhai and the task was carried out over a decade (Patel n. d.).

In the present article, we will refer to his *Short history of Aryan medical science* (Sinh 1896) briefly and the chapter on *Indian Materia Medica* in the same volume in greater detail.

### **Bhagvat Sinh's monograph on the Indian-medical science**

*A Short History of Aryan Medical Science* (Sinh 1896) is the revised version of the dissertation he submitted to the University of Edinburgh seeking the title of *Medicinae Doctore* (M.D.) in 1892-1894.

This book includes 12 chapters, a bibliography, and an index and a glossary arranged in 280 pages. The chapters titles are (1) early civilisation of the Hindoos, (2) ancient writers on Hindoo medicine, (3) the Hindoo theory of creation, (4) Hindoo practice during period of nubility, (5) principles of hygiene as understood by the Hindoos, (6) theory of Indian medicine, (7) *Indian materia medica*, (8) Hindoo writers on etiology, diagnosis and treatment, (9) qualities of a physician and his prognosis, (10) Indian surgery — its rise and fall, (11) vicissitudes of Indian medicine and surgery, and (12) concluding remarks. This book also includes four plates of line sketches of pharmaceutical apparatuses (placed between pages 144 and 145) and four plates of illustrations of surgical appliances and instruments (placed between pages 182 and 183) used in Indian-medical practice. These elegant illustrations have been made by the Edinburghian lithographer-engraver Frederick Huth<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 2).

### **Chapter VII, Indian Materia Medica**

Here we annotate from Chapter VII (pages 101-150) as an example. Bhagvat commences his explanation of the properties of every substance (*rasa, guna, veerya, vipaka, and prabhava*). He lists 75 plants recognized in Indian medicine citing their Sanskrit names (in Roman orthography) along with the biological names (supplied as binomials) and their medicinal uses. An example from p. 104 is *vidarigandha* (*Costus speciosus*, Zingiberaceae) useful as *angamardaprashamana* (antispasmodic). Notably, Bhagvat has provided the “translated” Sanskrit names as recognizable biological names and refers to their implied medical relevance using the terms employed in contemporary western-medical practice, such as cathartic, purgative, and anemetic. In pages 110—111, Bhagvat lists plants as recognized by *Agnivesha*<sup>3</sup>). In this list, he explains the logic behind the naming

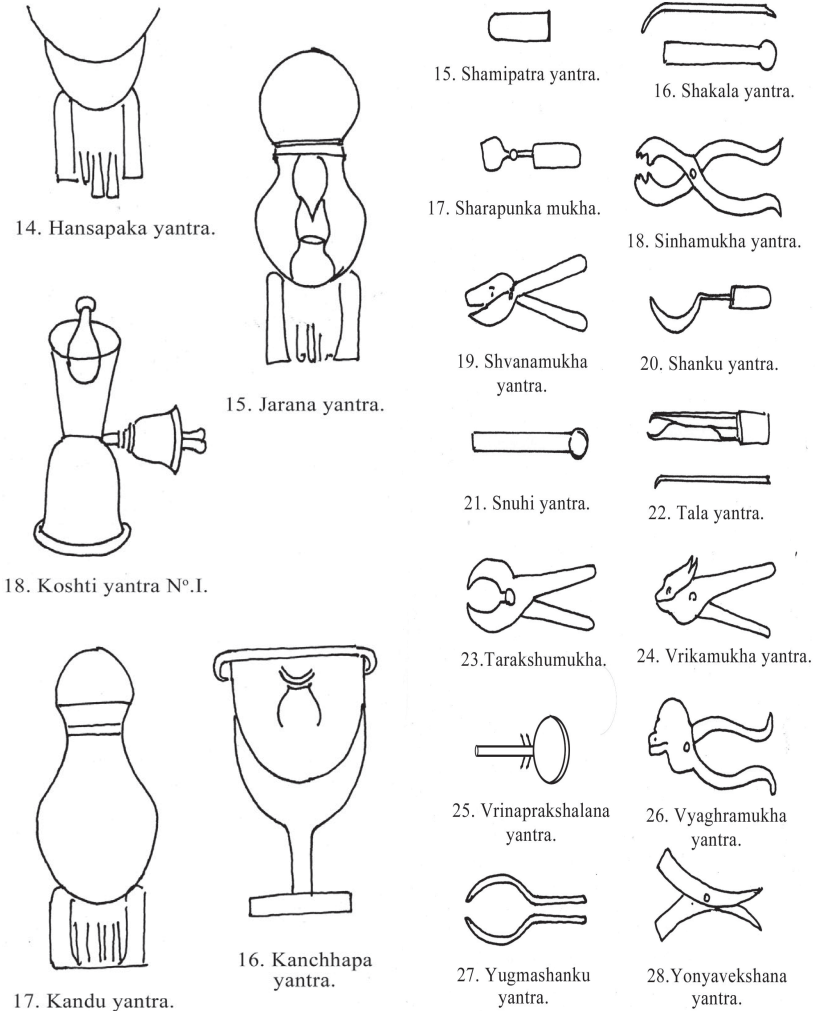


Fig 2. Sample pages of illustrations drawn by Frederick Huth of Edinburgh from Bhagvat Sinh's "A Short History of Aryan Medical Science". Left - contrivances used in the preparation of medications. Right - surgical instruments used in Indian medicine.

of those plants. For example, citing *Brachyramphus sonchifolius* (Asteraceae), he indicates (p. 110) that in Sanskrit it is *akhu-karni* (rat-eared), since the amplexicaul leaves resemble the ears of a rat. In p. 122, he refers to *Nighantu-ratnakara* of Vishnu Vasudev Godbole<sup>4</sup>, which includes the medical properties of those plants introduced into India in later years, which had acquired Sanskrit names because of their economic use including medicinal value. He lists species of *Aloe* (Xanthorrhoeaceae), *Ananas* (Bromeliaceae), *Psidium* (Myrtaceae), *Nicotiana* (Solanaceae), *Mentha* (Lamiaceae), *Lawsonia* (Lythraceae), and *Annona* (Annonaceae). In subsequent pages, Bhagvat refers extensively to the introduction of opium (*Papaver somniferum*, Papaveraceae) from Western Asia by the rising *Yunani* (*Unani*, [Ionian-Greek]) practice, which entered the Indian subcontinent with the Moghuls in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Opium was used by the *Unani* Hakims (= doctors) as a substitute of fermented liquors. Vagbhatta<sup>5</sup> and Shrangadhara<sup>6</sup> refer to opium as *ali-phena* (snake-foam), since it was believed to be the inspissated saliva of snakes. Bhagvat comments that the name *ali-phena* could be due to that its effect on humans resembled the effect of snake venom on humans. This product was used in treating diarrhoea, chronic dysentery, in relieving pain, and in inducing sleep. His following remark (p. 127) is worthy of exploration by historians of Indian-medical practice:

“The European doctors seem to have learnt the therapeutic use of opium from Indian practitioners, though Scribonius Largus<sup>7</sup> has noticed *Opium* early in the first century.”

Bhagvat indicates that the following plants (vernacular names shown in round brackets) as introduced into India after the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which gained medical relevance in Ayurveda: *Prunus bocariensis* (*alu*) [Rosaceae] – bilious affections and fevers,

*Illycium anisatum* (badian) [Illyciaceae]—rheumatism, *Viola odorata* (banafsha) [Violaceae]—bilious affections and constipation, *Onosma bracteatum* (gaozaban) [Boraginaceae]—leprosy, hypochondriosis and syphilis, *Chrysanthemum roxburghii* (*gul-e-daudi*) [current name: *Glebionis roxburghii*, Asteraceae]—gonorrhoea, *Panitis succinifer* (*kerba*)<sup>8</sup>—antospasmodic and stimulant, *Phoenix dactylifera* (*kharjura*) [Arecaceae]—nutritive. In pages 128–129, he lists 32 Indian plants that entered the European pharmacopiae as medically useful plants especially after the arrival of the Europeans in India in later years.

In pages 129–134, he refers to the useful products from the animal kingdom and some of the references (cited below): *garala* — snake venom useful in treating dropsy, *tvak* — shed snakeskin with several healing properties<sup>9</sup>, *jala* — cobweb useful in stopping haemorrhage, *jaluka* — leeches useful in phlebotomy.

In pages 134–136, Bhagvat talks of the minerals used in Indian-medical practice. By minerals, he explains that they include metals, *rasa*-s (mercurial and other Hg-based products), salts, gems, and soils. Talking of metals, he explains the two divisions recognized<sup>10</sup>: the principal *dhatu*-s, viz., *swarna* (Au), *raupya* (Ag), *tamra* (Cu), *banga* (Sn), *sisaka* (Pb), *yashada* (Zn), and *loha* (Fe); and their compounds, viz., *swarnamakshika* (yellow) and *taramakshika* (white)<sup>11</sup>, *tuttha* (CuSO<sub>4</sub>), *kansya* (brass, Cu—Zn alloy), *reeti* (calcined ZnO), *sindura* (Pb<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>), and *shilajita* (bitumen, asphalt). Bhagvat elaborately explains the various ways by which Hg has been used in Indian-medical practice (p. 135), as combinations with *gandaka* (S) producing *hingula* (cinnabar, vermilion, *á*—HgS). In subsequent pages, he refers to the nine precious gems, wherein he specifically refers to pearl (*mauktika*) and coral (*pravala*) as materials of the animal kingdom, still treated along with materials of soil origin. The secondary stones and clays evoke interest: *surya-kanta*

(the sun stone)<sup>12</sup>, *candra-kanta* (the moon stone), *spatika* (crystal), *haritshyama* (turquoise), and *kaca* (glass)<sup>13</sup>; *khatika* ( $\text{CaCO}_3$ ), *kardama* ( $\text{Al}_2\text{SiO}_5 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$ ), *gopicandana* ( $\text{Al}_2\text{SiO}_5$ ), and *shikata* (Si). The other compounds he refers to as useful in Ayurvedic treatment are: *jangala* ( $\text{Cu}(\text{C}_2\text{H}_3\text{O}_2)_2 \cdot \text{CuO} \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ), *mandura* ( $\text{FeO}(\text{OH})$ ), *pashanabheda* ( $\text{FeCO}_3 - \text{CaCO}_3$ ), *yashadpushpa* (ZnO), *rasasindura* (HgS), *rasakarpura* (mercurial salt, principally  $\text{HgCl}_2$ ,  $\text{Hg}_2\text{Cl}_2$ +other minerals)<sup>14</sup>, *shankhavisha* ( $\text{H}_3\text{AsO}_3$ ).

From p. 137 onwards, Bhagvat speaks of the skills employed by the ancient Indian-medical practitioners in retaining the potency of drugs and medications developed by them for longer periods of time.

“The ancient Aryans seemed to have ascertained by practical experience that vegetable drugs, as a general rule, become inert after a year; powders preserve their strength for two months, pills and tinctures for a year, and oleaginous preparations sixteen months. Under the circumstances, the Aryans have, it is alleged, discovered retentive and lasting medicines, which, far from becoming weakened in effect under the influence of time, increase in strength in proportion to their age. They have described the method of transferring the properties of vegetable cures to certain metals, which intensify their efficacy, and retain it a long time. The metals are subjected to various processes of purification, oxidation, etc., before they can be administered as medicines for various diseases.”

He then describes the techniques used in the production of *bhasma*-s (residual substance obtained after incineration-calcination), that builds on the remark offered above. He talks of the production of several *bhasma*-s. As an example, we supply details on the production of *swarna-bhasma* (Au”*bhasma*) here.

Thin sheets of gold are heated red hot and dipped in sweet oil (= any cooking oil); again heat the sheets red hot and dip into whey; heat again and dip in sour gruel; this process of heating and cooling is repeated seven times and lastly the red-hot gold sheet is dipped into *kulatha* (a solution?)<sup>15</sup>. It is then oxidized along with Pb and S. The Au''*bhasma* is implicated to remove the effects of old age, restore vitality, sharpen memory, improve voice and complexion of the body, and promote strength.

He has always remained a vital item in Indian medicine. Marvellous powers are attributed to it. Bhagvat describes many contrivances (*yantra*-s) used by the Indian-medical practitioners to prepare various mercurial compounds. One mercurial compound preparation involves the use of the seeds of *Brassica juncea* (Brassicaceae), sections of the bulbs of *Allium sativum* (Liliaceae), juice of *ghritakumari* (*Aloe vera*) and *chitraka* (*Plumbago zeylanica*, Plumbaginaceae), and *kakamachi* (*Cocculus indica*, Menispermaceae).

## Conclusion

When reading Bhagvat's M.D. dissertation submitted to the University of Edinburgh, what surprises is his thoroughness of knowledge of Indian-medical practice and his fluency in the English language. His clarity of understanding of medical theory and practice that was pitched exactly at the opposite end of a knowledge continuum is amazing: the Western-medical theory and practice being driven by the reductionistic paradigm, the traditional Indian-medical theory and practice by the holistic paradigm. The level of clarity Bhagvat radiates in this dissertation is impressive, which speaks highly of him and also for the level of acceptance that must have prevailed in the medical personnel, who examined his dissertation. Unquestionably, at that point of time, what Bhagvat was exploring in his dissertation should have been new to the British-medical professionals.



His extensive annotations on plants that were introduced into India opens a new window of opportunity to map the manner in which these organisms were introduced into India, along with human migrations and the medical practices they followed.

From the series of portraits of Bhagvat, made over different periods of time, it can be inferred that as a young man he was indeed dazzled by the pomp and pageantry of the ruling British. His travel in Europe, before 1883, seems to have offered a profound learning experience to him in seeing what he needed to do for his people in Gondal. The remarks of his biographers (Dave 1889, Singh 1934) highlight the fact that he was passionate in achieving a better life and lifestyle for his people and that he was inspired immensely by the development he saw in Switzerland. His recognition of India as a dependent nation should have occurred to him only in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His portraits of that period indicate an impressive simplicity compared with those made earlier in his life. Even though he did not play any obvious role in the freedom struggle, he stands at a higher pedestal through his efforts in empowering the people of Gondal. His impressive medical qualifications do not reflect in his later life. But Western education seems to have ignited a spark in him, making him remain committed to his people.

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is *Pinites succinifera* (an extinct form of *Pinus succinifera*), whose amber was of medical relevance in the Middle-East in 15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries. Our thanks go to Mark and Prasad.

## Notes

1. Rudolf von Roth (1821—1895), a German Indologist, taught Oriental languages at the University of Tübingen. His *Sanskrit Wörterbuch* (Seven volumes, St Petersburg) along with Otto von Bohtlingk is prized among several of his Indological treatises.
2. Frederick Huth was a renowned lithographer of Scotland in the later decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Huth was a sought-after engraver in medical research (Viscomi 2010, page 53).
3. *Agnivesha*, a disciple of *Atreya*, and the author of *Agnivesha Tantra* (= *Agnivesha Samhita*) (personal communication, M. S. Valiathan, email, 10 November 2014).
4. *Nighatu-ratnakara* (1867) by *Godbolé* is a compilation of extracts from old and medieval Indian-medical treatises, which dealt with diagnosis, eight-fold clinical examination, treatments, metals and their purification, medical terminology, anatomy, preparation of tinctures, decoctions, dietetics, pharmacology (Rao 2005, p. 75).
5. *Vagabhata*, claimed a disciple of *Caraka* and considered the author of *Ashtangasangraha* and *Ashtangahridayasamhita*; probably he was born in Sind (now in Pakistan), date unknown (Valiathan 2011).
6. *Shrangadhara*, 13<sup>th</sup> century, author of *Shrangadhara Samhita* [32 chapters, 2600 verses]. Parashuram Shastri edited published *Shrangadhara Samhita* in 1920.
7. Scribonius Largus (c.1-50 AD) was the court physician of the Roman emperor Claudius, About 47 AD, at the request of Gaius Julius Callistus, he drew up a list of 271

prescriptions (*Compositiones*), most of them his own, although he acknowledged others.

8. *Prunus bocariensis* should read as *Prunus bokhariensis* (<http://www.theplantlist.org/>, accessed on 13 November 2014). We could not track any valid plant name as *Panitis succinifer*. In high probability it is misspelling of *Pinus succinifera* (Coniferales: Pinaceae), an amber yielding pine. Bhagvat must have confused himself by misspelling the extinct *Pinites succinifera* for the extant form *Pinus succinifera*.
9. No further details available.
10. Use of Hg and mercurial compounds in Indian medical practice has been adequately covered by us in our previous article on the materia medica of Whitelaw Ainslie of Madras (Raman and Raman 2014).
11. Today we know that these compounds have no link to Au or Ag, but basically a sulphide of Fe ( $\text{FeS}_2$ ).
12. *Surya-kanta* (also referred as *suryamani*, *suryopala*, *vahni-garbha*, *jvanopala*) does not require purification. It is ground with purified S and  $\acute{a}\text{-As}_4\text{S}_4$  (realgar) into a fine powder; alleviates *vayu* and *kapha*; promotes intellect. *Candra-kanta* (also referred as *candramani*, *candropala*, *sasikanta*, *indukanta*) too does not require purification. It is ground with purified S and  $\acute{a}\text{-As}_4\text{S}_4$  along with the juice of *Aloe barbadense* (presently *A. vera*). Supposed to alleviate *pitta* (Dash 1986, p. 154—156).
13. Use of glass and glass-like items seems to have existed in Vedic India (referred as *kaca*). *Vyasaraya*, a minister in the court of Krishnadevaraya (Vijayanagara Empire, r: 1509—1529) seems to have used convex-eye glasses for reading, presented to him by a visiting Portuguese in 1520. Jan Huygen van Linschoten, a Dutch traveller in southern India, indicates in his 1598 volume '*John Huighen van Linschoten: his discours of voyages into*

ye *Easte & West Indies*' that glass jewellery (bangles) was particularly common in Malabar (vicinity of Calicut). An unsubstantiated story suggests that a hall in *Raghunata Nayaka's* palace in Tanjore (1600-1645) had crystal-glass windows. Production of optical-quality glass was unknown until this time, but Indians seem to have known to use naturally occurring crystals as eye glasses. Quartz crystals (occurring as pebbles) in *Vallam* in *Tanjavur* were identified as a right resource for making 'spectacles' in 1771.

14. *Rasakarpura*, a mercurial preparation, is used an ingredient in many formulations. A total 77 formulations exist used in the treatment of various diseases (Mehta, Galib, Patgiri, and Prajapati 2013).
15. Bhagvat identifies *Kulatha* as a kind of vetch (species of *Vicia*). Most likely it is *Macrotyloma uniflorum* (Fabaceae).

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## **ORIGINS OF TELUGU JOURNALISM: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

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Telugu as a distinct language took shape in the beginning of the early Christian era. The first, and the earliest, Telugu inscription was found in Kadapa district, belonging to the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD. From the seventh century onwards, Telugu inscriptions begin to appear in Anantapur, Chittoor, Nellore, Prakasam and Guntur. In the eighth century, epigraphical records in Telugu were found in Mahaboobnagar, and Nalgonda. The Telugu inscriptions were found in other Telugu speaking areas in the tenth and eleventh centuries<sup>1</sup>. Nannayya took up the translation of the Mahabharata. The later Telugu rulers patronized the Telugu language and poets adorned their courts. From the stage of *Kavya*, the language of the common man was adopted for a wider audience and the poets opted for the simple prose of the common folk. The advent of the Europeans and the printing press revolutionized the language and Telugu journalism became a common man's medium to spread ideas far and near. The social reform and the need for independence resulted in Telugu journalism playing a pivotal role. The philanthropic attitude of some gentlemen was equally responsible for the growth of the press in Andhra.

### **Beginnings of Writings**

In ancient India, clay tablets, stone slabs, palm leaves, papyrus, etc. were used for writing purposes. In ancient China paper

was produced by T'sai Lun in AD 105. The art of paper making spread from China to Japan through the Buddhist monks in the 7<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.. In the 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D., the Arabs learned the art of paper making from the Chinese. Then, the Arabs spread it to the European countries. The invention of ink and printing technology led to the development of printing in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. In AD 401, *Vijrasutra* (Diamond Sutra), a Buddhist work was translated into Chinese. It was printed in AD 868. It is the oldest printed book preserved in the British Museum. In the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, printing began in Europe.

*Doctrina Christa* was the first book published in India in AD 1557. The aim of printing of books by the Europeans in India was to spread Christianity and to promote business.

John Gutenberg had published *Mazarine Bible* during 1450-55 A.D.. In India, the Christian missionaries established printing presses. In 1556, the Jesuits started a printing press in Goa. Several presses were gradually established in South India. Benjamin Schultze, a German, published six books in Telugu in the town of Hale in 1746-47. In 1812, *Suvarthalu* was published in Telugu from Serampore. After Serampore, book publication activity developed in Madras in 1816. Some prominent Englishmen namely, William Brown, Cambell, J. C. Morris and C. P. Brown did yeomen service for the development of printing in Telugu. *Sathyadhoota* or "Truthful Messenger" was published from Bellary in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Then printing activity spread to Visakhapatnam, Machilipatnam and Kakinada.

In Bengal, the *Bengal Gazette*, an English weekly, was published by James Augustus Hickey on 29 January 1780. It inaugurated the publication of newspapers in India. Similarly, news papers were started in Madras and Bombay. In 1816, a Bengali newspaper entitled "Bengal Gazette" was published by Gangadhar



Bhattacharya. It was the first newspaper in an Indian language published by an Indian.

Newspapers in Telugu also began to be published as early as 1835. The prominent among them was “*Sathyadhoota*” which means Truthful Messenger. It was followed by the Madras Chronicle, the Carnatic Chronicle, Fort St. George Gazetteer, *Vruthanthi*, *Varthamana Tharangini*, *Hitavadhi*, *Dinavarthamani* etc. Thus, the Telugu press was well developed by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It helped the educated to bring awareness among the people. The development of the press had its impact on the society and in the field of social reform movement, and demand for social legislation and the urge for freedom. An attempt is made in this article to review the impact of the development of strengthened press on the society.

### **Establishment of Telugu news papers during the rule of East India Company’s rule**

According to Nidadavolu Venkata Rao and Narla, *Satyadhoota* was considered to be the first newspaper published in Madras by the Christian missionaries of Bellary in 1835. However, the copies are not available today. Rev. J. Long, Member of the Government Records Commission, Calcutta has mentioned that by 1833, newspapers were published in Telugu and Tamil<sup>2</sup>.

The Fort St. George Gazette commenced its publications in English on 4<sup>th</sup> January 1832. But since 1835, Telugu and Tamil also found a place in Government Gazettes. In the early 1840s, *Vruthanthi*, a weekly paper was published. On 8, June 1842, *Varthamana Tharangini*, a Telugu weekly was devoted to publish letters written by readers. Even though this paper was subservient to the British, it opposed the conversion of Hindus to Christianity. Its editor was Puvvada Venkata Rao and its owner was Sayyad Rahimatullah.

Initially, it was published on Wednesdays only. To enable the paper to incorporate the translations of the Fort St. George Gazette which was published on Tuesday night, the publication of the *Varthamana Tarangini* was released on Thursdays instead of Wednesdays. The paper contained 12 pages and sometimes it used to publish only 8 pages. It also had supplements on certain occasions.

This paper published not only the local news, but also news from Europe, Bombay and matters relating to trade and commerce, geography, astronomy, mathematics, philosophy, morals etc., Apart from these, job opportunities relating to civil and military matters, holidays, important news items from the Fort St. George Gazette, advertisements, letters, and replies to letters, were published. Information about papers, and about the country, important festivals, information about shipping etc., were also published in it<sup>3</sup>. The *Varthamanatharangni* dated 11 August, 1842 published a newspaper relating to the death of nearly one hundred people due to the sinking of a boat. Only three persons were able to survive the tragedy. The editors used to add their comment on some strange news. The paper also had an editorial. The papers also, in general, carried some advertisements about the availability of certain articles with addresses.

In 1848, a well-known scholar of Telugu, J. Edmund Sharkey started *Hitavadhi*. Even though, this paper was devoted to the spread of Christianity, it also published general information about local and foreign developments, Government vacancies etc. In February 1862, it published the summary of news for the year 1861.

In July 1856, under the editorship of the Reverend Peter Percival, *Dinavarthamani*, a weekly compendium of newspapers was published every Saturday. He translated the famous *Arabian Nights* into Telugu. It published not only news but also news items related to science, popular literature like *Gulliver's Travels*,

*Robinson Crusoe* and Review articles. The newspaper supported the British policies during the first war of independence in 1857.

From 1856 onwards, the District Gazettes were published in English and Telugu. The paper entitled *Native Circulator* was started by Narayanaswamy. It was purchased by Gajula Lakshmi Narasu Chetti, he changed the name to *Crescent* and started publication on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1844. It strove hard for the development of the natives. It also highlighted the mistakes committed by the missionaries and the employees of the Company. Hence, the British were annoyed with the “*Crescent*.” The help rendered by the British to other papers was not extended to *Crescent*. Narasu Chetti fought against the Company and tried to create political consciousness among the people.

#### **Telugu Press between 1858—1874**

Between 1857 and 1874, that is, after the Great Revolt of 1857 and the publication of *Vivekavardhini* by Kandukuru Veeresalingam Panthulu in 1874, nearly a dozen papers were started. Thyagaraja Modali and Venkataramana Kavi started *Sriyakshini* in Bellary in 1863. Vinjamuru Krishnamacharyulu, Bahujanapalli Seetharamacharyulu and Karmanchi Subbarayalu Naidu started *Sujanaranjani* in Madras in 1864. Vedasanjam started *Thatvabhodhini* in Madras in 1864. Sir T. Madhava Rao started *Native Public Opinion* in Madras in 1865. It released a Telugu supplement and Kokkanda Venkatathnam edited the Telugu supplement. The Reverend Baro started the *Godavari Educationist* in Rajahmundry in 1867 and Kokkanda Venkatathnam started *Andhra Bhasha Sanjivini* in Madras in 1871. Uma Ranganayakulu started *Purushardhapradhayini* in Machilipatnam in 1872, and Vankipuram Raghavacharyulu started *Vyavahara Tharangini* in Madras in 1872. Dvyatham Koteswara Sarma started *Swadharmaprakasini* in Machilipatnam in 1872.

*Brahmanda Ranjani* was started in Madras in 1874. Kakarla Subbaiah started *Lokaranjani* in Madras in 1874. Ogirala Jagannadham and Kandukurthi Bhujanga Rao started *Sudheeranjani* in Kakinada in 1874. Mir Shujayat Ali Khan started *Vidvanmanoharini* in Narasapuram in 1874.

*Sriyakshini*, *Sujanaranjini*, *Thatvabhodini*, *Andhra Bhasha Sanjeevini* and *Purushardha Praddhayini* began to publish articles relating to medicine, astrology and the natural sciences. *Thatvabhodhini* published articles relating to principles of the Brahmo Samoj, social reform, widow remarriage, girls education etc., there marked the beginning of the appearance of social aspects for the first time in many papers. These articles greatly influenced Veeresalingam. This newspaper was largely responsible for the social reforms undertaken by Veeresalingam.

However, *Andhra Bhasha Sanjivini* instead of propagating progressive ideas resorted to opposing social reforms, widow remarriage, women's education etc., *Purushardha Pradhayani* published more articles on science, health, philosophy etc., Thus, these papers during the period of 1857-1874 were largely devoted to the wellbeing of the people.

