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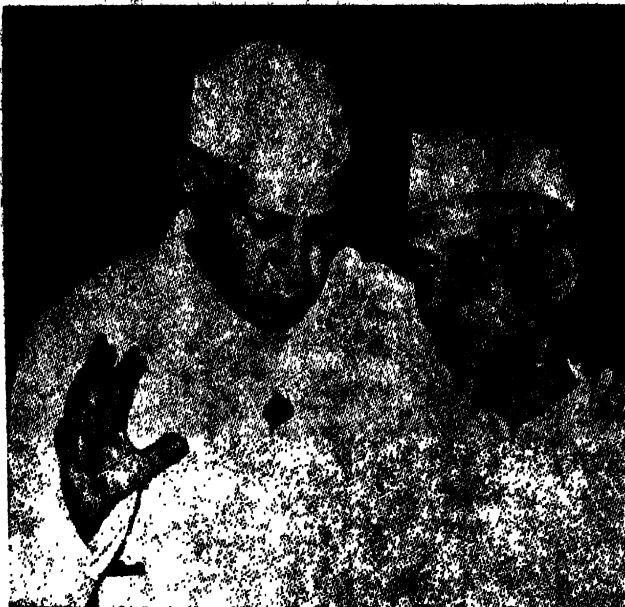
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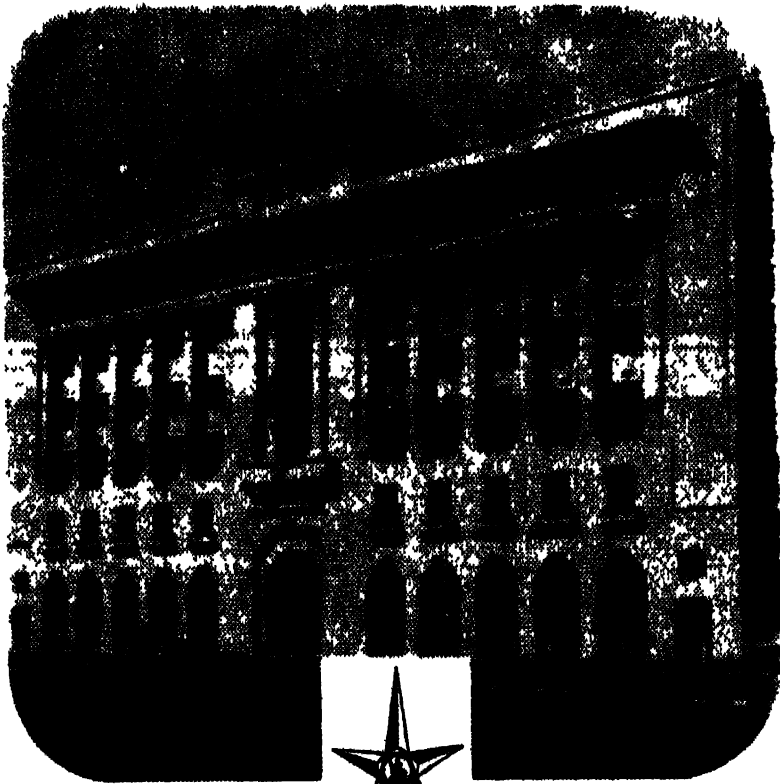
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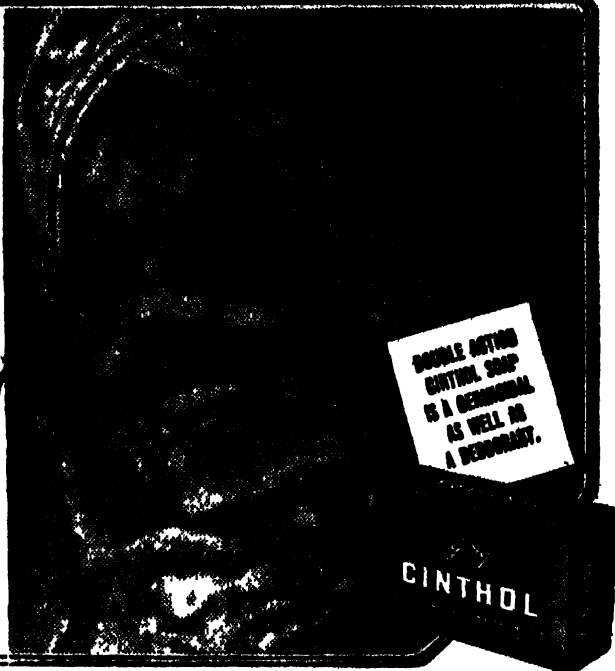
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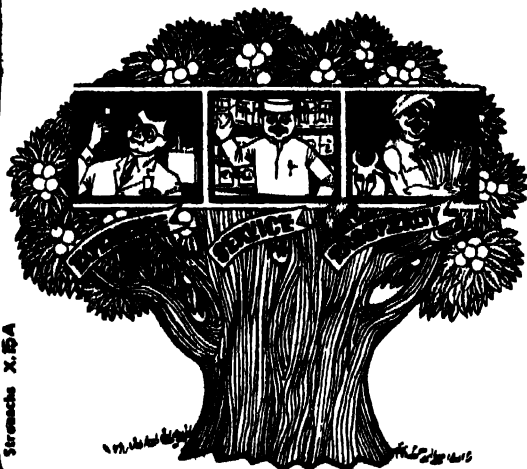
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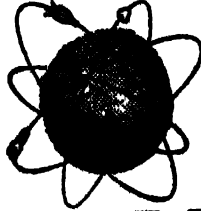
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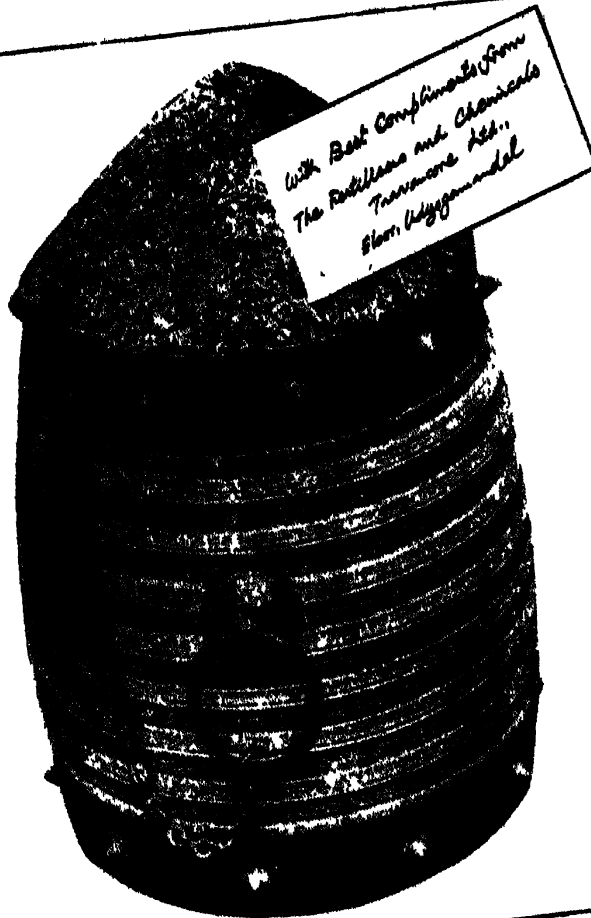
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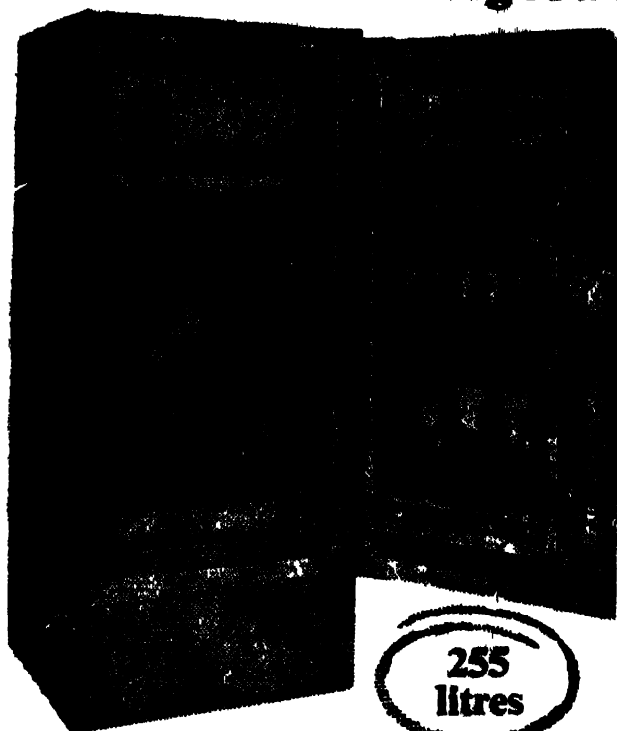
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FOREWORD

This Souvenir is brought out to mark the 400th Anniversary celebrations of the Cochin Synagogue. Kerala is the only country where the Jewish community has lived without persecution for nearly 2000 years. These celebrations therefore form an integral part of their expression of gratitude to the rulers and people of Kerala. Today both Jew and non-Jew can look back with justifiable pride to the long period of tolerance, kindness and co-operation.

On this occasion a Seminar and an Exhibition are being held under the auspices of the Kerala History Association to illustrate the part played by the Jews of Kerala in the social, economic and political life of the country. They also aim to depict the history and culture of Kerala.

As President of the Quater Centenary Celebration Committee of the Cochin Synagogue I express my sincere gratitude to our Prime Minister for her whole-hearted support. The Government and people of Kerala came forward to co-operate with us to make these celebrations a success. My thanks are due to them as well as to those individuals and institutions who have contributed several valuable exhibits and also to the participants of the seminars for their scholarly papers. I take this opportunity to express my thanks to all the advertisers for their generous contributions. It also gives me great pleasure to record my thanks to the Press in Kerala for their unstinted support and co-operation.

S. S. KODER

Chairman, Celebration Committee.

15-12-1968

THE COCHIN SYNAGOGUE

The tradition of the Cochin Jews is that the first permanent settlement of Jews at Shingly (modern Cranganore, about 25 miles from Cochin) took place in 70 C. E. following the destruction of the Second Temple at Jerusalem. There were of course Jewish trading posts at Shingly as early as 1000 B. C. E. exporting ivory, spices, teak and peacocks to ancient Palestine. The Jews lived in peace and prospered under the benign rule of the Perumals. But in 1567 their settlement was razed to the ground by the Moors and the Portuguese; and the Jews fled to Cochin and placed themselves under the protection of the neighbouring and more powerful Maharaja of Cochin.

The Cochin Maharaja afforded the Jews protection against the Portuguese and gave them land near his palace to build their Synagogue and their township. The Cochin Synagogue was built in 1568. It is situated at the northern end of 'Jew Town' in Mattancherry. The square Clock Tower is a conspicuous landmark and is visible from a distance. It was built in 1760 by Ezekiel Rahabi, a merchant prince of the community and has dials with Hebrew, Malayalam and Roman numerals facing the Synagogue, the Maharaja's palace and Jew Town respectively.

The spacious prayer hall of the Synagogue has glittering chandeliers suspended from its decorated ceiling. The floor is covered with hand-painted willow pattern tiles. These tiles were imported from China in 1760.

The Synagogue has twelve windows corresponding to the twelve tribes of Israel. At the entrance are two brass pillars, presumably to correspond to the pillars 'Boaz' and 'Jachin' in King Solomon's temple at Jerusalem.

At the western end of the prayer hall is the Ark, wherein are kept the Torah Scrolls, the five books of Moses written on parchment. Ordinary water was considered

too impure for mixing the mortar for the Ark wall; mortar for constructing this wall was therefore mixed in coconut water. The Ark is carved and gilded and an embroidered curtain covers its doors. Three steps paved with marble lead to the Ark. The Torah is placed in silver cases with gold crowns. The Synagogue has five such scrolls or Sephareem. One of the gold crowns for the Sephareem was presented by the Maharaja of Travancore in 1805.

The service on ordinary days is conducted from a curved enclosure in the centre of the prayer hall. The enclosure has beautiful, of brass balustrade on three sides. On Sabbath and High Holydays the service is conducted from a higher platform near the women's gallery.

The ram's horn or Shofar used for the New Year and early morning penitential services is about a metre long. The lamp used for the festival of Chanuka is made of silver. The Laver and Basin used by the Priests for washing their hands before the traditional blessing of the congregation are made of silver alloy.

In the Synagogue are preserved the Copper Plates given by King Cheraman Perumal in the year 379 to Joseph Rabban, the then leader of the Jewish Community in Cranganore, conferring on him princely rights and granting him and his descendants the Kingdom of Anjuvanam 'so long as the world and the moon shall exist'.

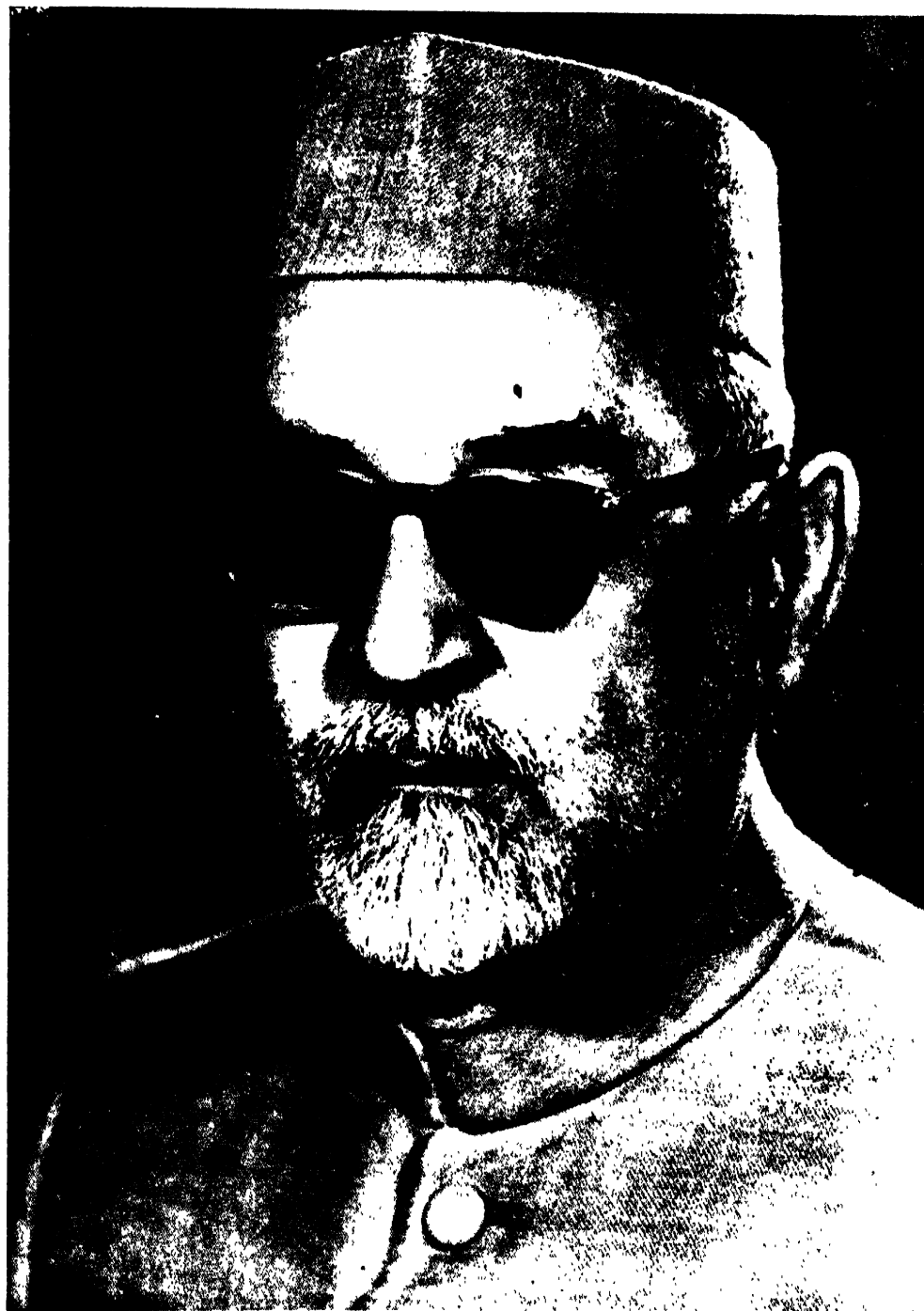


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The tolerance and benevolence of his ancestors made this 400th Anniversary possible



SECRETARY TO THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA

RASHTRAPATHI BHAVAN

NEW DELHI-4.

August 20, 1968

Dear Shri Koder,

The President has asked me to thank you for your letter of the 13th August, 1968 informing him that the Cochin Synagogue will celebrate its Quater Centenary in 1968 and that it proposes to hold a seminar and an exhibition of old books, manuscripts, furniture, old jewellery etc. under the auspices of the Kerala History Association. He sends his felicitations to the Cochin Synagogue on this historic occasion and his best wishes for the success of the seminar and exhibition.

Yours sincerely,

(Sd)

(Nagendra Singh)



**VICE-PRESIDENT
INDIA
NEW DELHI**

August 17, 1968

Dear Shri Koder,

**Thank you for your letter of the 13th
August.**

**I send my best wishes for the success of the
Quater Centenary Celebrations of the Cochin
Synagogue.**

Yours sincerely,

(Sd)

(V. V. Giri)



PRIME MINISTER

NEW DELHI

September 16, 1968

Although numerically small, for centuries, the Jewish community in our country has enriched our diversity and won the appreciation and regard of other sections of the nation. I am glad to know that the Cochin Synagogue, which is a notable national landmark, completes 400 years this year.

My best wishes for the success of the quater centennial celebrations of the Synagogue, and my warm personal greetings to my compatriots of the Jewish faith.

(Sd)

Indira Gandhi



נשיא מדינת ישראל
PRESIDENT OF ISRAEL

Jerusalem, October 11th, 1968

Mr. S. S. Koder, President
The Cochin Synagogue Quater-Centennial Committee
Tower Road
Cochin - 1
Kerala
India

Dear Mr. Koder,

I have been most gratified to learn that the four hundredth anniversary of the Cochin Synagogue is being commemorated in so appropriate a manner, marked by the cooperation of the Government of India and the Government of Kerala.

The existence and persistent vitality of a dignified Jewish community in a region of Asia far removed from other centers of Jewish life, must surely be attributed not only to the character of the community itself but also to the humane and tolerant spiritual climate prevailing in India. We in Israel are profoundly appreciative of this, and are happy that a considerable immigration of Cochin Jews, encouraged by our great, lamented friend, Dr. Immanuel Okwanger, has added to the mosaic of Israel's national culture the precious qualities of mind and soul developed over the years by your community.

We are indeed happy that our newcomers from Cochin, whose first years in Israel were not without difficulty, have now become a strongly rooted and much respected component of Israel's life in both town and country.

With brotherly greetings to Cochin Jewry on this auspicious occasion,

Zalman Shazar



E. M. S. NAMBOODIRIPAD
CHIEF MINISTER

TRIVANDRUM
30th August '68

My dear Shri Koder,

I am glad to know that you are celebrating the Quater Centenary Celebration of the Cochin Synagogue and that you are bringing out a Souvenir in connection with the function. I wish the function all success.

Yours sincerely,

(Sd)

E. M. S. Namboodiripad

**KRISHNA VILAS PALACE,
Ernakulam, 23-10-1968**

MESSAGE

WE have very great pleasure to learn that the COCHIN SYNAGOGUE is attaining its 400 years of very useful existence this year, and this year also marks 1900 years of the advent of Jews to Cochin. WE learn with pleasure that this occasion is being celebrated in a most fitting manner by the COCHIN SYNAGOGUE QUATER-CENTENNIAL Committee. We find that the Committee is also making arrangements to publish a Souvenir to mark the occasion. We know from our records that one of our ancestor Rajah had taken a very tolerant view and had granted lands and protection near Mattancheri Palace in a liberal manner, when the Jews were hard-pressed elsewhere and finally came to Cochin. The White Jews Synagogue was built in the year 1568 after the building of the JEW TOWN in 1567. WE find that the JEWS are peace-loving, pious and very good-natured WE extend our sincere and best wishes for the well-being and prosperity of the JEWS in Cochin

WE wish the happy function a grand success

**(Sd)
Maharaja of Cochin**

KAUDIAR PALACE,

TRIVANDRUM, 18TH SEPT. 1968.