### **Telugu Journalism during the period 1874-1900**

The advent of Kandukuri Veeresalingam onto the Telugu literary field, paved the way for the inauguration of new journalism in a new Telugu literary style. Apart from this in 1874, he started a new paper entitled *Vivekavardhini*. He is considered a pole star, who inaugurated the social reform movement through the press. Hence, commentators stated that the establishment of *Vivekavardhini* was a milestone in Telugu journalism. The fourth quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is considered "the era of Veeresalingam" in Telugu journalism and the Telugu press.

Sri Kandukuri Veeresalingam had started papers such as *Vivekavardhini* in October 1874, *Hasya Sanjeevani*, in July 1876 and *Sateehita Bhodhini* in April 1883. In July 1891, he started *Sathyasamvardhini*. In 1891, along with Nyapathi Subba Rao, Veeresalingam started *Chintamani*. In 1894, he took up the editorship of *Janana Patrika* from Rayasam Venkatasivudu. Later, he started *Satyavardhini*.

Thus, Veeresalingam by establishing several papers, served as a guide for others to emulate. Through these papers, he served the society, literature and the Telugu language. He laid the foundation for a new phase in Telugu journalism. He is responsible for revolutionary changes in society. Before *Vivekavardhini*, the concept of newspaper writing was not developed on modern lines. He brought the paper to the doorstep of the common man. Hence, Veeresalingam was called the “Father of the Telugu Newspaper” by S. Natarajan in his *A History of the Press in India*. During this period, nearly one hundred papers were started.

In 1886, Seshachalapati Rao started *Krishna Vruthanthini*. Afterwards, it was published as *Krishna News*. Later, it was named *Desabhimani*. For some time, it was published in English and Telugu. It was also published as a daily newspaper for some time. It is the first Telugu newspaper. It was published for nearly 30 years. It was the first Telugu daily published from Vijayawada. As stated above, before the *Vivekavardhini*, there were 25 papers. But, after *Vivekavardhini*, the number crossed one hundred. Thus, Veeresalingam became a role model for others in the publication of newspapers. The common man and his problems generally had no place in these papers. There was no reference to politics. Literary style dominated the papers.

Veeresalingam in his biography refers to the starting of *Vivekavardhini*. He stated thus: By establishing the paper, the aim

is to develop language, development of the nation, a plain style of writing, writing in prose, to dispel social evils among the people, to develop a law abiding society, and to develop the nation. There should be all round development in the field of education, social system, caste, moral value and religion. It was not his intention to work in the field of politics<sup>4</sup>.

### **Freedom Movement – The Role of the Telugu Newspapers**

During 1900—1947, nearly 600 Journals, namely dailies, weeklies, bi-weeklies, fortnightlies, monthlies, bimonthlies, and quarterlies were started. These journals dealt with themes like religion, both Hindu and Christian, literature, political aspects, social reforms, economics commerce, industry, agriculture, judiciary, medicine, science, women's problems, caste related matters, education, library movement, and music. Thus, all the aspects relating to human life were addressed by these journals to enlighten the Telugu speaking people not only in India, but also in South Africa and Burma, and to help the Telugu speaking people in the Tamil speaking areas of the Madras Presidency and Berhampur, Orissa, and Khargpur in Bengal.

*Desabhimani*, the first daily published from Guntur since 1886, took the lead in propagating nationalism. The paper was published from Rajahmundry and named *Vandemataram* in its first edition, March 1907 and highlighted the economic plight of the country and the need for the Swadeshi movement. Similarly, *Andhra Kesari* from Rajahmundry, *Krishna Patrika* from Machilipatnam and *Navayuga* from Machilipatnam published articles to arouse nationalist feelings among the people.

Gadicherla Harisarvothama Rao started *Swarajya* from Vijayawada in 1908. It inculcated nationalist feelings among the people through this paper. For the editorial published on the arrest of V. O. Chidambaram Pillai and the subsequent firing in which

three persons were killed, Harisarvothama Rao was jailed for his criticism of the British action. He is the first editor of a paper sentenced to a three-year-prison sentence under the sedition Act<sup>5</sup>.

As a result of the Vandemataram movement in Andhra, political awareness developed. Along with national consciousness, the demand for a separate Telugu state also developed. Referring to this, the annual issue of 1912 of *Andhra Pathrika* wrote thus: "When the time is rife, the formation of the Telugu territories in Madras state as a separate state appears a necessity. As a result of the formation of a new state, a new city may develop. Such a state will lead to the development of the language, development of the courts, development of trade and commerce. The backwardness of the Telugus will disappear. In a period where people aspire for national integration, many may argue that the formation of a state will hamper the prospects of independence. But there is no truth in such an idea<sup>6</sup>."

Slowly, the demand for a separate Andhra State became very strong. In 1912, the Telugu papers like *Desabhimani*, *Desamata*, *Bharatamata*, *Darbar*, *Andhra Patrika* and *Krishna Patrika* wrote extensively on the need for a separate Andhra State. *Krishna Patrika*, *Sasirekha*, *Desamata* etc also supported the establishment of the Home Rule League. Bipan Chandra Pal's visit in 1907 and Annie Besant's visit in 1916 and their emotional speeches revolutionized the political atmosphere in Andhra. The British gave orders that the students should not attend public meetings. This was resented by the Telugu press. When Annie Besant was arrested, there was a protest by the people and the press. Finally, Annie Besant was released. The papers claimed that the release of Annie Besant was a victory of the people's agitation.

These papers published news on the Non-Co-operation Movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi, the Chirala-Perala Movement launched by Duggirala Gopalakrishnaiah, movement against the

Forest Laws in Palnadu, police firing and the killing of Kanneganti Hanumanthu, and the No Tax campaign in Pedanandipadu under the leadership of Parvataneni Veeraiah Chowdary. These incidents drew the attention of the nation and the Telugu press strongly highlighted the details of the agitation.

The revolt of Alluri Seetharama Raju, his valour and sacrifice in Godavari and Visakhapatnam were also highlighted by the Telugu press. The publication of the news about the death of Alluri Seetharama Raju (8 May 1924) by *Palleturu*, invited the wrath of the British. The Press highlighted the events of 1857 and the national movement in Bengal and Punjab. Several editors were arrested and jailed for two and a half years with a fine of Rs. 1000/- in 1931. Annapurnaiah, editor of *Congress* was jailed for 18 months. Kandregula Ramachandra Rao, the editor and Dronam Raju Buchi Kameswara Rao, the author were sentenced to 15 months. For not depositing the money to run the press, Palakondeti Suryaprakasa Rao and Chandrupatla Hanumantha Rao were given a two-year jail sentence. For the editorial on the hanging of Bhagat Singh, Linga Raju was awarded a two and a half year jail sentence. The processions and hartals were organized in protest against Bhagat Singh's hanging on 24-3-1931 and which were covered by the entire Telugu media.

The British suppressed the freedom of the press, and tried to prohibit the publishing of news regarding the freedom movement. Those who violated these rule, were jailed. The papers that published the photos of freedom fighters were also harassed. Thus, the press suffered greatly at the hands of the British. After 1937, the leftists slowly gained ground. The Andhra Communists started *Swatantra Bharat*. It was banned. The Communist papers, namely *Radical*, *Radical Student*, *Andhra Labour* and *Visalandhra* became active. The Telugus in the Nizam's State developed an affinity towards the Telugu press because, Andhra Maha Sabha meetings were held in the Telengana region. With the defeat of the Conservative Party



in England, the Labour Party decided to grant independence to India in 1947.

It may be asserted that the national movement helped in fostering the development of the Telugu language. It resulted in the establishment of several papers in Telugu. In such a way, the national movement directly contributed to the growth of journalism in Telugu.

By the evolution and development of Telugu journalism from a humble beginning in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century by the Christian missions for the purpose of propagation of Christian faith and the promotion of business, had the effect of the Indians taking advantage of the printing press to utilize the technology to reform the Telugu society, ward off evils in the society, inculcate nationalist feelings among the people, develop the language and literature. The fine journalistic style.

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## **BRITISH COMMERCIAL INTERESTS IN ASSAM AND THE “OTHERNESS” OF NAGAS: A STUDY OF COLONIAL IDEAS AND MOTIVES**

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### **Abstract**

*This article examines the colonial ideas and motives in representing the Nagas in racial jargon, through a study of the relationship between British commercial interests in Assam and their representations of the Nagas. By analysing this relationship, the article illustrates the British colonial rationale for intervening in the Naga Hills and for otherizing the Nagas too. The British—anticipating that repeated Naga raids would cause commercial and political catastrophes—sent military expeditions to the Naga Hills as a defensive strategy. The outcomes of these military expeditions were representations of the Nagas as “backward,” “head-hunters,” “barbarians,” “naked,” and “wild.” The article argues that the representation of the Nagas in assorted “barbarism” is a colonial reality. The Naga “barbarism” became an idiom through which the British could defend their military expeditions in terms of the logic of civilizing the uncivilized, distinguishing selves from the colonized, and in the end controlling the Nagas. By means of Naga “otherness,” the British emerged as sovereign in the Naga Hills, continued the exploitation of the commercial resources of Assam and ruined the images of the Nagas.*

## Introduction

The British were apathetic to the presence of the Nagas until the late 1830s. However, once they started exploring the possibility of planting tea in Assam, the initial British apathy changed into one of keen interest in the affairs of the Nagas. This change in the interest of the British towards the Nagas was due to their anxiety, regarding their commercial security in Assam (Lotha 2007: 4)<sup>1</sup>. They feared that recurrent tribal feuds in the frontier areas and the repetitive Naga raids into Assam would cause commercial and political catastrophe. Therefore, to protect the British interests in Assam from probable annihilation, the British officials acted as agents of peace, reconciling the Nagas. However, their hidden motive was to contain the Nagas through making peace. This strategy of the British did not help them realize their objectives— and the Nagas’ raids continued even afterwards.

On account of the Nagas’ persistence incursions, the British government in Assam discarded their approach to control the Nagas through peaceful measures, and actuated the army to take on the Nagas. They sent military expeditions to the Naga Hills, commencing in 1839 and ending with the battle of Khonoma in February 1879 (Ratan 2008: 93). The consequences of these military expeditions were representations of the Nagas as “backward,” “uncivilized,” “wild,” “head-hunters,” “filthy,” “naked,” and “immoral” in the form of a military write up. Projecting the Nagas as a lesser breed of mankind through the choice of assorted “barbarism” seems to be a colonial “realness” – a by-product of the colonial efforts to protect their commercial interests in Assam with the use of military force.

According to Nicholas Dirk (2010: 194), the interest of the British in the “barbarism” of the colonized was to use it as a means of realizing their objectives; i.e., justifying military expeditions,

distinguishing the colonials from the colonized, and endorsing the project that would control the colonized “other.” It was precisely the same in the Naga Hills. During military expeditions to the Naga Hills, the British officials took digs at the Nagas’ characteristics of by describing them as “barbarians.” This was aimed at portraying the Nagas as though they were required to be civilized. However, the Nagas were not transformed by the British presence. And the British illustrations of the Nagas became merely a catchy phrase which rationalized colonial military expeditions. In addition to this, the barbarity of the Nagas helped the British officials to separate the colonized Nagas from themselves, increasing feelings of inferiority and superiority. And finally, the colonially conceptualized notion of barbarity exhorted the British army to go to a greater distance in the Naga Hills, under the pretext of modernizing the Nagas – and at the same time making them economically and politically progressive. However, the outcome was just tightening of the British control over the colonized Nagas. Referring to the British rationale for military expeditions, Sindhu Menon (2008: 70) in her work *Images of Colonial India in British writing 1757-1857* wrote, “the officers in India had in most cases to put economic reasons to justify their political actions.”

This paper analyses the British colonial ideas and motives in representing the Nagas in racial terms through a study of the relationship between the British commercial interests in Assam and the representations of the Nagas. It begins with a discussion as to how the British transformed the commercial resources of Assam into money-spinners by examining colonial commercial enterprises as evidenced in colonial and post-colonial writings. Next, colonial military expeditions and their assertion of authority in the Naga Hills are examined. And finally, it examines the colonial representations of the Nagas. This section of the paper argues that the British officials through representing the Nagas in racial terminologies were citing good reasons for their military invasions.

The present study is largely confined to the British and the Nagas relationship of the period when the former had to engage with the latter militarily. However, it makes use of theories from Dirk (2010), Hassan (2012), Menon (2008), W. Said (1979), and others of a similar paradigm for analysis. Commenting on the Orientalists' illustrations of the Orient which includes the Nagas, Edward Said (1979:207) wrote, "They were seen through, analyzed not as citizens, or even people, but as a problem to be solved or confined as the colonial powers openly coveted their territory-taken over." As the Nagas under the British rule were viewed through a similar apparatus, suggested by W. Said, this analysis about the Nagas adds to a better understanding of colonial racism, which projected the Nagas as "wild" and "barbarian."

### **British Commercial Interests in Assam**

The British commercial interests and the governance of colonized territories both in the heartland of India and as well as in Assam, operated in close collaborations<sup>2</sup>. The colonial governance of colonized territories facilitated the transforming of indigenous commercial resources into colonial commercial items. These increased both the colonial commercial exploitations and commercial profits. Similarly, the increase in commercial profits helped the British to secure and strengthen their position of power over the colonized. This nexus between imperial and commercial interests is examined by Menon (2008: 71). She writes, "Economic and imperial interests thus functioned hand in hand....."<sup>3</sup> As stated by Menon, there are evidences for the existence of connections between the British imperial and economic interests—one for exploiting the colonized "others" economically and another for being supreme in the political arena.

The existence of a network between the British commercialists and imperialists was as well a factor for converting Assam into

a commercial centre. The commercial commodities– existing in abundance in Assam– were transformed into money-spinners by the commercialists with the backing of the colonial administrators. The premier commercial item that stimulated the British interest was tea. Tea that was growing wild in Assam first came to the notice of Robert Bruce, the Scottish adventurer, who toured Assam in 1823. However, the East India Company initially gave little importance to tea. For they were of the view that a commercial venture on tea would cause financial liabilities rather than bringing profits (H.Mann 1918: 5-7). Yet individuals like David Scot, the then first Commissioner of Assam, and Captain Jenkins both analysed tea plants and making utmost efforts to draw the interest of government towards growing tea (McCosh 1837: 31). For they were aware that with the appropriate mode of plantations and manufacturing, tea would not only increase colonial income, but also would become a prime source of returns.

The endeavours of Scott and Jenkins to draw the attention of the Company towards tea partially succeeded– with an identification of Bruce’s tea as *camellia* (species of tea grown in China) by the Calcutta government botanist. This resulted in the commencement of tea plantations in Lakhimpur in 1835 under government initiative (Cooper 1873: 74). However, the government soon sold its tea estates to the European owned Assam Company in 1840 (Gait 1906: 349). Since then, the tea industry in Assam turned out to be a prime commercial sector for the Company’s investments. With booming tea industry, there was rapid expansion in the areas of tea plantation too. This fast growing tea industry was further expedited by government policy of allocating extensive acres of land to companies at throw away prices– under the waste land tenure act of 1838 (Dasgupta 1914: 1281) <sup>4</sup>.

The Company indeed cloaked their act of allotting land in an explanation justifying the repossession of land from the dense

jungles. However, a genuine motive of the Company's government was solely to boost profits from the tea industry by augmenting the areas of plantation. Hence, there was recurrent increase both in tea productions and in the areas of cultivation— much greater than before. So much so from a few pounds of tea leaf in the early days, the manufacturing of tea shot up to the tune of millions of pounds. This increased again in 1858 when the Company's administration was taken over by the Crown. For a better understanding of the development of the tea industry and increase in plantations and turnover of tea products, this study evaluates growth in five districts of Assam during previous variable years by comparing with the turnover in 1874. (Table A)

The assessment in Table A exhibits that there was a continual rise in the output of tea products. This suggests that a huge profit was made from investment in tea plantations. Therefore, tea remained as the most important commercial item for the British commercialists in Assam. In short, tea that was untapped by the indigenous population of Assam became a thriving colonial industry. Thus, the British were determined to protect the interests of the planters by combating repetitive Naga raids into the territory of Assam— and through carrying the war into Naga territory with the aid of the army.

Tea was indeed the chief commercial item of interest for the British in Assam; however, they were not neglectful of other commercial items. They were equally engaged in making profits from various marketable articles, such as rubber, forest, and minerals. Like tea, rubber was another valuable merchandise that was growing in Assam. However, it was not extracted by native populations on large scale. Investment on this product was expected to bring a substantial amount of income for the investors. On realizing the prospective return of profit, the Company stated the native tappers as inefficient and ignorant.

Citing the latter's incompetence and uneconomical way of extracting rubber as a major cause of fall in rubber production, they did away with the earlier system of letting out certain areas of rubber estates for tapping— and imposed a duty of twelve rupees every mound. Through this, the Company was asserting their right over the rubber trade. Henceforth, there was both increase in rubber products and in the profits of the Company. Hence, the rubber products in the latter years from 1890-1891 reached a total of 5,903 mounds, which meant the British Government had received an average income of Rs 70836 per annum from taxation on rubber products (Physical and Political Geography 1896: 37-38).

In addition to the above mentioned commercial items, Assam possessed rich deposits of mineral resources, such as coal, petroleum, etc. As these natural resources were economically valuable, the colonial government sought to convert Assam into a reservoir of colonial raw materials. With this motive, the colonial government sold away the right to extract and process minerals in Assam to European companies. By this measure, they maintained not only a regular supply of raw materials, required for British industries (Dutt 1916: xii)<sup>5</sup> but also amassed profit from selling. The profits acquired by selling those natural resources and the finished products— if spent in improving the condition of colonized “others” at least would make their material condition better. However, it was not utilized for that purpose; instead, it was siphoned off to their home country, England (Dutt 1916: xii). This draining of acquired capital was largely due to the entry of commercial companies in mining minerals from deposits and selling them off. One of the economically viable and extensively available minerals in Assam was coal. Coal that was extracted since 1865 by a few interested individuals like Mr. Goodenough of Calcutta and Mr. Jenkins of Khoyang in Lakhimpur (Hunter 1979: 377) was given to the Assam Railway and Trading Company, and Assam and Singlo Companies by the British government. From then on, these companies extracted coal that was found



in the Makum fields— and from fields located in the south of Sibsagor district. The chunk of extracted coal was sold to India General and Rivers Steams Navigation companies. This company used it on their steamers, exported to other steamers going to the oceans, and for other purposes. With the commencement of export, demand for Assam coal increased manifold. It led to augmentation in the extractions of coal in Assam. Such was an increase in mining of coal— that by the year 1903— it reached a total figure of 239,000 tonnes with a mere investment of £ 357,000 (Allen 1906: 58). And yet, the colonized subjects in Assam did not receive any benefits from such exploitations.

Like the extraction of coal, the drilling of petroleum which begun as early as 1868 (Physical and Political Geography 1896: 57), was given to European owned companies. Henceforth, petroleum became a colonial owned natural resource. To exploit petroleum and convert it into a colonial money-spinner, the British conceived and formed the Assam Oil Company in 1899. The Assam Oil Company enjoyed the monopoly of both drilling and refining oil in Assam. To refine crude oil obtained from different parts of Assam, the company constructed its first refinery at Digboi. The petroleum products like wax and others were produced in this refinery. These were both sold in India and exported to England (Saikia 2011: 52). This meant nothing more than financial depletion from the colonized territory of Assam.

Another economically viable avenue in which the British colonial in Assam were eagerly interested was forests. The forests of Assam with plenteous valuable trees like *teak*, *sal*, *sam*, *sissu*, and *ajhar* would considerably contribute towards improving the economic condition of those who possessed it. Because of this economic capability, forests did not escape the attention of the British government, who aspired to drive a hard bargain from it. Driven by the desire for profit, the British government sought to take control of the forests in 1870— through leasing forests

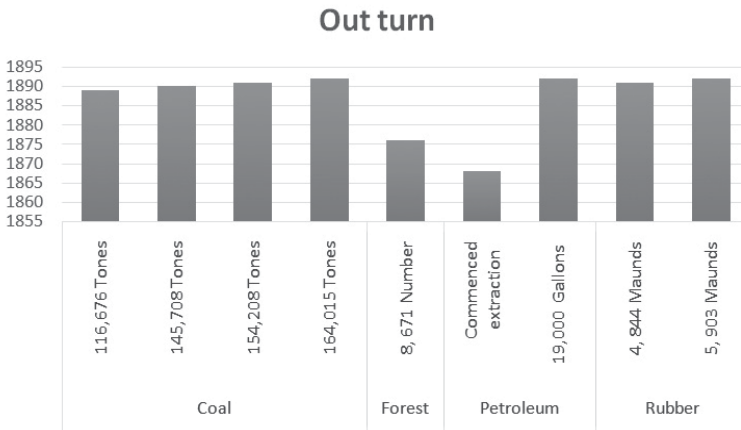
(Hunter 1979: 300) to private enterprises. Subsequently, classifying forests into “reserved” and “unreserved” forests, the British government took complete control of the forests. In the first category of forest, which is reserved forest, full government protection was extended, and in the second group, although there was no provision for government protection, the colonized could not cut down trees without prior payment made to the government (Misra 2005: 222).

**Table A.** Comparison of growth in tea industry both in the areas of plantation and products between the years 1859—1874

Districts	Year	Area under Tea cultivation/	Tea Produced (in terms of pound) Garden
Kamrup	1869	2873 Acres (whole district)	348,263 Ibs (whole district)
	1874	2687 Acres (Area by 24 estates)	321,962 Ibs (from 24 estates)
Darang	1870	46 Gardens	721,356 Ibs
	1874	3856 Acres/ 94 Gardens	1008,077 Ibs
Nowgong	1872	12,319 Acres	370,901 Ibs
	1874	2878 Acres	387,085 Ibs
Sibsagor	1859	3967 Acres	760,000 Ibs
	1874	22,573 Acres	4,528,329 Ibs
Lakhimpur	1871	90 Tea plantations	
	1874	89,370 Acres/ 112 Gardens	308,868 Ibs
Total		121364 Acres	6554321 Ibs

Source: Prepared from Hunter (1979), *A Statistical Account of Assam*, Vol. I, pp. 60, 146, 202, 262-264 & 390.

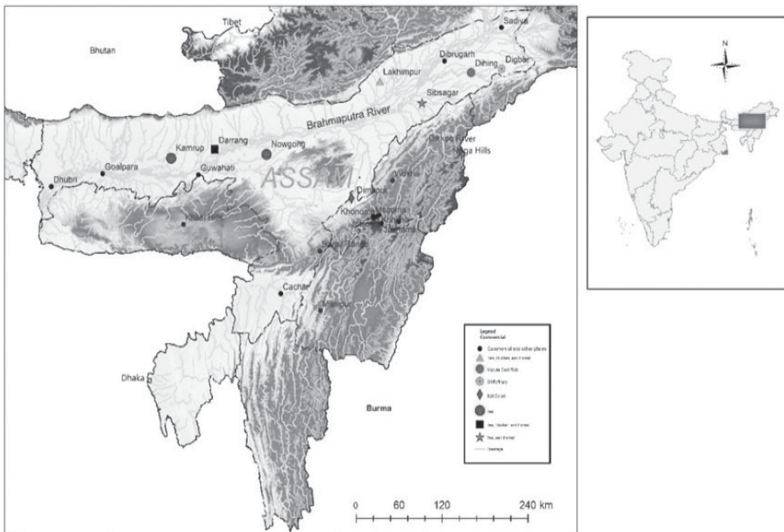
Through grouping of the forests, the British systematically excluded the colonized from access to forest resources— and brought forests exclusively within the colonial right of use. The utilization of the forest resources by the colonized became a legal offence – and whereas colonial use of forest resources became lawful (Bhukya 2013:95)<sup>6</sup>. This exclusion of the colonized and right to use by colonials were rationalized into the logic of conserving depleted forests resources. Nevertheless, the intention of the colonial government was to exploit forests resources and use it in colonial projects, relating to buildings, railways, and others. To meet the demand for timber from Assam, the forest resources were exploited to the highest. Hence, return of profit from export of timber in 1892 – 1893 was estimated to be Rs 11, 75, 234 (Physical and Political Geography 1896: 41-43). **Figure 1**, indicates an increase in the commercial out turn.



**Figure 1.** The outturn of commercial goods, such as coal, forest, petroleum, and rubber in the years 1885—1895.

Sources: a) *Physical political Geography of the province of Assam*, pp. 38, 54, 57, and b) Hunter (1979) *A Statistical Account of Assam*, Vol.1, pp. 58, 142.

From the above analyses, it is quite obvious that the British colonial government, in asserting its ownership over a wide ranging merchandise, transformed them into their income-generating enterprises. Hence, they became anxious about the security of their commercial enterprises. They took serious cognisance of security issues in the borderland. As threats in the frontier areas were coming from the Nagas, they got apprehensive and resolved to stop the Nagas from raiding their territory of Assam. **Figure 2** shows places of commercial importance that the British sought to protect from Naga raids.



**Figure 2.** Places of commercial importance that were frequently raided by the Nagas

## **British Colonial Military Expeditions: Assertion of Authority**

The British colonial administrators— having decided to stop the Naga incursions by the use of military force— sent the first military expedition to the Naga Hills on December 3, 1839, under Lieutenant E. R. Grange, the then assistant political agent (Grange 1840: 947, 950). Through this expedition, Grange asserted British authority over the Angami Naga by securing compliance from the Angami Chiefs of Khonoma and Mozema that they would refrain from raiding British territory (Neivetso 2005: 31). After this agreement, Grange might have felt that he resolved border crisis. Therefore, to forestall further recurrence of raids, Grange again toured the Naga Hills, exemplifying the British defined boundary of *Barail* range— and to receive the Angamis' submission. However, he was proved wrong when he was attacked by the Angamis. In an act of retaliation, Grange scorched five Naga villages (Shakespeare 1914: 213—214). Through this retaliation, he sought not only to traumatize the Nagas but also to bring to an end to Naga incursions into Assam.

Indeed, Grange's reprisal restrained the Nagas for a short time. But insofar as the British motive in dispatching this earliest military incursion was concerned, the significance of Grange's invasion lies not so much in the agreement which he secured from the Nagas to end the disturbances, but in his description of the Nagas. His manuscript on the Nagas provided other colonial officials with information about the causes of disorder, the nature of Naga society, topography, and about the hostility of the Nagas to the British (Misra 1998: 3275). All this knowledge helped the other colonial officials to prepare a road map both for subjugating the Nagas and for taking over of the Naga Hills.

Very soon after Grange's expedition, Lieutenant H. Bigge enriched himself in knowledge about the Nagas by leading another expedition

to Angami Naga territory in 1841. Bigge staying away from a direct show of aggression and demonstrated his affection towards the Nagas through opening a salt depot at Dimapur, which was requested by the Nagas (Shakespearee 1914: 125). His act of kindness not merely won the heart of the Nagas but also made them submissive. In addition to this, it cleared the air of suspicion that the Nagas were maintaining towards the British since their first entry into the Naga Hills.

Similarly, Captain T. Brodie, the then assistant to the Governor General's agent, attempted to subdue the western Nagas. With this aim in mind, he sought consent from his superior to establish full control over the Nagas— by way of exacting tribute from the Nagas and compelling them to sign a peace accord too. Receiving backing from his superior and at the same time from missionaries like Miles Bronson, he paid a visit to the western Nagas in 1842, a region between the river *Dikho* and *Bori Dihong*. Through this trip, Brodie brought Naga chiefs like *Moolong* of *Teroo Dwar*, *Changnoi* Raja of *Namsang* and many other chiefs of different Naga clans to a truce. At the same time, he persuaded them to give tribute to the colonial authority (Mackenzie 2013: 93-99). Thus, Brodie was able to bring peace and equanimity in the western frontier region of the province of Assam.

However, peace in the western frontier region as well as an understanding between the Angami Nagas and the British in Khonoma lasted only for a brief period. Very soon, trouble again started between the British and the Nagas over the collection of tribute. As taxation was aimed at subduing the Nagas, the British kept on imposing and collecting tribute from the Nagas. The Nagas, on the other hand, were not eager to pay tribute to the British. As a consequence of this tug-of-war, the Nagas again attacked the British official team, arriving in the Naga

Hills to collect tribute. Retaliating against this Nagas attack, the British officials made counter attacks by sending a punitive expedition under Captain Eld in 1844. They had both inflicted inhuman violence on the Nagas and caused serious damage to their properties through burning of the Naga villages (Allen 1905: 12).

Such were the cruelties and devastations that were perpetrated on the Nagas— that it pricked even the conscience of those who were party to it. Henceforth, the British renounced the strategy to win over the Nagas by committing violence and took an alternative path. As a sequel to this, the British appointed Major John Butler in February 1844 as a responsible person to deal with the problems on the border arising from Naga incursions. Butler's mission in his new assignment was to meet the Angami Nagas and secure their collaboration in preventing other Naga tribes from marauding or slaying colonized subjects in the plains, and simultaneously to open a trade route from Nowgong to Manipur (Butler 1855: 102). In this context, it is worth mentioning that opening a direct commercial connection between Assam and Manipur was of immense importance to the British colonial government— as it would promote inter regional trade.

Shortly after his appointment, Butler along with armed forces visited the Angami village in 1845. On this visit, he went about reconciling the Nagas, described them in racial jargon, and picturized their territory as well. He was indeed affably received by the Nagas and honoured with a gift of various articles like ivory and traditional clothes, etc. A few Nagas even came narrating their tales of constant feuds and requested his assistance in their fight against different Nagas (Lotha 2007: 18). This left Butler with a feeling of importance. However, his sense of elation was merely for a moment— and did little to place the British

in a superior position over the Nagas. The Nagas following Butler's departure from their territory resumed their usual internecine war (Misra 1998: 3277). Through this fratricidal war and with their warlike temperament, the Nagas continued to threaten both the colonial commercial establishment and the colonial administration in Assam.

Therefore, Butler along with others continued their forcible entry into the Naga villages with the aim of prevailing upon the Nagas to end their incursions into Assam. Their trips to the Naga Hills were not at all plain sailing. Every time they set out for expeditions to the Naga villages, they had to undergo teething troubles because of strong opposition from the Nagas and as well as owing to the unfamiliar geographical terrain. Therefore, Captain George Campbell in 1849 while leading an expedition against the Angami Naga not only failed to make headway in capturing Mozema village, but was also forced to retreat to his camp in the face of an audacious attack by the Nilholey Nagas. Further, when Campbell had gone to visit Jotsoma, another Naga village, the whole of Mozema village was reduced to ashes, causing loss of entire provisions meant for the army team out there in the Naga Hills (Butler 1855: 181). This disaster suggested that the Nagas were determined to oppose the British invasion.

As the Nagas confronted the British invasions through repeated pillages into British colonial territory and, at the same time, by reacting aggressively to the British expeditionary squad, the British colonial authority in Assam deputed Lieutenant G. F. Vincent to lead another military tour to the Naga villages in 1850. This time with little confrontation, Vincent seized Mozema. Further, he visited Jakhama, the Angami Naga village. He accused the residents of Jakhama village of forging on alliance with the enemies of the British (other Naga tribes opposed to the British). To scuttle the prospect of a unified allegiance against the British



and simultaneously to instil fear amongst the Nagas of the British, Vincent's team, assisted by some friendly Nagas set on fire the whole of Jakhama village (Sana 2013: 37).

However, burning of the Angami Naga village and cutting off the enemies' supplies did little to help the British defeat the Angami Nagas. Hence increasing the contingent of troops, the British colonial government in Assam sent another expedition in December 1850 to suppress the Nagas. In this military assault, the British troops captured Khonoma which was deserted by the Nagas. However, the British colonial expeditionary team could capture Kekrima only after they had fought a hard fought battle with the Nagas, which made them realize that asserting complete control over the Nagas was an uphill task. The ensuing decision of this realization was the pulling out of colonial troops from the Naga Hills in 1851 (Allen 1905: 15). But the British animosity towards the Nagas persisted even after the withdrawal of armed forces from the Naga Hills.

Not much long before— following the first withdrawal of colonial troops from the Naga Hills— Butler refuted the merits of the Assam Commissioner's proposal for continuing relationship with certain the Naga tribes. He suggested the complete withdrawal of colonial troops from the Naga Hills. He backed his recommendation to the colonial government through his rationalization that interference in the internal affairs of the Nagas was a total failure— and the Angamis, their allies in Mozema, no longer required their assistance (Mackenzie 2013: 113). They were capable of defending themselves. Therefore seeing the virtues of Butler's argument, the proposal of pulling out colonial troops from the Naga Hills was deliberated at great length in the council.

The President's council discussing Butler's proposition concluded that a complete control over the Naga Hills would not fetch any worthwhile economic returns and instead would incur heavy loss to the British government. In addition, the British government found that the Nagas were undependable and treacherous allies—and feared that the Nagas would bring more harm than good. As a result of this conclusion, the President's council accepted Butler's suggestion for ending interference in the internal affairs of the Nagas (Lotha 2007: 18). This decision was approved by the Governor General of India, Lord Dalhousie. He said in his Minute of February 20, 1851:

I concur in the conclusion to which the Hon'ble the President in Council has come respecting the relations to be maintained with the Angami Nagas, and consider that His Honour has judged wisely directing the withdrawal of the forces which has been sent, and of the post which had been established in advance in that country.

(Mackenzie 2013: 113)

Following this consensual decision of moving from the Naga Hills, the colonial troops were withdrawn. Subsequent to the withdrawal of British troops from the Naga Hills—and with nobody to intervene in their affairs—the Nagas carried out twenty two raids into Assam. This made the British in Assam contemplate over the effectiveness of the non-interference policy (Allen 1905: 16). They feared that if raids and feuds continued unrestrained, Assam would soon be broken up into smaller regions, and they would be driven out not only from the frontier regions, but from the whole province of Assam. Hence, after a few years of dilemma over a course of action to be adopted towards the

Nagas, Sir George Campbell, the Lieutenant governor, came out with a decision of establishing political control over the Nagas (Mackenzie 2013: 124).

On approval of Campbell's plan, the responsibility of establishing political control over the hill tribes rested on the Chief Commissioner of Assam. As an initial step of asserting political supremacy over the Nagas, the Naga villages were brought under a colonial protectorate on payment of revenue. Further to exercise active control and bring additional Nagas like the *Lothas*, the *Hathigorians* and others under their rule, the British headquarters in the Naga Hills was transferred from Samaguting to Kohima. However despite of relocating headquarter in more centrally located region in Naga Hills, raids and troubles continued. For this reason, the colonial forces fully took over Kohima in November 1878 and Jotsoma in November 27, 1879. Subsequent to the seizure of Kohima, many more Naga villages were made dependent on colonial rule. However, it was not all over. The colonial army had to engage in a hard tussle of war with the Angami of Khonoma. They resolutely resisted the invading British army from November 22, 1879 and finally surrendered March 28, 1880 (Physical and Political geography 1896: 94).

With the surrender of Angami of Khonoma, the Nagas who were resisting the colonial invading forces for quite a long time came under the political domination of the British government. From then on, the Nagas had no longer the benefit of self-rule. They were reduced to dependent subjects of the British. Despite this, minor Naga raids continued— particularly from the Ao and the Lentah Nagas. Subduing these Nagas, the British government – with a view to avert fresh Naga raids— brought more Naga territories under their control by expanding the areas of revenue the collection, and defining the Dikkoo River as the boundary (Shakespearee 1914: 225-226). Further, to assert more effective

control, the British resorted to the creation of the Naga Hill as an administrative district of the colonial government with Kohima as the seat of administration. This assertion of authority by the British over the Nagas was rationalized into terms of the logic of civilizing the uncivilized “other” Nagas.

### **Representations of the Nagas: The Logic of Colonial Rationalization**

The British, as they had embarked upon an aggressive use of military forces to suppress and then to establish absolute authority over the Nagas, they had to construct theories that highlighted the Nagas’ differences, and at the same time, provided justification for military expeditions<sup>7</sup>. This task had been accomplished through the representations of “other” Nagas in such a way that the Nagas were in need of British colonial interventions to become civilized<sup>8</sup>, or in other words to be human beings akin to the British colonial rulers, leaving behind primeval the behaviour of barbarians. Referring to the British colonial project of a civilizing mission, Tezenlo in his article *‘Thy Kingdom Come’: the Impact of Colonization and Proselytization on Religion among the Nagas* wrote, “In order to civilize, the colonized must be first “uncivilized” or “primitivized”; otherwise, the project of the civilizing mission cannot be implemented”(Tezenlo 2010: 45:595). The contention of Tezenlo is that the British colonial identification of the Nagas with primitiveness as their fundamental nature was motivated by their requirement to employ it as an appropriate idiom to cover up their intention to control and to project themselves as idealized and big-hearted out there to elevate the Nagas from a stage of rudeness to enlightenment. It is precisely this idea that this section of the paper carries forward to different aspects of the colonial representation of the Nagas. Further, it argues that the portrayal of the Nagas through different ideas and images– which always demonstrated the primitiveness of

the Nagas— were colonial acts in response to their apprehensions. This way of looking into the colonial portrayal of the Nagas might reveal overlooked motives and ideas of the British. As for instance, Butler, when he said, “when our rule will prove a blessing to these benighted tribes, who would henceforth enjoy the fruit of their labours in peace and prosperity,” (Butler 1855: 67) was not really referring to the wellbeing of the colonized Nagas; rather, he was vaguely implying to a moment in time when the Nagas would be completely subjugated to British colonial rule; so that the Nagas ceased to be a potential threat to their commercial interests in Assam.

From the very time the British had begun visiting the Naga villages, the British were constructing discourses, defining who the Nagas were. The British had defined and interpreted the “other” Nagas in comparison to themselves— changing according to circumstances. It was to harmonize with all the jargon, which depicted the Nagas in wildness and served the colonial purpose of presenting themselves as enlightened (Nag 2012: 70)<sup>9</sup>. Accordingly, Rowney in his work *The Wild Tribes of India* had delineated the Nagas by correlating with the “serpent.” Through this association, Rowney was belittlingly characterizing the Nagas through qualities that the serpent is generally attributed with. As serpent it symbolizes primitive rituals and evils in the history of human civilization, the “other” Nagas— in view of Rowney— were residues of the ancient people, representing primitiveness and all vices. By this inference, he was illustrating the Nagas as primitive, evil, ruthless, and malicious (Rowney 1882: 168). Correspondingly, Dalton in his *Caste and Tribes of Bengal*, equated the Nagas with the snake and described them as decorative, filthy, rude, and venomous (Dalton 1872: 38). Similarly, in the *History of Upper Assam, Upper Burma, and North –Frontier*, Shakespearee elucidated Nagas as “naked” by relating the term “Naga” with the Sanskrit word “Nanga” (Shakespearee 1914: 195). Hence, the Nagas were

described as untamed, deceitful, head-hunters, subtle, treacherous, and above all hard-bitten barbarians who would not simply give up incivilities (Butler 1855: 58-70).

All these colonial notions and images about the Nagas of Naga Hills served the British intention to separate the self from the colonized “other” Nagas. As wildness was a nature of pre-civilized man, the primitiveness of the Nagas became convenient pictograms through which the British colonial officials, differentiating themselves racially and ethnically from the colonized “other” Nagas, continued to project themselves as superior and civilized men and derided the Nagas as inferior and uncivilized men. Indeed, the Nagas were culturally a little less progressive than the British were at the time. However, the propagation of intense racial chauvinism—through contradicting terms in portrayals of the colonials and colonized Nagas—did not really spring from the status of the British colonials being more advanced than the Nagas. Instead, it arose from the irrational and illogical claim that the British were making about their biological origin. It lacks substance. Moreover, it was solely a politically motivated illustration, emerging from their ignorance about the Nagas’ moral and political behaviouralism. Thus, W. Said in *Orientalism* has stated, “Along with all other people variously designated as backward, degenerate, uncivilized, and retarded, the Orientals were viewed in a framework constructed out of biological determinism and moral-political admonishment” (Said 1979: 207).

The Nagas in colonial representations were distinguished as barbarians and inferior not only from the colonial self alone, but also Naga from other Nagas. The Nagas under British colonial regime were isolated from and used against other Naga tribes. Thus dividing the Nagas into two groups i) the Kilted Nagas, comprising of Angami Nagas, irrespective of regions, and ii) the Non Kilted Nagas, that consisted of the remaining Nagas

(Woodthorpe 1882: 58). The Angami Nagas were categorized and raised above other Nagas as sturdy, superior in valour and aggressiveness, and as well as in ingenuity and courteousness (Rivenburg 1887: 84). However, the Angami Nagas continued to be viewed as barbarians. Likewise, Aao, a different Naga tribe was written off in British representations as warlike and incorrigible, differing from the illustrations of the Angami Naga. Furthermore, the Lotha and the Rengma Nagas were depicted at odds with the aforementioned picturization of the Naga tribes. They were typified by the British officials as filthy. However, they were applauded for exceptional qualities in the performance of domestic chores. Finally, the Sema Naga, a different Naga tribe, came to be stigmatized not so much as savage but as notorious burglars and boozers (Shakespeare, 1914: 201—203). Getting to know both the virtues and vices of the Nagas, the British officials availed of this knowledge to subjugate one Naga tribe through another Naga tribe. For example, the Angami Nagas were used against the Aao, Rengma, and others. And the end result was nurturing of groupism and continuous feuds, causing insecurity among the Nagas. Thus Jenkin, pointing out colonial unjustifiable interests in classifying the colonized “others” argued, “the obsession with classification was not only for academic interests and colonial justification but also for the more practical goal of administration” (Jenkin 2003: 1149)<sup>10</sup>. Her opinion leads us to arrive at the conclusion that the British colonials in the Naga Hills— in order to dominate over the Nagas administratively— injected feelings of groupism and hatred amongst the colonized Nagas. Through this method, the British weakened the Nagas, reduced their resistance to the British, and in the end brought them under their control— under the pretext of providing lasting peace.

The colonials injected the Nagas with a spirit of hatred for one another and, at the same time, with a feeling of groupism, which

reduced the Nagas to anarchists. As anarchists, the Nagas in the British colonial viewpoint were less human and thus problematic resulting in an array of savageries, barbarism, murderousness, and above all from statelessness. Because all these behavioural problems are things that required to be condemned and to be controlled by any society that is civilized, the British used the aforementioned negative ideas about the Nagas to justify their aggressive and destructive military expeditions, which they had launched against the Nagas. Hence, the British— despite not having a mind to civilize the colonized “others” — explained away their unjust military expeditions in civilizing the uncivilized Nagas. And the consequence of this justification was by no means the Nagas being civilized, but just an appearance of the British as civilizer— and the Nagas needing to be civilized. And this is authenticated in the words of Metcalf in his *Ideologies of the Raj*. Examining the colonial rationalization of military expeditions through the “otherness” of the colonized, he concluded, “They had to set in place principles that would enable them to justify to themselves their rule over India. And they had further to establish enduring structures to order that governance” (R. Metcalf. 2007: 17).

The British colonial project of control, indeed, explained away in terms of a civilizing mission was not to reach its culmination so long as the colonized “other” Nagas remained a potential danger to the British commercial interests in Assam. This was apparently evident in continuous pursuits of the British to produce different and new information about the Nagas <sup>11</sup> that led to a further categorization of the Nagas. Further, it underpinned the British colonial sway over the Nagas with a new administrative system. Therefore, to get a new administrative mechanism operational and to establish a firmer control over the Nagas, the British divided the Nagas again, isolating them ethnically. The Nagas found themselves in secluded groups, which they themselves had never known till that moment in time. The Nagas like the earliest tribes were divided into three distinct tribal groups:



a) the western Nagas, comprising of Angami, Sema, and Rengma  
b) the central Nagas, consisting of Ao, Lhota, Tensa, Thukumi, and Yachumi, and c) the eastern Nagas that included Konyak, Phom, and Chang (Grierson 1967: 268). These categorizations are described by Lotha as tribalization (2008: 55). Lotha is right because through these bizarre categorizations, the British colonial officials were relegating the Nagas to primitivism. All these divisions of the Nagas into classes— although stated and done to provide good governance— merely helped the British colonial government to tighten their grip over the colonized Nagas. And in another way, the British colonial government might have taken to categorizations with an idea to endorse their argument that the colonized Nagas still required to be controlled by the colonial government to become wholly civilized.

The colonial demonstrations about the colonized Nagas that they still required to be controlled— led to further divisions of the Nagas into different groups by forming geographical boundaries, based on the Nagas' place of habitation. The Nagas inhabiting the northern, southern, and western regions of the Naga Hills were categorized as Nagas “administered.” They, in the colonial perspective, had become civilized on account of their governance. The subsequent Nagas, living in the central Naga Hills, were described as “unadministered” Nagas. These Nagas in the British view were the Nagas, necessitating further subjection to colonial rule to become wholly civilized. And the last group of Nagas, according to the British colonial officials were “free” Nagas, living in the regions bordering Burma (Lotha 2008: 55). For the British officials, these Nagas were still primitive and cut off from the civilized world. By dividing the Nagas into civilized, semi-civilized, and uncivilized groups, the British officials were substantiating themselves as rulers and were committing to civilize the Nagas. However, the end result of these groupings was not a transformation of the Nagas into civilized tribes nor the

deterioration of those Nagas who remained unaffected by the colonial civilizing mission. Rather, it was just a candid confirmation of the colonial authority over the “other” Nagas— and, at the same time transformation of the Nagas into obedient colonized subjects of the British colonial power.

From the above analysis, it is obvious that domination over the Nagas remained central to the British representation of the Nagas. The British colonial domination over the “other” Nagas was nevertheless made possible through military expeditions. However, it was always endorsed with cultural constructions of the Nagas which rationalized and made colonial control over the Nagas stronger than ever before. It was this cultural illustration of the Nagas that depicted the British colonial officials as idealized and the colonized Nagas as less idealized. The end results of these were the emergence of the British colonizer as the sovereign authority in the Naga Hills, ideas of the Nagas about themselves as “other,” and subjugation of the Nagas to British colonial authority (Tong 2012:390)<sup>12</sup>. W. Said has correctly observed the Orientalists’ attributions of character to the Orient. He tells us, “Thus whatever good or bad values were imputed to the Orient appeared to be functions of some highly specialized Western interest in the Orient” (Said 1979: 206). His conclusion affirms that both the negative and positive features in colonial portrayals of the colonized “others” were merely colonial constructed notions that helped the British colonial masters to realize their objectives of dominating the Nagas and exploiting Assam commercially.

## **Conclusion**

The “barbarianism” of the Nagas was a construction necessitated by the need to protect the British commercial interests in Assam. In order to protect commercial establishments in Assam from

the havoc caused by Naga raids, the British sent a series of military expeditions to crackdown on the Nagas. Captain Butler was one of those British colonial personnel, entrusted with the mission of subduing the Nagas, particularly the Angami Nagas. He conducted a number of military expeditions into Naga territory. While recounting his experience, he portrayed the Nagas as wildhead-hunters, uncivilized, and filthy. His accounts were full of his own perceptions and imaginations about the Nagas. Similarly, L. W. Shakespeare, the then Colonel of the Gorkha army, who fought many battles with the Nagas, described them as warlike, backward, treacherous, nude, etc. Shakespeare's notions about the Nagas came from his hasty conclusion—deduced from hardships that he had to endure while fighting against them. Mushirul Hassan in his *Colonial Ethnography in the Nineteenth Century*, referring to the colonialists knowledge about the colonized, wrote, “Some represent nothing but superficial knowledge based on census data or an inadequate generalization without any serious proof or any systematic analysis of the facts” (Hassan 2012: xvii)

Such superficial knowledge that the British had about the Nagas are found to be in similarity to styles, meanings, and portrayals, hardly going beyond the racist point of view. This is visible in the descriptions of Hutton, the then colonial administrator and ethnographer, about the Nagas' practice of head-hunting. Decades after annexation of the Naga Hills under the pretext of civilizing the uncivilized Nagas, he continued to dwell upon the Nagas' practice of head-hunting that made the Nagas appear all the more wild (Hutton 1928: 399-408). This simply substantiates the fact that colonial civilizing mission of the Nagas was just a saying. This aphorism was not only used to deceive the Nagas with a promise of transformation but also justified the British containment of the Nagas— and portrayed the British as dedicated to elevating the Nagas from being barbarians to well-behaved human beings.

The British effort to control the Nagas with their pretence of benevolence got entangled in endless categorizations and misrepresentations of the Nagas. For example, creating groups by attributing superior traits to one Naga tribe and discredit another produced far-reaching consequences. It categorized a particular tribe as changed into “civilized,” another as “semi-civilized,” and stills others as “barbarians.” Further, the Nagas were categorised as central, western, southern, administered, and free Nagas. All these groupings not only prevented the Nagas from resisting the British, but also made them submissive to the British rule. With the Nagas being submissive to colonial administration, the British were able to exploit economically and politically the commercial resources of Assam.

Thus the entire analysis of the relationship between the colonial commercial interests in Assam and the representations of the Nagas have revealed that the British officials were providing logical reasons for invading the Naga Hills—by problematizing the Nagas as “others.” This “otherness” of the Nagas became the colonial medium of responding to different challenges posed by the Nagas. It helped the British to disassociate themselves from the colonized Nagas, to rationalize their military invasions of the Naga Hills, and finally to have power over the Nagas. Thus, backwardness, barbarity, and nudity of the Nagas were merely idioms constructed to justify the British power in the Naga Hills. On the other hand, the Nagas because of colonial military expeditions had to bear the weight of racial prejudice, which vilified and portrayed them in different ways. Following the creation of the Naga Hills as an administrative unit of the British Empire, the British officials along with others carried out detailed studies on the Nagas with the intention of consolidating their rule.

## Reference

1. Lotha in his work *History of Naga Anthropology* (1832-1947) has suggested that one of the reasons for the British invasion of the Naga Hills was to protect their commercial interests in Assam, p. 4.
2. This idea is taken from Sarkar's *Modern India 1885-1947*, p. 23.
3. Menon has argued that a dream of Grandeur Empire did not make the British forsake their commercial interests. They were interested in drawing benefits from one and the other, p. 71.
4. See critical analysis of Dasgupta on "Plantation Economy and Land Tenure System in Brahmaputra Valley," in the *Economy and Political Weekly*, Vol. 18, No. 29, p. 1281.
5. For more insightful examination of this concept of India as a reservoir of minerals, see Dutt's *Economic History of India*, p. 12.
6. This idea is derived from Bhukya's "Enclosing land, Enclosing Adivasis: Colonial Agriculture and Adivasis in Central India" in the *Indian Historical Review*, 40 (1), 2013, p. 95.
7. In *Ideology of the Raj*, R. Metcalf has stated that the British in order to justify their rule in India, constructed theories of governance that seemed innovative, p.ix.
8. For elaborate analysis, see *Orientalism* of W. Said, p.11.
9. This idea is taken from Nag's "Rescuing Imagined Slaves: Colonial State, Missionary and Slavery Debate in North East India (1908-1920)" in *Indian Historical Review*, 39 (1), 2012, see p.70.
10. Jenkin's, Another "People of India" Project Colonial and National Anthropology" in the *Journal of Asian Studies*. Vol.62. No.4, (Nov. 2003) gives elaborate analysis, regarding colonial motives in classifying the colonized "others" based on caste, see p. 1149.

11. Inden, criticising Western powers constructed notions of unchanging essences of “others,” stated that the latter were made and remade according to situations that served the former purpose. See *Imagining India*, p.2.
12. For details, see Tong, (2012), “Civilize Colonizer and Barbaric Colonized: Reclaiming Naga Identity by Demythologizing Colonial Portraits” In *History and Anthropology*, p. 390.

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**14**

**POLITICISATION OF CASTE RELATIONS  
IN MODERN TRAVANCORE: SITUATING  
THE ROLE OF E. MADHAVAN AND HIS  
PLEA FOR INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY**

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Modern Travancore, one of the most advanced Princely States of British India, witnessed many political agitations and social movements. During the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, these movements were organized and led by the principal communities and their leaders. They also functioned as organized pressure groups. Permutations and combinations were used by them for achieving their objectives. In Travancore, many agents of social change worked towards social transformation. There are various theories of social change advanced by scholars. Social change may occur through two directions namely, social change through structural process and through cultural process. The theories developed by Richard Cantillon, Marx, Spencer, Burnett Taylor, Lewis. H. Morgan, Julian Steward, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, Immanuel Wallerstein, etc. have advanced these theories. Structural process involves changes in relation of caste, family and occupational groups. They may be protesting, community organising, revolution and political activism.

Social movement through protest aimed not only at social change but also at change in the political. Social change is also the result of the interplay of such forces as collective action through an ideology with the support of an organisation led by an effective leadership. Occupational change, political participation,

Sanskritisation, conversion to other religions and politicisation of caste are some of the broad factors which have been taken as variables for analysing the upward mobility of the marginalised for social change. In Travancore, caste played a crucial role in the transformation of traditional society into a modern society. In the traditional society, the status of an individual was fixed. Children who learn to act against the established norms and deviations are punished. But with the influence of modern ideas, the younger generations tend to become dissatisfied with the traditional society and readily accept the new values. These values reflected caste relations as well. In the changed situation, the dominant caste groups played a catalytic role in social change. S.N.D.P and the Sree Narayana movement were typical movements that experimented with ways of struggle. Political participation of the community can be seen in the movements like the Malayali memorial agitation, Ezhava memorial, Civic Rights movement, Nivarthana agitation and the struggle for responsible government. The conversion movement was effectively executed through actual conversion and the threat of conversion.