I am glad to learn that the Quater Centenary of the Cochin Synagogue is being celebrated this year. The Jewish Community's relationship with Travancore and its ruling family had always been cordial. The presentation of a gold crown to the Synagogue in 1805 by the Maharaja of Travancore was an open acknowledgment of this fact. May the community continue to thrive and contribute their full share in the building up of a prosperous India.

(Sd)

Rama Varma

BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION

NEW DELHI, INDIA

4 September, 1968.

MESSAGE

Four hundred years is a long time in the life of any community and it is a remarkable tribute to the spirit of toleration shown by the people of Cochin as well as to the strong faith of the Jewish community that the Cochin synagogue has now achieved its fourth centenary. I send you my Government's best wishes on this notable occasion, and hope that your synagogue may continue to prosper for many years to come.

(Sd)

J. A. Turpin

Acting High Commissioner

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

**NAOROJI ROAD, KILPAUK
MADRAS-10**

31st July 1968

MESSAGE'

The gratitude of the Jewish community to the Hindus in Kerala for their tolerance these 1900 years is matched by loyalty of the Jews to the rulers of Cochin and their cooperation with the people in all their activities. On the occasion of the 400th Anniversary of the Cochin Synagogue I send my best wishes.

(Sd)

C. Rajagopalachari

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF RABBI
ADLER HOUSE, TAVISTOCK SQUARE,
LONDON, W. C. 1.

September 1968.

My dear Mr. Koder,

It is with special pleasure and profound pride that, on behalf of your fellow-Jews in Great Britain and throughout the Commonwealth as well as of myself personally, I send you our warmest felicitations on the historic occasion of your Synagogue's 400th Anniversary.

Through this outstanding event, your Congregation establishes a record unique in the annals of the Commonwealth and exceedingly rare even in the history of our long-lived people. It is a ringing tribute to the perseverance and undaunted faith of our Jewish brethren in Kerala no less than to the tolerance and friendliness of the Indian people who have never allowed their record to be besmirched by Jewish blood.

Your Anniversary testifying to the continuity of a synagogue stretching over four centuries assumes a special significance in the light of the Jewish experience during the past generation when we witnessed the destruction of thousands of synagogues in one part of the world and subsequently the consecration of thousands of new synagogues in other parts, notably in Israel.

Your community having faithfully served the Almighty in your beautiful sanctuary for four hundred years, may He now bless you and all your members with the bounties of life and peace, to continue your distinguished contributions to the glory of our people, the enrichment of India, and the majesty of our common Creator.

With fondest personal greetings to you and all who rejoice with you, I am,

Cordially yours,
(Sd)
Dr. Immanuel Jakobovits
Chief Rabbi

OFFICE OF THE HAHAM
OF THE SPANISH & PORTUGUESE JEWS
4, ASHWORTH ROAD, MAIDA VALE
LONDON W. 9.

12 Elul 5728
5th September 1968.

Dear Mr. Koder,

I am most grateful to you for informing me that the Cochin community of Kerala is celebrating the Quater Centenary Celebration of the Cochin Synagogue and 1900 years of the arrival of Jews in Kerala.

This celebration is indeed not only of great importance to Cochin Jews in India and throughout the world, but to world Jewry in general.

Today, when after nearly 2,000 years, we are seeing the Almighty bringing His promised redemption to His people after millenia of exile, we can also look upon a community like your own, which, with dignity and devotion to God and man has upheld for nearly 2,000 years, the greatest traditions which are the basis of our sacred law.

On behalf of all the Sephardi communities of this country, I send your community my blessings and our sincere congratulations on this great event and pray that the celebration which will be held in the middle of December, will give expression to those pious endeavours which were so characteristic of all the leaders of your ancient community.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely,
(Sd)
Dr. S. Gaon.

**THE NEW YORK BOARD OF RABBIS
10 EAST 73rd STREET NEW YORK, N. Y. 10021**

**September 18, 1968
25 Elul 5728**

Dear Mr. Koder,

The New York Board of Rabbis, representing 2½ million Jews in the world's largest Jewish community, salutes you and your valiant congregation on the occasion of your Quatercentennial.

As you know, it was my privilege to spend some time in your midst. I was deeply impressed by the loyalty that you and the other members of the community have manifested towards Judaism and the admirable Jewish fortitude that you evinced in maintaining the continuity of Jewish life. The tradition of Cochin Jewry and the Cochin Synagogue is a proud one, and it has already taken its place in the distinguished annals of world Jewry.

As you celebrate the Quatercentennial of your beautiful, historic synagogue, we greet you and invoke God's blessings upon you and the entire community for life, for health, for continued endurance to maintain Judaism, which has been the source of strength to Jewry throughout all generations and a blessing to us and all mankind.

Sincerely,

(Sd)

**Rabbi Harold H. Gordon
Executive Vice President**

**UNITED SYNAGOGUE
RICHMOND DISTRICT SYNAGOGUE
SHEEN ROAD, RICHMOND, SURREY**

8th September 1968

Dear Mr. Koder,

I have much pleasure in sending a message of warm congratulations and best wishes on the unique occasion of the Quater Centenary Celebration of the Cochin Synagogue. This is indeed a proud record of service to Judaism in general and the Cochin Community in particular. It also bears eloquent testimony to the secure place the Jews of Cochin won for themselves in the hearts of their fellow-citizens of India through the centuries and the complete tolerance and goodwill manifested towards them. May the many aspects of this remarkable association be stressed as a lesson for all communities in all countries, especially in this International Year for Human Rights as inspired by the United Nations. May the ties between Cochin Jews and their co-religionists in other parts of India, in the Commonwealth, in Israel and elsewhere be strengthened in the years to come for the benefit of all. May the Almighty bless and preserve you and our fellow-Jews the world over.

Yours sincerely,

(Sd)

P. S. Gourgey, M. B. E.

SAGA OF THE JEWS OF COCHIN

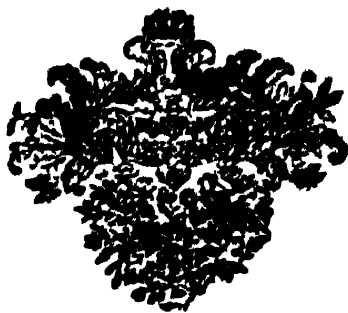
S. S. KODER

I, the undersigned declare how I have examined by order of the lords of the Mahamad, (2) a report, come from Cochin, and I did not find in it anything repugnant which can impede its printing, but, before it is published and brought out to light because it is a very rare and very informative one concerning the manner in which our brethren living in Cochin govern themselves so conformably with us, although the country is so remote from us, yet, since it is the truth, I have signed it with my own hand in Amsterdam on 9th Elul 5447. (3).

Ishack Aboab. (4)

N O T I S I A S
D O S
JUDEOS DE COCHIM,
M A N D A D A S
P O R
M/O S S E H P E R E V R A
D E P A I V A ,

Acuya Custa se imprimiraõ.



E M A M S T E R D A M ,
Estampado em caza de Vry Levy em 9 de Iul 5447:

Information about the Jews of Cochim sent by Mosseh Perevra De Paiva
at whose expense it was printed in Amsterdam and stamped in the
House of Vry Levy on 9th Elul 5447 (1687)

INTRODUCTION

To write an authentic history of the Jews of Kozhikode one becomes conscious of the difficulty of the task as many important facts are shrouded in obscurity. How and when they arrived on the South-West coast of India are still some of the unsettled problems of their history; but, whatever be the date of their first arrival, it is an undisputed fact that from the 5th to the 15th century the Jews in Cranganore had virtually an independent principality ruled over by a Prince of their own faith. Jewish travellers from Benjamin of Tudela in the 12th and David Beth Hillel in the 19th century and medieval authors starting from Abu'l Kasim Ubaidullah Abd Allah B. Khurdadhab in the 9th and Gaspar Correa in the 16th century have referred in brief to this forgotten outpost of the Jewish World.

In 1685 a commission of four Jews was sent by the Jewish community of Amsterdam to enquire and report about the state of the community in Cochin. In 1687 Mosseh Pereyra De Paiva, a member of the commission published his report "Noticias Dos Judeos De Cochim". This reliable and rare work (I) is one of the most important documents for the understanding of the history of the Jewish community of Cochin and throws new light on some of the questions which have hitherto baffled Jewish and non-Jewish scholars of Cochin Jewish history. This is the first time that the work appears in print in India. The language is in quaint Portuguese and it was translated for me by Rt. Rev. Mgr. F. Figueiredo Vicar General Diocese of Cochin.

My notes will explain to non-Jewish readers the Hebrew and other terms used by the author in his work. They also describe some of the Jewish customs and ceremonies and trace the development of the history of the Cochin Jews from the time of Paiva's visit to Cochin in 1686 to the present day.

An account of the affectionate reception which we experienced among our brethren living in High Cochin on the Malabar Coast with other particulars annexed to it.

Moved by fraternal love which was nourished in my heart for a long time, I resolved to proceed to this side. I always truly and earnestly desired to visit our brethren of Cochin. The Lord God granted me this grace on Thursday the 21st November 1686 when at three in the afternoon we arrived, stopping for one hour in the company of Vosburgo (5) to whose house David Castiel and Joseph Zackay had come in the name of the congregation to felicitate us on our arrival, doing it with such demonstrations of joy and sorrow our presence has evoked. This manifestation of welcome brought from us and others tears and we recited with them the verse of the Royal Psalmist; "This is the day the Lord has appointed. On it let us rejoice and be glad" (6) We embarked together in a vessel which the commandant got ready for us to go to high Cochin, which is half a league (7) from low Cochin. There David Levy, the Mudaliar (8) (Mudaliar denotes a captain who carries a rod with a head of gold and on it is the coat of arms of the Company) came to receive us and gave us a grand reception. He took us to his house where we found the entire congregation gathered with great joy to wish us; this if I try to explain, I would deem myself ungrateful to them for their affection, for it is certain that they were not tired of seeing us, embracing us and thanking God for having shown such good fortune.

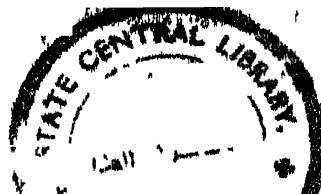
On the following day which was the 22nd of November, Haham (9) Belilia

visited us with the same show of affection. Belilia is a scholar and a learned man. Their joy was so great and general that I positively affirm to you my brethren, that if the King Messiah had come to them through that door, I do not know if they could have shown greater affection. For my part I assure you that I felt very much indebted to them because my soul was equally happy as theirs.

On 23rd Sabbath night we went for the first time to the Synagogue where they expressed openly their joy by singing different hymns in thanksgiving to God for having shown them their brethren from such remote countries whom they were longing to see for years.

On the morning of the 24th they entertained us with music consisting of 6 drums, 6 trumpets and 6 brass instruments the harmony of which was pleasant; but more enjoyable was the splendid lunch which David Raby gave us with such magnanimity that you, respected, Sir, will have nothing to match its excellence, when God grants me the grace to return to that country.

On the morning of the 25th November I went to the city to thank the Commandant for the kind treatment shown to our people and to beg of him that he be pleased to continue it. In the evening we went to Anguicaymal on the other side of the river (All this place is of Malabar Jews who have there two synagogues. (10).) In the



middle of the river we met a boat which came to welcome us with many instrumental music and escorted us to the shore. We got down among a big concourse of people who had come to welcome us. They led us in procession along a very long street with songs and I shed tears of joy. Before reaching the Synagogue at a place two hundred feet distant, Senhores Hahamim came to receive us (These hahamim (Rabbis) know sufficiently the law to solve ordinary cases). The hahamim and hazan (minister) conducted us to the synagogue accompanied by a multitude of people in whose company we recited "minha" (afternoon service). We then ascended a gallery in the azara (II) where we found a table laid out with food and drinks that their means afforded. After two hours at the table, they led us to the other synagogue through illuminated streets with music. Here we recited "arbit" (evening service). After the service we proceeded to the jetty where we found all the people gathered. We took leave of them but some accompanied us to our house and afterwards returned to their houses fully satisfied.

On the 26th, Elia and David Castiel entertained us at dinner as lavish as the one given by Raby. The same was repeated by Juda and David Askquanazim. We were detained by them till three in the

afternoon. We then embarked in two boats for the city accompanied by the hahamim who had brought us on other boats. We proceeded to the city with music and chanting of psalms and hymns. From here we went to the Commandant's house to the accompaniment of music but without singing of psalms & hymns. The commandant received us courteously and conversed with the congregation for one hour in the course of which I thanked him for his kindness and assured him of their gratitude. My short speech being ended, the haham came forward to bless me with such affection that the commandant, all present and I wept. We then took leave of him and they went home very sad. We remained in the commandant's house equally sad. On the following morning 8 or 10 of the leaders, to our great sorrow, came and remained till we weighed anchor. The hahamim, the leaders and also some persons from the other side brought with them choicest gifts and I did not know how to express my gratitude to them. I was very touched with their tears and sighs our imminent departure had caused. I was also affected by the love and kindness they bestowed on us and for their continuous receptions in gala dresses inspite of many who were in mourning for their recently deceased parents and brothers (12). (Today completes one year since we left Amsterdam).

List of the Heads of families.

N. B. The "B" denotes brancos (Whites).

1. B. Haham Haim Belilia - his great grandfather from Saffet (13)
2. B. David Levy Medulbar - his grandfather from Germany (14)
3. B. Haim Belilia, Minister & skilled scribe. His great grandfather from Alepo. (15)
4. B. David Raby - from Alepo. (16)
5. B. Haham Hai Pinto - from Damasco (17)
6. Elia David Castiel - His great grandfather from Castella (Spain). (18)
7. Jenda & David Asquenazim - sons of the famous Haham Mosseh Asquenaz - their grandfather from Germany. (19)

8. Semtob Castiel has retired to Paru by order from Batavia owing to some unpleasantness he had with David Levy whose post he occupied before. (20)
9. Mosseh Aleva - his grandfather from Alepo. (21)
10. B. Joseph & }
11. B. Zacharias } Zackay - Descendants of the first families from Cranganore. Their grandfather the famous Haham Selomo Zackay. (22 & 23)
12. B. Samuel Barrioti - his father & grandfather from Constantina (24).
13. David Belilia - His grandfather from Jerusalem. (25).
14. B. Elia a Reuyaly (Reby) His great grandfather from Jerusalem and the first foreigner in Cochín. (26).
15. Ishac &
16. Abraham Aleva - Their grandfather from Alepo. (27)
17. B. Sason Michael from Xiras in Persia. (28).
18. B. Joseph Susany (Guer) from Susan Abira. (29).
19. Aaron of Cranganore from the first families (30).
20. B. Isaque Toby from Berberia.
21. Mosseh &
22. Meyr, descendants from the mother's side of the Royal House of Cranganore. (31)
23. B. Joseph Asury from Babel. (32)

All these people are of very good disposition, docile by nature, and very prominent Jews. They are learned in the Law and are equally clever as traders. Their colour is brown which is due to the climate as they are totally separated from the Malabarees in rank and consider it a disgrace to marry them. They allege that the Malabarees are the slaves of slaves and are mixed with the Cannanites, Gentiles and Ismelims. They do not eat the meat slaughtered by their shohet (slaughterer) and do not count them in the minian (33) though they observe the same rites and ceremonies as ourselves. (34).

The women are not seen out nor do they present themselves in their homes; with great difficulty I was able to see the two daughters of David Raby. They were

both young, white and beautiful. Two other small girls of four and five years were equally beautiful. They live a contended life though I think their means are limited. Rabi is a man of twenty thousand and more pesos (peso is a Spanish silver coin worth about 4½ shillings) David Raby is better provided for than the others, four or five times more.

The place where they live is a pleasant one with the river flowing behind it, the houses are passable, all living in one street in which their herub is fixed with two pillars of stone crossed by an iron bar (35). In brief they live under the fig tree as our fathers had done in the Holy land. At one end of the street is the Royal palace and at the other is quarter of the Malabaree Jews with one hundred and twenty families and three Synagogues.

The Malabares Jews, their places of living, families and Synagogues in Cochin. (36)

Cochin	3	Synagogues	120	families	
Angicaymal	2	" "	150	"	(poor people)
Paru (The people here had 2 scrolls from Cranganore)	1	" "	100	"	(well provided)
Palur	1	" ;	10	"	
Chenot	1	" "	50	"	(well provided)
Muttam	1	" "	35	"	
Congregation Total	9		465		

Their Origin

The origin of these Malabares arose from the fact that the Jews of Cranganore had great wealth including a number of slaves. One among them who was learned in the law, powerful and respected, taught Judaism to twenty-five of his slaves and gave them liberty and one synagogue. After sometime the masters of these slaves died and were reduced in numbers; the slaves united with their equals and increased in the manner as seen today.

In the year 5272 (1512) the Spanish Jews came to Cochin in which place they settled down with their Synagogue which is the one they have today (36), very beautiful and of the size of that at London. (37)

INFORMATION WHICH I GATHERED REGARDING OUR RITES AND CEREMONIES.

As to their rites and ceremonies, they agree with ours except those mentioned below more out of curiosity than of importance.

The Women do not cover their head.

They are present in the synagogue barefooted (both are gentile custom).

They put on talit morning and evening.

They do not wear sisit for the reason that they do not use dress of four corners. (Their dress if of Eastern fashion).

They say everyday Bircat Coanim.

They do not light the Sabbath lamp but use double the light of other days. (38)

I saw the sepharim (scrolls of the law) and in the passage Deuteronomy XXIII, V. 2. the Hebrew alphabet Aleph is used instead of the letter Hay in 6 scrolls & in the Hebrew passage in Numbers XI, I, the inverted Nun is found in 5 scrolls. I also saw in an ancient scroll an inverted vav. In Aden, Sana, Gebila, Kellor in the land of Mecca they had five scrolls with the inverted nun and one of which is more than two hundred years old, I found the inverted vav. They keep the scroll inside a box and when they read it or show it to the congregation, the scroll is not removed from the box. (39). They use ornaments in the shape of pomegranates and crowns as decorations for the scrolls.

The names of famous Rabbis who had been to the shores (40)

Rabbi Samuel Alevy

.. Jeuda Alevy

.. Nissim came from Spain as is seen from his hymn which is enclosed.

.. Abraham Aben Hira. He came from Jerusalem and returned to his country.

„ Mosseh Abenaya.

„ Is Bar Joseph. He was the grandson of Is, an old judge and a descendant of the High priest.

They have no information about Sabatay Zebi, except that in the year 26 to 27 the commander at Cochin received his effigy with that of Natan. The Jews in Cochin took no notice of it. They learned later that he had become a Turk. (41). I met here one Hamram Cohen, a messenger from Hebron who was moving for, the past eight years among 200 congregations impressing upon the community that Sabatay Zebi was still alive and was unlike others the true messiah, though Zebi was already dead: There are two men of Royal descent (from the mother's side) whose great grandfather was called Joseph Azar, the last King of Cranganore. There is also a lady well advanced in years whose grandfather (on the father's side) was called Aaron Azar; she has two daughters and one son in Jerusalem.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE FIRST JEWS IN INDIA (42)

In the year 4130 (370) after the creation of the world there arrived on the coast of Malabar 70 to 80000 souls (Israelites) from Mayorca where their forefathers were carried away as captives. (no one was able to tell me whether they came here as exiles or voluntarily). After the destruction of the second temple by Titus Vespasian and in accordance with the promise of the Most Merciful God of Israel to his afflicted people that he will not totally abandon them, it pleased Him that this multitude should find favour in the eyes of the King Cheram Perumal (His kingdom extended from Goa to Colombo) that he should receive them in his dominion. With paternal and lasting affection he gave to Joseph Rabban the city of Cranganore (This Cranganore is 4 leagues from Cochin) in perpetual possession with an area of three leagues, with Royal Prerogatives as mentioned in the attached copy of the Grant, the translation of which was made in my

presence from the Malabaric engravings on the copper plates. With paternal welcome they settled down with 15000 souls of Royal descent with their King in Cranganore; famous Rabbis, men with means & others settled down in Maday, Peryapatnam and Cherigandaram and in the last named place the tomb of Reby Samuel Levi is seen even today. (43)

In the year 4250 (499) another great batch of people arrived, they could not say from which part of the world they had come, as the knowledge they have is much confused because of the loss of the book named " Sepher Ayashar" in which was recorded their early history. The book was lost as a result of the plunder and destruction of the Synagogue and Jewish houses.

The Myorcan Jews brought with them two trumpets with the Ineffable Name engraved on them from the Holy Temple. The Levites used to sound the trumpets to announce the approach of the Sabbath (Friday after sunset). On one occasion when the sun was about to set, the Levites had not arrived, the members sounded the trumpets; this enraged the Levites and they broke them into pieces. Thus a celebrated relic of our ancient glory was lost. This happened two hundred years before the loss of Cranganore and was the harbinger of events to follow. (The Cohens came from Madelagam, 3 leagues from Cranganore, attended by a retinue of forty to fifty palanquins and 300 - 400 slaves. Their route was crowded with people from the stalls and shops.)

Loss of Cranganore.

The first cause started from the fact that the King and his brother had married two sisters, the latter marrying the elder and the former the younger. The younger being the wife of the King occupied the first place in public functions. This was objected to by the elder sister and she asserted that she should get the first place by virtue of her age. The quarrel between the two

sisters brought hatred between the two brothers. The younger brother planned with the King of Cochin to invite his brother Aaron to his court at Cochin and have him murdered. Joseph succeeded in his attempt. Aaron before his death divulged the name of his brother Joseph as his murderer. This was heard by one of Aaron's pages who was at that time standing outside the room. This servant boldly entered the room but was not able to avenge his master's death as Joseph had escaped from the Palace.

Since this event, the throne became a bone of contention between two parties until both asked for help from the Zamorin, the King of Calicut. At this time the Malabaree Jews became bold and demanded marital union with the daughters and grand daughters of their masters. The masters resented the impudence of their slaves and rejected their demand. This enraged the slaves and they also appealed to the Zamorin advising him to pretend to support one party against the other or cheat both. They also promised to show the weakest parts of the place. The Zamorin attacked the town on a Sabbath midnight when the innocent people were all asleep. The Zamorin sacked the town and caused great destruction. The King Joseph Azar (since the first King Joseph Rabban, they counted with this 72 in the male line, (44)) escaped himself by swimming with his wife on his back with a few others to Cochin, where I saw his tomb and the others retired to Paru and Palur.

This is the information, Brethren and Lords, which I was able to gather after much trouble to communicate to you, respected Sirs, and to our friends who will like to see them. We pray that they will be acceptable to all of you as we were to our brethren to whom we owe love and gratitude for the splendid reception they had given us.

TRANSLATION OF THE COPPER LEAF OR THE PRIVILEGES GIVEN TO JOSEPH RABBAN BY CHERAM PERUMAL. (45)

Swasty Sri Cocomai Cocomai Condan (he sings praises to his Gods) Governando Pagarem Iraby, Burmen governing for many years with sceptre in hand, in the 2nd year of our reign and the 36th year of our age, at the time when I was residing in Vergicotu passed this which is called Vira, to Josepho Rabano with the authority of the emblem of five colours, firing of guns, elephants and horse, honour and five colours in all, torches of the day, to adorn with white cloth all the way, sedan chair, umbrella, drum of Baddaga, trumpet, small drum, arch, ornaments of the arch, honour of throwing bettila, and sulla in the air etc to the 72 existing houses, the income of the pezo, silk curtains and the inhabitants of the bazar need not pay customs or ground rent; all these we have given by the copper oilha to Josepho Rabano, and the place called Anjuvannam Udayur to his sons and daughters, nephews and sons-in-law and to their descendants as long as the moon and the earth shall exist, everything shown above has been effected in our presence.

Witnesses:— Govarthan Marthandan, the Chief of Venadu which is Trinancur.

Kodai Chirikandan, Chief of Venapalinadu which is Vadakenour.

Manavipata Manavien Chief of Erahanadu, that is the Kingdom of Lamori.

Irayaran Chathan, Chief of Velluvanadu.

Kodai Iravi, Chief of the land called Meddur Muncur Moorkan Chathan.

Written by Vanthalachery Kandan, Chundapozhanaya (under secretary) Kizhavaya Kelappen

QUESTIONS PUT TO OUR BRETHREN IN HIGH COCHIN.

1. How many years have their ancestors been in these parts and from which country did they come?
They came from Majorca in the year 4130 (370).
2. In which countries in India did they settle?
They settled down as mentioned in my report.
3. What are the names of families existing today?
The names are given in the report.
4. In which year did they come to this place?
It was in the year 5272 (1512).
5. Who were the famous Rabbis they had and whom have they at present?
Their names are mentioned in the report.
6. Did they bring or have they anything from the sacred temple?
Two trumpets.
7. Are any among them or have they any information of the members of Royal descent?
There are three men and 3 women.
8. Have they any knowledge of the 9 tribes?
None.
9. Have they any knowledge of Sabatay Zebi and his stratagems?
I have mentioned him in my report.
10. When did they first get of the existence of the congregation in Amsterdam?
Since sixty years.
11. Do they communicate with the Jews of Mecca and Persia?
In frequently they do.
12. What books do they have and what books do they need?
They want the Babilonian Talmud (46) of which they have only fragments. They also want the books mentioned in the margin.
13. Are they well treated by the officials of the Company?
Well.
14. How is the Hebrew alphabet nun written?
As stated by me.
15. Do they follow the Talmud.
Yes, as we.
16. Do they have Shulhan Aruch and Misnayot? (47)
They have.
17. How many items of work they do not do on Sabbath?
39 (48).

18. Do they celebrate Passover for two days like us?
Two days.
19. Do they blow the Shofar if the New Year falls on a Sabbath? (49)
They do not blow.
20. Whether they take the lulab with citron and myrtle on the Sabbath? (50).
No.
21. Whether they say the Hagadha as we? (51)
In the same manner.
22. How do they count the Omer? (52)
Same as we.
23. Hanukha and the Hanukha lamp? (53)
The same.
24. Sisit and Talet? (54)
The same as ours.
25. Phylactery its form and chapters?
The same form & verses.
26. Mezuzah (55) its form and chapters?
No difference.
27. Fast of Esther, Purim and Megillah? (56)
As we.
28. If the fast falls on Sabbath do they fast on the following Sunday?
On Sunday.
29. The Erub & Tehum with their ceremonies? (57)
They agree with us.
30. The order of prayer on ordinary days and festival days?
The same psalms more or less.
31. Whether they shave the middle part of the face.
They do not shave.
32. How do they look upon Shatnez? (58)
As we.
33. Do they light lamps on the Sabbath & bake the Sabbath bread.
They burn double the light on Sabbath & bake the bread.
34. Do they observe the ritual bath on days of separation and also after delivery?
Both times.
35. The ceremonies of marriage and the form of the marriage document?
The same.
36. What is the form of divorce?
The same.

37. The observance of taking butter after flesh and meat after taking milk preparations?
They observe four hours duration.(59)
38. Have they any information about sharing of Dibre?
There is no information.
39. Have they the same Canonical books as we have?
The same.
40. What is the form of their calendar?
The proper one.
41. Do they celebrate Rosh Hodesh (First day of the month) more than one day?
One and two days in certain months.
42. Do they observe the rules regarding slaughtering of animals and their examination?
They agree.
43. Blessing of the moon & Abdalah (Benediction over a cup of wine at the conclusion of the Sabbath and festivals)?
Like us.
44. How do they consider wine of idolatrous libation?
With great horror.
45. Do they observe cleansing of the meat?
As we.
46. Do they change the verse and the prayer for the rain and dew on the same day?
On the same day.
47. Whether they had any information of Christianity before the advent of Portuguese to India?
They had no knowledge.

All the above questions I put to them in spite of the fact they followed our customs, I want all facts based on truth as I have seen.

NOTES

1. One hundred and fifty copies of this important work were printed. Copies were found in selected public and individual libraries in Amsterdam, Europe and London. There was also a Spanish translation of the report in the Jewish library of Amsterdam.
2. Mahamad is the governing body of a Sepharadic (Spanish & Portuguese) Synagogue elected by the members. The Mahamad had considerable control over the private and the religious lives of its members.
3. Elul is the 12th month of the Jewish calendar. The Jewish year 5447 corresponds to the year 1687.
4. Ishack Aboab was the leading Rabbi in Amsterdam.
5. Commander Gulmer Vosburg was Commander in Cochin from 1684-1686.
6. Psalm 118. Verse 24.
7. League - Distance usually of about 3 miles.
8. Mudaliar is a title conferred on the leader of the Jewish community by the Rajah of Cochin in recognition perhaps of the privileges granted to Joseph Rabban in Cranganore. The Mudaliar was given a rod of office. He exercised civil & criminal jurisdiction over the members of his community the Rajah reserving to himself the right of trying grave offences. The first Mudaliar was Baruch Joseph Levi, one of the four who built the Parthesi Synagogue in 1568. Joseph Levi succeeded his father & after his death the title passed on to Samuel Castiel. In 1663 the Dutch presented to Shem Tob Castiel the then Mudaliar in addition to the rod of office from the Cochin Ruler, an official staff with its top mounted in gold bearing the motto of the Dutch East India Co. The Hallegua family succeeded the Castiel family in acquiring the title. The title conferred personal distinction and the power could not be exercised by his successor unless renewed by the Rajah. It was during the time of Col. Macaulay (1800-1810) the British Resident in Travancore and Cochin that the Mudaliars ceased to exercise the powers conferred on them. The descendants are however still called Mudaliars out of courtesy.
9. Haham. The Rabbi among the Spanish & Portuguese Jews is called Haham (Hahamim — Rabbis).
10. It is interesting to note that Paiva uses only the term "Malabar Jews" instead of the objectionable and unjewish term "Black" Jews". According to some writers the classification White and Black was first used in 1776 and according to Rev. J. H. Lord the term was used in 1876.
11. Azara. The entrance to the Synagogue which is usually a small hall.
12. The custom of the Jews of Cochin is to wear white or black dress during the twelve months of mourning for father, mother, sister or brother.

13. The list of the Heads of the families of the Parthesi Synagogue and the countries of their origin are historically of great importance. They clearly and conclusively prove without any more prevarication that all the so called White Jews were not new comers but among them were Heads of the first families from Cranganore including descendants of the Royal House of Joseph Rabban and his successors. Rev. J. H. Lord and other writers like him who have maintained the "White" Jews have never been the real ancient Jews of Cochin and that they had nothing to do with Cranganore would have been compelled to revise their pet theories had they only known the existence of Paiva's work. The list also throws new light on historical facts which have hitherto eluded certain writers.

Rabbi Haim Beliliah's great grand father came about the year 1566 from Safed (Palestine). Safed was noted for its scholars. After 1492 a large number of refugees settled in the city. Beliliah family may be of Spanish origin.
14. David Levy Mudaliar. His grant father came about the year 1596 from Germany. Baruch Joseph Levi was the first Mudaliar and one of the four who built the Parthesi Synagogues.
15. Haim Beliliah was an erudite scribe and minister. His great grand father came from Alepo in 1566.
16. David Raby. Ezekiel Rahabi I came to Cochin from Alepo in 1646 leaving behind his wife and young son David. After his father's death in 1664, David came to Cochin. He was a prosperous merchant in the service of the Dutch East India Co. and the Rajah of Cochin. It is this David Raby whom Paiva met and described him as one of the wealthiest men in Cochin. This David was the father of the famous Ezekiel Rahabi who played a leading role not only as the leader of his community but as the sole representative of the Dutch East India Co. for several years. David through the Dutch played an important role in getting the present Royal family of Cochin to the throne when it was claimed by another branch. He died in Cochin in 1726.
17. Rabbi Hai Pinto came from Damascus along with David Rabi. He died in Cochin in 1689.
18. Elia David Castiel's great grand father came from Spain about the year 1566.
19. Jeuda & David Asquenazim's grand father came from Germany. They were the sons of the famous Rabbi Mosseh Asquenaz who died in Cochin in 1646. According to the records of the Parthesi Synagogue another branch of this family came to Cochin from Cranganore. Several members of this family are buried in the old White Jews cemeteries.
20. Shemtob Castiel. According to Paiva several thousand Jews came to Cranganore from Spain in 370. Some branches of this family are said to have come in 1511. Shemtob Castiel was present when the Fort at Cochin was taken over by the Dutch.
21. Mosseh Aleva. His grand father came from Alepo in 1606. He died in Cochin in 1707. The name Aleva was changed to Hallegua.
- 22 & 23. Joseph & Zacharias Zackay were the descendants of the first families of Cranganore. Many members of this family are buried in the old cemeteries of the White Jews.

Though the family became extinct in Cochin, one branch of the family made their home in Calcutta. After the death of the father, his son left Calcutta for Israel and a daughter to United Kingdom. It is interesting to note that one member of this family was the first Indian to acquire American citizenship on the plea that he belonged to the White Jews of Cochin and as such his family had not inter-married.

24. Samuel Barrioti His grand father came in 1778.
25. David Belilia. His grand father came from Jerusalem in 1596. Unlike Haim Beliliah, Paiva includes David in the list of non-whites.
26. David Reuyaly is mentioned by Paiva as the first foreigner in Cochin. His great grand father came from Jerusalem about the year 1566
27. Ishac & Abraham Aleva's grand father came from Alepo in 1596.
28. Sason Michael from Persia.
29. Joseph Susany came from the Royal Palace and citadel in Persia. Paiva mentions that he was a guer - a proselyte to Judaism.
30. Aaaron. This is the second family mentioned by Paiva from Cranganore.
31. Mossch and Meyr. Paiva mentions these two as Heads of the third family from Cranganore. It is important to note that they belonged to the Royal family of Rabban in Cranganore.
32. Joseph Asury came from Babylonia.

A closer scrutiny of the list of the Heads of families reveals some interesting historical facts which have hitherto confounded some scholars.

1. Paiva enumerates 25 Heads of families whose ancestors came from the following countries

3	Families	from	Germany
3	"	"	Palestine
1	"	"	Damascus
3	"	"	Spain
1	"	"	Turkey
2	"	"	Persia
1	"	"	Berberia
1	"	"	Babylon
5	"	"	Alepo
5	"	"	Cranganore

2. The presence of five Heads of families from Cranganore among whom three were from the first families and two from the Jewish Royal house of Cranganore is significant. Paiva mentions further that there were 3 women of Royal descent among the members of the Parthesi Synagogue.
3. Paiva divides the Heads of families into "White" and "Brown". He places 14 under "White" and 11 under "Brown" and asserts that their dark skin was not due

to inter-marriage but because of long residence in the country. This proves that among the members of Parthesi Synagogue there were coloured Jews. They may have come from Yemen or some Arabian country.

4. The first batch of Jews left Cranganore as a result of the fratricidal strife between Aaron, the last Jewish Chief and his brother Joseph in 1344.

The second exodus took place after the Moorish attack on the Jews in Cranganore in 1524.

The Portuguese attacked and destroyed Jewish houses and Synagogues and in 1565 the Jews left Cranganore en masse.

5. According to Paiva Jew came to Cranganore from Spain in 370 and another batch came in 1512.
6. According to our author the great grandfather of Elia Reuyaly was the first foreigner in Cochin. He may have come in 1566 or earlier.
7. None of the Heads of families mentioned in the list were born in Cochin.

33 & 34. Paiva describes here the bitter feelings that existed between the so called "White" & "Black Jews". The former considered themselves as Jews by race and religion and looked down upon the "Blacks" as Jews by religion only. The racial purity of Jews was questioned by many a writer. This is what the Universal Jewish Encyclopedia says "Because of the innumerable mixtures which have taken place in prehistoric and historic times, there is no pure race among the peoples of the world today. The Jews too are a historical cultural product which had its origin in a mixture of several races and cultural peoples. All the theories on the Jews as a race which have been advanced hitherto by the racial theoreticians have proved fruitless and untenable, since there still exists no expert scientific basis for the construction of theories. 'Not only is every race akin to every other' said Israel Zangwill but every people is a hotch-potch of races. If the Jew has been able to enter into all incarnations of humanity and to be at home in every environment, it is because he is a common measure of humanity. He is the pioneer by which the true race theory has been experientially demonstrated".

It is a historical fact that the Jews in Cranganore and Cochin had numerous slaves and many of them were converted to Judaism. In 1817 there were 221 White Jews and 447 slaves worshipping in the Parthesi Synagogue. In Jewish law an emancipated slave is identical with that of a Proselyte who is regarded as a Jew in every respect. Till recently, the "White" and "Black" masters treated their slaves as outcasts contrary to Jewish law and practice; one therefore wonders whether the Jews in Kerala have also succumbed to the influence of "Caste" which was ubiquitous in those days. Slavery was abolished in the States of Travancore and Cochin in 1854-55. All differences between the "White & the Blacks" and between them and their respective slaves have happily disappeared and The Parthesi Synagogue has ceased to be the House of Prayer exclusively for the Whites.

35. Erub is a device adopted by the Rabbis for the removal of difficulties in applying the precepts for sabbath and holy-day rest. It consists in symbolically enclosing a public domain with the aid of a rough wooden framework at the exit to suggest

a door, or, in most cases by fixing a wire horizontally above the exit. In this manner a whole town may become a single closed domain. Till recently a horizontal wire connecting two houses existed at the entrance of Jew Town, Cochin and two pillars of the Erub may be seen today in Parur in Jews Street.

36. Paiva refers to the following three Synagogues in Cochin.

1. Cochangadi Synagogue was built in 1345 by the last Jewish Ruler from Cranganore—Joseph Azar. This was the first Synagogue built outside Cranganore in Kerala. It was closed in 1789. The mural slab of this Synagogue is now preserved in the courtyard of the Parthesi Synagogue.
2. As a result of the Moorish attack on the Jews of Cranganore in 1524, more Jews escaped to Cochin. They found the Cochangadi Synagogue too small. Another Synagogue The Kadvobagham Synagogue was therefore built in Cochin by Baruch Levi, the father of the first Mudaliar in 1544 and completed in 1550. The mural slab of this Synagogue is also preserved in the Parthesi Synagogue. This Synagogue was closed for service when the entire congregation left for Israel in recent years.
3. The Thekobagham Synagogue in Cochin was built by Jacob David Castiel the 5th Mudaliar in 1647. This Synagogue was demolished and the ground sold when all its members left for Israel.
4. Angicaymal. The Kadvobagham and Thekobagham Synagogues are still used for worship though the members have dwindled to 150 from nearly a thousand before the State of Israel was established.
5. Paru The Synagogue in Parur was built by David Jacob Castiel the 4th Mudaliar in 1616.
6. The Synagogues in Palur and Muttam were probably built by Ezechiel Rahabi for the convenience of the Jews working on his estates.
7. Chenot. The Synagogue in Chennamangalam is now closed for service as there are hardly any Jew there.

37. The White Jews or the Parthesi Synagogue was built in 1568 by Samuel Castiel, David Belilia, Ephraim Sala and Joseph Levi. They were new comers to Cochin. Hence the name Parthesi Synagogue. At the time of Paiva's visit in 1686 there were 4 Synagogues in Cochin. Today there remains only one; so this Synagogue is now generally referred to as The Cochin Synagogue. Pierre Loti writes "there is perhaps no other Synagogue in the world where an ancient style of decoration of an unknown manner is preserved". Prof. Walter Fischel an eminent Jewish scholar of the University of California refers to the Cochin Synagogue in these words. "Having visited this Synagogue in 1959 I can only share with Rabbi David his admiration and evaluation. It could really be called the 'Taj Mahal' of the Indian Jews.

38. Some of the customs referred to by Paiva are no longer in evidence.

1. The custom of Jewish married women to have their heads covered is of considerable antiquity. Cochin Jewish women now cover their heads.

2. The custom of being present in the Synagogue bare-footed is not observed now.
3. The Talit or prayer shawl is put on in the morning and not in the evening
4. The Priestly blessings are now recited on Festivals and certain Sabbaths
- 5 The Cochin Jews usually light 7 oil lamps on the Sabbath & festivals instead of the two candles used in Europe

39. In Europe the scrolls of the Law are tied up with a sash and closed in a decorated silk or satin mantle In Cochin and in other Oriental countries the scrolls of the Law are kept in a cylindrical shaped wooden box plated in gold or silver with a gold or silver crown on the top. Ernakulam Synagogue has the unique distinction of possessing a solid gold plated box This is perhaps the only one in the world

40 Rabbi Samuel Alevy was the father of Judah Halevi who was the foremost Hebrew poet since the Bible The father and son are said to have visited Cochin Rabbi Samuel died here

Rabbi Nissim was a 14th century Hebrew Poet & Traveller In one of his poems he wrote—

I travelled from Spain
I had heard of the city of Shingly
I longed to see an Israel King,
Him I saw with my own eyes

Abraham Aben Hira Paiva refers here to Abraham Ibn Ezra who was a versatile scholar & poet He was born in Spain in 1092 and died in Rome in 1167

- 41 Sabbatai Zevi proclaimed himself as the Messiah and had in the beginning some following prominent among whom was Nathan He finally became a convert to Islam and the hope of a national Jewish renaissance in Palestine was abandoned.
- 42 As to the probable date of the first Jewish settlement in Cranganore opinion is sharply divided among many schools of thought Jost holds that the first colonisation of Jews in Cranganore was the result of the exodus of the Jews from Persia in the 5th century Another theory is that the Cochin Jews are descendants of the tribes taken into captivity by Shalmanezar and that after being freed they came to Cranganore Another historian has it that they are the descendants of the Jews taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezar According to Paiva about 80000 Jews arrived on the Malabar Coast in 370 The tradition of the Cochin Jews is that they came to Cranganore soon after the destruction of the second Temple in the first century
- 43 Cherigandaram is a place in Cranganore where an old Jewish cemetery existed Excavation of this place may throw new light on some of the dates if, for example, the tomb of Joseph Rabban is discovered
- 44 Joseph Azar, the last of the male successor of Joseph Rabban built the Kochangadi Synagogue in Cochin in 1344 and if he was the 72nd in the male line of succession then Joseph Rabban may have lived in the 4th or the 5th century assuming that

each ruler had an average of 12-15 years of reign. Paiva saw Azar's tomb in Cochin in 1686.