Along with conversion, the move towards rationalism also developed among the Ezhavas. From 1920 onwards, Travancore witnessed the growth of the rationalist movement represented mainly by the radical youths of the Ezhava community. In their agenda, they had given prime importance to the temple entry demand. A peculiarity of this movement was that instead of appealing for conversion, the leaders exhorted the members of the Ezhava community to stand as an Independent Community (*Swathanthra Samudayam*). Karappuram<sup>1</sup> was the strong centre of this movement. An organisation known as the Karappuram Seva Sangham of Ezhavas was founded in 1920, which became the Karappuram Ezhava Yuvajana Sangham in 1921<sup>2</sup>. The main objective was to effect political and social reforms in Hinduism. Karappuram witnessed the emergence of two other organizations,

namely, the Karappuram Sahodara Sangham of Ezhavas founded in 1920 and Karappuram Ezhava Union in 1930<sup>3</sup>. However, the Karappuram Ezhava Yuvajana Sangham became very popular and it was later renamed as the “All Kerala Thiyya Yuvajana Sangham.” When this organisation was founded, the President was Chirappanchira Krishna Panicker of Muhamma and Sathyavrathan was its Secretary, while Koriampallil Raman became Treasurer. The other major leaders included Kariampallil Vava Vaidyar and K.C.Kuttan<sup>4</sup>. The first meeting of this organisation was held at Cherthala English School under the presidentship of Kunjikkannan Gurukkal. In this meeting, Manchery Rama Ayyar and Sadhu Sivaprasad made provocative speeches. Violence broke out in the area and the police arrested leaders like Krishnanayyappan<sup>5</sup>. In the subsequent meetings of the organization, prominent S.N.D.P. leaders like T.K. Madhavan, C.V. Kunjuraman, Kumaran Asan, Swamy Satyavrathan, C. Krishnan, Sahodaran Ayyappan and others participated. The majority of the members of this organisation were Ezhava youths and in the meetings, provocative speeches were made against the *savarnas*. The workers of these organisations walked through prohibited roads and entered the temple premises disregarding the “Pollution Boards<sup>6</sup>.” Several branches of S.N.D.P. Yogam came under the control of the youth wing factions. At several places, meetings were conducted in which the extremist section among the Ezhavas delivered speeches advocating the severance of their community from the Hindu fold<sup>7</sup>. The local branch of the SNDP Yogam held a public meeting at Vayalar on 28 October 1934 under the presidentship of Satyadevan. In this meeting A.A. Raman, an advocate and K.C. Kuttan exhorted the community members to boycott all the Hindu temples. Similarly, a public meeting under the auspices of the local branch of the SNDP Yogam was held at Pulinkunnu on 28 October 1934 in which leaders like M.S. Anirudhan, K. Damodaran, V.R. Nanoo, V.K. Velayudhan and K.R. Narayanan made thought-provoking

speeches. K.R. Narayanan stated that the Ezhavas should give up Hinduism and stand as an independent community. In its first meeting itself, the All Kerala Tiya Yuvajana Sangham resolved to demand that the SNDP Yogam declare the Ezhavas as non-Hindus. At its second meeting held at Karunagappally, Sahodaran Ayyappan asked the Ezhavas to quit Hinduism.

In the third meeting of the Tiyya Yuvajana Sangham held at Pattanakkad in 1934, E. Madhavan presided<sup>8</sup>. In his presidential address, he exhorted the Ezhava community members to remain as an independent community (*Swathantra Samudayam*). This speech was reproduced in a book form in October 1934 under the title *Swathantra Samudayam*. The book was highly critical towards all religions and immediately after its publication, demands came from several quarters for proscribing its circulation. The Dewan of Travancore asked the Chief Secretary Kunjan Pillai to look into the issue. The Government sought the advice of the Sirkar Vakil who, however, did not recommend its proscription<sup>9</sup>. But several organisations and communities persisted in their demand. A Muslim paper *Sarasan*, published from Cochin, in its issue dated 1 November 1934 condemned certain passages of the book as highly revolting to Muslim feelings<sup>10</sup>. A Muslim public meeting was held at Cochin under the auspices of the Young Men's Muslim Association (YMMA) on 21 December 1934 and registered their protest against the book. The meeting authorised one Sayyid Abdul Rahim of Kochangadi, Cochin to write to the Chief Secretary, Travancore about their protest<sup>11</sup>. This book was proscribed first in Travancore. Later, its circulation was prohibited in Cochin, Malabar and Madras. The book attacked all religions, but the attacks on Hinduism were particularly virulent and the Travancore Government was charged with being a caste Hindu Government. E. Madhavan asserted that the Ezhavas and other *avarnas* received from Hinduism, nothing but harm. So they must throw off that yoke and free themselves.

To him religion had given to man nothing but harm. It blocked the progress of education and science, suppressed freedom of thought and caused wars. He criticised Gandhiji's anti-untouchability programme as a mere fake<sup>12</sup>. He also criticised the *Suddhi* movement as a trick and argued that the *savarna* leaders must reform the *savarnas* first before trying to uplift the downtrodden<sup>13</sup>. To him, religion was a total waste. He said, "A Christian of the lowest class can become a Kathanar. Muhammadanism does not stand in the way of any Muhammadan becoming a *Maulavi*. The Brahmin cook of an Ezhava can become a priest. But the Hindu religion does not allow Holy Sri Narayana even to walk along the public path<sup>14</sup>." Criticising various religions, he said, "To a Sanathana Hindu, all the non-Hindus are *Mlechas*. To a fanatic Muhammadan all the non-Muslims are contemptible Kafirs. To a pious Christian, all non-Christians are sinners<sup>15</sup>." E. Madhavan visualised the Ezhava community as an independent community and suggested that without converting to any religion they should opt for atheism. He was attracted to Russian Communism and suggested that the communist society was an "idealistic society." In the concluding remarks of his speech, he addressed the audience as "comrades<sup>16</sup>." Later, a few Ezhavas declared their intention to remain as an independent community<sup>17</sup>.

The Swathantra Samudaya Vadam was an offshoot of rationalism that developed among the Ezhavas. All these developments were the results of the community's ire targeted at the *savarna* Hindu domination. The rationalists held their first meeting at Aluva Advaita Ashram in 1925. The Ezhava leader Sahodaran Ayyappan was the Editor of *Yuktivadi* (Rationalist), a Malayalam magazine started in 1929. He had coined the famous slogan "No Jati, No Religion, No God for Man." C. Krishnan also functioned as one of the founders of *Yuktivadi*. Later, M.C. Joseph became the editor of *Yuktivadi*<sup>18</sup>. In fact, the conversion moves; the *Yuktivadam* or Rational Movement and Swathantra Samudayam

Movement could be understood merely as threats to the upper castes. Rather, we should consider these varied trends as delineating a certain stage in the ideological development of the Tiyya's critique of the caste system<sup>19</sup>. However all these trends were helpful in creating awareness among the authorities about the necessity for reforms in Hinduism.

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3. *Ibid.*
4. C.R.Mitra, *Op.cit.*, pp.152-153.
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6. The endapalakakal refers to the prohibition boards that prohibited the members of the untouchable castes from entering in specified areas.
7. Weekly Secret Bulletin, Saturday 3 November 1934.
8. E.Madhavan was an Ezhava leader who actively participated in the activities of S.N.D.P.Yogam, Sahodara Sangham, Tiyya Yuvajana Sangham and Nivarthana Prasthanam. During the Nivarthana Agitation he functioned as the Organising Secretary of S.N.D.P. Yogam; E. Madhavan, Swathantra Samudayam (mal.), Thiruvananthapuram, Prabhatham Publications, 1979, p.2.
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10. Sarasan, 1 November 1934.
11. File No. 990/1934, Confidential Section, Kerala State Archives, Nalanda, Thiruvananthapuram.

12. E.Madhavan, *Op.cit.*, pp.90-97.
13. *Ibid*, pp.102-103.
14. *Ibid*, p.12.
15. *Ibid*, p.118.
16. He said, “We did not get any reform or benefit from our connection with Hinduism. Hindu reforms were not reforms to us. We have benefited not from the Penal code of Manu, but from the British Penal code...If we abandon our religious connection, people will not only respect us but also love and care us...Don’t be blind believers but be rational thinkers...Don’t bother about the questions whether there is God or no God, whether religion is good or bad, think about the benefits that we will get from these things in this world. If there is another world after our death, we can think about it at that time. Now we need facilities for better life in this world...We have to awake! We have to rise! As in the case of several other reforms we accomplished, we have to take initiative for abandoning religions. In that case the future historians will record the heroism of Tiyya Youths,” pp. 225-232.
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## **MOVEMENT IN THE GARJATS OF ODISHA: A STUDY OF THE NAYAGARH DISTRICT**

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The Indian National Movement was one of the greatest mass movements that the modern world has ever seen. It was not a movement controlled by the bourgeoisie. But it was a popular, multi-class movement which galvanized millions of people of all classes and ideologies into political action and brought to its knees a mighty colonial empire<sup>1</sup>. The movement had its bearing in every nook and corner of India. As such, Odisha was in the mainstream of the national movement and it played an outstanding role in fulfilling its objective i.e. the Independence of India. However, in Odisha the movement developed in three different directions i.e. the Indian National Movement leading to the independence of India; the Odiya movement that paved the way for the creation of Odisha as a separate state (on 1 April 1936); and the *Prajamandal* movement (Peoples' Movement) against the unmitigated autocracy of the Princely States. Among the three, the third one, which really saw mass involvement and finally culminated in the merger of the Princely States with the Odisha province, is the main objective of our discussion in the present paper.

India, after the Great Revolt of 1857, was split into two divisions: British India under the direct paramourcy of the Governor-General or the Viceroy; and the Princely States ruled by the



local *Rajas* or the princely rulers who were responsible for their own internal administration to the British and had treaty obligation with the British. A Political Agent was appointed by the Viceroy for a large State or a group of States to advise the ruling prince and supervised the day-to-day business of the state/ states, though the British laws and regulations were not implemented in the states. The princes were always required to consult the Political Agent or the British officers on all important matters. The British also guaranteed the princes against any threat to their autocratic power, external or internal<sup>2</sup>. The Princely States, therefore, were the part and parcel of the British Empire in India.

Odisha had 26 Princely States or Feudatory States,<sup>3</sup> otherwise known as *Garjats*, in the revolutionary term as *andhari mulaks* (dark regions or areas) as the people were completely ignorant about the day-to-day happenings of the outer world. These States shared a common culture, social system, religious beliefs and manner of living with their neighbours of British Odisha, except in the sphere of administration. Most of the *Garjats* were run as unmitigated autocracies with absolute power concentrated in the hands of the ruling chief, or his favourites. There was complete absence of the rule of law, and civil and political liberties. Whenever internal revolts took place, the British Government came forward to provide protection to the rulers. The system of taxation was unbearable and the peasants were burdened with numerous taxes. The land revenue was even higher than that of British Odisha. The ruler had unrestrained power over the public revenue for personal use. In addition to this, the *Garjats* levied special fees for permitting the use of double planks doors, use of any headdress and use of palanquins. There was even a tax on the plough. Besides, the subjection of the people into some obnoxious systems like *bethi* (free / forced labour for construction works undertaken by the ruler like construction of roads, palaces, etc), *begari* (free carriage of luggages of the

*raja* or his officers from camp to camp), *magan* (free / forced contribution both in cash and kind on ceremonial occasions like marriage sacred thread wearing function etc., in the palace), *rasad* (free supply of ration/ food to the king, his relatives and officers in moffusil camps), *suniya bethi* (New Year gift), *abwals* (gifts and presents made to the palace on different occasions of feasts and festivals) etc., further made their condition deplorable and broke their economic back-bone<sup>4</sup>. All these hardships consequently led to growing discontent and opposition from the people.

Gradually, with the rise of the national movement in Odisha, the people in the Princely States became conscious of their rights, and their reaction against the oppressive ruling chiefs assumed a new dimension. In such circumstances, the first Orissa (Odisha) States Peoples' Conference (*Garjat Praja Sammilani*) was held at Cuttack on 20 June 1931 due to the untiring efforts of Radhanath Rath, Balukeswar Acharya, Madhusudan Patnaik and Govinda Chandra Mishra and with the active co-operation of the All India States Peoples' Conference (AISPC).<sup>5</sup>The conference was held under the presidentship of Bhubanananda Das, an eminent legislator of Odisha and a member of the Central Legislative Council. Representatives from different States participated in this historic conference. The main objective of the Conference was to champion the cause of the people in the Princely States. It was in this conference that a request was made to the rulers to look into the development of education, health, agriculture, trade and industry in the States. An appeal was also made to the rulers for the abolition of the obnoxious *bethi* and *begari* system<sup>6</sup>.

But after this conference, the organization unfortunately remained dormant for several years<sup>7</sup>. However, with the intensification of the national movement and overwhelming success of the

Congress in different provincial legislatures, the people of the States were inspired to agitate for civil liberties (like the right to association, right to organise meetings, right to publish newspapers, right to use forest products and the right over their agricultural holdings), and to rejuvenate their dormant organization. The years 1937 –1939, indeed , stand out as years of new awakening in the Princely States of Odisha and even *Prajamandals* mushroomed in many States that had earlier no such organization to ventilate the grievances of the people before the rulers.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> June, 1937, the second session of the Orissa (Odisha) States Peoples’ Conference was held at Cuttack<sup>8</sup> under the presidentship of the eminent Congress leader Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya who emphasized the need to “harness the immense talent power of the masses in the State” for the cause of freedom. The Conference, among other things, urged upon the rulers of the *Garjats* to ensure the security of the States peoples’ life, property and honour by carrying on the administration according to declared and published law; to grant to their subjects the rights of occupancy on their holdings and fundamental rights of citizenship, to stop illegal practice of exacting *rasad, magan, bethi, bheti, begari, abwals, etc.* It also proposed the setting up of an enquiry committee to probe into the conditions of the Princely States of Odisha. A working committee of the conference was formed consisting of Dr. B.Pattabhi Sitaramayya as the President, Sarangadhar Das (known as *Garjat* Gandhi’ of Dhenkanal *Garjat*) as the Secretary, Dr. Biswambhar Rath (Nayagarh *Garjat* ) as the Treasurer, and of 8 elected members such as Gangadhar Mishra (Ranapur), Govinda Chandra Mishra (Dashapalla), Lalmohan Pati (Mayurbhanj), Balukeswar Acharya (Hindol), Radhanath Rath (Athagarh), Harmohan Patnaik (Dhenkanal), Madhusudan Mohanty (Athagarh), and Madhusudan Patnaik (Tigiria). The permanent office of the working committee was located at Cuttack. The Indian National Congress extended

moral support to the States' people's causes. It also declared at the Haripura Session in 1938 that the goals of *Poorna Swaraj* included the independence of Princely States.

As a consequence, there was unrest in different parts of the Princely States of Odisha. *Prajamandals* were formed in almost all the Princely States, and under their banner, the struggle started for securing democratic rights. Initially directed against the misrule and autocracy of the rulers, the movement subsequently demanded responsible government and the merger of the Princely States with the State of Odisha. The movement assumed greater momentum and vigour in the State of Nilgiri, Dhenkanal, Talcher, Ranapur, Nayagarh, Khandapara, Athagarh and in other States. The feudatory rulers saw the *prajamandals* as a potential danger to their autocratic authority; hence, they not only refused recognition to this organisation but also adopted several repressive measures to restrict and curb their activities. In the present paper, however, an endeavour is made to study the *prajamandala* movement in Nayagarh, Ranapur, Khandapara, and Dashapalla Princely States, which are now included in the present Nayagarh district of Odisha.

**Table**

Feudatory States of the Nayagarh District with their Area, Population, Income and Tributes, Year 1930-31<sup>o</sup>.

Name of the Feudatory State	Area in Sq. Miles	Population According to 1931 Census	Income in Rs.In 1933	Tribute Paid to the British Government
Dashapalla	568	42,650	1,20,000	661-7-11
Khandapara	244	77,930	1,48,000	4,211-8-8
Nayagarh	590	1,42,399	3,96,000	5,525-4-1
Ranapur	203	47,713	71,000	1,400-13-2

The *Prajamandal* movement took a vigorous form in the *Garjat* of Nayagarh against the oppressive rule of the *raja* (king) in 1938. The Nayagarh *Prajamandal* was established on 6 June 1938 under the presidentship of Narayana Nanda. The administration was autocratic, and there was prevalence of the system of collection of illegal exactions like *rasad*, *magan*, *begari*, *bheti*, *bethi*, (*bitpali bethi*, *sadaka bethi*, *rath bethi*, *baghaadi bethi*, *jangal bethi*), *abwals*, etc. The peasants had no proprietary right over their land and the percentage of rent was much higher in comparison to the neighbouring states of British Odisha. Many privileges of the peasants that they enjoyed previously were drastically curtailed. The forest rules were very strict and the punishment for violating forest laws was very heavy. Realization of fees for offering *puja* (worship) in the temples of Jagannath at Nayagarh, Raghunath at Odagaon and Ladubaba at Saranakula was a unique feature in the Princely State of Nayagarh. Many times in the past, the people expressed their resentment against the oppression and misrule; but always their endeavours ended in vain due to the police atrocities. In addition to this, the plight of the peasants was aggravated when the State experienced the worst possible drought in 1938 because of the scarcity of rainfall. There was acute food shortage in the State and the misery of the common people was beyond description. At this critical juncture, the peoples' movement got a new spirit and started in an organized way.

People offered *Satyagraha* in order to ventilate their grievances. The *Prajamandal* movement in the State of Nayagarh, however, had derived its new spirit from the *pana* (betel) boycott movement in the towns of Nayagarh and Odagaon. Previously betel selling was the sole business of a section of the common people in the State. However, suddenly by an ordinance, the *pana* business became the monopoly of the royal authority; as a result, the *pana* business community suffered tremendously, they were even

reduced to the position of beggars. As a protest against this monopoly of the royal authority, people started to quit betel consuming. Ninety-nine percentage of the whole population of Nayagarh *Garjat* forsook the habit of chewing *pana*<sup>10</sup>. They promised not to consume it until the chief withdrew the monopoly of betel trade. The agitators, the common people, and the peasants whole heartedly extended their support to the *pana* boycott movement. Consequently, there incurred a great loss to the State Government. The peasants along with the *pana* boycott also started an agitation against their rulers. The *pana barjana andolana*, in fact, gave a tremendous boost to the *Prajamandal* movement in the Princely State of Nayagarh. The *raja* of Nayagarh issued an ordinance prohibiting meetings and processions. The agitators violated the ordinance. The State Government to combat the activities of the agitators resorted to police atrocities and imprisoned a large number of persons who were subjected to physical torture. The agitators like Narayan Nanda, Bharat Nayak, Lingaraj Sahu, Ramakrishna Adhikari etc. were arrested by the police at Odagaon and in the month of *bhadrava* (August-September) were penalised by the King.

As a reaction to this, the *Prajamandal* agitators of Nayagarh organized the first session of the *Prajamandal* movement at Odagaon on the fullmoon day of *bhadrava* (Aug.-Sept.) i.e., on 09-09-1938 under the presidentship of Shri Banchhanidhi Senapati. Around 5,000 people from different places attended this session. Narasimha Nanda, Laxman Maharana, Kuber Sahu, Sudarshan Prusty were among the important leaders of this session. A number of resolutions were passed in this session to ameliorate the grievances of the people. It included: (a) abolition of the system of *bethi*, *bheti*, *begari*, *rasad*, *magan*; (b) freedom to organize meetings, demonstrations and to read newspapers; (c) modification of the forest laws; (d) the establishment of responsible government etc. On the other hand, the State authority

tried to curb the *Parajamandal* movement by oppressive measures. The agitators demanded more freedom and reforms. Many people were captured, fined, and imprisoned. But in this, the State authority could not suppress the movement. Consequently, the “Nayagarh Prajamandal” held meetings at different places to systematize the movement. Protesting against the arrest of their leaders, they offered *Satyagraha*. On 31 December 1938, about 30,000 people gathered at Nayagarh town and demanded the release of their leaders. This huge gathering shocked and terrified the *Raja* of Nayagarh, and he realized his weakness before the gathered mass. On 9 January 1939, he was forced to release some of the leaders including Narayana Nanda<sup>11</sup>. The insurgents, however, were not satisfied with the response of the *raja* and threatened to launch a *Satyagraha* unless a proclamation conceding their demands was immediately made. It was only after the murder of the political Agent Major Bazelgette at Ranapur and subsequent terrorization that the *Prajamandal* movement in the Nayagarh *Garjat* subsided.

The Nayagarh *Prajamandal* movement, however, was not completely suppressed. Taking advantage of the outbreak of the Second World War, the *Prajamandal* agitators raised their voice not only against the autocratic rule of the local chief but also against the British Government. The *Raja* of Nayagarh, to meet the situation, arrested the *Prajamandal* leaders like Sridhar Das, Banchhanidhi Senapati, Laxman Maharana, Sukru Behera, Udayanath Prusty, and Bidyadhar Mantri on 17 July 1942. This further aggravated the situation. Every region of the State declared its independence. The mob attacked government offices and police stations and burnt most of them. The King adopted more repressive measures. Hundreds were arrested, and their properties were confiscated. The King also dissuaded the people from joining the agitation with the promise of concessions to them. On 10 October 1942, when there was a clash between

the armed police and the peaceful procession of the people, the police opened fire that caused the death of Kasti Dakua. Many people were wounded seriously. Oppression also started inside the jail. An old man named Kanduri Parida and his son Budhi Parida were beaten to death inside the jail of Nayagarh<sup>12</sup>. Notwithstanding this inhuman oppression, the *Prajamandal* movement in the *Garjat* of Nayagarh continued unabated marching towards its goal.

It is to be indicated here that the *Prajamandal* movement in the *Garjat* of Ranapur assumed a violent character in the beginning of 1939. Towards the later part of 1938, the *Prajamandal* was formed in Ranapur. Banamali Ram became its president while Krupasindhu Mishra, Raghunath Mohanty, Dibakara Parida and Agadhu Barada became its vice-president, secretary, organising secretary and treasurer respectively<sup>13</sup>. Krushna Chandra Bajradhar Narendra Mohapatra, the ruler of Ranapur, was a paralytic patient and was oppressive and autocratic. He took very little interest in the administration of the State and his authority was used by Diwan Jagannath Mohanty whose integrity was always suspect<sup>14</sup>. It is observed that the administration was so corrupt that people of the State became restless. Justice in the court was sold and bribery became a very common phenomenon<sup>15</sup>. The social condition of the people was in a very bad shape. Life and property were not safe. Heavy taxation, illegal levies and forced labour made the lives of the toiling people quite unbearable. The continuous oppression had made the people morally degraded to such an extent that could not be imagined in any other civilised society<sup>16</sup>. Owing to all these reasons, the people under the banner of the *Prajamandal* started an agitation to dethrone the ruling chief Krushna Chandra Bajradhar Narendra Mohapatra, who was known as an epitome of injustice and oppression. The young and valiant leaders like Raghunath Mohanty (born on 18 July 1910 in the Badabhuin village of



Ranapur feudatory State) and Dibakar Parida (born on 30 November 1911 in the Gadabanikillo village of Ranapur feudatory State) infused the spirit of agitation among the people against the royal oppression. Their flaming words spread like wild fire in different parts of Ranapur *Garjat*. The people rose in revolt, demanding civil liberty. They demanded their rights on the forest produce and ponds and abolition of *bethi* and *begari*.

On the other hand, in a bid to curb the *Prajamandal* movement, the King of Ranapur took strong repressive measures. On 2 January 1939, the King banned the *Prajamandal*, declaring it as an unlawful organisation and arrested some of its leaders. Protesting this activity of the King, a tense situation had developed in the State. On 5 January 1939, a large crowd gathered in front of the royal palace and raised slogans demanding the immediate release of their arrested leaders. Finding himself unable to control the situation, the *raja* invited the Political Agent, Major R.L. Bazelgette who was at that time in the neighbouring *Garjat* of Nayagarh to come to his rescue. Bazelgette rushed to Ranapur with a handful of policemen. After consultation with the King, Bazelgette with Chandrasekhar Mishra, the Assistant *Diwan* of the Ranapur state went to pacify the crowd. All his advices, however, went unheeded and the mob moved on towards him in a menacing manner (with the shouting *maro*) and attacked him. Bazelgette then fired with his revolver and killed a person named Arjun Rout who belonged to Mayurajhalia village<sup>17</sup>. The mob then lost its patience, pounced upon Bazelgette without a second thought, and assaulted him with bamboo sticks; and Bazelgette was killed on the spot<sup>18</sup>. This ghastly murder of Bazelgette shocked the authorities. It was condemned by many including the Congress. The Congress Working Committee passed a resolution condemning the killing of the Political Agent, though it also simultaneously welcomed the awakening among the people of the Princely States<sup>19</sup>. The Nationalists and Socialists regarded

the incident as the natural reaction of the people and as a warning to all oppressive feudal chiefs. The British Government considered this incident as a manifestation of the nationalist propaganda. The death of Major Bazelgette, however, was nothing but an outburst of the people's resentment and anger against the oppression, exploitation and injustice being perpetrated on them for generations. It provided a new direction to the *Prajamandal* movement in Odisha. It also "revealed that the people of the Orissa [Odisha] States were no longer willing to submit to the degradation of autocratic rule"<sup>20</sup>. Taking advantage of the murder of Bazelgette, leaders like Raghunath Mohanty and Dibakar Parida compelled the *raja* to release the political prisoners. As a result, under the orders of the *Raja*, jailor Gulab Lal released all the political prisoners including Krupasindhu Mishra, the vice-president of the Ranapur *Prajamandal* movement.

The measures of reprisal taken after the incident, however, were very serious. The news of the murder of Bazelgette soon spread like lightening. The British Government sent troops to Ranapur to crush the people's movement. The whole town of Ranapur was filled with military vans and looked like a military cantonment and for some days, there was a virtual reign of terror. A house-to-house search was carried out by the soldiers. The people of Ranapur and adjoining villages left their homes to save their lives, and took shelter in the *jungles* and in other places outside the State boundary. The State Administration was overhauled and the ruler was divested of his power and authority. The Political department took over the administration of the State. Sri Bamadeb Rath of Marthapur, Dhenkanal was appointed as new Diwan of Ranapur to run the administration on behalf of the court of wards<sup>21</sup>. Many people were arrested and awarded rigorous imprisonment. The leaders like Hata Pattanaik, Bhagabat Behera, Krushna Chandra Rout, Banka Swain, Bhagaban Sahoo, Narasingha Sahoo, Madan Mohan Dash, Muralidhar Panda etc.,

were deported for life. The two patriotic heroes of the Ranapur *Prajamandal* movement, namely Raghunath Mohanty and Dibakar Parida were executed on 4 April 1941 in the Bhagalpur Jail. Raghu and Dibakar were hanged. Their relentless struggle against injustice, oppression, and tyranny, and their selflessness and self-sacrifice remained indelibly imprinted not only on the minds of the people of Ranapur but also in the minds of all Odiyas. They, indeed, are the living embodiment of the patriotism of the Odiya people.

The *Prajamandal* Movement started in the *Garjat* of Khandapara in September 1938. As in other States, during the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the feudatory State of Khandapara underwent socioeconomic and political deterioration<sup>22</sup>. The misery of the people reached its height. Besides *bethi* and *beggari*, extra illegal taxes were imposed on betel, *bidi*, salt and sugarcane. The state had no proper communication and transport facility. The then ruling chief, Harihar Singh Mardaraj Bhramarbar Ray, instead of looking after the welfare and economic development of the people, enjoyed life by spending public money lavishly. People objected to the apathetic nature of the ruler and demanded a betterment of their socioeconomic status. They raised an agitation against the royal authority on various issues. In August 1935, hundreds of educated people rose against the oppression and misrule of the *raja*<sup>23</sup>. The State authorities adopted stern measures to suppress their agitation. As a result, out of panic and fear a large number of persons fled to the neighbouring British administered territories. The people of Khandapara feudatory State, however, became enthusiastic and active in their agitational activities after the formation of the *Prajamandal* in September 1938. They vehemently opposed the monopoly and autocratic rule of the *Raja* and demanded civil liberty and self-government<sup>24</sup>. In July 1939, they further demanded recognition of the Association of the elected representatives of the tenants.