- 45 The Copper Plates. No two scholars agree as to the date and the correct translation of the copper plates.

Dr. Burnell gives 774 as the date.

Venkayya 11 - 12 Century.

Kanaka Sabha 192.

Sylvan Levi 1020.

Whisel 231.

Ramanantha Ayyar 1000.

Moens 426.

Buchanan 490

Middelton 508

Lawson 750

Whitehouse 825

Cochin Jews traditional date is 379.

It is stated by some writers that the copper plates now in possession of the 'White Jews' are not genuine and that they originally belonged to the 'Black Jews'. The 'Whites' obtained them by trickery. Rev. Henry Lord was the foremost critic of the 'White Jews'. He writes "The plate in the possession of the White Jews is not the original. The original was taken to Cambridge by Dr. Buchanan and preserved there". In his book "Christian Researches in Asia" Dr Buchanan writes: "I have employed by their permission (Jews) an engraver at Cochin, to execute a facsimile of the original plate on copper. The original is engraved on both sides of the plate, the facsimile forms two plates. These are now deposited in the public library at the University of Cambridge."

The second charge is that the "Whites" obtained the plates by deceit.

1. The copper plates were the most precious document of the Jews after their exodus from Cranganore and the person who had them would have carefully and zealously guarded them. The "Whites" were then, the enemies of the "Blacks" it is therefore very difficult to believe that the latter would have allowed the "Whites" to take them by fraud.
2. Paiva mentions among the members of the Parthesi Synagogue five families from Cranganore among whom were 2 men and 3 women from the Cranganore Jewish Royal House. It is therefore not only natural and logical that, the copper plates originally given to Joseph Rabban should have been passed on to his successors, who were members of the Parthesi Synagogue. Hence the presence of the Copper plates in the Parthesi Synagogue. Paiva's translation of the plates may perhaps be the oldest version.

46. Talmud is the name given to the large literary collection of reflections and discussions of the Rabbis arising from their examination of the text of the Mishnah.

47. Shulan Aruch is the code of Jewish Law compiled by Joseph Caro and published in 1555. It has remained the standard authority for orthodox Jewish practices.

Mishnah is the name of the oldest collection apart from the Bible, of Jewish legislative writings.

48. **The Rabbis have forbidden 39 items of work on the Sabbath.**
49. **An important feature of the Jewish New Year service is the sounding of the Shofar or the Rams horn. If the New Year falls on the Sabbath, the sounding is done only on one day instead of two.**
50. **Lulab. The Palm branch decked with sprays of myrtle and willow and citron are the characteristic feature of the Synagogue service on the feast of Tabernacles.**
51. **Haggadah. Narrative. The Rabbis prepared a complete ritual which the Jews carry out on the first two nights of Passover.**
52. **Omer. The seven weeks which elapse between Passover and the Feast of Weeks are called the days of the Omer.**
53. **Hanuka is the feast of Lights, celebrated in memory of the successful revolt of Judas Maccabees.**
54. **Sisit and Talit. The sisit and talit are worn by males as a constant reminder to the Jew of his duties to God.**
55. **Mezuzzah. A small roll of parchment on which certain biblical verses are written and it is affixed to the entrance door of all orthodox Jews.**
56. **Megillah is the scroll depicting the story of Queen Esther. It is read on the feast of Purim.**
57. **Erub. A device for the removal of difficulties in applying the precepts for Sabbath and Holiday rest.**
58. **Shatnez. Mingled stuff. Biblical law forbids the wearing of garments made from a mixture of wool and linen.**
59. **The Rabbis have prohibited the eating of milk and meat dishes together. the observant Jew waits four hours after taking meat dishes to eat dishes made from milk.**

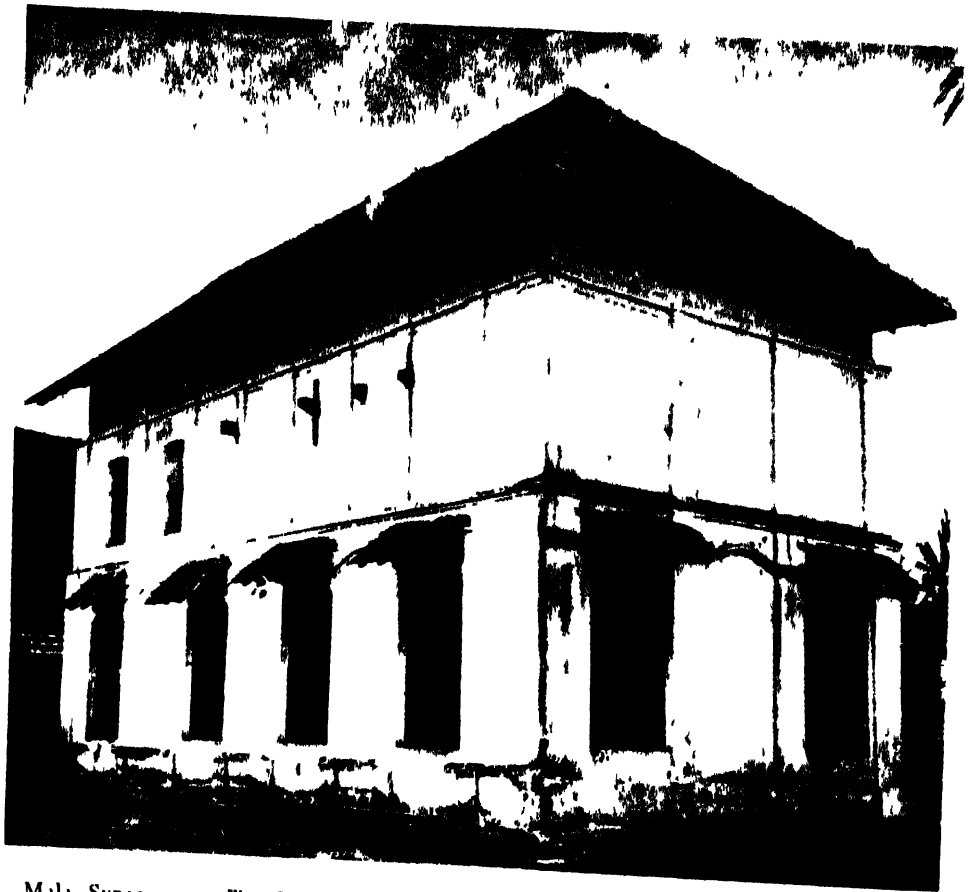


Unlike the brass oil lamps used in Hindu Temples and houses, this lamp is unique. According to experts it was designed for Jews specially for the Day of Atonement Service, as the oil in the lamp will be sufficient for lighting for more than 24 hours.

בנה בפנינו בית זבל לד מכון לשב
 עולמים שנת נדול יד הכבוד הבית
 הזה האחרון מזה ראשון לעידה היום
 בשלישי בשבת חמשה ללכסלו ב'ה'

Mural slab of the Cochangadi Synagogue built in 1345 now preserved in the courtyard of the Parthesi Synagogue. This Synagogue was built by Joseph Azar, the last Jewish ruler in Cranganore. This was the first Synagogue to be built outside Cranganore.





Mala Synagogue The first Synagogue to be closed for service after the establishment of the State of Israel This Synagogue building along with the Jewish cemetery was entrusted to the Mala Panchayat as per a document executed on December 12, 1954 by the Trustees of the Synagogue

THE CONCEPT OF UNITY OF INDIA IN REGIONAL LANGUAGES

Suranad Kunjan Pillai

To a superficial observer the multiplicity of the languages of India is an apparent contradiction to its unity. From the Southernmost corner, the Cape Comorin, to the snow-clad mountain, in the far north, India presents to all outward appearances a diversity of cultures embedded in languages belonging to different families of human speech. It would, therefore, appear to an outsider that the unity of India is only a matter of geography and not of culture or homogeneity of race. Separated from the other countries of Asia by lofty ranges of the Himalaya and isolated from other parts of the world by deep seas on all other sides, the geographical unity of this great country is obvious even to a casual student of its history, notwithstanding the variety of its physical features and differences in climatic conditions particularly in the South and in the North. The numerous rivers or even the ranges of Vindhya and other mountains have not actually tended to keep the different regions in isolation, nor have they served as barriers preventing contact in political or social life. It is in the background of this geographical unity that the variety of languages calls for an explanation. How in this land which, from time immemorial, has been regarded as one country - Bharatavarsha, there is this diversity of languages, not to speak of other differences from region to region. There are in the south of the peninsular India the languages of the Dravidian

family, Malayalam, Tamil, Tulu, Kannada and Telugu besides other uncultivated dialects. In central and north India there are several languages belonging to the Kolaryan and Munda families. But the more important languages of Central and North India belong to the Aryan stock, and they are derived from Sanskrit which was introduced here by the Aryan colonists in ancient times. A passing reference may also be made to the Khasi languages of the Himalayas. From these facts, one is likely to form an idea that every one of these languages is the repository of a different type of culture. This may be the case when we consider the generality of the languages of the world. But so far as Indian languages are concerned, this conclusion is far off the mark. Most of our languages are, no doubt, mutually unintelligible, and they have also different scripts, and have highly developed literatures. A Malayali cannot easily follow even the other Dravidian languages except perhaps Tamil. The same is the case with the speakers of the Aryan languages also. These circumstances help to create a feeling of diversity of culture based on these languages, and in recent times unhealthy linguistic fanaticism receives nourishment from several sources. It is, however, strange that these outward features of diversity do not succeed in hiding the inner unity of India's culture that is the core of all these languages and their literatures. We may examine the question.

Despite the fact that the several regional languages are fully developed idioms possessing distinct features of their own, an examination will reveal that the bulk of vocabularies and thought-contents of all these languages is substantially the same, and it is derived from a common source, the Sanskrit language. This is only natural in the case of the North Indian languages which are off-shoots of Sanskrit, but what is most astonishing is the fact that the South Indian languages, Malayalam, Tamil, Kannada, Telugu etc., which belong to a different family—the Dravidian stock—have drawn even more freely from Sanskrit. Dravidian languages like Malayalam, Kannada and Telugu are, in a sense, more Sanskritic in their vocabulary than the North Indian languages. This may be because in Malayalam and other Dravidian languages the percentage of Sanskrit tatsama forms is larger, whereas the Prakrit languages of North India abound in slang-forms derived from Sanskrit. Of the languages of the Dravidian family, only Tamil has made any attempt to resist the over-domineering influence of Sanskrit, but even Tamil has not hesitated to borrow words and ideas very freely from Sanskrit taking care only to Dravidianize Sanskrit words in the process of adoption. Numerous words in that language which appear to be of pure Dravidian origin are in fact dravidianized forms of Sanskrit words. Take a word like 'Matiri' meaning 'sort or manner'. This looks like a pure Dravidian word, but, in fact it is a derivative of the Sanskrit word 'Matrika' meaning 'model or ideal'. In regard to thought-contents, literature and literary forms, the influences of Sanskrit is equally evident in all the regional languages, and it serves as a bond of unity among these languages. The moral and religious thoughts and the underlying philosophy of life are essentially one and the same as embedded in the languages and as reflected in the social life of the people inhabiting the vast area comprising the sub-continent of India. A student who cares to compare one Indian language with another Indian language,

and then an Indian language with a foreign language will be struck by the amazing fact of the fundamental cultural unity underlying the Indian languages. The linguists tracing the origins of these languages will go back to pre-historic times to discover different sources, but coming to later periods they will be amazed to note the interactions and mutual influences of these idioms, and more than that the all-encompassing domination of Sanskrit that made its way through the Khyber Pass and spread throughout the Indo-Gangetic plain as far east as Kamarupa, Assam and later on southward to the Southern-most point of India, Kanyakumari. In the course of the long history of these languages there have been two distinct but intertwining tendencies, one developing the individuality and the other promoting mutual influence. These tendencies are apparently opposing one another, but they have, strange to say, succeeded in promoting the growth of distinct languages all bound together by a common culture. This is the essential unity underlying the national life and culture of our motherland.

It has been pointed out above that in respect of vocabulary and thought-contents all the regional languages have enriched themselves by freely drawing from Sanskrit. The bulk of the vocabulary in every regional language is Sanskritic and is, therefore, common for the whole of India. Students of one of these languages will accordingly be agreeably surprised to see that the majority of words included in the dictionaries of other languages are already familiar to them through their own languages. This observation will be found to be absolutely true if one examines a standard dictionary of any of our regional languages. A comprehensive dictionary of the Malayalam language, for example, contains almost all the Sanskrit words. Most of those words are included in the Tamil Lexicon as well as in the dictionaries of Telugu, Bengali, Hindi or any other Indian language. The individuality of particular languages will thus be seen only in the limited number of

indigenous words and also in inflexions and in syntax.

Religion also has exerted its influence in propagating spiritual, moral and philosophical ideas through the regional languages. The earliest literary forms in these languages were naturally folk songs and ballads, but all these languages very early in their history began to enrich themselves by borrowing or adapting the literary forms of Sanskrit. It was through popularisation of puranic literature that religion sought to spread these ideas. Epics and puranas of Sanskrit have from very early times made their appearance in regional languages in the form of translations or adaptations. This was a common feature in the history of all the languages of India, a feature which promoted the unity of national life. The role of the puranas and the epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata, deserves special reference in this context. The ideals of life held up in these great works, the characters delineated in them, the moral and spiritual values emphasised by the Rishis, the religious and philosophical thoughts enshrined in them, have all become the common property of every region of India through translations and adaptations of puranic literature in the regional languages. Rama and Sita became the ideal hero and heroine as much to the Bengali as to the Malayali or the TAMILIAN, the Punjabi or the Kashmiri. Ramayana, the national epic, became the premier literary work in the regional languages, whether it be Tulasi Dasa's work in Hindi, Kampan's work in Tamil or Ezhuthachan's Adhyatma Ramayanam in Malayalam. The same observation is correct in regard to Mahabharata and the puranas also. The heroes and heroines of the Puranas and the Mahabharata have likewise become national heroes and heroines celebrated in every regional language by poets and literary men and worshipped in temples specially erected in their honour. The languages became the media for the propagation of all kinds of religious faiths expounded by great

preceptors and philosophers, and this has also served to strengthen the bond of unity. Every language borrowed the ideas of Valmiki and Vyasa, Sree Sankara and other Acharyas, Kalidasa and other poets, and thus came to be a repository of Indian culture and as such an indivisible part of the intellectual wealth of our nation. Thus, though the regional languages of India are confined to particular areas, their literatures are not so confined, but, on the contrary, relate to the whole of India from Kanyakumari in the south to Kailasa in the north. Further, every language is rich in stories and allusions to sacred places, mountains and rivers, old Kingdoms and Cities belonging to all the distant parts of the sub-continent of India. Gods and Goddesses, demi-gods and nymphs, Gandharvas and Yakshas, having associations with different parts of India, have been familiarised by these languages to every region. These languages have in this way fostered a common tradition which is the strongest foundation for the unity of the whole of India. The South Indians through the inspiration of their language go on pilgrimage to Kasi and Haridwar, and the North Indians impelled by ideas current in their own languages come on pilgrimage to Rameshwar and Anantashayanam in the southernmost extremity of India.

These thoughts lead us to the conclusion that the regional languages, far from dividing India into different cultural zones, serve to promote an inner unity allowing at the same time a diversity of sub-cultures, suited to regional conditions and the genius of the peoples of those areas. But suppose one asks a question whether these languages did not stand in the way of the consolidation of India as one political unit, and are not even after unification under a national Government behaving as fissiparous agencies. These assumptions are plausible, but they will not bear close scrutiny. There is no rule in history that languages by themselves achieve or obstruct political unity, although languages are indisputably

strong bonds of unity. Take the example of Travancore, Cochin and Malabar which have in recent times been integrated to form the State of Kerala. Till a few years ago they remained as different political entities although the same language Malayalam is spoken in all the three areas. There are also contrary examples of multi-lingual states and even multi-lingual cities. At no time during the long history of India, languages created barriers in the matter of formation of states.

Although there was thus in the regional languages a cultural basis for the unity of India, it was only in recent times after the national awakening that the concept of the political unity of India began to take concrete shape in the regional languages. The whole of India and the territory now comprising Pakistan came under one political suzerainty under the British Raj. But India then presented a picture of a congeries of states and provinces, and not a unified and integrated country. It was our great national leaders like Mahatmaji and Panditji who raised their voice for a united free India. Poets and literary men of all the regional languages took the lead, and songs like Vande Mataram began to echo in all parts of the country. A national fervour was felt by all classes of people and the unity of a free India became the most favourite theme. All the regional languages vied with each other in fostering this feeling. The Malayalis and Tamilians, the Kannadigas and the Telugus, the Marattas and the Bengalis forgot their linguistic differences and began to think in terms of a united India. Every regional language played its role magnificently well in the battle for freedom, and no language in India ever raised its voice of dissent against the unity of our motherland. It is particularly noteworthy that when religious

interests sought a separate independent homeland, no language has made or is making any such demand although protection of linguistic interest is sought to be achieved by the formation of linguistic States. It is most creditable that the languages could rise to the occasion during the struggle for freedom and could make their due contribution to the unity and the solidarity of our nation.

The regional languages of India are the gifts of our history and they are the most precious heritage that we can boast of. Although there are some disadvantages due to the multiplicity of language there are also compensating advantages. Whatever may be the fears of those who see in these languages a possibility of separatism, history provides ample proof that such fears are baseless. At the time of the national crisis even in recent times we experienced the supreme gratification that the different parts of India forgot their differences of languages or communities and rose up as one people to answer the national challenge posed by a foreign invasion. This is assurance enough that the languages are not going to affect the unity of our national life. It must, therefore, be our endeavour to cultivate the concept of unity in our regional languages and make them serve our national life in a way worthy of their history and worthy of the great culture that they embody. I shall close this by making a humble suggestion for a further step towards a closer unity among the languages. Adoption of a common script for all the languages of India will go a very long way in mutual understanding and appreciation. Let us hope that the day is not far off when all the languages of India will be written in the same script, and speakers of the different languages can at least read the literatures in all these languages.

THE MAKERS OF ISRAEL

K. V. Krishna Ayyar

The name *Jew* is derived from Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob, who became the progenitors of the twelve tribes respectively called after them. The word *Judah* itself comes from the Hebrew *Yahuda*. In course of time the connotation of the word was extended to the community as a whole. *Israel* was a title or name assumed by Jacob, though it is generally believed that it was conferred upon him by God. In course of time it came to denote all his descendants.

The English knowing public of India know the Jew only from Shakespeare. For dramatic effect he has over-emphasized one of their national traits -toughness or 'stiff-neck' as Jehovah himself has called it more than once. But Shylock is as much a typical Jew as the velvet robed and silk cushioned *ananda* a typical Hindu yogi. A microscopic minority, the Jews trace their descent from the first man and woman Adam and Eve.

In many ways their history is unique. Their customs have remained unchanged since the days of Moses, whom historians generally assign to the thirteenth century B. C. Christianity is to Judaism what Protestantism is to Roman Catholicism. And Judaism and Islam have their roots deep in the ancient beliefs and practices of the people of the desert. The history of the Jews differs also from the history of other peoples in every event being attributed to God, His grace or anger. It is a religious interpretation of History, quite

different from the political interpretation of the ancient Greeks and the economic interpretation of modern times. To the student of mysticism, again, the history of the Jews offers an unexplored field of research, God manifesting Himself before their leaders or communicating His commands through dreams.

The Jews believe that God created the world and its trees, animals and birds in the first five days of the week and man on the sixth day, and retired to rest on the seventh (*Genesis* 1/26). For a long time Adam lived alone and taking pity on him, He created Eve with a rib taken out of his body while he was asleep. Jealous of the happiness of God as well as of Adam and Eve, Satan tempted the latter to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, which God had forbidden (3/6). As obedience was more important than worship God punished them by sending them out of Eden and barring its gates (3/23).

By the time Jonah was born in the tenth generation Adam's descendants had considerably swollen in numbers and also became wicked. So he destroyed them all, except Noah and his children, who were god-fearing. For forty days and forty nights it rained without a break, and the earth was covered with water for one hundred and forty days (7/24). Noah saved himself and his family in an ark which he had built at God's command. When the floods began to subside it settled on Mt. Ararat (8/4) Noah came

out of the ark with his family, and moving southwards, set up his home in the land of Shinar (Ur of Chaldaea).

Gradually his descendants spread far and wide. They began to build a tower at Babel to reach heaven and the throne of the Almighty. Seeing that nothing could be kept away from men if they were united, and it was their common language that enabled them to make a united effort, He cursed them so that they could not understand one another's speech (11/8). No longer able to communicate with one another except by signs, they did not complete the tower. They dispersed (11/9). Noah's eldest son, Shem, and his descendants remained at Ur. Terah, tenth in descent from Shem, however, left Ur with his son, Abram, Abram's wife named Sarai, and Abram's deceased brother Haran's son, Lot, for Haran on the Balikh (11/31).

ABRAHAM

Abram, or to call him by the more familiar name Abraham, was the first of the patriarchs and the pioneer who blazed the trail. Simple and pious, he did nothing except as God directed. Leaving Haran, he came to Bethel in Canaan with Sarai and Lot. A famine however compelled him to move to Egypt. But when its king discovered that Sarai, already married to Abraham, could not live with him in the palace, he ordered him to leave Egypt (12/30). Accordingly he returned to Canaan.

As there was not enough pasture ground Lot separated from Abraham and went to Jordan with his herds. But the uncle bore no ill will towards his nephew. And when the eastern kings plundered Lot's property and took him captive Abraham went at the head of his men, and defeating the invaders, released Lot and recovered his property. God was so pleased with Abraham that He promised him descendants as "countless as the stars in heaven and the sand on the sea shore, with Canaan

and all the land from the Nile to the Euphrates as their inheritance" (15/18).

Abraham was now one hundred years old and Sarai ninety. Still they had no son. But God fulfilled his promise. At His command Abraham adopted circumcision for himself and all his male descendants as an insurance against childlessness. And in the following year Sarai gave birth to Isaac. As Isaac grew up God tested Abraham's devotion by demanding his only son as a burnt offering. The father readily obeyed. He took Isaac to the sacrificial mount; but just in the nick of time God averted the tragedy.¹ Pleased with Abraham, He renewed the covenant.

When Isaac was twenty-seven years old Sarai died. And Abraham staked his claim to the inheritance by buying some fields with a cave near Mamre for a family grave and buried her there. Abraham did not want his son to marry a Canaanite girl. He sent his servant to Mesopotamia to his brother Nahor's son, Bithuel, seeking the hand of his virgin daughter Rebecca. Everyone agreeing to it, Rebecca left her parents for Canaan and Isaac gladly married her (24/17).

On the death of Abraham, Isaac succeeded him. He was sixty years old when Rachel gave birth to the twins, Esau and Jacob. Jacob incurred his brother's anger by cheating him not only of his birthright but also of his father's blessings, and fled to his uncle, Laban, in Mesopotamia. He married his daughters, Leah and Rachel, and had by them and their maids, twelve sons who became the eponymous founders of the twelve tribes (35/23-27).

JOSEPH

But for Joseph, the last but one of the twelve sons of Jacob, the whole family would have perished in the terrible famine that swept through Palestine and Egypt. It is difficult to find anywhere and at any time a son so loving and a brother so affectionate

as Joseph. Cruelty could not harden his heart, treachery could not sear it. Power could not turn his head, and woman could not lead him astray. He stands in history as a shining example also of sincerity and loyalty receiving their well-deserved reward.

Joseph was his father's favourite as the son of his old age (37/3). Jealous for that reason, his brothers resolved to kill him when he told them of a dream which presaged their submission to him. They threw him into a waterless pit (28/24). The arrival of an Ishmeelite caravan induced them to make a profit out of their crime. Drawing him up from the pit, they sold him to the Ishmeelites. And they in turn sold him to an Egyptian captain named Potiphar (37/36).

Joseph was then only seventeen years old (37/2). He did the work allotted to him every day so well that his master made him his overseer. Potiphar's wife became enamoured of her husband's handsome overseer, and made fruitless overtures. One day she seized him by his garment, but he escaped from the temptress and fled, unfortunately leaving his garment behind in her hands (39/13). Potiphar could not but believe his wife's concocted story, with the garment to corroborate it, and he threw him into prison for alleged outrage (39/20). Here he became the jailer's favourite and deputy, and became acquainted with the royal butler by correctly interpreting his dream. Two years afterwards the Pharaoh had a dream, which his own priests and soothsayers could not explain. So the butler took Joseph before the king (41/13, 14).

Joseph told him that his dream indicated seven years of plenty, followed by seven years of famine. The Pharaoh at once appointed him his chief minister, though he was only thirty years old (41/46). During the seven years of plenty Joseph bought up all the surplus corn and stored it in the royal granaries erected for the purpose. As Joseph had predicted, after plenty came the much dreaded famine. And people from

Palestine and Egypt flocked to Joseph's granaries for corn. Though it was only the first year of the famine Jacob sent his sons. Joseph recognized them, but they did not know him (42/8). In the following year also Jacob had to send them. Joseph now revealed his identity. Forgiving them, he asked them to bring their father and settle in Egypt.

"I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life..... And God send me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God; and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him. Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt, come down unto me, tarry not: And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children and thy children's children, and thy flocks and thy herds and all that thou hast. And there will I nourish thee" (45/4-11).

The Pharaoh heartily supported Joseph's invitation, and sent his wagons and chariots to bring Jacob and his family. With the approval of Jehovah, who promised to accompany him, Jacob and his family, numbering sixty six souls, left Mamre. Jacob settled them in Goshen, and his brothers became the overseers of the royal cattle (47/6). Jacob adopted Joseph's wife, who was an Egyptian, and their children into his family, and died at the age of one hundred and forty seven (47/28). His dead body was taken by Joseph and his brothers with all the pomp a chief minister could command to Mamre and buried in the family grave (50/7). Living happily with his brothers, Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten, and his body was embalmed

(50/2) and it was taken to Mamre only four hundred and thirty years afterwards.

MOSES

For more than four centuries the descendants of Israel lived in Egypt. Natural calamities, like occasional inundations of the Nile contaminating all drinking water (*Exodus* 7/20), invasions of frogs (8/6), vermin (8/16) and flies (8/24), cattle mortality (9/4), plague (9/9), thunder, lightning and hail (9/23), locusts (10/14), sand storms bringing inky darkness at noon (10/22) and heavy infant mortality (10/22) could not check the growing population. ^a

After the death of Joseph the relations between the Pharaohs and Israel steadily deteriorated. Looked down upon as shepherds, they were subjected to all sorts of forced labour under the overseer's whip. The growing population alarmed the Pharaoh. Lest they should outnumber the Egyptians he commanded that all male children should be thrown into the river as soon as they were born (1/22). ^a

Man proposes but God disposes. For the nonce maternal affection proved stronger than the fear of Pharaoh's punishment. And a mother disposed of her infant son by putting him in an ark and placing it on the brink of the river instead of casting him into its waters. It so happened that the daughter of the Pharaoh herself came that way; and she caused him to be brought up, though unwittingly, by his own mother. And when he came of age the princess named him Moses (2/9).

As he grew up the sufferings of his countrymen began to burn his heart; and seeing an Egyptian smiting a Jew, he killed the former (2/12), and fled to the land of the Midians. He married the daughter of their priest and settled there, tending his father-in-law's flocks. Always brooding upon the wrongs of his people and praying for their deliverance, he began to believe that God had appointed him to take his brethren from Egypt to the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. As he was not

circumcised (4/25, 6/12, 30) he was far from sure whether his people would obey and follow him. Anyway he came back (4/19), and with the help of his eloquent brother, Aaron, gradually worked his way into their confidence. To lull all suspicion it was given out that they must go to the wilderness for a three day's sacrifice to Jehovah. The Pharaoh raised many objections at first; but he gave his permission in the end. Believing that the Jews would come back, the Egyptians gave them gold, raiment and such other things as they required (12/35,36). Four hundred and thirty years ago Jacob and his family had come, numbering in all sixty-six souls. With Joseph and his family, the original Jewish settlement of seventy souls had by now increased to six hundred thousand (12 37,40).

Led by a pillar of smoke by day and a column of fire by night, ^a the Jews slowly made their way through the wilderness until they came to the Red Sea. By this time the Pharaoh had come to realize that the Jews had no intention of returning. So he sent his chariots and horsemen in pursuit. Fortunately for the Jews, on account of the ebb tide and an east wind, the waters had withdrawn, and the fugitives crossed the sea by dry ground left by it (14/16). But by the time the Egyptians came up the tide had begun to turn, and in their reckless pursuit they were all drowned in the rising waters. The destruction of the Egyptian army was naturally interpreted as a sign of God's grace, and the thanksgiving song of Moses infused fresh strength in the minds of his followers. It took three months for Israel to reach Mt. Sinai. Here Moses received the ten commandments from God and instructions for the construction of the Tabernacle and the Ark. As soon as these were finished the journey was resumed, with the young warriors guarding them in front, flank and rear. For forty years they toiled through the wilderness. The princes along the familiar route would not allow them a passage. Moses and his multitudes had to by-pass them, winding their way through

inhospitable forests and living on the little water and manna they could get. Besides wild animals like the lion and the bear, they were harassed also by serpents. Disease also took its toll. Unable to bear the hardships the people grumbled, and the more daring spirits even rebelled. Moses was eighty years old when he left Egypt. At last in his one hundred and twenty-eighth year he came to the Arnon within sight of the promised land.

As soon as he occupied Moab he took a census of the people with a view to further conquest. (*Numbers*, 26/4). From Heshborn he advanced to Bashan, defeating and killing all the kings who opposed him. As the new comers wanted land to settle they showed no mercy to the vanquished. Old and young, men, women and children were all put to the sword except virgins, who alone were allowed to live, though as slaves (31/8-11).

Sensing his approaching end, Moses summoned the elders. Naming Joshua as his successor (*Deuteronomy* 31/14, 23), he assured them that Jehovah would bring them back to the inheritance even if they were compelled by some misfortune to leave it and disperse (30/4,5).⁶ Proclaiming once more his ordinances, he caused them to be written in a book and deposited in the Ark (31/36). His last act was to go up to the top of Nebo and show to Joshua the lands that had yet to be conquered. He was one hundred and twenty one years old when he died: but "his eye was not dim nor his natural force abated" (34/7).

JOSHUA

Joshua had won his laurels at the beginning of the exodus by killing Amalek (*Ex.* 17/13). He was one of those selected to spy out the land of Canaan (14/38). And though he and Caleb volunteered to go forth and conquer it, the others shrank from the expedition and Moses gave up the project. After completing the mourning for Moses, Joshua started against the enemy. Causing the Ark to be carried in front of the

warriors for success,⁷ he crossed the Jordan, the river allowing them a passage to proceed on foot (*Joshua*, 3/16).⁷ He captured Jericho (6/20) and followed it up by burning Ai (8/19). The Gibeonites submitted without a blow, and Joshua spared their lives, though they had to become hewers of wood and drawers of water (9/27). The neighbouring kings attacked Gibeon for its surrender. But marching from Gilgal, Joshua inflicted a crushing defeat on them. Taking them captive, he caused them to be trampled to death by his warriors. One by one he occupied their cities, Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmouth, Lachish, Eglon, and Debir. Advancing southwards, he occupied Kadesh, Gaza and Goshen. In the meanwhile the northern kings formed a confederacy against him. Proceeding north, he slaughtered them near the waters of Merom. With the capture of Hazor, Joshua completed the task assigned to him, and settled his people on the promised land.

DAVID

After the death of Joshua the fortunes of Israel suffered a set back. The Philistines captured even the Ark (*I Samuel* 1/11) and the glory of Israel was thus eclipsed. So the prophet, Samuel, caused Saul to be anointed king. The Philistines at once came down to Elah with an army against him. But David killed their champion Goliath in single combat and Israel slaughtered their army. As God willed, Saul's jealousy compelled David to leave the kingdom and Saul had to defend Israel with only Jonathan to assist him. Unfortunately in the battle of Gilbea Jonathan was killed and Saul mortally wounded.

David was by birth a shepherd. He was the son of Jesse and his mother was related to the ideal daughter-in-law Ruth. Quite early in his life he became famous both as a harper and as a man of valour. While tending sheep he once killed a lion and a bear with his stick. It was as a harper that he first came into contact with Saul. The latter was subject

to frequent moods of depression, and David was called to harp them away and restore the King's spirits.

His successful encounter with Goliath made him the idol of the people and got him the king's son, Jonathan for a bosom friend and the king's daughter Michal for a wife. Saul however became alarmed when people began to compare him with David: they began to say that though Saul had slain thousands David slew ten thousands (18/7). Saul sought to kill him in various ways. Neither Michal nor Jonathan could remove Saul's fears; so with their help David fled to the land of the Philistines.

He established himself in the cave of Adullam. Becoming the leader of a band of unfortunates, some six hundred in number, like himself, he led a precarious life as an outlaw, sometimes plundering the Philistine cities, sometimes holding them to ransom. Two times Saul fell into his hands; but David was too noble to kill him (I Samuel 24/7, 26/11). He even put to death the Amakelite who killed Saul though at the king's own request, when he brought the deceased's crown and bracelet.

On the death of Saul, David came to Hebron, and was anointed as king of Judah. He was then thirty years old (II Samuel 2/4). An astute diplomat, he was not yet prepared to make himself king of Israel. Whether due to his own inborn nobility or insight in diplomacy, he went on mourning for Saul and Jonathan, who were "swifter than eagles and stronger than lions, whose bow turned not back nor sword returned empty" (1/23,22). He waited for desertion and civil war to weaken the successors of Saul. At last, seven years and six months after he became king of Hebron, his opportunity came. The elders of Israel came to Hebron and anointed him king (5/3).

His first task, which was to unite Judah and Israel, thus accomplished, he proceeded

to attack Jerusalem. Originally an Egyptian out post, it was now held by the Jebusites. Surrounded by a wall, they thought the city impregnable. But entering through an unguarded water conduit, David's soldiers occupied it. Hiram, king of Tyre sent him cedar wood, carpenters and masons, and the city of David rose in might and splendour. Transferring his residence to his newly built palace in Jerusalem, he made himself popular by taking local women into his harem as wives and concubines (5/13).

From David's reign onwards Jerusalem became the headquarters of the Jewish faith also. He caused the Ark to be brought from Baal, whither the Philistines had sent it on account of the calamities they had had to suffer. In an imposing procession, with the king himself leaping and dancing in ecstatic joy in front (6/17) it was carried into the city, and placed in the tabernacle that David had pitched for it. Four thousand men were also set apart to praise the Lord with instruments.

The success of David naturally alarmed his neighbours of Syria, Edom, Moab, and Ammon. They joined in a confederacy and declared war against him. But David prevailed over them all and extended his empire from the Nile to the Euphrates and Damascus to the Red Sea. Properly organized and with mighty men in charge of the empire, neither the plague nor the intrigues for the succession that clouded the end of his long reign of forty years could unseat his dynasty, which continued to remain at Jerusalem till its capture by Nebuchadrezzar in 586 B. C.

SOLOMON

As intended by David, his son, Solomon succeeded him. While the father was a man of war, the son was a man of peace. The former was exclusively national in outlook and religion, the latter was liberal and cosmopolitan in tastes and interests. Solomon was the earliest of the three

wise men of the Mediterranean world, the other two being Solon and Socrates of Athens. It is said that in a dream Jehovah asked Solomon whether he wanted long life riches and success; declining them all, he asked for knowledge; and immensely pleased with the answer, Jehovah granted him not only knowledge but also the other three which he had not asked (I Kings 3/11).

Solomon was so wise that people and princes from far and near flocked to his court to hear him. Among the distinguished visitors the first place must be given to the queen of Sheba, who was less wise than only Solomon. Coming to test him with hard questions, she had to admit in the end that his wisdom many times exceeded what she had heard about him (10/7,8); and offering him as a present 120 talents of gold and large quantities of spices and precious stones she returned to her kingdom.

Such presents formed one of the important sources of Solomon's income. Trade also brought immense gold. With the help of Hiram of Tyre he built a navy at Ezion near Bloth in the Red Sea; and every year it went to Ophir (Abhiras, Gujarat ?) and returned with 420 talents of gold (9/26, 28). In conjunction with Hiram's navy Solomon's ships came from Tharshish to the Jewish settlements planted by him along the Kerala coast and elsewhere to take the gold, silver, ivory, apes and peacocks collected by them (10/22). Jerusalem became so rich that silver was abundant here as stones and cedar as sycamore (10/27). It is to Solomon that the once shepherd Jew owes his present instinct for commerce.

Solomon was a great builder, surpassing Akbar and Shah Jahan in North India and Martanda Varma in Kerala. In the fourth year of his reign he began the construction of the temple which David had planned, and finished and dedicated it in the eleventh year. It took thirteen years for the construction of his own palace. He built also a separate palace for the Egyptian princess outside the town at Millo. He strengthened the defences of Jerusalem by constructing a

wall and fortified Hazor, Megiddo and Hazor.

One of the wisest of men, it would be surprising if Solomon was not tolerant. He did not impose Judaism upon his wives. On the other hand he allowed them their own worships. He erected shrines for their deities also. Temples rose in various parts of the city for Ashtoreth of the Zidonians, Milcom of the Ammonites, Chemosh of Moab and Molech of Ammon.

A wise king, fond of knowledge, Solomon used to hold discussions with learned men as Janaka of Videha and Bhoja of Ujjain did in India. Wiser than Ethan and Heman, Chalcol and Darda, he was the author of 3000 proverbs and 1005 songs, and there was no tree, beast, bird, fish or reptile about which he could not speak.

Solomon reigned for forty years. After his death evil days came upon Jerusalem. His successors began to quarrel, and one after the other the tribes began to revolt. In 586 B. C. Nebuchadrezzar plundered Jerusalem, destroyed the temple, and carried away the Jews to Babylon. In 538 B. C. they were released by Cyrus when he captured Babylon. Allowed to return to Jerusalem, they rebuilt the temple in 520-16 B. C. Alexander the Great was crowned here in 332 B. C. The Roman money lender-triumvir, Crassus, plundered it in 54 B. C. In A. D. 68 the Romans destroyed the second temple. In A. D. 132 its site was ploughed and the Jews were expelled, though allowed to come once a year to weep. After World War I the new state of Israel was created and the promise of Deuteronomy 30/4, 5 was thus fulfilled.

APPENDIX I

ADAM AND HIS DESCENDANTS

(TRADITIONAL DATES)

No.	Name	Born in B. C.	Died in B. C.	At the age of
1	Adam	3761	2831	930
2	Seth	3631	2719	912

3	Enos	3526	2621	905
4	Cainon	3436	2526	910
5	Mahalaleel	3366	2471	895
6	Jared	3301	2339	962
7	Enoch	3139	2774	365
8	Methuselah	3074	2105	969
9	Lamech	2887	2110	777
10	Noah	2705	1755	950
11	Shem	2205	1605	600
	Flood	2107		
12	Arphaxeed	2105	1667	438
13	Salah	2070	1637	433
14	Eber	2040	1544	464
15	Peleg	2006	1767	239
16	Reu	1976	1537	239
17	Sereg	1944	1714	230
18	Nahor	1914	1766	148
19	Terah	1885	1680	205
20	Abraham	1815	1540	175
21	Isaac	1714	1534	180
22	Jacob	1654	1507	147
	Famine	1526-19	1524	Arrival in Egypt
23	Joseph	1563	1453	110
	Moses	1174	1054	120
	Exodus	1094-1054		

Revised Dates

B C.	1225 - 1200	Moses
	1028 - 1013	Saul
	1013 - 973	David
	973 - 933	Solomon
	586	Destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadrezzar.
	520 - 516	Second Temple built.
	A. D. 68	Destruction of the Second Temple.
	1919	Peace Treaties-State of Israel (8084 sq miles).