On the other hand, the *Raja* not only ignored the demands of the agitators but also undertook a systematic policy of repression. He applied all methods of repression on agitating people, which was in the form of severe assault, rigorous imprisonment and social boycott<sup>25</sup>. He also arrested a number of leaders of the *Prajamandal* Movement. People left the State for the neighbouring British territories out of fear of persecution. Many of them took shelter in Khurdha<sup>26</sup>. The properties of those who left the State were confiscated. Criminal cases were instituted against the important leaders. In spite of rigorous punishment and indiscriminate imprisonment, the *Prajamandal* movement in the feudatory State of Khandapara was carried on. In early 1940, the *Prajamandal* of Khandapara issued a Bulletin entitled *Judha Nian* (war fire) which severely condemned the prevailing administrative condition in the feudatory States, and the support of the British Government in repressing the agitating people<sup>27</sup>. Towards the middle of 1940, the situation in the *Garjat* of Khandapara, however, changed. The refugee problem became formidable. However, after the intervention of H.K. Mahatab, their repatriation was made possible. The forfeited properties of the refugees who returned to their homes were restored. Subsequently, the ruler granted some concessions to the people, and cases against some political prisoners were also withdrawn. The King also constituted four separate committees with popular representatives in it to assist him in the administration of the State.

*Prajamandal* activities were carried on in the *Garjat* of Dashapalla also. Here, the King complied with the demands of the agitators. Before the *Prajamandal* Movement, there was a serious *Khond* (an aboriginal tribe) rising in Dashapalla in 1914, but it was suppressed mercilessly.

The *Prajamandal* Movement in the *Garjats* of Odisha played an important role in the merger of the *Garjats* in the Odisha

State. It, in fact, prepared the ground for the integration of the Princely States. It was a spontaneous mass movement that involved people from all ranks and classes. It brought about a new awakening among the people who gave up their traditional fear of the autocratic rulers. It had also a substantial bearing on the Indian National Movement. The uniqueness of the *Prajamandal* movement in Odisha was that it not only exposed the tyranny and exploitation of the ruling feudatory chiefs but also at the same time exposed the misrule of the British in India. It popularised among the people of the feudatory states the ideas of democracy and civil liberty. It created political awakening and consciousness among the people to work actively to secure their legitimate rights and basic privileges. It encouraged and inspired the people to plunge into the mainstream of the Indian National Movement to drive out the British. One may infer that though the separate State of Odisha was born on 1 April 1936, its present shape can be dated back to 1 January 1949 when Mayurbhanj, the last princely state *was* merged with the Odisha state, which was primarily an outcome of the *Prajamandal* Movement.

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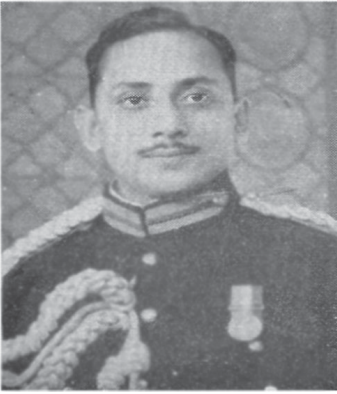
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Raja Krushnachandra Singh Mandhata, the last ruling  
Chief of Nayagarh



Raja Brajendra Chandra Singh Deo  
Bajradhar Narendra Mohapatra, the  
last Ruling Chief of Ranapur



Raja Harihar Singh Mardaraj  
Bhramarabara Roy, the last Ruling  
Chief of Khandapara



Raja Bahadur Kishore Chandra  
Deo Bhanj, the last Ruling  
Chief of Dashapalla



## **QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT IN CHITTOOR DISTRICT: A CASE STUDY OF NAGARI ORDINANCE CASE**

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The Quit India Movement was the next major milestone after the “Salt Satyagraha” in the history of Indian independence struggle. It was a civil disobedience movement launched in August 1942 with Gandhiji’s call for immediate independence. It is also known as the “Bharat Chodo Andholan” or the “August Kranthi.”

This historical movement was played out in the backdrop of World War II. The British government took India into the war unilaterally and without consulting the Indian people. This angered the Indians terribly. In March 1942, faced with an increasingly dissatisfied sub-continent, only reluctantly participating in the war, the British government sent a delegation to India under Sir Stafford Cripps, in what came to be known as the Cripps Mission<sup>1</sup>. The purpose of the mission was to negotiate with the Indian National Congress a deal to obtain total co-operation during the war, in return for progressive devolution and distribution of power from the Crown and the Viceroy to an elected Indian legislature.

The Congress was unhappy with the Cripps proposal, because the retention of defence in the hands of the British and the promise to transfer power appeared illusory. So, Mahatma Gandhi described the Cripps proposal as a “Post Dated Cheque<sup>2</sup>.” The proposals also gave the impression that the unity of India would

be at stake because of the Pakistan demand and the promise to the Indian Princely states to stay out of the Indian union. The proposals would greatly hamper the whole national movement. It also appeared that the ambition of Indians to obtain some form of self-government from the British appeared remote. The Indian National Congress leaders' fears were not cleared and there was no assurance on the demand of independence. So, the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress rejected the proposals of Sir Stafford Cripps.

The other parties also rejected the Cripps proposals because, the Muslim League felt that there was no categorical assurance about the creation of Pakistan as envisaged in the Lahore Resolution in 1940. The Hindu Maha Sabha opposed the proposals because the unity of the country would be threatened. The Sikhs feared that Punjab may be divided on religious lines and they may become a minority. Ambedkar said: "It would be madness to weaken law and order when the barbarians are at our gates" and he feared that the Harijans may be placed at the mercy of caste Hindus<sup>3</sup>. The proposals relating to the Interim Government also appeared to be vague. Cripps also made it clear that the "National Government" was nothing but the expansion of the Viceroy's Executive Council and not more than that. The British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill was reluctant even to transfer limited power to the Indians. So, all the political parties rejected the proposals. Hence, the Cripps proposals were withdrawn by Churchill and Churchill recalled Cripps on 11 April 1942.

The failure of the Cripps Mission, rising prices, wartime shortages and the Japanese threat forced the Congress to take active steps to compel the British to accept the Indian demand for Independence. The All India Congress Committee met at Bombay on 8<sup>th</sup> August 1942 and passed the famous Quit India Resolution<sup>4</sup>. After the

resolution was passed, Gandhiji, in his speech said, “There is a *manthra*, a short one, that I give you. You imprint it in your heart and let every breath of yours give an expression to it. The *manthra* is “Do or Die” i.e. we shall either be free or die in the attempt.” “Quit India” and “Do or Die” became the battle cry of the Indian people during the Quit India Movement.

The British, already alarmed by the advance of the Japanese army to the India/Burma border, responded the next day by imprisoning Gandhi at the Aga Khan Palace in Pune. All the members of the Congress Party’s National leadership were arrested and imprisoned at the Ahmednagar Fort. Due to the arrest of the major leaders, a young and until then relatively unknown Aruna Asaf Ali presided over the AICC session on August 9, and hoisted the flag. Later, the Congress party was banned. These actions only created sympathy for the cause among the population. Inspired by Gandhiji’s “Do or Die” speech, the common masses eagerly jumped into the movement, despite lack of direct leadership. Large-scale protests and demonstrations were held all over the country. Workers remained absent and strikes were called. Not all the demonstrations were peaceful.

The British swiftly responded with mass detentions. According to official estimates, more than 60,000 people were arrested, 18,000 detained without trial, 940 killed, and 1,630 injured through police or military firing during the last five months of 1942<sup>5</sup>. A total of over 100,000 arrests were made nationwide, mass fines were levied, and the demonstrators were subjected to public flogging. Hundreds of resisters and innocent people were killed by police and army fire. Many national leaders went underground and continued their struggle by broadcasting messages over clandestine radio stations, distributing pamphlets, and establishing parallel governments. The British sense of crisis was strong enough that a battleship was specifically set aside to take Gandhi

and the Congress leaders out of India, possibly to South Africa or Yemen, but such a step was ultimately not taken, out of fear of intensifying the revolt. An underground guerrilla force was also organized to sabotage the British Interests.

In Andhra, the Provincial Congress Committee had issued a circular popularly known as the “Kurnool Circular” even in advance of the Bombay A.I.C.C. Session. This circular was drafted by Kala Venkata Rao on 29<sup>th</sup> of July, 1942 and was sent for the approval of the Congress Working Committee through Dr. Pattabhi Seetha Ramaiah, a member of the Working Committee<sup>6</sup>. Originally, the Andhra leaders thought that the fight should not begin until and unless Gandhiji were to give the signal for the commencement of the struggle. It clearly stated, “immediately after Mahatmaji gives the order, the Civil Disobedience Movement must be begun and the German ‘blitz kreig’ pattern must be followed<sup>7</sup>.” It also laid stress on the spirit of non-violence and insisted that no established law should be violated in contravention of the first rule. But the sudden arrest of the leaders all over the country upset the non-violent nature of the struggle envisaged in the programme. The Kurnool Circular envisaged a programme of defying prohibitory orders, lawyers to give up practice, students to leave colleges, picketing salt and foreign trade and industry, cutting of communications, cutting of spathe of the toddy yielding trees, travelling without tickets, pulling chains to stop trains and blowing up bridges so that communications might be disrupted and the movement of the Army Columns retarded; the cutting of telegraph and telephone wires, non-payment of taxes excepting municipal taxes, picketing of recruitment office, and hoisting of national flags on all Government buildings as a sign of independence. It also expected the Indian businessmen in particular to withdraw their deposits from the banks, to demand only Rupee payment and not to deposit fresh amounts in the banks so that there would

be a drain on the British economy. All sections of the people, including non-Congressmen, were asked to join in the struggle. The instructions were to carry on the struggle till the finish. “Do or Die” was the slogan. The rule that one should wear “khaddhar” and spin khadi was also given up so that a real mass movement could be created.

But the sudden removal of the leaders at all levels of India, provincial, district, *taluk* and *firka*-left the country without any experienced and responsible men to guide the popular movement.

As part of the Quit India Movement in Andhra, the students of the Tenali Taluk High School and the Bharath Tutorial College, Tenali, convened a meeting on the night of the 11<sup>th</sup> August 1942, and decided to boycott the schools in the town and to see that a complete “Harthal” on the 12<sup>th</sup> August 1942 was observed by the closure of shops, hotels, and other business concerns. On the same day the Congress workers and students observed the “Harthal” in Tenali. In Chirala, 500 students took part in closing the Court and, afterwards, they raided the Office of the Sub-Registrar and the Sales Tax Officer. These students also went to the Railway station and set fire to the station building after cutting the telephone and signal wires. The damage caused to the Chirala railway station was about a lakh of rupees. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of August, a crowd of 2,000 gathered at the Gandhi Park. The police followed them and suddenly opened fire on them without any provocation, on account of which two people died while several were wounded.

The Guntur Bar Association passed a resolution condemning the action of the authorities. Educational institutions were closed down for a week. Palakonda Railway station was also attacked and the goods shed was completely gutted. Several other stations like Akiveedu, Atthili, Ongole, Nidubrolu, Dendhuluru, Undi, etc.

suffered the same fate. The Non-Co-Operators also tampered with railway tracks in order to derail trains at Uppuluru, Panapakam and Srikalahasthi. Telegraph and telephone wires were cut off in as many as 1,500 places in Andhra. Police stations also became targets of attack. On the 17<sup>th</sup> of August, a crowd at Palakol smashed the quarters of the Sub-Inspector and the Police Constable. At Akiveedu about 100 people gathered and overpowered two constables and after seizing their muskets and *lathis*, burnt down the records at the police station. At Bheemavaram Gokaraju Venkatapathi Raju hoisted a Congress flag on the Collector's Office<sup>8</sup>. The records in the Office were burnt. As a result, the police opened fire on them and in the firing four people died. At Pentapadu, people held a condolence meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> August, then later they set fire to the Pentapadu post office. During this period a large number of college and high school students abstained from classes like Bhimavaram, Tenali, Guntur, Kakinada, Eluru, Ananthapuram, Madhanapalli, Nellore, Chittoor, Penugonda, Hindupur, Tirupati, and Vijayanagaram.

Chittoor District which was in the forefront of the freedom struggle under the inspiration of National and State level leaders, took an active part in the Quit India Movement. The protests were organized against the arrest of Gandhi on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1942. The protests were marked by strikes, demonstrations, processions, and meetings. A protest meeting was held at Chittoor on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1942. The next day M. Anantha Sayanam Aiyangar was arrested and jailed at Vellore. Protest meetings were held at Tirupati. Similar meetings were also held at Madanapalli and Palamaner and fiery speeches were delivered by the leaders. On 13<sup>th</sup> August T. Prakasam, a member of the AICC was arrested at Kadapa Railway station. The British gave prohibitory orders regarding meetings in the processions in the district. When compared to previous periods of the freedom struggle, Chittoor

District took an active part in the Quit India Movement. Even though M. Anantha Sayanam Aiyangar and D. Rama Subbareddy were arrested, the people continued their protests in the form of hartals, demonstrations, processions and public meetings<sup>9</sup>. *Sri Sadhana Patrika*, a Telugu paper played an important role in creating political consciousness among the people of Chittoor district. A protest meeting was held at Madanapalli which demanded the release of the National leaders from detention.

The Chittoor district witnessed two rail derailment incidents namely at Sri Kalahasti during 21-22 August 1942 and Panapakam on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1942.

As a result of the arrest of the leaders and due to the active role played by the newspapers, the Movement spread to rural areas also. The farmers and the artisans also took an active part in the struggle. They indulged in the destruction of the communication system at several places and also propagated “no tax campaign.” On the occasion of Gandhi’s birthday meetings were held at Nagari and Palamaner in Chittoor district. The participation of students in this programme was significant, because they boycotted schools and colleges. To intensify the struggle at Madanapalli the leaders advocated a “no tax campaign.”

The leaders in Chittoor district showed their solidarity through agitations against the arrest of the leaders and the repressive measures of the British. The prominent leaders like M. Anantha Sayanam Aiyangar, and D. Srinivasa Aiyangar, Madiraju Subramanya Raju, R.B. Ramakrishna Raju and Peddireddy took the lead in organizing the agitation. M. Subramanya Raju, a teacher from Tirupati joined the agitation involved in the raiding of police stations and removing railway lines at Nagari and was arrested and given rigorous imprisonment.

## **Nagari Ordinance Case**

On 17 August morning in response to the Quit India call, the activists of the freedom movement led a procession consisting of K.R. Kumaraswamy Chetty, a student in the local school, M. Subrahmanyam Raju, former teacher in a District Board School, K.Muniswamy Naidu, a member of the Chittoor District Board, V. Jayaramulu Naidu, merchant, M.Kondandaramaswamy Raju, K. Kuppaswami Mudali and G. Kannappa Chetty, aged 16 and other villagers drawn from the neighbourhood of Nagari about 500 strong reached a tank bund and held a public meeting there disregarding the advice given by the Sub-Inspector of Police, Nagari, that such meetings were prohibited by the District Magistrate, Chittoor. After the meeting, the whole crowd went in a body to the police station, Nagari, broke through a cordon formed by the policemen and civic guards and smashed the name board of the police station. They also committed other acts of violence like cutting telegraph wires at the post office near Vepagunta and other places<sup>10</sup>. The Nagari police arrested seven persons and took them to Chandragiri to be produced before the Joint Magistrate for violating prohibitory orders. Mohammed Himayatullah Farukhi, the special magistrate, acting under Ordinance 11 of 1942 (special Courts Ordinance) pronounced judgement in the Nagari Ordinance Case convicting one K.R. Kumaraswamy Chetty and six others of various offences under the Defence of India Rules and sentencing them to various terms of imprisonment<sup>11</sup>. The first three accused, including K. Muniswamy Naidu, a member of the Chittoor District Board, were sentenced to undergo rigorous imprisonment for one and half years each, to receive twelve lashes with a whip and to pay Rs.25/- each as fine under one charge, in default, to undergo R.I. for one month and to pay in addition as fine Rs.25/- each on another charge, in default to undergo one month R.I. The fourth accused, Jayaramulu Naidu, was sentenced to pay a fine of Rs.25/- (in



default to suffer one month R.I. for one offence) to pay a sum of Rs.25/- (in default one month R.I.) for another charge; and to pay a further sum of Rs.50/- as fine (in default to two months R.I.) for a third charge. He was also sentenced to 15 lashes with a whip. The fifth accused Kuppuswamy, a youth of 20 years, was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for one week for each of the three offences committed by him<sup>12</sup>. The Magistrate also ordered the administration of 12 lashes with a whip. The Magistrate convicted the sixth accused Kannan, a boy of 14 years but under the provisions of the Madras Childrens' Act, admonished him for an offence under Rule 56(4) of D.O.I. Rules. For another offence, the Magistrate sentenced him to suffer six lashes with a whip. The Magistrate sentenced the seventh accused Kodhandaramaswamy Raju, to a fine of Rs.25/- for one offence and Rs.25/- for another offence in default to one month R.I. for each of the offences. The Magistrate ordered all sentences of imprisonment to run concurrently, except the sentences in default of payment of fine<sup>13</sup>.

## **Conclusion**

Thus, Mahatma Gandhi's call of "Quit India" had galvanised all sections of society and spread to every nook and corner of the country symbolizing that irrespective of age, education, profession, religion, all joined together for the cause of freedom for the country. It is important to note the sacrifices made by lakhs of people who suffered at the hands of the British by serving jail sentences, hangings, firings, and lathi charges today. In this context, the role played by small groups of people who were involved in the Nagari Ordinance Case played a key role in arousing national sentiments among the people of nearby villages for the cause of national independence.

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**CHEVALIER SELLANE NAICKER (1884-1965) : THE FORGOTTEN FREEDOM FIGHTER OF FRENCH INDIA**

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**Abstract**

*In the liberation of French enclaves, Sellane Naicker was one of the prominent leaders of French India. Despite his successful legal practice, he plunged into active politics for the merger of the French colonies with Mother India when the French delayed the transfer of power on one pretext or the other. He brought together all the likeminded Nationalists under the banner of the “French India Central Merger Committee” for the liberation of French Indian territory. He highlighted all the important problems of Pondicherry. Due to political rivalry and differences of opinion, an attempt at murder was made on him, allegedly by the socialists. However, he had a narrow escape. He condemned the rule of the goondas in Pondicherry. He played a great role in the merger of the French colonies in the Indian Union and in organising the Pondicherry unit of the Indian National Congress. In the post-merger elections, all those who fought for the freedom of Pondicherry were given electoral seats. However, they were defeated due to animosity and political rivalry. Since then he disassociated himself from active politics, led a peaceful life without aspiring for any coveted positions, and died at the ripe old age of 81.*

## **Introduction**

In the freedom movement of the French Indian settlements, many prominent leaders played a vital role in the liberation of colonies for merger with the motherland. One such leader was Sellane Naicker, a champion of the French Indian freedom struggle who was honoured with the highest French title “Chevalier.”

He formed the “French India Central Merger Committee” and played a great role in the merger of the French colonies with the Indian Union. After merger, he disassociated himself from active politics without aspiring for any coveted positions and so was forgotten by the public. An attempt has been made in this paper to highlight the selfless and noble service of this great personality.

## **Life and Education**

Sellane Naicker was born on 9 September 1884, at Kalapet, a small hamlet, near Pondicherry<sup>1</sup>. His parents were Rathinasababathy and Irisammal, of an agricultural family and he belonged to the Naicker caste. He was the eighth-child of his parents and his father was headman of the village<sup>2</sup>. Sellane was also called Sababathy. After his early education in Kalapet, he joined the College Colonial at Pondicherry run by Missionaries in 1898. Sellane was also well versed in Tamil, and acquired a knowledge of Latin, French, and English<sup>3</sup>.

On 16 December 1905, he obtained his Bachelor’s Degree (Baccalaurat). In the Convocation, all the Europeans were eagerly waiting to see who would be the first rank holder. To their surprise, his father, in Indian dress came and received the prize from the Governor and everyone was astonished. He got an appointment

in the Government Office as supervisor (Surnumiraire),but he left the job to pursue a Law course and joined the Law College on 24 August 1906, and completed his Law Degree in 1909<sup>4</sup>.

In the meantime, he married his niece Danabhagiyam on 2 June, 1907. He had two daughters, namely, Padmathilagam and Kamaladevi. Within six months of the birth of the second daughter, his wife passed away. Though young, he did not marry for the second time because he wanted to devote and sacrifice his life for the nation.

### **Legal Profession**

After getting his Law Degree he took his licence *en droit* (Licentiate in Law – French M.L.) from the Paris University and started his career as an Advocate in Pondicherry on 22 July, 1914<sup>5</sup>, and attained name and fame in French India in the High Court under the French legal system. He also acted as the legal adviser in the French Indian Judiciary. Due his hard work and perseverance, he was able to elevate himself on par with Gastron Pierre, a leading legal luminary of French India, by 1919<sup>6</sup>. He was described as a great judicial luminary by the veteran labour leader V. Subbiah<sup>7</sup>. In many cases, if he appeared against the Government, the Government would be in dilemma as to whether to continue the case. As a lawyer, he enjoyed a high reputation in French India<sup>8</sup>.

### **Political Life**

While practicing as an advocate, Sellane Naicker was actively involved in politics. He was elected as a Member of the Representative Assembly on 7 December, 1919, under the Second List<sup>9</sup>. He demanded a single list of voters which would necessitate the abolition of reserved seats for Europeans and the descendants

of Europeans<sup>10</sup>. He felt that the list system was an injustice to the popular majority and fought tooth and nail to abolish it. French Indian political life was dominated by a handful of powerful people. Shanmuga Mudaliar controlled the reins of French Indian politics for the first two decades of the twentieth century<sup>11</sup>. He was dethroned by Gaebele and the Gaebele party had an uninterrupted sway in Pondicherry politics for another twenty years. He was a staunch supporter of the French establishment and against the masses. He and his family members monopolised every coveted post as the President of the Conseil General, Mayor of Pondicherry and President of the Chamber de Commerce<sup>12</sup>. In this situation, Sellane was elected to the Conseil General in 1920, with the support of Gaebele. However, his best friends turned out to be his worst enemies by 1927<sup>13</sup>.

In the face of growing nepotism and favouritism of Gaebele, a new party known as the Popular Party was started in 1922 by Sellane Naicker, Joseph David and Thomas Aroul against Gaebele<sup>14</sup>. From 1927 the political events in Pondicherry were dominated by Sellane and his collaborators replacing Gaebele for a short while<sup>15</sup>. However, a split occurred in the party due to a difference of opinion between Sellane and David on the allocation of certain budgetary provisions. The result was the division of the party into two factions – one headed by Sellane and the other by David<sup>16</sup>. In close association with Thomas Aroul, Sellane's Party contested the Municipal elections on 13 May 1928 and, for the first time, Gaebele's party suffered a setback. Thomas Aroul was elected President of the Conseil General in the changed political situation<sup>17</sup>. This marked the first success of the Sellane-Thomas Aroul combination which wielded political power for more than a decade. The period witnessed the entry of political refugees from British India to Pondicherry that awakened nationalism in French India. When the mill workers were subjugated by the French administration, Sellane and his associates fought

for the rights of the working class<sup>18</sup>. He was responsible for the formation of the Labour Union in 1927<sup>19</sup>.

He served as Municipal Mayor of the Ouzhugarai Commune in 1928<sup>20</sup>. He introduced many welfare measures for the benefit of the people and was responsible for the construction of the Municipality buildings in Ouzhugarai. He was a member of the committee appointed by the French Government, which recommended a wage hike and reduced working hours in favour of the workers. Later, the recommendations of the committee were accepted as the Labour Law in 1937<sup>21</sup>.

He occupied the coveted position of the President of the Conseil General from 1928 to 1933. At that time, there was inflation in France and the salary of the employees were hiked. Similar pay hike was expected by the higher officials of the French Indian government, and they approached Sellane, the President of the Conseil. But he turned down their request stating that it would empty the coffers of the government and, in turn, he earned the displeasure of the French officials including the Governor, Andrien Juvanon<sup>22</sup>.

His courage and political honesty and unparalleled legal knowledge were commendable. Justice Maharaja of the Madras High Court used to consult him on French laws. In honour of his scholarship, the French administration awarded him the highest title of honour the “Chevalier” on 25 November, 1933<sup>23</sup>.

He was actively involved in the Self-Respect Movement. When Bharathidasan arranged a meeting on behalf of this movement in Pondicherry in 1930, in which E.V. Ramasamy Naicker, was the key speaker, Sellane Naicker too participated in it. He was associated with other frontline leaders like P.T. Rajan.

Sellane Naicker strongly opposed the “Organic Ordinance” that was enacted in 1930 against the natives<sup>24</sup>. The differences in scales of pay and lack of opportunities for high positions were not acceptable to him. He wanted to eliminate the differences and discrimination that persisted between the French and the natives. He wanted to abolish the “renunciation” system<sup>25</sup>. To check the political activities of Sellane, the French Government induced his former friend to contest against him and Naicker was defeated in the elections<sup>26</sup>. However, he did not hesitate to raise his voice in condemning and criticising the French officials whenever they violated the law. While working with the French, he made use of his position to work for the welfare of the people of Pondicherry<sup>27</sup>. Further, to check the growing influence of Sellane, all his relatives were terminated from the government service without prior notice. However, these intimidatory tactics did not serve to deter him from his political activities<sup>28</sup>.

### **Freedom Movement**

Although political conditions in the French Indian establishments were different from those of British India, the people of French India showed considerable zeal for freedom from French rule and wanted Pondicherry to become an integral part of the Indian nation<sup>29</sup>. Mahatma Gandhi’s influence on the patriots of Pondicherry was tremendous even in the early days and Sellane Naicker was very much attracted to his ideals and he threw himself heart and soul into the political revolution. The Civil Disobedience Movement launched under the leadership of Gandhiji awakened the political and social consciousness of the people in Pondicherry. When Gandhiji visited Pondicherry on 17 February 1934, and when Nehru visited in 1936, Sellane Naicker accorded them a warm welcome. He could be called the pioneer of the liberation movement in Pondicherry<sup>30</sup>. The visits of Gandhiji and Nehru



to Pondicherry were significant in the sense that such visits brought the politically conscious people into close contact with the freedom movement of India<sup>31</sup>.

On seeing the stubborn nature and political activities of Sellane Naicker, the French Indian administration foisted unfounded allegations against him. To bring disrepute to his name and fame, he was blamed for patronising anti-social elements in his house. The police searched his house stating that he gave shelter to one Arumugam Padaiyatchi, a criminal on 20 October, 1934<sup>32</sup>. On May 13, 1937, his house was attacked by *goondas* with the connivance of the French officials. His brother-in-law, Parthasarathy, was dismissed from service without any reason<sup>33</sup>.

The post-second world war period witnessed the emergence of the National Democratic Front in Pondicherry which consisted of Sellane's Party, the Communists and the Socialists on 15 September, 1945<sup>34</sup>. It advocated complete self-rule as its avowed objective. Sellane Naicker was closely associated with the Communist Party and its front line labour leader V. Subbiah to fight for the common cause. All the false implications against Subbiah and Bharathidasan were legally disproved by Sellane Naicker<sup>35</sup>. Later, due to his persistent campaign on 23 August, 1945, separate electorates were abolished and a single list of voters was enforced in French India<sup>36</sup>.