APPENDIX II

THE TWELVE SONS OF JACOB (ISRAEL)

(a) By Leah	1. Reuben
	2. Simeon
	3. Levi

	4. Judah
	5. Issachar
	6. Zebulun
(b) By Rachel	7. Joseph
	8. Benjamin
(c) By Bilhah (Rachel's maid)	9. Dan
	10. Naphtali
(d) By Zilpah (Leah's maid)	11. Gad
	12. Asher

Notes

1. A similar story is told of the Saiva Nayanar Paranjoti, popularly known as Chiruttonadan. To test his devotion Siva appeared to him and demanded Paranjoti's son as cooked up food. Accordingly he was killed, cooked and offered on a plate. Immediately he appeared alive before the assembled family, and Siva disappeared with the words " I am pleased ".
2. These events are better rationalized to be in keeping with historical facts than assigned to a single year as in the Biblical source.
3. This edict was promulgated by Rameses II (1298 - 32 B. C.), which gives us the upper limit for the date of Moses. The exodus took place in the next reign.
4. In those days these regions were highly volcanic. Mt. Sinai was an active volcano, and the pillar of smoke might have been the smoke rising from the crater and the column of fire might be the red hot cone.
5. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee.

And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers

possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good and multiply thee above thy fathers. (Deuteronomy 30/4,5).

6. It is said that for success in war, the Zamorin used to have a door - panel draped in silk, called *Pallimaradi*, carried before the Nayars while they proceeded to the battle field.
7. The ten rivers of the Punjab are said to have offered such a passage to an invading army at the request of Sage Viswamitra in the Rg. Vedic period. The Kaveri and the Chaliyar (near Kadalundi) are believed to have allowed a similar passage to Saint Cheraman Perumannayanar and Chelapparampu Namputiri respectively

8. The temple was planned by David. For the construction he set apart 3000 talents of gold and 7000 talents of silver from the treasury. He collected also from the various princes, peoples and officers under him 5000 talents and 10000 drams of gold, 10000 talents of silver, 18000 talents of brass and 100000 talents of iron. The necessary cedar wood was provided by Hiram of Tyre. Shipped at Tyre it was unloaded at Jaffa and taken to Jerusalem. In all 153600 men were engaged, of which 70000 were porters, 80000 hewers of wood and 3600 overseers. The engineer and architect in charge was Hiram, son of a daughter of Dan and a man of Tyre (I Chronicles 29/4,7, II Chron. 2/14).

KATHAKALI

M. K. K. Nayar

Today most people know that Kathakali, India's classical dance drama, originated in Kerala, but it is doubtful whether many people have an adequate appreciation of the earlier histrionic features that contributed in one way or another to the evolution of this highly specialised art form.

Like miracle plays of Europe, but in an incipient form, ritual plays used to be enacted in temples from very early times in Kerala. The most popular theme was the slaying of the demon Darika by Durga. One cannot say how ancient this incipient drama was in existence in Kerala. There is proof that it was there before the second century A. D. This drama called "Darika Vadha" was one of the contributory factors to the common Vadha concept or the slaying of the demon usually depicted in several popular pieces of Kathakali.

Another interesting factor that played its part in the evolution of Kathakali was the tradition of the gymnasia known as Kalaries in Kerala. The Kalari was a place confined to military training including physical combat. The Nayars of Kerala were a fighting class although they were both chieftains and farmers alike. Their main stay however was soldiering. The Kalaries provided the training. With the advent of the Aryan element into Kerala, Brahmins also took part in the exercises in the gymnasia. Some of them became teachers too. As the Brahmins had the ability to convert anything into a religious ritual or to provide anything with a religious aura,

the Kalari celebrations soon took a religious turn. Thus arose what was called the Sangha Kali (also called Sashttra Kali, Chatura Kali, Satra Kali or Yatra Kali). Though the festivities closed with the display of combatant techniques, they all began with ritual worship, recital of narrative poems on the chosen deity and a few comic interludes. Comic characters were considered essential to break the possible monotony in sequences. The Kalari thus gave rise to a form of drama which combined both physical display and intellectual relaxation. Gradually two distinct forms were evolved, the comedy and the dance drama. Comedy no doubt contained a good percentage of satire.

Another important art form that contributed to the making of Kathakali was the Kudiattam. Again we do not know how old Kudiattam is. Chilappathikaram, the famous Tamil epic written by Elankovan, brother of Chera Chenkuttavan, the Chera emperor of the second century A. D., who ruled from his headquarters within a few miles of the present Cochin Port, described in detail the performance of Kudiattam and Chakiar Koothu then prevalent in Kerala. One could not say definitely which was older - Kudiattam or the Chakiar Koothu. The elite of Kerala at that time were well-versed in Sanskrit. The drama attracted them. To enact Sanskrit dramas a group of people with histrionic talent was selected. The performance given by the group was called Kudiattam. It might be of interest to know

that even in those days Kudiattam was performed by both men and women. The particular sect who performed these dramas were called Chakiars and the women Nangyars. Chakiars were specially trained to portray different roles with enviable effect. Talented men among them used to give mono-act performances. Such performances were called Chakiar Koothu.

The Chakiar Koothu was dominated essentially by the comic spirit. The Chakiar had great licence to ridicule contemporary society. Even kings were not exempt. The convention was that if any member of the audience spoke in protest of the Chakiar's innuendos, he walked out of the stage. Chakiar Koothu is popular even today. It is usually performed in temples. Chakiars are great masters of histrionic art. They are veterans in *Abhinaya*.

As the centuries rolled by, Jayadeva's Geetha Govinda became a popular poem in Kerala. The Zamorin of Calicut, a powerful king who managed the affairs of the famous Guruvayur temple devoted to Lord Krishna, was enamoured of Geetha Govinda. He insisted on Geetha Govinda being recited in the Guruvayur temple every day. Some devoted Nambudiri Brahmins in Guruvayur listening to this ecstatic music conceived of a dance drama based on it. This dance drama known as Krishnattam—in other words the dance of Krishna—became very popular in that area.

The origin of Kathakali is shrouded in folklore. The first poem written for Kathakali is attributed to the Rajah of Kottarakara a small chieftain in South Kerala. When it was introduced it was popularly known as Ramanattam—in other words, the dance relating to Rama. Legend has it that the Rajah of Kottarakara had conceived of Ramanattam as a reply to the great Zamorin's Krishnattam. Whatever the legend may hold, the beginning of the Kathakali that we see today was with the Rajah of Kottarakara's story of Ramayana written for the purpose. At the time he

himself was not very clear in his mind of the tremendous potential of the seed he had sown. The costumes used then were not elaborate or glamorous. Dancers were also expected to sing along with their performance. Very soon Ramanattam became popular. One of the reasons for this popularity was the jealousy of the smaller chieftains towards the mighty Zamorin. A chieftain called the Rajah of Vettathunadu, a neighbour of the Zamorin's territory, took Ramanattam into his hands and developed it in the initial stages. He devised proper dance movements, especially those now known as *Kalasams*. He also found, like Lucian in Greece, that violent exercise caused shortness of breath and the song suffered from it. He therefore provided a musician to sing the poem from behind the dancers, so that the dancer could be free to dance and express the emotions. The Rajah of Vettathunadu was also responsible for improving the costumes and the facial make-up of the artist. But Kathakali was still in its infancy when this great lover of art breathed his last with very fond words on Ramanattam on his lips just as he closed his eyes for ever. He was no poet. He did not therefore write any poem for Kathakali.

The first major event that happened in the history of Kathakali after the creation of Ramanattam by the Rajah of Kottarakara was the emergence of a great scholar, the Rajah of Kottayam in North Kerala. He recognised the tremendous potential of a dynamic art form like the Kathakali. He realised that any dance drama based on an essentially devotional piece like the Ramayana had its limitations for vibrant expression and emotional display. He therefore turned to the Mahabharata where men were men and women were women. He converted Ramanattam which was till then more of a religious ritual than a dance drama, into Kathakali, resplendent with emotion and capable of converting the audience into identifying themselves with the characters displayed. He wrote four *Attakathas*, i. e. poems for Kathakali

performances. They are even today the basic Kathakali themes. The first one related to the slaying of Baka by Bheemasena. The second called "Kirmeeva Vadha" described the life of the Pandavas immediately after their exile from Hasthinapura. The third one a very popular piece called "Kalyana Saugandhika" related to the mad rush of Bheemasena to collect the flower that attracted the whim of his beloved Draupadi. The fourth work of his called "Kalakeya Vadha", presented Arjuna at once as the most glorious hero and the most humiliated object of ridicule. It was the Rajah of Kottayam who gave shape and substance to Kathakali. Like poet Dandi who prescribed the code for a *Mahakavya*, the Kottayam Rajah evolved the pattern of presentation of Kathakali. After Kottayam's days no one heard of Ramanattam; everyone talked of Kathakali. *Katha* means story; *Kali* means play. But Kathakali does not mean merely a story play; it is much more than that.

It is not necessary to go into the various stages of development of Kathakali after the days of the Rajah of Kottayam. It is enough to mention two significant events in the history of Kathakali to bring one up-to-date. The first relates to the period when a versatile artist called Kaplingad Nambudiripad who lived towards the end of the 18th century, worked for a few years under the supervision and guidance of Maharaja Karthika Thirunal of Travancore to improve the costumes and make-up employed in Kathakali to make them attractive and at the same time, unearthly. He introduced various reforms in the methods of presentation of characters and set the proper perspective for the creative artist. The second major event took place only 40 years ago when the great poet Vallathol established the Kerala Kalamandalam, the academy of Kerala arts of today. It was mainly through his efforts that art lovers outside Kerala got an opportunity to learn and see this great art form.

Kathakali is a marvel of perfection in which detail upon detail is added, each

complementing the other and fits into the whole with organic naturalness and exact balance. It opens with a festive gusto of relentless drumming and song accompanied by loud musical instruments, making the whole atmosphere ring with a weird sound transporting the audience to a different world of rhythm and fantasy. Essentially based on sage Bharatha's *Natya Sasthra* yet developed into much more meticulous detail, Kathakali is a highly specialised art, its specialisation permeating every aspect of it with the same uncompromising intensity and superb finish.

Kathakali combines in it both the *Thandava* and the *Lasya* styles of dancing. Yet it is essentially a masculine performance. Intensive and ruthless training for a period of a dozen years or more enables the artist to bring under perfect control every part of his body solely for the sake of aesthetic expression. His eyes are ever vibrant; his facial muscles eloquent; his finger tips creative; and his whole person the very embodiment of rhythm. The story of the dance drama is related by the actor by gestures and with the aid of *Hashtalakshanas* (popularly known as "*Mudras*"), as the musicians sing the slokas and the Padas. Bharatha taboos theatrical exhibition of battle scenes blood-letting. But in Kathakali nothing is taboo. Marriages take place on the stage; battles are fought; entrails are pulled out. The most beautiful and the most grotesque are presented with equal dexterity.

Kathakali is the visual presentation of mythological characters. The costumes and make-up are therefore designed to create the necessary appeal. The facial make-up might give an impression that masks are used. In Greek dramas and Chinese and Japanese plays masks are used extensively. When one uses a mask one cannot express an emotion on the face. The Kathakali make-up is different because the whole face is painted over - the lips, eye-brows and eye-lashes emphasised. The differential make-up is luminously

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Courtesy P S V Natva Sanaham

clear in its typological indications. One could compare the make-up in a distant manner to the mask of a Japanese Noh Play actor. The mask employed by the Japanese and the Chinese does not permit the face its rich expressive mobility. But in a Kathakali character the contour of the face is clearly demarcated by a white thin fringe called the Chutti which frames it effectively making the face a stage for the inner spirit. The tumult or the tranquility within find immediate expression in the mobile features with no mask to conceal them.

Make-up alone takes about three to four hours for a Kathakali actor. The make-up and costume also determine the character portrayed. For this purpose mythological characters are classed into different categories. The first in the order of precedence is the *Dhrodatta*, the noble-hearted, upright hero. The costume known as *Paccha* (face painted in green) is allotted to such characters. Examples are the *Devas* (Indra), noble kings like Nala, Yudhishtira, Rukmangada, Arjuna and Bhimasena. All characters who don *Paccha* also wear *Kirtas* (headgear); but when it comes to Krishna, the headgear is changed to what is called the *Mudi*. This costume has now come to be referred to as "Mudi". For both *Mudi* and *Paccha* the facial make-up is the same. The clothing of *Paccha* normally consists of purple jackets and white skirts. Krishna's costume however is a dark jacket and yellow skirt. *Paccha* and *Mudi* represent *Satwa Guna*.

Kathi, another prominent costume of Kathakali, is devoted to *Prathinayakas* or heroes who are classed under the term *Dhrodhatta*. The costume in general is similar to *Paccha*. The facial make-up is different. A knife-shaped pattern is drawn on either cheek in red pigment over the normal *Paccha* make-up. In addition, a small ball called *Chuttippoo* is fixed on the tip of the nose and another one in the centre of the forehead. Kathi represents *Rajasa Guna* and is the costume of characters like

Ravana, Kamsa, Jarasandha and Duryodhana. Kathi can be said to denote a combination of royalty and evil. Kings of *Rakshasas* like Ravana or *Rakshasas* among Kings like Kamsa are depicted in Kathi. Also villains like Kichaka. Whereas *Paccha* characters do not open their mouth or create any noise, Kathi characters are permitted to make weird noises appropriate to the occasion or to the emotion expressed.

The costume that represents *Thamoguna* or *Thamas* is Tati. Tati means beard. There are red, black and white Taties, each depicting a type of *Thamoguna*. Red Tati has the face painted in a frightening dark pattern and wears an impressive red beard. The headgear is round in shape and much larger in size than the *Kirtas* worn by *Paccha* or Kathi. On the tip of the nose and on the forehead Tati costumes wear *Chuttippoo*s of a much bigger size than those worn by Kathi. Red Tati is usually given to extremely wicked characters like *Rakshasas* or despicable men like *Dussasana*. Examples are *Bakasura* and *Murasura*. The concept of the red Tati is one of a destructive evil force with little or no thinking faculty. The costume has therefore been extended to portray roles like *Sudarsana Chakra* and *Veerabhadra*. The *Sudarsana Chakra* is the all-powerful weapon of Vishnu. Annihilation without thought is its motto. So also *Veerabhadra* who is born out of the ire of Siva, is nothing but an agency for destruction and blind obedience.

A further extension of the Tati costume is its application to the Monkey kings like *Bal* and *Sugriva*. Here again, the human concept for the unthinking monkey must have influenced this decision.

The black Tati or black beard is a costume given to a character like *Kali* in *Nalacharita*. The character depicted is as evil as the red Tati, but has the subtle distinction that it denotes also a treacherous schemer. The make-up is similar to red Tati, the beard alone being black in colour.

White Tati or white beard is a further refinement of the Tati group of characters. A good example is Sakuni, the notorious uncle of the Kauravas, who is an arch schemer with no scruples but no physical prowess either. The make-up is simpler than in red Tati. Even the usual chutti is omitted and a white beard worn.

All bearded characters are permitted to make noises appropriate to the occasion. Sometimes this may amount to loud roaring.

Another costume very popular in Kathakali is Kari. It is an all black costume with the face painted in black and the jackets and skirts blacker. The headgear is primitive. This costume is used for depicting the lowest primitive human being; both man and woman. The noises they produce can almost amount to howling. The characters portrayed in this costume are *Kiratas* (Chantals) and demoneesses like Surpanakha or Tataka.

The make-up used for gentle characters is Minukku. It consists of a mere painting of the face with a yellowish orange pigment. There is no *Chutti*; no elaborate clothing as in other characters. Stri (woman), Rishi and Brahmanas appear in Minukku. Other characters who appear with such make-up are charioteers and messengers.

Stories of Kathakali are written in the form of *Attakathas* in Malayalam and consists of *Slokas* constituting the narrative portion and *Padas*, the dialogue. These are set to music in appropriate *ragas* and the musician sings them to the accompaniment of the drums and cymbals.

The stage used in Kathakali is the simplest imaginable. The only equipment needed on the stage is a huge coconut oil lamp towards which all movements converge. The curtain used is a small rectangular piece of cloth called *Tirassila*. The drums used are the chenta and the maddala. The chenta is not used during *lasya*. The other musical accompaniments used are the Chengila and Itatala. Almost all the stories

that appear on the Kathakali stage are from the two great Hindu epics, the Mahabharatha and Ramayana.

In truly traditional style Kathakali is played throughout the night in the open air. It starts in the evening with *Kelikkottu*, the formal announcement when all the drums and cymbals are played in the courtyard for a while. At about 9 P.M. the maddala is played for a short while in front of the oil lamp. This is followed by *Totaya* when one or two players perform an invocational piece. After this the musicians sing the first *Sloka* of the story of the night. This is followed by *Purappadu*. This is reckoned as a formality – a formal darsan of the Lord and His Consort or the presentation of the hero. At the end of this the musicians and drummers take the opportunity to entertain the audience with the nuances of their art. This interregnum is called the *Melappada*. After the *melappada*, the story begins.

When characters in costumes other than Paccha or Minukku make their debut, they follow a formality called *Tiranokku*. A literal though incorrect translation of this word is "curtain-look". The word debut conveys its meaning in a more exact manner. The character stands behind the *Tirassila* very close to the lamp and to the accompaniment of the drums and cymbals slowly brings the *Tirassila* down so that the audience can have a good look at the character and make-up for a few steady moments. It started in the old days as a convention to draw the attention of the spectators to the arrival of a powerful character and to enable the audience to appreciate the elaborate make-up employed so that they could get a proper mental picture of the character depicted. It has come to stay as an inevitable formality and helps to create the necessary tempo required when a powerful character makes his or her debut.

One of the unique features of a Kathakali performance is what is called *Ilaklattan*.

The term is used to distinguish it, from *Cholliattam*. *Cholliattam* means dancing to the words sung by the musician. The musician can sing only what is written in the poem. When the artists dance to express the meaning of the *slokas* and the *padas* sung by the musician it is *Cholliattam*. At the end of it one should normally expect the curtain. But the curtain does not fall so soon in Kathakali. The characters continue to converse with each other by the use of gestures and *hasthalakshanas*. Depending upon the talent and standing of the artiste on the stage this conversation can occupy anything from five minutes to a few hours. This is the occasion when the artiste gets an opportunity to use his *Manodharma* (creative imagination). An artiste of high calibre can make the scene most effective and delightful. The converse is also true. Traditions and conventions have determined the occasions when *Ilaklattam* could be elaborate. Instances are numerous. Just to cite an example: The story is Bali Vijaya in which Ravana at the instigation of Narada goes to Bali, challenges him to fight and gets thoroughly humiliated in the end. In the scene in which Narada with his inimitable tail-bearing technique infuriates Ravana against Bali, the great Lord of Lanka decides to go and

teach Bali a lesson. The *pada* ends there. Thereafter both Ravana and Narada enter into a long discourse. The incident can develop from Ravana picking up his famous Chandrabasa, the sword presented to him by Lord Siva and Narada making fun of him by saying that anyone would laugh at the idea of a hero like Ravana using a sword to vanquish a mere monkey instead of carrying a small piece of rope to tie it up. This could give an opportunity to Ravana to explain to Narada what Chandrabasa means to him. He could describe his triumphant battle with Vaishravana; the capture of the Pushpaka Vimana; his storming of Kailas and the way in which he threw up the whole mountain as if it were a feather and so forth. Depending upon the talent and the mental horizon of the artist he could make the scene an unforgettable one. Ardent devotees of Kathakali look forward to scenes of *Ilaklattam* than any other portion of Kathakali. Other occasions when *Ilaklattam* is done are where a character takes an opportunity to describe a forest (*Vana Varnana*) the heaven (*Swarga Varnana*) and so forth

A traditional Kathakali performance runs through the night and the Mangala Sloka is sung with the dawn.

EDUCATION IN ANCIENT INDIA

Prof. P. S. Velayudhan

INTRODUCTION

Ancient India had attained a standard of higher learning which had hardly a parallel anywhere else in the contemporary world. Ancient Indian education had some brilliant features which no civilised country can afford to ignore. The period under discussion can be broadly divided into four, viz. the Vedic Age, the Imperial Age, the Classical Age, and the post-Classical Age. The Vedic Age covers the Rig Vedic Age roughly covering the period 1500-1000 B.C., and the later Vedic Age, i.e. the period 1000-600 B.C. including the period of the Brahmanas and the Upanishads. The Second Age viz. the Imperial Age mainly centres round the period of the Mauryan Empire (329-184 B.C.). The Classical Age is the Age of the Guptas and the succeeding period which stretches upto the 8th century A. D. including the period of Harsha. The period from the 9th upto the end of the 13th century may be roughly termed as the post-Classical Age. Each one of these ages has made distinctive contributions to the evolution of education in Ancient India.

The art of writing presupposes education, because without education one cannot learn to write. There is no authentic evidence as to when the art of writing originated in India. In fact there are no definite specimens of alphabets which can be unmistakably dated before the 4th century B.C. The Western scholar Buhler is of the view that Indian merchants learnt the art of writing from Western Asia and introduced it in India in the 8th century B.C. The Brahmi alphabet of Asokan inscriptions, supposed to be

the most ancient alphabet of India, is regarded as derived from the north Semitic types of the 9th century B.C. But the discovery of the numerous seals at Mohenjodaro with pictorial writing has led to the theory that the Indus script which existed more than five thousand years ago formed the parent script of India. The Indus script had some 270 characters. The existence of this script presupposes the existence of education in the period of the Indus civilisation. But we have practically no evidence as to what system of education had developed during this period.

The Aryan civilisation of the Rig Vedic period testifies to the fact that education can exist without the art of writing. The early Aryans were illiterate, but they had an appreciable system of education. The Vedic literature formed the chief subject of instruction and the essential part of education both in the early and the later Vedic periods. Literary education during this period was transmitted only orally, that is by word of mouth from teacher to pupil. This is evident from the well known satirical frog-hymn of the Rig Veda which, referring to the croaking of the frogs, says—"One repeats the word of another like students echoing the voice of the teacher; together they form a chorus, when at rainfall loudly they croak". The word "*Brahmacharin*" meaning "religious student" is mentioned in Rig Veda. The aim of education was the sharpening of the intellect as well as the development of character. Sometimes the father was the teacher, the son taking his lessons from the father along with a few neighbouring students. Vedic study, service

to the teacher and charity were the principal duties of a *Brahmacharin*. The Atharva Veda refers to a *Brahmacharin* gathering sacred fuel for fire-worship and bringing alms (begged from door to door) to the teacher.

The Grihyasutras throw a flood of light on the essential features of the life of studentship. The first stage is the formal acceptance of the pupil by the teacher at the request of the former. This is followed by the entrusting of the pupil to the care of certain duties. The pupil had then to take certain vows regarding the duties to be discharged by him while residing at the house of the Guru, such as putting fuel on the fire, sipping water and begging alms. The *Altarya* and *Taittiriya* Brahmanas give a vivid picture of the educational system of those days with its insistence on truthfulness, observance of *dharma* or duty, devotion to the teacher and to hospitality, faith and generosity. The *Taittiriya Arnanyaka* even gives some minute directions such as: the pupil should not run while it is raining, nor urinate in water, nor bathe naked, etc

In the later Vedic period, the division of society into 4 *Varnas* or castes had become clear-cut. Only the three higher castes, viz. Brahmanas, Kshetriyas and Vaisyas were entitled to education. Sudras who were the lowest caste were denied the right to get education. At that time there was no system of State education. The Brahmana teachers gave instruction to the students of the three higher castes at their houses, giving them free board and lodging. In return the pupils served the teacher and gave him *guru dakshina*. Education was not merely literary; it included also physical and moral training. This is clear from the hard daily routine of the pupil and the code of moral conduct prescribed for him while living with the teacher. Vedic schools, each presided over by a celebrated vedic teacher, existed all over the country.

In the later Vedic period, society was dominated by the priestly class. But when

we come to the age of the Upanishads we find that the members of the non-priestly class grew more and more inquisitive into the true nature of the world. In this period the highest position in society is willingly yielded to the intellectual aristocracy. Kshetriya Kings like *Janaka* were famous for their learning and respect was paid to them by all including the Brahmanas.

The word "Upanishad" itself signifies the importance of education. It is derived from the root "upa-ni-sad" which means "to sit down near some one". This evidently refers to the pupil sitting down near his teacher at the time of instruction. "The word in course of time gathered round it the sense of secret communication or doctrine which was imparted at such sittings. Later on the word also came to be applied to the texts which incorporated such doctrines".

In the age of the Upanishads, women had their rightful place in the educational system. There were women teachers with high intellectual and spiritual attainment like Maitreyi, the wife of Yajnavalkya and Gargi Vachaknavi. This is in sad contrast to the deplorable position of women in the later age when even the study of Vedic literature was forbidden to women under the most severe penalty. Among the subjects of study listed in the Upanishads were Vedas, Itihasa (history), Purana and spiritual knowledge, grammar, mathematics, chronology, dialectics, ethics, astronomy, military science, science of snakes and knowledge of portents. This shows how a very comprehensive view of education was developed at the close of the Vedic Age.

During this Age, the teacher was the pivot of the educational system and moral training was the pivotal aim of education. The relationship between the teacher and the pupil was in no sense mercenary. It was sacred and almost spiritual. The teacher was the friend, philosopher and guide to the pupil. The initiation of the boy to studentship by the teacher, called *Upanayana*,

marked, as it were, his second birth in a spiritual sense. It is thus the term *Dviija* (twice-born) was applied to the three higher castes, who only had the privilege of "Upanayana". The pupil was to hold the teacher in utmost reverence. The teacher, on his part, had also to observe some vows and rules while he taught.

Physical training was an integral part of the educational system. This is clear from the trend of the numerous prayers for the grant of vigour and strength that form part of the *Upanayana* ceremony. The begging of alms, morning and evening, the gathering of fuel-sticks and the manual labour involved in the worship and tending of sacrificial fire entailed sufficient hard work or manual exercise for the student. It had also to perform the *Pranayama* or control of breath in the morning, noon and evening adoration. This was not only an ideal exercise for lungs, but also one that penetrated to all parts of the body. The student was also presented with a staff at the *Upanayana* ceremony. It was called *Danda-Pradana* (handing the staff to the initiated boy). The staff was certainly an excellent weapon of self defence.

As the Vedas were not reduced to writing, memory was a specially valued faculty and was most assiduously cultivated. The preservation of the Vedic literature by a meticulously correct and scientific method of recitation down to the minutest part of it, necessitated vigorous memorisation. The period of studentship was normally twelve years or until the pupil had mastered the Veda, though it might extend to much longer periods such as twenty four or twenty-eight years, or even for life in exceptional cases.

EDUCATION IN THE IMPERIAL AGE

During this Age, the Vedic traditions and practices of education were codified into a regular system. Education was looked upon as a process of life which was controlled in its totality by the teacher. The pupil had to leave the home of his parents to live in the home of his spiritual parent,

the Guru. Admission to study was solely based upon the pupil's fitness for study. Studious pupils worked night and day, some even resorting to the light produced by the burning of dried cowdung when they could not get oil for their lamps. Idle and indifferent pupils were branded with different names such as (1) *Khatvarudha* i.e. one who started sleeping on a cot instead of sleeping on the ground, (2) *Tirthakaka* i.e. fickle as a crow that does not stop at a place of pilgrimage, (3) *Kumari Dakshah* i.e. those who entered as pupils of *Dakshah* for the sake of the girls living with them, (4) *Biksha-Manava* a pupil whose aim of studentship is to appropriate the proceeds of begging, (5) *Odana Paniniyah* i.e. those who seek the study of Panini for the advantage of getting free food like boiled rice, and (6) *Kambala-Charayanuyuh* i.e. those hankering after blankets.

There were two kinds of teachers, the *Upadhyaya*, who took the teaching as a profession for livelihood and the *Acharya* who taught the Vedas and Upanishads without charging fees. The pupil, could however, give *gurudakshina* to the *Acharya* according to his means – gold, cow, horse, umbrella, shoes, grain, vegetables or clothes. However the concept of education during this period is reflected in a verse in the "Nithi Sara" of uncertain authorship, which says "The student learns a fourth from his *Acharya*, a fourth from his own intelligence by himself, a fourth from his fellow-pupils, and the remaining fourth in course of time by experience".

The art of writing had fully developed during this period, and the *Brahmi* alphabet is employed in the majority of records of Asoka. But teaching still continued to be mainly oral and the study of manuscripts was positively condemned. Rhys David in his "Buddhist India" suggests that "the art of writing was introduced into India at a late period in the intellectual development of its people – so late that, before they knew of it, they had already brought to perfection another and a very correct method

(i.e. learning by heart) of handing down literary productions". One of the reasons for the continuance of the system of oral teaching is said to be the desire of the Brahmanas who had the monopoly of teaching to preserve that monopoly. However, we have to remember that in an educational system which gave importance to the development of the personality of the pupil no less than to impart knowledge, the teacher rather than the books, should be the main source of instruction.

From the Mahabharatha, we get glimpses of the system of industrial education which was in vogue at that time. The apprentice to learn a craft, has to live with his master, whose home is his workshop. He cannot be exploited by his master and employed to do any work which is not connected with his craft. He cannot leave his master before the prescribed period of apprenticeship even if he has completed his training, the gains from which are to go to the master. An apprentice deserting his master deserves corporal punishment as well as imprisonment. It was the efficient industrial training imparted under this system which gave ancient India, the "palm in handicrafts, feeding her new export trade for centuries from Pliny to Tavernier".

The Mahabharatha also tells us of numerous hermitages where pupils of different and distant parts of the country gathered for instruction around far famed teachers. The Ashrama of Naimisha located in a forest and the ashrama of Rishi Kanva on the Malini, a tributary of Sarayu, are examples of such hermitages. From Ramayana we learn that Ayodhya was a renowned seat of learning. It mentions about a federation of the Sanghas or Brotherhoods of *Brahmacharis*. Students were residents of Ashramas situated outside the city. Ayodhya had also its Ladies' Clubs called *Vadhu Sanghas* and dramatic societies called *Nataka Sanghas*. There were also educational institutions conducted by private citizens in the city which offered lectures and lessons attended by various bodies of students.

IMPACT OF BUDDHISM ON EDUCATION

The main feature of the Brahminical system of education was the *Gurukula* institution based upon individual relationship between the teacher and the pupil. This necessarily limited the number of pupils who could be admitted. In the Buddhist system, education was imparted in the *Vihara* or monastery giving scope for collective life and spirit of fraternity and democracy among the many resident monks who came under a common discipline and instruction. It is in this way that university education developed in ancient India. Wherever the monks clustered in a Vihara, it became the nucleus of a University. The University was presided over by a "Kulapathi" corresponding to the principal of a modern college.

The earliest among the celebrated Universities of ancient India was Takshasila or Taxila which became the chief centre of Hindu learning as early as the sixth century B.C. Even scholars from distant Greece came to study in Taxila. It offered the highest education in humanities and the sciences, arts and crafts. It had special schools of law, medicine and military science and also taught elephant-lore, hunting, animals' cries and archery. Each branch of learning had a school presided over by a Professor. Panini, the great grammarian and Chanakya, the Minister of Chandragupta had been students of the Taxila University. It was specially reputed for the teaching of medicine. Jivaka, the reputed physician who had cured both Lord Buddha and King Bindusara of some painful diseases had studied in this University for seven years. The University maintained high reputation for several centuries and was in a flourishing condition during the reign of Asoka. In the pages of the Buddhist "Jatakas" it is stated that five hundred pupils were studying *silpa* (art) in the University of Taxila.

Another centre of higher learning was Benares, which was to some extent built up

by the graduates of Taxila. Benares was noted for its school of music under an expert who was "the Chief of his kind in all India". Earliest among the Universities which grew up from Buddhist "Viharas" was the University of *Sridhanya Katak* in Vidharbha on the banks of the river Krishna. It became famous as the seat of both Brahminical and Buddhist learning.

Besides the resident pupils, there were also day-scholars in the Universities. Some of these day-scholars were married. The Jatakas mention cases of some whose studies were hindered by their wives, one of whom always pretended sickness when her husband was about to go to school. It is interesting to note that a school in those days kept a cock to serve as a clock or alarm-bell to rouse students from their bed. Also *titlrl* birds were trained to recite Vedic mantras and help the boys to remember them, thus serving the purpose of the modern tape-recorder.

EDUCATION IN THE CLASSICAL AGE

We get copious information about education in this Age from the records of the celebrated Chinese travellers Hieun Tsang and I-tsing who visited different parts of India during this period. Hieun Tsang refers to a class of wandering teachers who took a vow of life-long poverty for the purpose of study and instruction. I-tsing testifies that the rule of life of the pupil in relation to the teacher was closely followed by the pupil and teacher alike in the Buddhist monasteries during the latter part of the 7th century A. D. He describes the manner of the typical pupil of India waiting on the teacher. "He (the pupil) goes to his teacher at the first watch and at the last watch in the night. The pupil rubs the teacher's body, folds his clothes or some times sweeps the apartment and the yard. Then having examined water to see whether insects be in it, he gives it to the teacher. This is the manner in which one pays respect to his superior. On the other hand,

in case of a pupil's illness, his teacher himself nurses him, supplies all the medicine needed and pays attention to him as if he was his child."

The most famous seat of learning for a long time in Ancient India was the Nalanda University. It was situated near Rajgir, about fifty miles from Gaya. Both Hieun Tsang and I-tsing were attracted by the University, the former staying there for five years and the latter for ten years. Its genuinely historical period begins with the middle of the fifth century A. D. It was patronised by the Gupta King Kumaragupta I and his successors and by King Harsha. The State had assigned the revenues of a hundred villages for the support of the University. The University had one hundred lecture rooms, great libraries and six huge blocks of dormitories four storeys high. It possessed observatories which, according to Hieun Tsang, "were lost in the vapours of the morning and the upper rooms towered above the clouds". The building in which the library was housed had nine storeys and was then considered the largest in India.

Hieun Tsang says that there were ten thousand students in the University when he visited the institution. Admission to the University was not easy. Of those from abroad who wished to enter the schools of discussion in Nalanda, he tells us, "the majority beaten by the difficulties of the problem, withdrew, and those who were deeply versed in old and modern learning were admitted, only two or three out of them succeeding". Those who were lucky to get admission were given free tuition, boarding and lodging. But they were subjected to rigorous discipline. Women were admitted, but men students were not permitted to talk to a woman nor to see one. Even the desire to look upon a woman was considered a great sin. The student guilty of sex relations had to wear for the whole year, the skin of an ass, with the tail turned upward, and had to go about begging alms and proclaiming his sin.

The Nalanda University was "a teaching, residential, unitary, research and international University", which attracted students from a large part of the world. Monks from China, Tibet, Central Asia, Bokharo and Korea found free board, lodging and instruction there. The course of studies comprised not only the works of all the eighteen schools of Buddhism, but also the Vedas, the *Hetuvidya* (Logic), the *Sabda Vidya* (grammar), the *Chikitsa Vidya* (medicine), the *Atharva Vidya*, the *Sankhya* and so forth. The method of instruction was chiefly tutorial, though there were lectures. But discussion played even a more important part and the greatest and the most brilliant achievements were in the field of Logic.

The only rival of Nalanda as a centre of learning in India was the University of Vallabhi in Kathiawar. It was founded about fifth century A. D. Hieun Tsang says that it contained six thousand priests, most of whom were studying the Hinayana form of Buddhism.

EDUCATION IN THE POST CLASSIC AGE

Coming to the post-classic period, the Universities of Odanthapuri, Jagaddala, Sakya and Vikramasila deserve special mention. The University of Odanthapuri, founded by Gopala I, King of Bengal, in the 8th century A. D. in the town of Bihar near Nalanda, contained a splendid library of Brahminical and Buddhist works. The University of Jagaddala was established by King Ramapala in the eleventh century at his capital Ramavati in North Bengal. The famous monastery of Sakya became a great seat of learning in the thirteenth century A. D. and followed Odanthapuri in the details of monastic discipline and education.

The University of Vikramasila was founded by Dharmapala, the son of Gopala I about 800 A. D. It flourished for about 4 centuries. It attracted numerous students from abroad. Like Nalanda, it was a monastic University, and under it there were six colleges. Four of these colleges stood at the four gates of the monastery.

Pupils had free access to these institutions for study. The resident pupils received free boarding from the four "satras" which were established inside the monastery at the four gates. These "satras" were maintained by the endowments of princes and nobles. At the University there were six gate keepers or "dwara-panditas" who conducted the entrance test and were principals of the six colleges. Besides, there were 108 professors in each College, and a committee of six of them, presided over by the 'Vice-Chancellor' managed the affairs of the University. The title of "Pandita" was conferred upon the best pupil by the King. There were also other reputed Universities such as the Ajanta and Ujjain Universities. Ujjain was famous for teaching of astronomy and Ajanta for teaching of art.

Nearly all the monasteries and monastic Universities of ancient India, both Buddhist and Brahmin perished by the onslaughts of Muslim invasions. Nalanda was burnt to the ground in 1197 A.D. and all its monks were slaughtered. In the same year, the University of Odanthapuri suffered the same fate. The University of Vikramasila also disappeared with the advent of the Muhammadan invaders. Despite the tragic end of these Universities, the glorious heritage left by them will remain immortal.

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ANTI-SEMITISM - A CHRONIC DISEASE

P. T. Bhaskara Panikkar

Anti-Semitism is two thousand years old.

The causes and terminology of anti-semitism varied from era to era. When religious dogmas were uppermost, anti-semitism had a religious edge. When new race-theories were evolved by interested parties, anthropological phrases were being used. In the capitalist era Jews were called crafty money-lenders, thrifty usurers and exploiting capitalists. Anti-semitism is a chronic disease. But in the era of socialism and world revolution, it has no currency. All pseudo-racial theories have been literally smashed by modern anthropologists.

VICTIMS OF PERSECUTION

However the fact cannot be denied that the Jews were victims of inhuman persecution. All their religious, ethical, social and personal customs and manners were criticised by the early Christians and the medieval Jew-baiters. They had to live more or less segregated from others. Laws were enacted forbidding Jews to own land. Naturally they had to turn to mercantile pursuits. Some became money lenders and the ill-repute spread that they were inhuman and cruel shylocks. The common Christian believed that the Jews were the people who crucified Christ and they had only contempt for them. Later on, class hatred also brought up a little bit of anti-semitism.

How far the Jews themselves were responsible for creating such a mentality among the common people of Europe is a thing on which there is vigorous contro-

versy. But the fact remains, that the most elementary dislike was based on religion and religious beliefs. The Christians thought that the people who refused to change according to times were anti-social elements and should be treated accordingly. They were ostracised, despised, persecuted and harassed in every way. The Jews refused to budge. The more persecution they suffered the more ardent they remained loyal to their own sectarian ideas.

IN ANCIENT WORLD

Anti-semitism did not exist in the very ancient world. But slowly anti-jewish tendencies developed in cities like Alexandria where the Jews resided. Their numbers increased as they were being persecuted. The persecution made them rather exclusive. They were hated and abused. The Egyptian priest Manetho (B. C. 270-250) is supposed to be the earliest anti-semitic author. Romans like Tacitus and Horace wrote against circumcision which they called a mockery and against their abstinence of swine's flesh and the celebration of the sabbath. Sincere Christians thought that it was their religious duty to oppose the Jews. The first pogrom is reported to have taken place in 38 A. D. The Jews became a subject of contempt and controversy in the Graeco-Roman world. They became thoughts of literary Jew haters. Apion, Tacitus, Seneca and others were critical about the beliefs and rituals of the Jews. Most of this hostility was because the Jews observed circumcision,

sabbath and certain dietary laws. A historian remarks that the "anti-jewishness of the ancient world appeared primarily as a literary folk-loristic xenophobia rather than as a mass aggression."

Coming to modern times, Hitler's jew baiting is too notorious to be narrated here. His ethnological theories were good fertilizer for the growth and development of the Nazi idea. Six million Jews were physically exterminated during World War II. This will show what anti-semitism means in the modern world.

REVOLUTION LIBERATES JEWS

It was only revolutionary ideals that exposed the ugliness of anti-semitism. The French Revolution gave human rights to the Jews and their political emancipation started. They were allowed to enter all trades and crafts, settle in cities, have their own factories, etc. In 1719 (September 27) the National Assembly repealed all exclusive measures against the Jews. The constitution (1795) granted equal rights to the Jews. The Russian Revolution (1917) also liberated the Jews. During 1889-1914 period thousands of Jews emigrated from Russia. It was the Russian Revolution that called a halt to this and treated the Jews like human beings.

India was completely free from any trace of anti-semitism. Batches of Jews who arrived in India were treated well and every amenity was rendered to them. The standing monument of Kerala's hospitality to the Jews is the synagogue at Cochin-which has witnessed 400 years of Kerala History. The Jews of Kerala have in their own way contributed their share to the multi-colour fabric that is called Kerala culture.