The year 1946 stands out as a turning point in the history of the freedom movement in Pondicherry. It was in this year that a group of politically conscious young men formed the French Indian National Congress and decided to follow the foot-steps of the Indian National Congress<sup>37</sup>. Similarly, a band of youngsters formed the French Indian Students Congress on 17 August, 1946, to mobilise younger elements to fight for the cause of freedom<sup>38</sup>. Sellane Naicker was the advisor for both the organisations<sup>39</sup>.

## French Politics

The French Colonial Minister Marius Moutet visited Pondicherry on 9 January 1947, and the tremors of Indian freedom were felt in French India<sup>40</sup>. Sellane and other leaders met the Minister and stated that the people of Pondicherry wished to join Mother India and the French also should leave gracefully like the British.

In July 1947, the French Indian Socialist party was formed breaking away from the National Democratic Front. The dominant figure and the driving force of the new party was Goubert. Both Goubert and Subbiah were locked in a bitter rivalry and Goubert's official position enabled him to defeat his Communist rivals with the support of the French administration<sup>41</sup>. However, with the proclamation of India's freedom on 15 August, 1947, the freedom movement gathered momentum.

On 12 October 1947, the students went on procession and led demonstrations voicing their demand for the liberation of the French settlements. The students were brutally assaulted by the police and Sellane Naicker openly criticised and condemned the atrocities of police<sup>42</sup>. When the Referendum Agreement was signed on 8 June, 1948, between the Government of India and France to decide the merger issue, Sellane Naicker stated that it was a ploy adopted by the French to cheat the Indian Government under Nehru<sup>43</sup>. In 1948, he was able to expose the smuggling activities that were going on in the French territory with the support of the French government and the loss of revenue in *crores* to the Indian Government. On his suggestion, the Indian government introduced a customs barrier and an economic blockade<sup>44</sup>.

In July 1949, Sellane Naicker and Youth Congress leaders submitted a memorandum to Omandur Ramasamy Reddiar, the

then Chief Minister of Madras stating that the election of 1949 was an eye-wash and requested him to extend all feasible support for the liberation of the French Indian settlements. Even the All India Congress Committee observers Rajkumar and Subarayan endorsed the statement of Naicker<sup>45</sup>.

Chandernagore was merged with India on 26 June 1949. When celebrations of “Chandernagore Day” was in progress in Pondicherry, *goondas* patronised by the French Indian Government and the Socialists attacked the nationalists<sup>46</sup>. Even the Communists were stripped of their hold on the working class of Pondicherry by a systematic policy of persecution, terrorism and physical liquidation. The Assembly Election of 1950 was the occasion for the outbreak of new violence in Pondicherry with all its attendant evils<sup>47</sup>.

It was essentially a fight between Goubert and Subbiah. Rowdies were let loose on the opponents of Goubert. Aided and abetted by the administration the *goondas* looted and burnt the headquarters of the French India Communist Party located in the house of Subbiah. Anti-social elements were reigning in Pondicherry. *The Hindu* wrote, “Such lawless acts particularly the incendiary as a measure were calculated to strike terror among the pro-Indian elements of Pondicherry<sup>48</sup>.” Thus, the demand for integration without referendum was unanimously voiced by all political parties except the Socialists. On 16 August 1950, Sellane Naicker met Kamaraj, the then Chief Minister of Madras, and insisted on giving protection to the refugees of French India living on the borders. He wrote a letter to S.K. Banerjee, Foreign Secretary, for protection from the Government of India to the nationalists<sup>49</sup>.

When the neutral observers from the International Court of Justice came to Pondicherry to study the feasibility of conducting a referendum in April 1951, the public were not allowed to meet

them. Durai Munusamy one of the disciples of Sellane Naicker was able to communicate the wishes of the nationalists. So the nationalists under the leadership of Sellane Naicker were given audience with the neutral observers to appraise the political conditions and the feelings of the people<sup>50</sup>. It exposed the evil intensions of the French colonial rule. On 16 July 1951, Sellane and his associates met Nehru in Bangalore and appraised him about the efforts of merger rights and sought the support and help of the Government of India for the merger<sup>51</sup>.

Tension in Pondicherry was widespread after July 1952. Sellane Naicker, the most influential and efficient leader appealed to political leaders to sink their differences and join together for liberating Pondicherry from French rule<sup>52</sup>. As the merger movement was gaining momentum under the guidance of Sellane Naicker and Dadala Ramanayya,<sup>53</sup> Menard and his henchmen like Goubert, Muthupillai, and Mottucomarappa Reddiar became anxious about their own position and the continuance of French rule. A new wave of terrorism was launched in Pondicherry and a plot to kill 65-year-old Sellane Naicker was hatched.

On 29 August 1952, hooligans shot him with three bullets at his residence. Two bullets miscarried and the third one hit Naicker on the left thigh, above the tibia bone<sup>54</sup>. Naicker escaped miraculously and refused to lodge a complaint with the French police or to be treated in the French hospital at Pondicherry. He was taken and admitted in the General Hospital, Madras. The local government did not make any arrest. The Indian leaders expressed their shock and in particular, Prime Minister Nehru had condemned the attempt on Naicker in very strong words on 9 October, 1952. Nehru said that, “One respected leader of Pondicherry only a few days back, was brutally attacked” and he ended by saying that “there is then the end of the plebiscite business<sup>55</sup>.”

## **Birth of French India Central Merger Committee**

When Pondicherry was in the hands of thugs, the pro-merger leaders went into hiding fearing for their lives<sup>56</sup>. A gloom descended upon the nationalist leaders. Subbiah and his mouthpiece *Swadeshmitran* suggested the necessity of taking strong measures for the liberation of the Indian territories<sup>57</sup>. It paved the way for the formation of a common front of the pro-merger parties at Cuddalore on 21 January, 1954, known as the French India Central Merger Committee under the leadership of Sellane Naicker. And then Dadala Ramanayya was chosen as the General Secretary<sup>58</sup>. It was the efforts of Rajkumar, General Secretary of the External Affairs wing of the Indian National Congress that were crowned with success<sup>59</sup>. The object of the new party was to bring the different nationalist elements of French India under one umbrella. It insisted that all the four French settlements were to be merged with the Indian Union. This was the first step for starting a mass campaign in favour of integration. Sellane Naicker said that French India had democracy only in name, but in fact was subjected to all sorts of tyranny<sup>60</sup>.

## **Defection of Socialists**

The political crisis in Pondicherry was deepening and Menard; the French Governor, found himself in deep political trouble in the first week of March 1954<sup>61</sup>. It was the outcome of hostilities between the French Governor and the French Indian Deputy and the Minister for Revenue, Goubert. People felt great relief at the fall of the Fascist rule of Goubert. In the scandal relating to the auction sale of *toddy* (country liquor), Goubert's men were involved and the police arrested some of them<sup>62</sup>. The French Government issued an order on 30 March, 1954, dismissing Goubert and Mottucomarappa Reddiar from the Conseil without

any show cause notice<sup>63</sup>. To save his skin Goubert turned a nationalist and hoisted the Indian National Flag at Nettapakkam police station on 31 March, 1954<sup>64</sup>.

On 7 April 1954, for the first time, the National Flag of India was hoisted in Pondicherry by the Communist Party led by Subbiah under “Operation Pondicherry<sup>65</sup>.” On 30 April, 1954, a Joint Action Committee consisting of Subbiah, Sellane Naicker, (President of the Central Merger Committee), and the representatives of the French India Leftist Parties including the Students Congress announced their decision to conduct a non-violent fight for freedom<sup>66</sup>. The Central Merger Committee invested Sellane Naicker with full powers to conduct *Satyagraha* in Pondicherry<sup>67</sup>.

A mass demonstration was organised in Pondicherry on 13 April 1954, on the occasion of the Tamil New Year’s day and thousands of textile workers took part<sup>68</sup>. The most spectacular aspect was the participation of women in the demonstration. When the students courted arrest, Sellane Naicker went to the court after many years and released all of them<sup>69</sup>. Sellane was besieged in his house by *goondas* armed with daggers on 14 April, 1954,<sup>70</sup> but he escaped. On every Independence Day, Naicker used to hoist the national flag in his house and the French police used to threaten him to bring down the flag<sup>71</sup>.

When the political atrocities went on increasing, the Government of India took a serious note of the developments and a strong protest note was sent to the French ambassador demanding punishment of the police responsible for the outrage and compensation for the nationals. In the meantime, negotiations between the Governments of India and France were resumed and a joint declaration was issued on the merger of the French settlements with the rest of India<sup>72</sup>.

## **Referendum: A Brain Child of Sellane Naicker**

When the Government of India and the representatives of the French Government were negotiating to hold a referendum or opinion poll to ascertain the views of the citizens of the colonies, it was Sellane Naicker, the legal luminary and the founding father of the liberation government in the French colony who suggested that the opinion of the elected representatives was tantamount to the opinion and wishes of the citizens who had elected them. Pursuant to this laudable view of the legal expert, the parallel government run under the aegis of the Indian Mission in the colony held a referendum at Keezur (18 October), 1954<sup>73</sup>. This was followed by a resolution in the Council of Representatives. The suggestion given by Sellane Naicker brought a sigh of relief to both the colonial administration and the Indian Mission<sup>74</sup>. He was one of the signatories of the Indo-French agreement that led to the signing by the Indian Government on 1 November 1954, and the *de facto* merger took place<sup>75</sup>.

## **Post-Merger Politics**

Soon after the merger, the political situation in Pondicherry became very fluid due to new alignments and adjustments among the political parties. The unity and co-operation evinced by all the political parties during the freedom struggle no longer existed. The Congress High command deputed Mahesh Saran as the special Representative of the All India Congress Committee to Pondicherry in January 1955, to ensure that the very first election after merger was not marred by disunity and dissension<sup>76</sup>. He suggested the formation of an *ad hoc* committee of representatives of all parties willing to join it. But the admission of some political leaders into the Congress was opposed by the Pondicherry National Congress headed by Sellane Naicker<sup>77</sup>. The Pondicherry National Congress charged that some of the members of the

*ad hoc* committee had no popular support because they had worked to sabotage the liberation movement in the past<sup>78</sup>. Despite the efforts of stalwarts like Kamaraj to patch up the differences, the Congress was split when Sellane Naicker declared that his party would contest the elections independently of the Congress under *Makkal Munnani* (People's Front)<sup>79</sup>. The Communist Party was the chief constituent of the "People's Front"<sup>80</sup>."

The Pondicherry National Congress of Sellane Naicker, which contested 19 seats with the "Standing Lion" as the symbol, was totally routed<sup>81</sup>. When an appeal was made by Goubert in March 1956, a sizeable number of members from the Pondicherry National Congress joined Goubert, deserting Naicker<sup>82</sup>. Since then Naicker disassociated himself from active politics and led a peaceful life without aspiring for any coveted positions. However, Naicker gave free legal consultation to the Government of Pondicherry at the request of Nehruji<sup>83</sup>. He also worked for the social and economic advancement of the people of Pondicherry whenever he was approached. He died at the ripe age of 81, on 11 August, 1965<sup>84</sup>.

## **Conclusion**

Among the many freedom fighters of French India, Sellane Naicker was a prominent personality. He played a substantial role in the peaceful transfer of the sovereign power of the colonies from the French to the Indian Union. On many occasions, his steadfast approach and nationalistic fervour had kept him in the forefront on many issues. He was instrumental in guiding the freedom movement in French India and bringing together various political groups under one umbrella. He claimed the independence of the colonies as a matter of inherent right.

He never sought any favour from the Government of Independent Pondicherry for whose cause he worked day in and day out.



He never became a “Yesman” of the new regime like some others to reap favours and titles. The new rulers of free Pondicherry at the time could never bend this old man’s moral integrity and hence always kept a distance from the “Old Lion” of Pondicherry. Unfortunately, due to political skirmishes and rivalry, the name of Sellane Naicker, the “Lion” among freedom fighters of Pondicherry does not find a place in the list of freedom fighters prepared by the Government of Pondicherry except naming the Government school at Kalapet and an urban colony on the outskirts of West Boulevard.

He became the “Forgotten Hero” of the freedom movement when everybody including many anti-merger men and turncoats became the new *thiagies* of the freedom movement. The list of freedom fighters prepared by the Pondicherry Government must be rewritten with his name at the top and he must be honoured either with a memorial or with a statue to remember him as a champion of justice.

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**PONDICHERRY MUNICIPAL  
ADMINISTRATION  
DURING THE POST COLONIAL PERIOD**

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**Abstract**

*Municipal administration has deep roots in our country. It takes care of all the civil needs of the people. It was first introduced in Pondicherry by the French. This administrative system prevailed in other detached French colonies and derives its inspiration in India. The local self-government of Pondicherry was in France. The system of Local Government introduced by the British in India was not similar to that adopted by the French Pondicherry. It had adopted a commune system of local government which was not found anywhere in India. The main thrust of this paper is to examine the various measures of the municipality and its recognition to suit rural and urban development needs for national building activities. The British and the French thought of constructing a future local Government set-up for Pondicherry. In Pondicherry, a uniform pattern for all local authorities for both rural and urban areas was developed. The mayor was the real political chief of each of the Municipal authority. At present, he is the head of the Chairman of the Pondicherry Municipal Corporation.*

## **Introduction**

Pondicherry is located on the East Coast of South India. It was the head of the overseas territory of the French colonial power in India from 1674 onwards. The other French settlements were Karaikal, Mahe, Yanam, and Chandranagore. Pondicherry came to have a Municipality as early as 1790 A.D. constituted by the General Assembly in France<sup>1</sup>. The territory of Pondicherry is an irregular land in the South Arcot District of Tamil Nadu in South India. The region is spread over an area of 293 Sq.kms with 267 villages<sup>2</sup>. Pondicherry region is divided into the smaller units of Local Administration. Urban Pondicherry is under the Municipal Administration.

The French system of Municipal Administration was established in Pondicherry from 1880. The municipal administration was virtually the pivot of the whole administrative machinery in Pondicherry. The Union Territory of Pondicherry was originally divided into five Municipalities and ten communes, namely Pondicherry, Ozhukarai, Karaikal, Mahe and Yanam and Ariyankuppam, Villianur, Mannadipattu, Nettapakkam, Bahour, Kottucheri, Niravi, Nedungadu, T.R.Pattinam, and Tirunallar respectively<sup>3</sup>. These were administered by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor who have been re-designated as Chairman and Vice-Chairman by the Act of 1973. In the absence of Municipal elections, Pondicherry Municipality was administered by the bureaucracy.

## **The Post-Colonial Period**

The French establishments in India were merged with the Indian Union on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1954. At the time of merger, the subject of Local Administration was dealt with by the Bureau des Affaires Politiques and the Municipal Administration was covered by the

decree of 12<sup>th</sup> March, 1880. The Local Administration Department was constituted only on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1963 to deal with all matters connected with the local administration at the secretariat level<sup>4</sup>. The inspectorate of municipal councils and local boards were formed in June 1967, to exercise control over the municipalities.

### **Re-Organisation of Municipality**

In Pondicherry, a common structure of Municipal Administration for urban as well as rural areas was established. A new law of 1973 replaced the old French laws. Moreover, the municipalities remained stagnant and the establishment charges had increased gradually to reach almost half of the Income of the municipalities<sup>5</sup>. Adequate funds were not left to meet even the essential as well as the basic needs of the population. Further, much of the powers conferred on the municipalities by the various French laws have ceased to have effect as Indian laws had replaced them.

### **Pondicherry Municipality**

The municipal administration as conceived in the nineteenth century stood eroded substantially. Hence, the system was replaced by the Pondicherry village and Commune Panchayat Act of 1973 and the Pondicherry Municipal Act of 1973 respectively, to govern village and town administration<sup>6</sup>. Under the reorganized setup, the Inspectorate of Local Bodies was converted into a directorate headed by a Director to deal with the administrative matters. With the introduction of the Pondicherry Municipalities Act 1973, four municipalities came into existence in Pondicherry, Karaikal, Mahe, and Yanam towns. The jurisdiction of the Pondicherry Municipality extended to Pondicherry and Mudaliarpettai commune, which stood amalgamated to form a single municipality. Thereafter, it was called Pondicherry Municipality<sup>7</sup>. The Mairie (Town Hall) in Pondicherry is the Office of the Mayor.



Under the new law, all functions excluding those which were assigned to the Chairman, i.e., those which were hitherto exercised by the Mayor appointed under the Municipal Act of 1973 came to be exercised by the Commissioner. The Mayors were also relieved of their day-to-day administrative responsibilities enabling them to be in greater contact with the public. The Commissioner was appointed as the chief executive head of the Pondicherry Municipality<sup>8</sup>.

### **Municipal Election**

French India adopted the French system of Municipal election for the governance of the civil administration. The election was conducted once in six years. The first municipal election was held in July 1955 on the basis of Universal Adult Franchise for sixteen municipal councils. In October 1961, the elections to all the municipal councils were conducted for the second time. In 1965, an Act was passed by which Indian citizens alone became eligible to vote in the elections. Pondicherry had witnessed the last local body elections way back in 1968 as per the French system<sup>9</sup>.

In 1973, the DMK-CPI led coalition ministry had replaced the century old French laws and introduced the Indianised Civil Legislations Act. But this Act of 1973 remained on paper and elections were not held. A special officer was appointed in the place of Mayor and the six-year term ended. This was due to the political instability that prevailed in the Union Territory of Pondicherry<sup>10</sup>.

There was a proposal to merge the enclaves of Pondicherry with the neighbouring states due to continuous political instability when the Janata Party was in power at the Centre. Subsequently, by the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendments of the Indian Constitution,

the Pondicherry village and Commune Panchayat Act and Pondicherry Municipalities Act 1994 were passed<sup>11</sup>. Again these amendments also continued to remain on paper and there were no elections.

### **Election of 2006**

The Local Body Election was held in June-July 2006 after a gap of thirty eight years on the directions of the Madras High Court. The previous elections were held in 1968 under the French System of Commune Municipal Councils. Elections would be conducted for a total of 1138 Local Body Posts, including those of Municipal Chairman, 98 Village Panchayat Presidents, 122 Municipal Councilors, 98 Commune Panchayat Councilors and 815 Village Panchayat Ward Members, for 5 Municipalities, 10 Commune Panchayats and 98 Village Panchayats<sup>12</sup>. The term of these bodies ended on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2011. The Civic election process was started after the Madras High Court direction to the Pondicherry Government from August 2012. Uddipta Ray was appointed as the new State Election Commissioner to conduct the civic body election in Pondicherry Municipality.

### **Mayor**

The Revolution of 1789 standardised the organizational structure of all communes in France, irrespective of their size, Active citizens had to elect a municipal body, presided over by the Mayor and, the same to be extended to the French colonies in India. Pondicherry was the official headquarters of the French colonies. The Pondicherry Municipality has followed the same systems of Mayor and Deputy Mayor Elections. The Mayor is elected by the Municipal Council from among its members, for a term of six years<sup>13</sup>.

The Mayor entered into Pondicherry's day-to-day political life and turned into the most familiar figure and became close to the citizens of Pondicherry town. The Mayor is the first citizen of the Pondicherry town. He presides over the meetings of the Municipal Councils. Normally, the mayor is the ceremonial head. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor have been re-designated as Chairman and Vice-Chairman as per the act of 1973<sup>14</sup>. In 2006, the Pondicherry Municipal Election Dr. Sridevi was elected Chairman of the Pondicherry Municipality. She was the first woman Chairman of the Pondicherry Municipality.

### **Powers and Duties of Municipal Authorities**

The Chairman, the Council, and Councillors and the Commissioner are the trinity of the Municipal authorities who run the Municipal administration. They are vested with adequate statutory powers to carry out their respective duties and responsibilities. They ran the municipal administration effectively. The Council being the governing body of the municipality is vested with the powers to issue directions to the Commissioner who is the executive authority. The Chairman is the Presiding Officer of the Municipal Council. He represents the Council in the day-to-day administration of the municipality. He is entitled to be kept continuously informed of the working of the executive authority<sup>15</sup>.

### **Commissioner**

The Municipal Commissioner is the Chief Executive Officer of the Pondicherry Municipality. He has responsibilities for the administration of the Municipality and the implementation of policies and programmes decided by the Council. The Commissioner has to consult the Chairman in respect of all matters; such consultation would be conducive to the smooth working of the

Municipality. The Commissioner exercises wide functions in the administrative and financial areas. He participates in the meeting of the Councils and Committees and answers the questions raised by the Councillors. He acts as a link between the Government and the Corporation. He has wide powers of appointment, discipline, supervision and control over the personnel. He also exercises financial discretionary and emergency powers<sup>16</sup>. He carries the resolutions of the Municipality Councils and also its lawful decisions and directions.

### **Functions of the Council**

Every State in the country has enacted legislation for the Constitution of the Municipalities in the State specifying their functions, structure, resource and their role in the civil administration. Pondicherry town is having a population of 2,20,750 (2001 census) with 19.46 sq.km. urban area town limit. They must form ward committees to ensure true people's participation in the governance of the area. Their participation in urban governance brings the municipality closer to the people<sup>17</sup>.

The social measures that are likely to promote public safety, health of the inhabitants of the locality, generally comes within the ambit of the functions of the Council. No resolution of the Municipal Council would require the prior approval of the government. However, an authenticated minutes of the proceedings of the Municipal Council is to be forwarded by the Chairman to the Director within three days of the date of the meeting<sup>18</sup>. The Municipal Councils are empowered to levy taxes, which are compulsory. In some cases, the tax may be imposed with the approval of the government. The municipal councils could frame their own budget within the limits of their own financial resources. The responsibility for the collection of taxes lies with the Commissioner<sup>19</sup>.

## **Public Services**

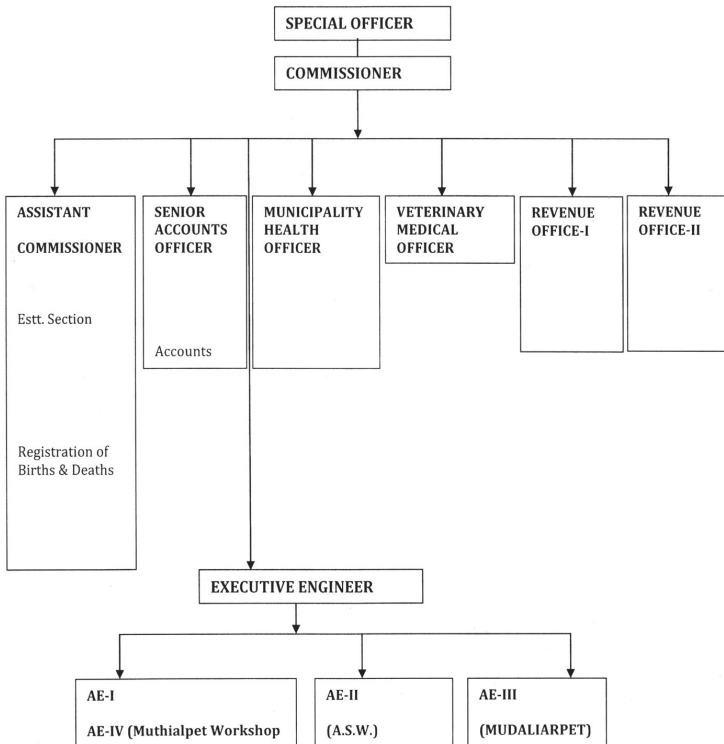
Pondicherry Municipality is responsible for lighting public streets, places and buildings, keeping them tidy and free from all encumbrances, controlling and stopping dangerous trades and practices, constructing and maintaining the burial grounds, markets, slaughter houses, cattle sheds etc. They are also responsible for water supply, drainage and sewerage, preparation of composted manure, providing relief for the destitute and also in times of scarcity, for providing preventive and remedial measures during the outbreak of epidemic etc<sup>20</sup>.

The Municipality is also responsible for the registration of births, deaths and marriages. As part of their optional duties, the Municipalities also provide for the laying new roads, establishment and maintenance of libraries, museums, lunatic asylums, houses for the destitute and disabled persons, town halls, Municipal offices, shops, *dharmasalas*, rest houses, the maintenance of parks, control of the milk trade, control of the dog menace within the municipal limits. These public needs are fulfilled by the Municipal authorities.

## **Organisational Structure**

The distinct characteristic of a city is the huge concentration of population within a limited area. The management of civil services, requires an effective organizational structure, efficient personnel and adequate finance for the development of the municipal administration of Pondicherry<sup>21</sup>.

## ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE



### **Controlling Authorities of Municipality**

The Government appoints a Director and other officers as may be required for the purpose of inspecting or superintending the operation and the day-to-day administration of Pondicherry Municipality. There are seven sections, each section under a Municipal officer, for the developmental activities of the Municipality.

**I. General Section (Establishment)**

- Maintenance of all service matters of all employees of Pondicherry Municipality.
- Issue of Appointment/Transfer orders of employees, etc.
- Maintenance service records.

**II. Accounts Section**

- Preparation of all type of Bills pertaining to Accounts and General Establishment.
- Refund of Deposits paid for the road cutting charges, stacking of building materials and service of sewage tanker.
- This section also deals with the bank transaction.
- Disbursement of pension and other retirement benefits.
- Preparation of Annual Budget.
- A.G. Audits & LFA Audits<sup>22</sup>.

**III. Engineering Section**

- Permission for cutting road and platform.
- Permission for stacking of building materials.
- Street lights.
- Laying/providing and maintenance of roads, drains and culverts, municipal buildings/construction and maintenance.
- Public taps.
- Public parks/gardens.
- Maintenance of workshops and vehicles of Municipalities and Commune Panchayats in the Pondicherry region.
- Maintenance of graveyards/cemeteries.
- Permission for the erection of Pandal/Shamiyana/Stage on Municipal roads.
- Permission for laying OFC by private agencies.
- Preparation of all type of bills pertaining to the engineering section.

**IV. Health Section**

- Issue of exhumation permit.
- Cleaning of public street lanes, markets, bus stands and other public places and attending to the complaints.
- Disposal of unclaimed dead bodies.
- Control of the mosquito menace in co-ordination with the Health Department.
- Catching stray dogs, street cattle and street pigs and the issue of licences.
- Preparation of all types of bills pertaining to the health section.

**V. Revenue Section-I**

- Levy of property tax.
- Transfer Assessment Certificate.
- Issue of Assessment Certificate.
- Collection of Entertainment Tax.

**VI. Revenue Section-II**

- Levy of Profession Tax
- Issue of permission to display banners and the erection of hoardings.
- Issue of Trade Licences.
- Issue of Licence under P.F.A. Act
- Issue of permission for erection of Bunks / Shop.
- Allotment of Kalyanamandapas, Thidals and Kalairangam.

**VII. Birth and Death Section (Etat Civil)**

- Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages.
- Issue of the Certificate of Marriage, Birth and Death.
- Issue of Extract of Birth, Death and Marriage.
- Conduct of civil marriages based on the French code civil<sup>23</sup>.



## **Local Administration Department**

A function of the Local Administration Department was constituted only on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1963 to deal with all matters connected with the local administration. The Director is the head of the Local Administration Department. He and his sub-ordinates monitor the various schemes sponsored by government and executed by the local bodies. In addition, it allots the grants to the local bodies from the resources earmarked by the Government of India under the Five Year Plans. A separate engineering division has also been created in the department to assist the local bodies to execute various civil works in the Municipality and Commune Panchayats in the Pondicherry and Karaikal regions<sup>24</sup>.

The Director of Local Administration Department is the Chief Registrar of Births and Deaths. He is the Chief Executive Authority in this Union Territory for implementing the provisions of the Registration of the Births and Deaths Act, 1969. The Puducherry Registration of Births and Deaths Rules, 1978 framed under the provisions of the Act came into force from 1<sup>st</sup> March 1979. The rule invokes compulsory registration of Births and Deaths in this Territory.

The Commissioners of Commune Panchayats are re-designated as Registrars and conferred with the power to issue birth and death certificates. Since, the Registration system followed during the Ex-French period was working well; no difficulty was encountered in the implementation of the registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969 by this Administration. Following the introduction of the Revamped system of Civil Registration system by GOI, the Puducherry Registration of Births and Deaths Rules 1999 superseding the earlier Rules have come into force from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2000<sup>25</sup>.

## **Solid Waste Management**

The performance of the Pondicherry Municipality will be judged by its conservancy services to the public. The effective early and unobtrusive clearance of all the refuse and garbage that are generated every day in houses, lanes, streets, markets and public places is the measure of the excellence of the municipal service. The conservancy includes collection, transport and disposal of garbage in all forms and solid waste.

The Government of India, Ministry of Environment and Forest, notified the Municipal Solid Waste (management and handling) Rules 2000 on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2000. As per Rule 4 of the said rules, the Municipal Authorities within the area of municipalities shall be responsible for the implementation of the provisions of rules or for any infrastructure development, for collections, storage, segregation, transportation, processing and disposal of Municipal Solid Waste<sup>26</sup>. It was extended to the rural communes also.

## **Financial Administration**

Pondicherry Municipality requires adequate resources to undertake their obligatory and discretionary functions. The Municipal Authorities get their income primarily from their own sources, that is the tax and non-tax sources, which have been assigned by the State Government. Based on that, the sources of revenue for the Pondicherry Municipality may be classified as

- Tax revenue
- Non-tax revenue
- Grants-in-aid and loan from the Government.

## **Tax Revenue**

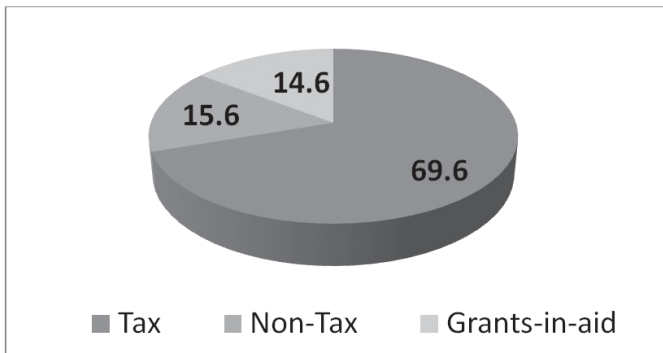
The Tax revenue consists of the income from property tax, entertainment tax, profession tax, advertisement tax, duty on transfer of properties and duty on toddy trees. All other items such as licence fee, bus stand parking fees, income from leasing of usufructs of trees, income from leasing of fishing rights, income from land properties, hire charge of vehicles, etc. constitute the non-tax revenue of the Municipality as well as some statutory grants. The government contributes every year to the funds of the Municipality by way of non-statutory grant for undertaking various development works so as to provide civil amenities. Loans are also given to the Municipality by the government for remunerative enterprises<sup>27</sup>.

## **Non-Tax Revenue**

The non-tax sources include, rents on land and houses, sale proceeds of land and other products of land, fees from educational institutions, licence fees, fines for violating municipal byelaws and other fines and fees and receipts from slaughterhouses. In addition, there are provisions for shared revenues, grants-in-aid and loans from the Government and financial institutions, besides tax and non-tax sources<sup>28</sup>.

## **Tax Sources**

The resources of the Municipality came from both internal and external sources. Internal sources constitute more than half of the total resource base of the urban local bodies. The ordinary revenue from taxation formed 69.6 percent, non-tax revenue 15.6 percent while grants and assigned revenue from the administration amount to 14.8 percent. For financial assistance from the Government, “external” means the Income from taxable sources<sup>29</sup>.



Property tax contributed about 38.3 percent of the total tax income of all communes. The next important source of tax revenue was *mahamai*, which contributed 30 percent of the tax income. Income from entertainment tax came next with 8.2 percent. The Income from tree tax amounted to 7.3 percent.

The amount received in the form of grant was Rs.1.5 per capita as against Rs.2.32 for All India as early as in 1960-61. This showed that assistance from grant to the municipalities was very meagre. The study made by the 1971 Commission showed that the cost of provision of civil amenities had increased considerably in the context of the industrialisation and urbanization for large-scale development activities in the territory. By the existing tax measures, the Commission suggested the imposition of levies of the Municipality.

- Surcharge on Stamp duty
- Taxes on Mineral rights
- Taxes on profession, trade and employment
- Taxes on motors (pump sets)

## Property Tax

The property tax or tax on building occupies a pivotal position in the system of finances of the Municipality. It is levied on

all types of buildings except those especially exempted within Municipal limits. The government, which collected the property tax on behalf of the municipality, credited the amount to the Municipal account, retaining a small percentage of the receipts of 3 percent as collecting charges. The tax was levied at a flat rate of 12 percent of the annual rental value in the Municipality of Pondicherry<sup>30</sup>.

### **Entertainment Tax**

The Entertainment tax was exclusively earmarked for Municipalities even during the French period. The rate of levy of tax on each payment for admission to any entertainment, which is varied from commune to commune and Municipality to Municipality. The tax ranged from 10 to 25 per cent of the total face value of the entrance ticket.

### **Tree Tax**

The system of levying a tax on trees tapped for toddy was in vogue for many years in the territory. This constituted one of the major sources of revenue of the municipality. The rate of levy varied from Rs.2 to 5 per coconut tree and the municipality was instructed in 1971 by the Government to enhance the rate of Rs.5 per tree. The tree tax levied both by the Administration and the Municipality should be collected jointly and an amount may be assigned to the Municipality in proportion<sup>31</sup>.

### **Grants-in-Aid**

To promote democratic decentralization and enlargement of the function of the Local bodies, the responsibility of the Municipality to cater to the growing social needs of the urban population increased in the territory. It is commonly known as the “push”

factor of urbanization. This problem acquired new dimensions in the wake of large-scale developments; the Municipality encountered some difficulties in discharging even their primary functions with their slender resources. In these circumstances, there was no other alternative for the Government but to render them financial assistance by way of grants-in-aid in such fields of activities as were required to be supplemented by Government intervention.

Such grants-in-aid and loans were granted to undertake development works, such as laying and metalling of roads, construction of latrines, *dhobi ghats*, *Kalyanamandapams*, markets, drains and gutters, overhead tanks, laying of pipe lines etc<sup>32</sup>. The present Government order to the Municipality and PWD Public Health Department for laying of water pipe lines throughout (bulwara) town of Pondicherry. Yearly grants constitute a major source of income of the Pondicherry Municipality.

## **Expenditure**

The expenditure pattern of the Municipality was such that works programme formed the most important item of expenditure involving 23.6 per cent of the total expenditure. The expenditure was mainly on public health, sanitation, public works which included roads and paths, public safety and conveniences like street lighting and general administration<sup>33</sup>.

The various items of expenditure of the Municipality were classified as compulsory and optional. For example, expenditure on the maintenance of town hall and building allotted to the Municipal office, printing charges, subscription, pension, repairs to Municipal buildings, maintenance of graveyards and cremation grounds, payment of debts, vaccination charges and maintenance of Municipal records, etc. were treated as compulsory items

of expenditure. The expenditure pattern of the Municipality to highlight that sound resource base is one of the major requirements of urban local bodies for development works<sup>34</sup>.

Both urban and rural local bodies were starved of financial resource mobilization and administrative resources. Besides this, they were compelled to work under the district bureaucracy<sup>35</sup>.

The Pondicherry Municipality should enhance local revenue. A tax on vacant urban lands should be imposed to reduce speculation. The Cinema, houses and hotels should be taxed on the basis of the total revenue collection, but not on the basis of value of the properties. Cable T.V. tax multiplies<sup>36</sup>. A favourable public opinion should be created for tax rise to meet the increasing cost of civil services. The Municipality must be encouraged to fix the maximum rates of entertainment and profession tax<sup>37</sup>. All the development departments like planning department, water supply and housing should operate under a single umbrella, namely the Secretary, Local Administration, to secure expeditious decisions through institutionalized co-ordination among related activities.

## **Conclusion**

The arrival of the French introduced various acts for the development of the Municipality in a systematic manner. They organized municipal elections. The Mayor was the head of the Municipal administration. The Municipal councils were responsible for implementing all welfare measures within the limit of Pondicherry Municipality. During the post merger period, old municipal acts was replaced by the Act of 1973.

A new Municipal Administrative System was introduced in Pondicherry Municipality. Pondicherry Municipality should be up-graded as a City Corporation in view of the rabid urbanization.

The rules and regulations of the Pondicherry Municipality, which were based on the French practices, methods, and procedures, have been carried on even after independence. Hence, they need to be revised keeping in mind the present regulations.

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**19**

**R.C. MAJUMDAR:  
THE CONSOLIDATION OF NATIONALIST  
HISTORIOGRAPHY**

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R.C. Majumdar was one of the last stalwarts of the older generation of historians in India, who is probably, most respected for his independent views and uncompromising attitude towards the interference of those in power in the objective analysis of historians. He stood for the integrity of history and historian. His biggest contribution to India and Indian history came in the form of eleven volumes of the monumental “The History and Culture of the Indian People,” under the aegis of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. He was the Chief Editor of these volumes.

He began his life –long history –writing journey with his doctoral thesis entitled, “Corporate Life in Ancient India” in 1918. The important theory propounded in this research thesis was that, in ancient India “religion did not engross the whole or even an undue proportion of the public attention.”<sup>1</sup> This was more in the spirit of rebuttal to the Euro – Centric view of Indians not having a proper history, because of their being too religious minded and other –worldly, especially during the ancient period. But his evidences are perfect and conclusions logical – In his methods, he is both scientific and thorough.

His “Outline of Ancient Indian History and Civilization” (1927), was another useful contribution. In fact, this work is projected on a large canvas and it went into six editions from 1927 to

1971. His “Early History of Bengal” published by the Dacca University in 1943 was later developed into a substantial co-operative work: “A History of Bengal” in two volumes (1943). Majumdar was the co-author with K.K. Dutta and H.C. Ray Chaudhari of “An Advanced History of India” (1946), which, even today, is considered one of the best text-books ever to be written on Indian history.

Following the example of some of his predecessors and colleagues, he too embarked on studying the colonial heritage of India – as if, just to prove what the Englishmen had achieved in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was achieved by us before the birth of Christianity itself. Thus came his “Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far – East,” exploring the history and culture of the Indianized states of South –East Asia in three volumes. Apart from its intrinsic merit, the work is significant in the sense that it had made available to those unacquainted with French and Dutch a systematic account of ancient Indian efforts in South-East Asia through a thousand years of its history. As a matter of fact, he had been accused of an imperialist approach towards these Asian colonies, just like K.A. Nilakanda Sastri, It is however, a fact that Majumdar and Sastri etc, never implied “Political Colonialism”; rather what these Indian scholars were suggesting with reference to the South –East Asian countries was their being merely “cultural colonies.” Thus, Indian colonialism did not have the same exploitative tendencies and, as a consequence, the socioeconomic effects of European colonialism of the nineteenth century.

R.C. Majumdar’s *magnum opus* was “The History and Culture of the Indian People” brought out in Eleven voluminous volumes, each of which he edited thoroughly, systematically, and meticulously, adding footnotes and appendices wherever necessary; getting chapters written by the authorities and specialists in the respective fields of studies; but maintaining a high degree of academic

honesty and integrity as is evident in his approach towards chapters VI and VII written by Abdur Rashid and chapter XX written by M.W. Mirza in Volume VII. To use the editor's own words: "The editor notes with regret that, in spite of his best efforts, he could not establish contact with Prof. Abdur Rashid who wrote chapters VI and VII (Jahangir and Shahjahan) and Prof. M.W. Mirza who wrote the section on Islam in Chapter XX, both of whom were in Pakistan, and could not revise the proofs of their articles. The Editor had not, therefore, the advantage of discussing with Prof. Rashid some points on which serious differences of opinion made this course a very desirable one. He has, therefore, kept unaltered the text of Prof. Rashid and expressed his own views in the footnotes<sup>2</sup>."

Volume VI of the Bhavan's "The History and Culture of the Indian People" was, as a matter of fact, significant for a number of reasons. First and foremost, the foreword of the President is not only brief, but insignificant; secondly, it has a longer and very significant preface; thirdly, he has written the following chapters, I – "The sources," III – "Ghiyasuddin Tughluq," IV – "Muhammad Bin Tughluq," V – "Firoz Shah," VI – "The Successors of Firoz Shah," VII – "The Invasion of Timur etc.," and Sections D and E of Chapter XIII, viz. I – "Assam," II – "Mithila" and III – "Nepal" in D. "The Minor States," and "Malabar and Portuguese" in Section E. He has also written an Appendix on "The Use of Guns in Medieval India." Once again he has written Sections "A – General Review," ("Vaishnavism" along with D.C. Sarkar), "D – Mystic Saints" in Chapter XVI; "Section C- Hindu-Muslim Relations" in Chapter XVIII<sup>3</sup>.

In the preface, he writes that "the first five volumes, dealing with the history of the ancient Hindus, were comparatively speaking, free from what would be regarded as serious controversial

issues of the present day. The present volume, dealing with the beginnings of the Muslim settlement in India on a permanent basis, naturally has to deal with topics which have a direct bearing on many lives today.” He clarifies that he would rigidly follow three basic rules of writing objective history and if unpalatable facts come out, one will have to bear and forebear. “First, that history is no respecter of persons or communities; Secondly, that its sole aim is to find out the truth by following the canons commonly accepted as sound by all historians; and thirdly, to express the truth without fear, envy, malice, passion or prejudice, and irrespective of all extraneous considerations, both political and humane.” In order to clear the mists of controversies, he recommends and has followed the true path of history – writing “the question to be asked is not whether it is pleasant or unpleasant, mild or strong, impolitic or imprudent, but simply whether it is true or false, just or unjust, and above all, whether it is or is it not supported by the evidence at our disposal<sup>4</sup>.

Regarding the controversial issue of Hindu – Muslim relations, he is candid in his admission that there were definite barriers between the Hindus and Muslims in the medieval period, which kept them apart and aloof. “These are primarily religious bigotry on the side of the Muslims, and social bigotry on the part of the Hindus”<sup>5</sup>. He opines, “these differences are generally sought to be explained away or minimized. Such an attitude may be due to praise worthy motives, but is entirely out of place in historical writings.<sup>6</sup> As he has written on the Tughluqs, as a whole, and edited the chapter on the Khiljis, we may refer to his opinion regarding the reigns of these two dynasties to give us an idea. He writes “The popular notion that after the conquest of Muhammad Ghorī, India formed a Muslim Empire under various dynasties, is hardly borne by facts. It was Alauddin Khilji who, for the first time, established Muslim suzerainty over nearly the whole of India. But his actual sovereignty did not extend beyond

the Vindhya. The empire of Muhammad bin Tughluq, which included the southern most part of India as a province under his governor, broke up within a decade of his accession (A.D. 1325), and before another decade was over, the Turkish empire passed away for ever. “ It is clear that “barring the two very short lived empires under the Khiljis and Muhammad bin Tughluq which lasted, respectively, for less than twenty and ten years, there was no Turkish empire of India”<sup>7</sup>.

Regarding Timur’s invasion about which he had written in this volume, he says that two aims of the invasion were putting Islam on a firm footing in India, by destroying the infidels (Kafirs or Hindus) and plundering their wealth. He says, “He was no doubt encouraged by the tottering condition of the Delhi Sultanate.” He asserts that he is writing Timur’s account on the basis of conclusive evidence of the autocrat himself: “Fortunately for historians, Timur has himself recorded his misdeeds, as it would otherwise be difficult to believe in the inhuman atrocities perpetrated by him..... the climax was reached in the cold – blooded massacre of one hundred thousand Hindu prisoners outside the plains of Delhi – an event unparalleled in the history of the world<sup>8</sup>.” As far as, the Portuguese domination of the coastal regions is concerned, he opines that for nearly two centuries. The “Portuguese became a by-word for cruelty in India.” Both Vasco da Gama and Timur were inspired by similar motives of propagation of their religion and acquisition of wealth and both were cruel-, “almost fiendish in character<sup>9</sup>.”

As far as the first chapter on the sources of medieval Indian history is concerned, he wrote with precision that they are court histories, pure and simple.” Naturally, “their authors could not always take an impartial and unprejudiced view..... The contemporary court histories concentrate their attention upon the Sultan and his doings, and seldom touch upon topics or events

with which he was not directly or indirectly connected.” Thus, these court –histories “hardly ever noticed the people at large or gave any information about their lives and activities social manners and customs, economic conditions etc. This deficiency is partly made up by the writings of foreign visitors to India<sup>10</sup>.

As the general editor, writing the preface of volume VII of the series of “The History and Culture of the Indian People,” he writes, thus, “This the seventh volume of the series, deals with the period from 1526 to 1707 A.D. during which the Mughals gradually established their authority over nearly the whole of India. This is the brightest chapter in the history of Muslim rule in India... The Mughal rule is distinguished by the establishment of a stable Government with an efficient system of administration, a very high development of architecture and paintings and, above all, wealth and splendour such as no other Islamic state in any part of the world may boast of. Akbar was the sole exception; otherwise, the Mughal emperors were more or less religious bigots according to the evidences he paraded. The climax was reached during the reign of Aurangzeb, who deliberately followed the policy of religious intolerance, as a result of which, the Rajputs, Sikhs and the Marathas rebelled and caused the disintegration of the empire. He is of the firm opinion that it is the solemn duty of a historian to bring out the truth and he should not stop at exposing the truth or social reality, even if the men in power and vested interests be against it.”

He was naturally, at pains unable to explain how a historian like K.M. Ashraf could try to prove that the Hindus and Muslims had no cultural conflict. He is willing to criticize even Lala Lajpat Rai for trying to project the Indians as a nation as the Englishmen were! <sup>12</sup> He has quoted a correspondence between Sir Jadunath Sarkar and Dr. Rajendra Prasad regarding this issue of communalism and suppression of facts by the historians in the hope of creating

amity. In his reply (1937) to Sarkar's letter, Dr. Rajendra Prasad wrote, "I entirely agree with you that no history is worth the name which suppresses or distorts facts. A historian who purposely does so under the impression that he thereby does good to his native country really harms it in the end. Much more so in the case of a country like ours which has suffered much on account of its national defects, and which must know and understand them to be able to remedy them<sup>13</sup>." This combined view of the two eminent personalities became the light-house of these volumes published by Dr.R.C. Majumdar, under the auspices of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. As far as Aurangzeb is concerned, he writes "... in spite of his religious bigotry... Aurangzeb must be regarded as a very able ruler. For it was he who had extended the southern boundary of the Mughal Empire which then included the vast region from the Hindukush and the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, ( for a near parallel, we can look to the Mauryan Empire) ..... "He, however, praises the artistic achievements of the Mughal rulers": "... great artistic achievement whose extant remains far exceed in skill and grandeur those of any other period in the history of India... The Mughal paintings have also received a world – wide renown<sup>14</sup>."

Dr. R.C. Majumdar tries to be objective in his analysis as far as the assessment of the Mughal empire is concerned: "India during the Mughal period enjoyed a proverbial reputation for wealth and splendour and attracted a large number of visitors from Europe who have left records of their impressions." In the same volume, he has written an appendix on Hemu entitled, "Hemu... A forgotten Hindu Hero." He feels it is his duty to do justice to a person "who once dominated the political stage of north India by sheer merit and personality without any advantage of birth or fortune." He writes "Neither fate nor historians have been kind to Hemu..... Historians medieval and modern, have done scant justice to, and failed to show due



appreciation of, the unique personality and greatness of a Hindu who, during the heyday of Muslim rule in India, worked his way from a grocer's shop to the throne of Delhi, and but for an accident in a battle which turned victory into defeat, might have founded a Hindu ruling dynasty instead of the Mughals; in Delhi..... bare historical justice demands that the career of this great Hindu should be impartially reviewed as a whole, separately as an important episode in the history of medieval India.”

Having occupied Delhi and Agra he, naturally, thought of occupying the royal throne, and Majumdar finds no fault in this and, rightly so, “He occupied Delhi with their ( Afghans) concurrence, declared his independent status in a practical manner by ascending the throne with the royal canopy raised over his head, issued coins in his name, and assumed the historic name Vikramaditya or Raja Bikramjit<sup>15</sup>. As a matter of fact, Hemu might have won against the forces of Akbar, led by Bairam Khan at the second battle of Panipat, “Probably he would have won but for the accident that he was struck in the eye by an arrow which pierced his brain and rendered him unconscious. An Indian army never could survive the loss of its leader, on whose life its pay depended. Hemu’s soldiers at once scattered in various directions and made no further attempt at resistance<sup>16</sup>.” He then parades the account of Sir Wolseley Haig, which corroborates what Smith had proposed: “( the Mughal forces) would certainly have been overpowered had not Hemu’s eye been pierced by an arrow<sup>17</sup>.

How difficult it was to get this volume VII – “The Mughal Empire,” and the next volume viz. Volume VIII – “The Maratha Supremacy” published is quite obvious from the fact that the volumes I to VI were published between 1951 and 1960; and Volumes IX, X and XI were published between 1963 and 1969; Volume VII in 1974 and VIII in 1977<sup>18</sup>. He discusses the aftermath

of Aurangzeb's death to begin with to introduce this volume (Vol. VIII). His remark is apt, when he says, "This chaotic political situation facilitated, if not invited, foreign invasions, notably those of Nadirshah and Ahmad Shah Abdali, which bear comparison, both in nature and effect, with those of Sultan Mahmud and Tamerlane<sup>19</sup>. Though, he considers the political history of this period "highly important," Yet, culturally, it was more significant. The nineteenth century Indian Renaissance was possible "mainly due to those forces and factors which began to influence India during the period under review<sup>20</sup>." But, despite this positive aspect of cultural regeneration, he was not oblivious to the economic exploitation of the colonial masters: "the deterioration in the economic condition to such an extent that it would be hardly an exaggeration to say that India, which was one of the wealthiest countries in the world, sank to the position of one of the poorest in the world during the period under review. This was much due to the British rule in India as the brighter features of cultural regeneration noticed above<sup>21</sup>."

In Volume VIII, he has written an important appendix to Chapter VI – on the Battle of Panipat. He has studied the accounts of Sarkar in "Fall of the Mughal Empire," Vol. II, Sardesai in "New History of the Marathas," Vol. II, and, Shejwalkar in "Panipat, 1761" and then gives the most accurate one, after a comparatively studying and analysing all contemporary and later histories. In chapter XIX, he has written about the following literature and languages – Bengali, Hindi, Assamese and Oriya and in chapter XX on Islam.

The Heres lectures delivered by R.C. Majumdar in 1967 are available in book form "Historiography in Modern India," published by the Asia Publishing House in 1970. In the first lecture in the series of three lectures, he traces the evolution of Indian

historiography as an impact of its contact with the West<sup>22</sup>; he then discusses the development of modern historiography in Europe, basing it mainly on the works on G.P. Gooch (*History and Historians of the Nineteenth Century* 1913), H. Temperley (ed., *Selected Essays of Bury*, 1930 ), Sir Charles Oman (“On the Writing of History,” 1939) and A.L. Rowse ( *The Use of History*, 1946). He points out three defects in the earlier historical writings even in Europe: i) lack of critical spirit; ii) domination of religious history, thus, the limited scope of history and, iii) instead of causation, we have the explanation of “providence.” He then analyses the role and impact of Niebuhr and Ranke in the growth of scientific and critical historiography; from the earliest writings done under the patronage of the English East India Company, he then analyses the contribution of the Indologists in this field and that of Mill’s history. In doing so, he makes a very valuable evaluation of their works; “But Mill was not prepared to believe that like the Romans and Greeks of the present day the Hindus were formerly in a ‘State of high civilization’..... In other words, Mill, who had never studied the original sources of Information about Ancient Indian civilizations, rejected the views of William Jones who did.”

Referring to other works, like those of Sir John Malcolm, R. Montgomery Martin and Peter Auber, he comes to Elphinstone’s “History of India.” About him, Majumdar rightly says that he was adopted both in the history of India and modern historiography, therefore, is able to give a good account of the ancient and medieval periods of Indian history, making full use of the works of Indologists like William Jones, Prinsep, Cunningham and, H.H. Wilson. As a matter of fact, “ the foundations of the cultural history of Ancient India were well and truly laid by him” ( PP.17-18) He also gives an account of the works of Hamilton, Tod, Grant Duff, Marshman, Stirling, Macgregor and Cunningham to end the lecture. (PP. 18-19).

The second lecture deals with the “development of Indian Historiography since the middle of the Nineteenth century,” whose two chief elements, according to R.C. Majumdar were: i) Critical study of the books and documents and, ii) Discovery and study of the old inscriptions and monuments by archaeological explorations and excavations. He then analyses the works of Sir William Jones, Colebrooke, Wilson Bournouf, Bopp, Grimm, Humboldi, Max Muller, Christian Lassen, Fausboll, Jacobi, Oldenberg, and Henry Beveridge. About Beveridge he says, “(he) followed more faithfully the true principles of modern historiography than even such historians as Elliot and V.A. Smith.... he was free from the imperial sentiments which influenced the above two and many others...” (P.22).

What changes came in the realm of history –writing after Beveridge –has been analysed by him next. He points to the “further discoveries of source materials which introduced a new phase in the development of historiography after Beveridge.” These inscriptions were scattered all over the country. He analyses the role of James Princep and Alexander Cunningham in their proper utilization in restructuring ancient Indian history. He then moves onto analysing the works of medieval Indian chroniclers (PP.25-26) and asserts, “So far as the history of medieval India is concerned, the development of historiography shows a close resemblance to that of Europe.” (P.25) He also discusses the contribution of Elliot in translating and compiling the “History of India As Told by Its Own Historians.”(8 Volumes).

He also analyses the contribution of R.G. Bhandarkar and R.C. Dutt to the development of history –writing. After referring to Fleet, Stanley Lane Poole and Sir William Irvine, he analyses the works and contributions of Sir Jadunath Sarkar. About Sarkar he writes, “He set a new example in India of hunting for first-hand original documents from various sources... He checked

every detail and every document with meticulous care... He has justly been compared with Ranke, Niebuhr, and Mommsen and hailed as the father of modern scientific historiography in India." He begins the next paragraph, thus, "Another contemporary scholar who followed the same line of research was the Maratha historian V.K. Rajwade," He then refers to Sardesai also in the same breath.

R.C. Majumdar then discusses the archaeological excavations, their collection and interpretation and role in historical reconstruction. He also throws light on the State papers etc. and their importance. He ends this second lecture discussing the "Types of Historical Studies," "General Histories of India" is the first category he discusses and refers to the "Cambridge History of India," B.V.B.'s Six Published Volumes of "The History and Culture of the Indian People," "The Dynastic History of Northern India" by H.C. Ray, and "A History of South India" by K.A.N. Sastri are also referred to ( P.32); in the second category viz. "Monographs and Regional Histories"; he discusses in brief the works done on Chandragupta Maurya, Asoka, Harsavardhana, Alauddin Khilji, Muhammad Tughluq, all the Mughal Emperors, Shivaji, Baji Rao, Haidar Ali, and Ranjit Singh, to name a few. (P.33); the third category contains works on the "Freedom Movement" and, finally, under the "Research Papers," he refers to the role played by the journals in a big way to promote historical researches.

Having dealt with the development of historiography in India in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the first two lectures, he moves on to analyse whether these high standards, as reached in Europe have been maintained here or not. The first principle on which he has based his analysis is, the "Collection of available data"; which made him to prove that 1857 was the first war of "India's independence." Secondly, a historian should be in

the position of a judge rather than an advocate; the third fundamental principle was a clarity as far as, the object of writing history is concerned – it should never be guided by preconceived notions; “a historian must, in his reconstruction of the past, aim at the nearest approach to the whole truth that he can attain,” ( P-39) Quoting Fisher’s view of analysing events as they appear, he is not after analysing only “progress” in human history, as it might not be true in each generation. Historians must concern, themselves with nothing but the truth – that should be his goal and “eternal quest,” as recommended by both Niebuhr and Ranke; the fourth principle is to be as objective as a scientist while writing history. He realizes that it is the most difficult process to disabuse oneself of sentiments, prejudices and preconceptions. Perfection should be the ideal. He then cites the “example of Mill, who violated all these principles, while writing his “History of India” and a century later by V.A. Smith who does the same in the “Early History of India.”(P.41)

He puts Elliot midway between Mill and Smith (his jingo – imperialism), who thought that his collected material (The History of India as told by its Own Historians) would make the Indians realize the gains accruing to them during the British rule. He then criticizes Smith’s assessment of Alexander’s victory in India, on the grounds of immorality, cruelty and inhumanity. Then through the controversy of Hastings’ trial and later British writings, he proves the bias evident in their writings, which is further evident “in relation to the annexation of the dominions of Indian rulers by the British<sup>23</sup>.” He then discusses two books in particular – “Rise and Fulfillment of British Rule in India” by Edward Thomson and G.T. Garatt published in 1934 and D. Cunningham’s “History of the Sikhs” that had appeared way back in 1849. The latter was banned by Dalhousie. The former could, however, cast aspersions on the silent British censorship, which was affecting “Current Scholarship.”(PP.46-47).

Majumdar then analyses the aberrations appearing in the Indian works on account of the growing tide of nationalism, “which magnified the virtues and minimized the defects of their own people.” (P.47) and he cites the example of K.P. Jayaswal and the “ludicrous excess in his Hindu Polity, by his theory of a Parliamentary form of Government in Ancient India.” He is unable to digest the attempts “to explain away, ignore, or minimise, the harsh treatment accorded by the high caste Hindus to the lower castes, particularly Sudras and Candalas.” (P.48) Turning to medieval India, he fumes at the attempts of glossing over the issues of bigotry and intolerance that Muslims exhibited against the Hindus, in the name of Hindu – Muslim unity against the British rulers. He condemns such historians in unequivocal terms whether it be K.M. Ashraf or Lala Lajpat Rai (PP.48-49)

Moving on to the historical writings of the post –independence period, he points out the defects of historians, who, in trying to please the political masters, are distorting history and are not paying heed to Ibn Khaldun, who had already warned historians against adopting such practices. Thus unnecessary attempts at glossing over the real facts of history either to project Hindu – Muslim amity, when it was not present; or, an undue stress on the Gandhian value of non-violence in a phase, when it was non-existent is unpalatable to him. (PP 51-52) Thus, according to his view, the Rankean method is the best and, of course, the best course for the historian to lay bare the facts and not to shun them. The historian should fearlessly express, irrespective of whether the facts mentioned by him are compatible or incompatible with the government’s policies or not. Historians should “not care whether truth is pleasant or unpleasant, and in consonance with the current views or not.” (P.56).

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**DASTANGOI – AN ART... LOST AND UNKNOWN**

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**Introduction**

Across India, traditional stories have entertained and instructed people for many years. Storytelling is integral to Indian culture, and the stories passed down through the generations have been received and retold through dance forms, theatre, songs and narrations, shaping India's immense cultural heritage. India is a land of myths and mythologies; of tales with pious men and brave gods; of stories with carefully masked do's and don'ts; of tickling anecdotes and gruesome monsters. We have always loved a good story and we have always had storytellers.

But from the past to the present, the face of storytelling and storytellers has morphed and evolved into something very commercial and professional, but also less localized and far reaching than ever before. In the face of rapid urbanization, mushrooming malls and multiplexes, this ancient art form is somewhere making rapid inroads.

Storytelling is a very useful tool with corporate, humanitarian, psychiatric and educational benefits. After years of being recognized as a source of entertainment, storytelling is now being viewed as a powerful tool for change and the overall development of

an individual's personality, as well as an effective method to address social issues. From the *Bhands* in Kashmir, finding younger voices and newer texts, to the *Dastangoi* in Delhi, the ancient art of telling stories is weaving its magic again.

Storytelling has a hoary ancestry in different parts of the world. Before stories were written down, they were told, and told in such grand fashion, that they were performances in their own right. The Arabs had a long tradition of oral poetry. *Dastaan* was the main form of Urdu prose narrative before the modern period. *Dastaan* literature and Urdu fiction has thus suffered from neglect. Even in India, the practice of memorizing the Vedas had existed for long. Remnants of that culture thrive all across India even now. Storytelling has disappeared and is not even revered as a valid cultural artefact. Whereas theatre has survived and it flourishes, pure storytellers, who went from town to town narrating fantastic tales, have vanished. There are new storytellers now, but their language is English, their audiences are mainly children, and the form and style they employ, to make a broad observation, have a Western influence.

### **And there lived.... what is called *Dastangoi***

*Dastangoi* refers to the art of storytelling, and it is a compound of two Persian words *Dastaan* and *goi*, which means to tell a *Dastaan*. *Dastaan* means a “tale,” and when the suffix *goi* is added to the word, it translates to “to tell a tale”<sup>1</sup>. It means to narrate a *dastaan* – an epic tale. Moreover, the artist performing it is called Dastango. It first originated in Persia and travelled to medieval India. Urdu *dastaan* literature grew out of Persian *dastaan* literature – or of one single Persian *dastaan*, that of Amir Hamza. While in Iran, the Hamza story was simply one of a number of medieval romances<sup>2</sup>. The Hamza romance

spread rapidly all over the Islamic world: there are versions of it in Arabic, Turkish (24 volumes), Gregorian also in Malay and Javanese. The *dastaan* of Amir Hamza not only developed far more elaborately in Urdu than it ever had in its Persian homeland – it also developed along what in some cases were distinctively Indian lines.

*Dastaans* were epics, mostly oral in nature, which were recited or read aloud and in essence, were like medieval romances. *Dastangoi* encases the medieval art of storytelling that was a courtly ritual. It is an Urdu and Indian art of storytelling where the narrator uses nothing other than his voice to tell stories of war and love. *Dastaans* were an oral narrative, passed orally from the *Ustads* to the disciples. They were only written and printed when the tradition was coming to an end, at the end of the 19th century. *Dastangoi* originated back in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when it became popular in the sub-continent, especially in the courts of the Deccan and Mughal rulers. It is believed to have thrived as a performance form for a long time in India. There is very little information on what the ingredients of their art were, but they were sufficiently distinct to merit a separate genre for themselves.

### **The Mughal Connection**

In India, the art of storytelling was already immensely popular in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and was one of the earliest and first artistic projects commissioned by the Mughal Emperor Akbar (r.1556-1605) and was an illustration of the *Hamzanama*, which consisted of over 1200 huge folios<sup>3</sup>. *Dastangoi* was later encouraged even by the British as well. The “*Dastaan* of Amir Hamza,” supposedly, an uncle of the Prophet Mohammed, had fairies, *djinns* and prophecies. Mentioned first in the Deccan courts, the *dastaan*

reached its creative pinnacle in the court of Akbar. By then, many *dastangos* had surfaced. Akbar was a big *aficionado* of *Dastangoi*, and would himself recite it with great relish. Akbar was not as fond of poetry as he was of histories and tales. He was the most popular ruler of medieval India, also known for his penchant to promote different art forms.

*Dastangoi* found many takers from one of Delhi's greatest poets Mirza Ghalib<sup>4</sup>, who is believed to have organized storytelling sessions for Bahadur Shah II, who dabbled in it. They borrowed their tropes and themes from other stories. But over time, it was the stories of Amir Hamza that stood out. *Hamzanama* travelled across continents fighting evil spirits and *Dastangoi* evolved, travelled across courts, got made into paintings, grew and moved from the oral to the written.

The form is believed to have donned an Indian look in the 1730s. A poet and writer Mir Taqi Khyal<sup>5</sup>, brought in a realm called "tilism" (magic), an enchanted realm created by sorcerers that had characteristics, properties and life features that were unique. Then there was *Aiyyari*<sup>6</sup>, the element that was full of tricks and disguise. The popularity of tilism and *Aiyyari* allowed the *Dastangos* to develop a fantastic world, which wholly paralleled this world, so the existing social world around them could be easily featured into the narrative.

*Dastangoi* is believed to have reached its apogee in Lucknow during the 1857 Uprising. Along with many writers and poets, *dastangos* too travelled to Lucknow as part of the mass exodus from Delhi. Charting the end of the historical timeline, with the passing away of the last great *Dastango* Mir Baqar Ali in Delhi in 1928<sup>7</sup>, the tradition died almost abruptly. Sadly, it lost its flavour in modern India and faded away completely in the contemporary age of technology.

## **The Dastangos – their performance...the narration**

Perhaps they wore colourful robes or maybe their clothes were plain and only the words they uttered carried a *froufrou* that conjured vivid images in the minds of the listeners, of *djinns* (spirits) and demons on the prowl in the adventurous landscape of the story they were narrating. We do not know for sure and can only surmise from vague mention in the pages of history, what exactly *Dastangoi* the art of storytelling was, like in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, *Dastangos* used to tell interesting stories about things they have heard or text they have read to the Kings and to the common man. After the Emperor Akbar, Shah Jahan, Aurangzeb and all of them supported this art form. For centuries, there was no written text. And then in 1881, Munshi Naval Kishore Publishers from Lucknow, who used to run a printing press<sup>8</sup>, hired three leading *dastangos* of those times to recite *dastaans* to scribes who penned it verbatim. Earlier, *Dastangoi* themes revolved only around two aspects of “Love” and “Warfare.” It was Lucknow that added the new dimensions of tilism and *Aiyyari*. From 1928 to 2005, there was no mention of this art form.

Interestingly, there is a “modern” version today. Widely performed in places across North India, the contemporary rendition has many distinct features<sup>9</sup>: two *dastangos* or storytellers, dressed in stark white *angarkhas*, are seated next to each other on a white diwan-like structure with white bolsters on either side. Beside, each performer has a wine cup, the only piece of ostentation on an otherwise bare stage. Sometimes, a candle accompanies the wine cup with a shining flame, almost as if to illuminate the words coming out of the performer’s mouth.

The idea of this storytelling form is simple – so simple that the lack of any performance paraphernalia intrigues a first-time

viewer. There are no props, no music, and no action and the *dastango* or the storyteller, holds the audience's attention with the sheer force and power of his narrative techniques. The storytellers walk in, dressed in stylish *kurtas* and flared *pyjamas*, evoking the raffish sartorial style that must have been prevalent in the 19th century *qasbah* (a predominantly Muslim urban area in north India).<sup>10</sup> The performers, mostly well-versed in Hindi and Urdu, choose a story from a wide array of swashbuckling tales of Amir Hamza, the uncle of the Prophet, whose adventures became the traditional texts of the *Dastangos* in the 16<sup>th</sup> century or Saadat Hasan Manto's<sup>11</sup> stories or even Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland. Its narrative structure is that of a tale; its prose is flowery and rhyming, interspersed with verses in Persian and Urdu; and it makes use of many elements of the supernatural. Even its long lists of the names of flowers, food, countries and so on are like those that the traditional storytellers were fond of reeling off at any opportunity.

Memory and the power of utterance were the keys for the performers. In a *jugalbandi* of sorts, the lives of the story oscillate between the two performers, in a dramatic give-and-take, where one instantaneously picks up the story from the part, where his partner would have stopped. The performer generally begins with a *sakinama*, an invocation to the wine server<sup>12</sup>. This fragment also summarized the story in few lines. Writing a *dastangoi* story is very different. Every story is narrated in pure, refined Urdu, which many people do not understand very well<sup>13</sup>.

Moreover, *Dastangoi* was one feature of an oral / performative culture, where the public arena was the first and perhaps the most natural site of performance<sup>14</sup>. Qissagos, contortionists, sooth-sayers, *faqirs*, magicians, animal fights, *mushairas* and sundry other activities provide a prismatic context in which the

*Dastaans* were composed and performed<sup>15</sup>. Their skill as actors lay in commanding the audience attention at all times, an audience that in the case of a public performance was likely to fade away at the slightest drop of intensity. This demanded acting and performing skills that range from drama to dance to mime to performance art.

### **The Hamzanama (*Dastaan-e Amir Hamza*)**

*Dastaan-e Amir Hamza* is one of the longest fictional narratives in the world. It narrates the legendary exploits of Hamza bin Azzak, a brave man who lived in the Banu Abbas reign. The story is “extremely fanciful, a continuous series of romantic interludes, threatening events, narrow escapes and violent acts<sup>16</sup>.” Many *dastaan* adventures involve journeys to places like Egypt, Yemen, Greece, Turkestan and encounters with the respective Kings. In the west, the work is best known for the enormous illustrated manuscript commissioned by the Mughal Emperor Akbar in 1562CE.

The *Dastaan* about Amir Hamza persists far and wide upto Bengal and Arakan (Burma) due to Hamza’s wide travelling in Persian, Central Asia, India, the Himalayan region, Burma and probably in Malaysia in his youth. In Iran, the Hamza story was simply one of a number of medieval romances, and outside Iran, it attained a popularity equalled only by that of the “Alexander Romance.” In south Asia, it came through medieval Indo-Persian versions and spread to Sindhi, Pashto, Punjabi, Hindi and even Bengali<sup>17</sup>.

Local popular themes like magic and trickery helped the Urdu Hamza romance develop from its relatively modest beginnings into an extraordinary cycle of forty-six huge volumes. The forty-six volume *Dastaan-e Amir Hamza*, a monument to the popularity

of *dastaan* literature in its heyday, which was published by the Naval Kishore Press in Lucknow from about 1881 to about 1906<sup>18</sup>. It is generally believed that, no living human being has read the whole cycle – which is not surprising, since the volumes average about 900 pages each.

### **The Genre and its Decline**

Oral literature inevitably precedes written culture and the earliest written records in almost every culture, acknowledges the pre-existence of tales and stories. Originated by anonymous storytellers and passed on by word of mouth from generation to generation, such stories rely on their ability to satisfy its listeners for their survival. The earliest form of storytelling was primarily oral combined with gestures and expressions.

Persian was, of course, also the literary language of the Muslim rulers of India. Urdu later became the prime medium of poetic expression for the Muslim elite of the sub-continent. Urdu was declared as the mark of identity of the Indian Muslims. *Dastaans* are gigantic cyclical stories comprising (story/tale in Persian) of marvellous tales in the romantic style meant for oral narration<sup>19</sup>. *Dastaans* were prose genres. It has also been described as, too often, a coterie style, highly cerebral, conventionalized and even contorted.

Little attention is paid to a genre that was indeed “the main form of Urdu prose narrative before the modern period.” After reaching unprecedented heights of popularity in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, *dastaans* have generally had a bad press in the 20<sup>th</sup> century; they have been perceived as unrealistic, irrelevant, puerile and immoral<sup>20</sup>.



*Dastaan* literature has thus suffered from neglect and modern Urdu fiction has suffered too, for it has been unable to claim the superb achievements of the best *dastaan* literature as its inheritance.

The establishment of the Naval Kishore Press in Lucknow around the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century boosted the production of popular literature. It is an interesting twist in the history of Urdu literature that in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Naval Kishore Press gave the “*dastan*” a new fillip and a new audience by getting the oral narrative of Persian “originals” translated and edited into publishable texts.

The “endless” cyclic stories known to us as the *Dastaan-e-Amir Hamza* (Tale of Amir Hamza) and the *Bostaan-e-Khayal* (Garden of Imagination) were rendered from Persian into Urdu at the request of Munshi Naval Kishore by a team of talented *dastaan* narrators (*qissa khvan* or *dastango*) Mir Muhammed, Syed Husain Jah, Husain Qamar, Amba Prasad, Rasa Sheikh, and Sheikh Tasadduq Husain. However, the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the marked decline of this fascinating genre.

Critics of the *dastaan* have held that the “novel style” narratives that began to flood the market, edged out *dastaan* literature, eventually leading to its obsolescence<sup>21</sup>. But this was not true, the popularity of the “novel type” fiction had practically nothing to do with the decline of the *dastaan*. In fact, the earliest proto-novels were a sort of “modern *dastan*” except that their purpose was almost “anti-*dastaan*,” because they poked fun at the culture that had nurtured the *dastaan* and its imaginative world. The written version of the oral *dastaan* now appeared static and dated.

## **Need for its Revival and its importance in the contemporary period**

Folktales are themselves history of a sort. And they are not just artefacts, but also processes aiming at quite varied effects within different traditions and contexts. As processes, these amusing stories can be said to be as much politically affirmative as subversive. Despite no cinematic screening around, the experience was of being lost in the pages of history, centred on the life and times of the Emperor Akbar.

What makes *Dastangoi* interesting is the fact that it is a “Sangam” of literature, performance and history. One of the first *dastaans* performed after the revival was a contemporary story based on the partition of India. Since then, there have been storytelling sessions.

Although *Dastaans* continued to be published into the middle of the twentieth century, their popularity was clearly waning. Many of its conventions had passed into cinema; the oral culture of which it was a product was giving place to a literary culture and the spaces where it was traditionally performed were being recast. In 1928, just a few years before sound revolutionized the Indian film industry, Mir Baqar Ali died<sup>22</sup>. In 2005, Mr. Shamsur Rahman Farooqui, a poet himself and his nephew writer, director Mahmood Farooqui, began the revival of this art form. Mahmood Farooqui, believes that the present version is not an attempt to resuscitate the 16<sup>th</sup> century art, but is in fact a reinvention in itself. The modern history of *Dastangoi* began on 4 May 2005 at the India International Centre, Delhi where he staged the *Dastaan-e Amir Hamza*. He conducted a number of performances across North India, mostly for adults. He is now focusing on children<sup>23</sup>. *Dastaan Alice Ki*, is based on the Lewis Carroll’s classic. Another is *Dastaan Goopy aur Bagha*

*Ki*, the story of two men who wants to be a singer and another a drummer<sup>24</sup>. It is the manner in which the story is narrated that makes its irresistible. One of the things that Mahmood Farooqui did was to innovate and bring in a second performer to join the single traditional storyteller on stage, to alternate recitations and ease the strain off them. Farooqui and his team of storytellers have not only explored many texts but also contemporary issues as well. *Dastaan-e Sediton* is an example of this. It narrates the arrest of Dr. Binayak Sen<sup>25</sup>. Their *dastangoi* has witnessed audiences from typical auditorium venues, to university spaces; from dinner theatres to the *maagh mela* of Allahabad<sup>26</sup>; from literature festivals to protest rallies; from corporate shows to community-run cultural ventures too.

This art also champions and encourages women as performers. Earlier, traditionally this form championed men playing roles of women because women were not allowed. Thanks to the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, “Peepli Live” co-director Mahmood Farooqui and his associate Danish Hussain are giving a new lease of life to *Dastangoi*. In one such move to revive the vanishing art of storytelling in Urdu, the trust, more recently organized *Dastangoi* (held in the backdrop of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Mughal monument Chausath Khamba, in Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti, New Delhi)<sup>27</sup>. Ankit Chadha<sup>28</sup> is a young *Dastango*, one of the only twelve remaining today, of the long forgotten Urdu story telling tradition. He said, “Every nobleman, had made it a practice to employ a *Dastango* in his retinue, as chowks or city squares became a favoured site for the performance of the art during and after the Mutiny of 1857.”

Today, these performances showcasing *dastaans* or fables of fantasy, adventure, intrigue and seduction have become popular and well appreciated across the country and even abroad. It has been performed successfully across India, Pakistan, the UAE and the USA.

Storytelling is turning into a rare but growing commodity and storytellers are becoming brands. There is a lot that a story can do. It can affect individuals or the masses. It can bring reform and it can bring joy.

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2. Francese W Pritchett, "Emperor of India: Landhaur bin Sa'dan in the Hamza cycle," Christopher Shackle (ed.) *Urdu and Muslim South India*, Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1991, p.67.
3. *Ibid*, p.69.
4. Ghalib born Mirza Asadullah Baig Khan, on 27 December 1797 and died on 15 February 1869, was the pre-eminent Indian Urdu and Persian poet during the last years of the Mughal Empire. He was also a prolific prose writer. His letters are a reflection of the political and social climate of the time.
5. He was the leading Urdu poet of the 18th century, and one of the pioneers who gave shape to the Urdu language itself. He was one of the principal poets of the Delhi school of the Urdu ghazal.
6. *Aiyyari* was called trickery.
7. Mir Baqir Ali(1850-1928), an Urdu storyteller of Delhi who performed the *Story of Amir Hamza* for royal and middle-class patrons, and before the public, in an age of changing attitudes towards the "fantastic" romance (*qissah/dastan*) genre.
8. Shri. Nawal Kishore embarked on a highly ambitious literary print project. He assembled some of the leading Dastangos

- of Lucknow and commissioned them to produce the entire Hamza narrative as it existed in oral and written records.
9. Swati Daftuar, "A Twist in the Tale," *The Hindu*, 7 July 2013, Sunday, p.4.
  10. *The Frontline*, Vol. 28, Issue 1, 1-14, January 2011.
  11. Manto (1912-1955) was a short story writer of the Urdu language. He is best known for his short stories, *Bu*, *Khol Do*, *Thanda Gosht*, and *Toba Tek Singh*. Manto was also a film and radio scriptwriter and a journalist.
  12. Swati Daftuar, "A Twist in the Tale," *The Hindu*, 7 July 2013, Sunday, p.4.
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  15. *Mushaira* is an evening social gathering at which Urdu poetry is read. It is a part of the culture of Pakistan and North India as also Deccan Hyderabad.
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22. He was the last famous Dastango of India. Reports of his performances establish beyond doubt that he was perhaps the last great traditional actor to be born in this country.
23. Swati Daftuar, "A Twist in the Tale," *The Hindu*, 7 July 2013, Sunday, p.4.
24. Both were worse in their talents and how they are exiled into the forest for their lack of talent is narrated. How their fortunes change when the King of Ghosts grant them boons is the story all about.
25. Archana Nathan, "Djinns, Demons and their Dastans," *The Hindu*, Friday Review, 17 October 2014, p.1.
26. This mela is one of the greatest annual religious affairs for Hindus. An important occasion, the Magh (Kumbh) Mela is held every year on the banks of Triveni Sangam (the confluence of the three great rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati) in Prayag near Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh.
27. Archana Nathan, "Djinns, Demons and their Dastans," *The Hindu*, Friday Review, 17 October 2014, p.1
28. Ankit Chadha is a writer-storyteller who brings together performance, literature and history. He specializes in Dastangoi and has written, translated, compiled and performed stories under the direction of Mahmood Farooqui. He has collaborated with leading authors and NGOs to make reading programmes more effective for school children by implementing storytelling techniques. He is also the founder of "Heptulla," a storytelling company that conducts storytelling for adults and children. <http://www.thealternative.in/lifestyle/the-art-of-dastangoi-forgotten-urdu-storytelling/>

**21**

**BOOK REVIEW**

*The Migrant Silk Weavers of Tamil Nadu* – A Study by Prof. C .S. Krishnamoorthy, Sakthi Cultural and Educational Trust, Madurai, 2014, Rs. 500/-.

This book is a detailed and accurate account of the Sourashtra community by Prof. C.S. Krishnamoorthy. The author himself belongs to that community and knows the intimate details of their domestic and public life.

The author has discussed certain questions like the linguistic history of their language and its affinities; the influence of the Tamil language on their language, the impact of the several local castes and cults, and their patronage of several Hindu temples. Also interesting is the part on local industry with special reference to silk weaving and trade and their association with the ancient trade guilds.

In the chapter II on the historical background, the author says, “The oft migrating Sourashtras, being primarily weavers, silk weavers, dyers and traders can be expected to live in any area where they had all sorts of facilities including a congenial political atmosphere.” For this, the author has traced the political cum economic history of Western India since the earliest times i.e., the Harappan Period until 800 A.D, the date of their probable exodus from their immediate past home, Lata.

Chapter III is on “Linguistic Aspects.” It discusses “Sourashtri” – the tongue of the Sourashtrians, belonging to the Indo-Aryan group. This language is not spoken in any part of northern India

nowadays and the people of modern Sourashtra (Gujarat) cannot understand this language though it is generally considered a dialect of Gujarati. A deep analysis of this language points out to its antiquity going as far back as the Vedic Period.

Chapter IV is on “Economic Aspects.” It says that there will be no doubt that the Sourashtras form a caste traditionally involved in the textile industry especially in the craft of weaving and dyeing as well as trading in goods like yarn, cloths and silk cloths. Historically, they seem to have also functioned as a “Guild” of weavers and traders.

Chapter V is on “Social Life.” It says that the Tamil Brahmins object to recognize Sourashtrians as Brahmins on grounds of their profession of weaving and their habit of meat eating.

Chapter VI is on the “Historical background of Bakthi marga and Vaishnavism.” It describes Sourashtras as “Sun worshippers, pious and god fearing orthodox Hindus,” “Saliya Srivaishnava’s” who assume “Bhagavathar” as suffix in their personal names. Also their other personal names reflect the aspects of various sects of Hinduism, i.e., Vaishnavism, Saivism, Madhva etc., they worship mother goddesses besides many minor and village deities. They have a strong belief in the Krishna cult subsequently adopting the Perumal cult, too.

Chapter VII is on “Temple activities and other forms of worship.” It studies their temples and the activities attached to these temples. Special attention has been paid to the study of temples at Paramakudy and Emaneshwaram as they seem to be their earliest settlements.

Chapter VIII is on “Socio-Religious Beliefs and Practices.” It says that the Sourashtras are more a religious than economic-



oriented community. They are fond of fasts, feasts, and festivals. They have a strong belief in Dharma and “daana.”

Chapter IX is on “Origin and Stages of Migration.” The popular theory giving their routes as Sourashtra (Somanath) – Devanagiri – Vijayanagar – Madurai is not acceptable to the author. Contrarily, he feels that the Sourashtras left their immediate past home, Lata, by 800 A.D. and spread all over the Deccan and Tamil Nadu.

The book under discussion is undoubtedly, a well-researched work. The author has meticulously studied his own community and has answered several questions pertaining to it.

This book will be useful to all those who want to know about the Sourashtra community, its origins, customs, religious beliefs, and practices.

Dr. G. J. SUDHAKAR

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