A LESSON AND A WARNING

In the long history of the world we can see certain communities sticking fast to their time honoured habits and rituals, whatever difficulties they have to face. By sheer suffering and fortitude they develop

strong feelings which the ruling bureaucracy will not be able to suppress. The so-called civilized world will try to call them uncivilized and primitive but there is something common among them which makes them stand united. In India at present, we are seeing the Adivasis asserting themselves. They have their own pet notions about things, and they may not be ready to listen to modern views. They may even be superstitious. No amount of persecution and condemnation will swerve them from their accepted path. This is what one should learn from the two thousand years of anti-semitism.

INFLUENCE OF RENAN AND MAX MULLER

During the 19th century outworn religious arguments against Jews were replaced by the innocent literary and philological speculations of eminent persons like Ernest Renan and Max Muller. The French historian Renan had expressed certain sweeping remarks about the semetic race and their traits and Max Muller had enunciated the doctrine of a common Aryan script as a basis of all the Indo-European languages. He even said that there was a race which spoke the Aryan language. The German ethnologist Friedrich Von Hüllwald wrote in 1872: "In the case of the Jews we have to do with an entirely different ethnic group.....This people, scattered and settled in Aryan Europe, is purely semitic. From an anthropological point of view the Jew who lives in our midst stands quite far apart from us as the Arab, and the emphatic contrast between the two, usually indicated by the opposites Christian and Jew, is for the most part exactly the same as the opposition which exists between Aryanism and Semitism."

PSEUDO-SCIENTIFIC DOCTRINES

It is this pseudo-scientific doctrine that was seized upon by Wilhelm Man (1879) and others and expounded in a series of very popular pamphlets. Politics also

played its part in this nasty game. Anti-jewish ideas, sometimes Christian, sometimes even socialist spread and anti-jewish agitations developed like a crusade. Riots broke out (1880-81). A mass petition signed by 300,000 Prussian citizens called upon Bismarck to exclude Jews from all national schools, universities and public offices. It was the same political trend that was later on developed by Adolf Hitler in his *Mein Kampf* and practised by his storm-troopers.

In Russia, anti-semitism took another turn. There were concentration^s of Jews in certain places. There the Jews were considered a separate economic and religious class. They were permitted to reside only within the territory of Poland. In

1881 Alexander II was assassinated and the May Law (1882) was promulgated by which Jews were forbidden to reside outside towns. The idea was that the Jews should not own land. These were followed by the great pogroms of 1903 and 1906 when the Black Hundreds were organised by the Czarist government to combat the revolutionary movement.

Today we know that there is no biologically pure race as such. There is always a conflict of categories and characters in the genetics of Man, cutting across narrow nationalism and still more primitive kinship. The spirit of internationalism has today more loyal followers than all these pseudo-scientific and Chauvinistic ideals.

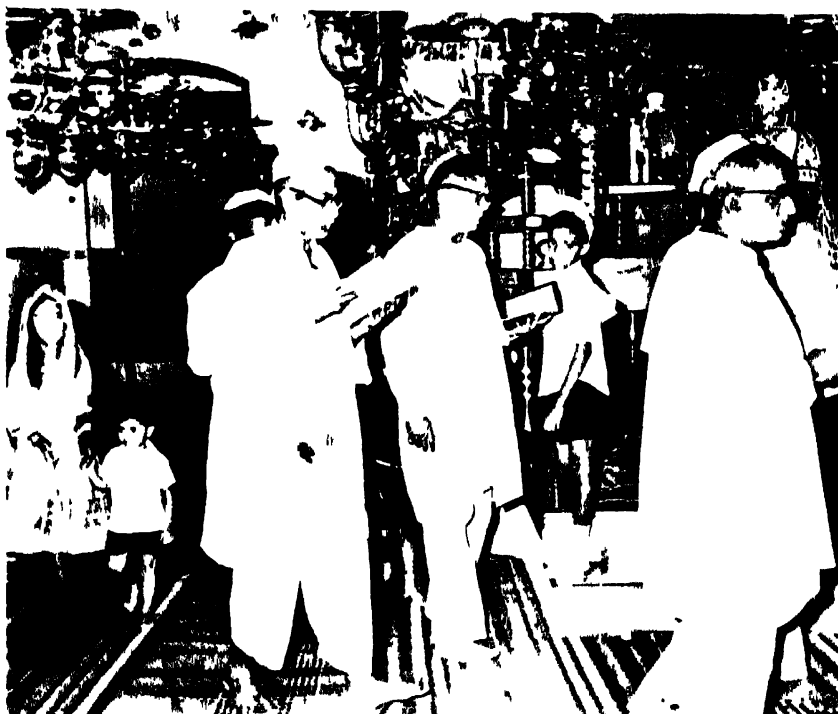


Kadavumbagh Synagogue, Ernakulam. A common feature of all the Synagogues in Kerala, unlike other Synagogues in the world, is to have a Teba or Bimah (Pulpit) on the top and another in the centre of the Synagogue. The top one is used for the reading of the Law and for services during the Sabbath and Festivals and the bottom one is used for the ordinary daily prayers and for Musaph (additional prayer) on Sabbaths and Festivals. It is said that Ezra was the first to suggest that the Law is to be read from a raised platform. The two pulpits are clearly seen in the photograph.



The Scrolls of
Law on
Simhat-Torah
night in the
Thekkumbhagom
Synagogue

Hakaphah (Circuit) on the night of Simhat Torah in the
Thekkumbhagom Synagogue at Ernakulam





Seated from the left The late Mr Issac Benjamin and late Mr Haim Isaac Hallegua

Standing The late Mr Eliavo David Hallegua

The Dagla (long coat) and the kakupayam (trousers) were till recently the traditional ceremonial dress of the Elders of the Parthesi Synagogue



Costume of the Cochin Jews of the 16th century The ceremonial dress of women are made of silk and gold brocade They resemble the Spanish costumes of the Jewish women of Morocco All married women wore a gold tahli This is the custom of all communities in Kerala

INDIAN ART TODAY

K. C. S. Paniker

Is there at all, one sometimes wonders, a thing which can be clearly recognised as the contemporary art of a particular country today. "Modern art is no longer modern," says Goldscheider, "it is academic; and like all manneristic schools - Late Gothic, the post Michelangelo school Rococo—it is an international style. Now-a-days exhibitions of contemporary art, whether they are held in Paris, London, Berlin, Budapest or New York, all look very much the same. No young artist would have any chance of success if he defied the rigid laws of academic modernism". As we know, India and most other countries of the world today, except the totalitarian states, show a marked tendency towards an eager acceptance of the modern art idioms of Europe. At the same time this tendency has worried some, in India at least, who have looked forward to something in their art which could be a little more representative of themselves, — something Indian and yet world-wide contemporary.

But then, is there any need for impatience over the inevitable and slow process of evolution which might take us sometime to come to our own? Or, are we a little frightened over the possibility of losing a beloved tradition in this welter of new ideas, styles and techniques? There are people who are able to look at these things differently. Here is a bomb-shell from Herbert Read: "The internationalism of modern art makes it difficult for the critic to claim a distinctive type of art for his own country. *There is no British art since 1945*—there is

an art, more vigorous than any art Britain has known since death of Turner (1855), which has made a distinctive contribution to the world-wide movement of the arts". (italics mine). If Britain with her unbroken artistic tradition, constantly revitalised by continental influences, can be said to have, since 1945, lost her artistic identity in the context of world art, how would one react to the Indian situation? We are heirs to a very disturbed artistic past, what with Greek, Moslem and British invasions and rule.

It is no doubt, painful to the superficial traditionalist to have to watch his own world of fond memory appear to slip by while he himself is left behind to draw what consolation he might from old art forms more familiar to him. In his despair he is often likely to underestimate the significance of the inevitable changes in the art of his country. At times he is tempted to attribute the new outlook to ignorance and servility of mind of present day Indian artists. However, one has to be aware that the impact of the modern art of Europe on present day world civilization has been powerful and dynamic. It has changed the face of the world, its architecture, design and all construction. And India, we are aware, was introduced to it slowly during the century and a half of British rule.

Moreover, no serious artist can entertain any mental reservation against the appreciation or acceptance of ideals and techniques of outside origin. His has to be

an open mind with the senses free to respond to stimulation by the world around him. His senses recognise no racial or geographical barriers. Old traditions are constantly broken to form new ones. Tradition is understood as something akin to life itself, ever growing and capable of vital changes. Perhaps, a charge that can be levelled against the contemporary Indian artist is his failure to recognise the great potentialities of his own tradition, which he imagines is too far removed from his conscious life and ~~cor~~ with the necessity to express himself in a contemporary idiom which is European. In him there appears to be too little inner demand for a restatement of those ideals and visions which alone can strike a more sublime chord. But imitation of the past, surely, holds out no solution to the problem. It should be interesting here to listen to Goldscheider again: "..... An Indian artist, on the other hand, cannot merely study the Ajanta and Tanjore wall painting and imitate them on a smaller scale

-this would not make him a modern master: he has to go through the school of world art. But to become a genuine artist he is not allowed to forget or suppress his racial and national way of seeing and feeling and shaping - he has to be an *Indian* artist or nothing at all. In the end his painting will be as different from all European art as the thinking of India, Upanishads and Buddha, is different from European thought. (No true message without that difference.)"

It is therefore fairly understood that tradition does not merely consist in following the immediate generation before us. As T. S. Eliot says it cannot be inherited. If you want it you must obtain it by great labour. It involves the historical sense and a perception not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence. This historical sense makes a man create anew for his generation with a profound feeling for the work of the dead master. It gives him a clear notion of his place in time, of his belonging to the present.

NAMBOODIRI BRAHMINS: AN ANALYSIS OF A TRADITIONAL ELITE IN KERALA¹

Jean P. Mencher

Columbia University, New York, U. S. A.

INTRODUCTION

Social structural change, either radical or gradual, has long been an interest of anthropologists. This field has received considerable impetus during the past 10-15 years as more anthropologists have worked in complex plural societies of a type which can be described as follows: (Swartz, Turner and Tuden 1966:6)

Social fields with many dimensions, with parts which may be only loosely integrated or even virtually independent from one another and that have to be studied over time if the factors underlying the changes in their social relationship are to be indentified and analyzed.

Bailey has shown in the case of the Kondmals that where more than one structure

works in the same field, conflicts may take the form of contradictions, and lead to the modification of the structural forms. He further indicates how in a situation of change, the conflicts project people out of one structure and into another. (Bailey 1958)

In this paper, I should like to isolate and examine selected features of the traditional social structure of Kerala with particular reference to the patrilineal Namboodiri Brahmins, a wealthy aristocratic landed caste group of highest ritual and secular rank, who maintained their position by the practice of primogeniture and a complex relationship with lower ranking matrilineal castes. Following this I shall first examine some of the changes that have taken place in Kerala since the advent of the British, indicating why the Namboodiris

¹ Research among Namboodiri Brahmins in Kerala was conducted during the summer of 1962 on a special small grant from the American Philosophical Society. Field work among Nayers in Kerala was undertaken in 1958-60 under the joint auspices of the American Association of University Women and the United States Educational Foundation in India. Additional work was done during the fall of 1962 as part of a larger study being carried out as a National Science Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow. A preliminary version of this paper was read at a meeting of the American Anthropological Association in Denver, Colorado in November 1965. The write-up and analysis of this data was completed while the author was Co-Principal Director of a project sponsored by NIMH.

Grateful acknowledgments are here made to the following who have provided critical and instructive comments: Professors Baidya Varma and F. C. Southworth, and Mr. Owen Lynch. I am also extremely grateful to Dr. Savitri Shahani for many useful discussions about Kerala social structure and the role of the Namboodiris in particular. Finally, I should like to express my gratitude to Miss C. M. Parvathy, who worked as my interpreter cum research assistant during the summer and fall of 1962.

(as compared with the matrilineal Nayers or patrilineal Tamil Brahmins) were able to maintain their traditional structure and life pattern until the early part of this century. That is, I shall attempt to show how the structural features of primogeniture, plus their wealth in the land and their high socio-religious status, were decisive in influencing Namboodiri conservatism and in leading them to resolve a status conflict between their religious and political roles by retreating. Secondly, I shall indicate how the dichotomy between the traditional and modern has in effect led to a radical reform movement among the younger generation who favour a complete break with the traditions of the past. This break is leading to a sharp breakup of Namboodiri "theocratic supremacy in Malabar and the — (destruction of) the landed aristocracy of Malabar." ¹

TRADITIONAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Certain salient features of the social structure of Kerala were crucial in delimiting the traditional roles and statuses of the Namboodiri Brahmins in Kerala. Perhaps the two most critical features were: a) the existence of a loose, feudalistic type of political organization, permitting considerable local autonomy and b) the system of primogeniture found in South India solely among the Namboodiris. This system permitted the consolidation and maintenance of power and wealth in individual families.

In Kerala, due to ecological factors, the settlement pattern has always been of the dispersed type, with each middle and upper class family living in its own spacious

compound set off from neighbouring houses. On the whole, authority tended to run from the large landlord family to those under him, in a way reminiscent of the European feudal manor. Village organization was always very loose, and it has always been difficult to say where one village began and another ended. Village unity was always a nebulous concept. Any given village (and the word translates badly in the context of dispersed settlements) tended to be dominated by either a high subcaste Nayar family or group of families, or else by a ruling Kshatriya or Namboodiri family.

K. P. Padmanabha Menon (1924: III, 357) describes Malabar prior to the arrival of the Portuguese as:

The feudalism of Malabar resembled the corresponding continental system of Europe in the 13th and 14th centuries ... The petty chieftains more or less exercised the right ... not simply of taking up arms between themselves but also were so far free and independent as to wage war against their own feudal heads themselves.

Politically, even the largest state in Kerala prior to European contact, that of the Zamorin of Calicut (who was in the process of territorial expansion and consolidation with the help of the Muslims on the coast and the Namboodiris of Central Kerala, at the time the Portuguese arrived) was loosely organized and depended considerably on the allegiance of the various local chieftains. These local chieftains were usually either Nayers or Samandans, though in a few places in Central Kerala

¹ In 1937, S. S. Ayyer wrote in a chapter dealing with a Malabar village in Thomas and Ramakrishna eds (p. 275)

"A strong and growing protestant party (especially among the younger folk) who want to break away from the traditions of the past. They take to English education, are in favour of marriage in the community for all, and want even partition of illom property. Some of the Nambudiri youth preach radical social reform — inter-dining inter-marriage between communities, widow remarriage, breaking of purdah for their women and so on. These reforms, if successful, will result in the breakup of Namboodiri theocratic supremacy in Malabar and the partition of their estates into fragments which will destroy the landed aristocracy of Malabar".

there actually were minor Namboodiri sovereigns. In certain other places in Central Kerala, there was a peculiar institution known as the Samketam. A Samketam was a kind of temple corporation made up of a group of Namboodiri households (known as illams) in a given locale. This corporation constituted a self-contained and independent community exercising sovereign powers and "Owning no sovereign except the Yogam" (i. e. the board of the Samketam) (K. P. Padmanabha Menon 1924: IV, 103)

The history of the Namboodiri community still presents certain puzzles, and major disagreements exist among historians as to their exact date of arrival in Kerala. According to the legendary *Keralolpatty* (a traditional account of Kerala history, said to have been set down in writing in the 18th century), Brahmins were brought to the southwest coast of India by the sage-warrior Parasurama, and settled in thirty-two *grammam* in the north (in what is now the South Canara District of Mysore State) and thirty-two in the south in what is now Kerala State. (It is hard to define a Namboodiri *grammam* in simple terms. Each *grammam*, at least each of the major ones, had its own temple, and its own set of authorities for both religious and secular law and its enforcement, though some of the smaller or lower-ranking *grammam* deferred to the authorities in the major

ones. Most *grammam* were somewhat localized geographically, with their illams located within a radius of 10 to 25 miles of the *grammam* temple. But since the territory of one *grammam* might overlap that of another, these cannot be thought of as communities in the usual sense.)¹ There clearly is no sound basis for the legend of Parasurama, and indeed, the majority of modern historians hold that the Namboodiris came to Kerala sometime between the first century B.C. and the 4th. century A.D; though there are some, notably Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai, who hold that they came even later. (E. K. Pillai, 1953).

The geographic distribution of Namboodiris in Kerala was never completely uniform. Certain areas were noted for containing thick Namboodiri concentrations, whereas others might contain only a few widely scattered illams or none at all. The area of thickest Namboodiri concentration was in parts of South Malabar and Cochin where they also had the most direct political control. Namboodiris located in some areas were said to rank higher than those in other parts.² There were no Namboodiris south of the Alwaye River on the Cochin-Travancore border who possessed the right to perform the Yaga sacrifices. (It is conceivable that there were some higher ranking Namboodiris there earlier who were converted to Christianity during the early centuries of this era, as many of the

1 Some illams of particularly large grammams might be located more than 25 miles from the *grammam* temple. This was certainly true after the end of the 18th. century. At least in some areas it is hard to be certain of the distribution of illams prior to this because of the disruptions caused by the Mysorean invasions. There was some slight preference for *grammam* endogamy, though considerations of rank, status, and wealth were more critical in arranging a marriage. It was not common to marry a daughter to an illam more than two or three day's journey away by foot.

2 It is striking that the largest number of illams, including almost all of the high ranking ones, were located in the area where the greatest amount of land could be given over to rice cultivation. This is not entirely a coincidence. Apart from gifts by local rulers, most of the wealth of the Namboodiris came from the land. On the other hand, they refused to have anything to do with the land directly, preferring to leave the management of agriculture to tenants. It is a fact that throughout Kerala, rice and occasionally coconuts have been given over to tenant cultivation, whereas the majority of cash crops such as pepper have been cultivated directly by land-owners with the help of labourers hired by the day, week, or year. Such crops usually require direct supervision in the fields.

Travancorean Syrian Christians claim to have been converted either from Namboodiris or from high Nayar subcastes.) In parts of Trichur taluk where there was the densest Namboodiri concentration, the area was for a long time dominated by the so-called Yogiattiripads or ecclesiastical heads of the Vadakunnathan and Perumanam Devaswoms (temple boards). Where Namboodiris did not rule directly, or where they had direct rule but were weak, they would align themselves with different rulers. At an earlier period of uncertainty, two groups of Namboodiris came to assume central importance in Kerala: those belonging to Panniyur grammam, said to have been loyal to the Zamorin of Calicut, and those of Chovaram (now Sukupuram) grammam said to have been loyal to the Maharaja of Cochin. At one point, the Panniyur grammam Namboodiris greatly displeased the Zamorin. Using some religious matter as a pretext, he managed to get them degraded and replaced, at least in part, by the Sukupuram grammam people, who also were more than eager to break the power of their rivals. On the other hand, on other occasions different rulers would court Namboodiri allies. Thus, when the Zamorin was in the process of expanding his kingdom, he found it necessary to win the allegiance of the heads of two of the largest temple boards of Cochin in order to maintain his power in that area. When the Maharaja of Cochin with the help of Travancore recaptured that part of his kingdom, he found that in order to consolidate his power, he had to break the power of the Namboodiri Illams in Trichur.

Apart from their direct political control, they were often able to exercise considerable indirect power because of their status as the highest spiritual authorities in Kerala. The custom of organized Pattini or fasting by a group of Namboodiri Brahmins was an instance in point here. K. R. Pisharoti (1934) provides a clear description of this.

When a local chief becomes very aggressive and trespasses on the elementary

rights of the people, the Brahmin leaders all assemble together in a hall especially built for the purpose where every arrangement for a grand feast has already been made. Then they all sit down...After all have been given water and before they have performed their pranahuti (oblation to the vital airs), the leader amongst them stands up and publicly announces the name of the chief who has hurt them. Then he narrates the wrongs he has done and finally calls upon the assembled guests to get them redressed before they touch their food. Thereupon the Brahmins all throw down the water in their hands; they rise up and take a vow that they will not eat until their wrongs are avenged... There are indeed some conditions imposed upon the fasters and one of the rules is that the period of fasting should never exceed seven days. If the...chief does not turn over a new leaf before the week is out, there is yet a higher rite prescribed. On the eighth day all the strikers leave the hall in a body and (purify themselves)... meanwhile they have got ready a wooden or stone statue of the wicked chief; this is then invested with life... and then hanged in front of the temple ...This final rite over, the Gramakkars all leave the village in a body in search of a new abode, where alone they break their fast. This final rite is supposed to be potent enough to bring instantaneous destruction of the offender... Pattini then is a sanctified weapon of defence which religious leaders in Malabar have instituted against oppressive chiefs.

Another indirect consequence of their spiritual supremacy was that they were often able to function as "neutrals" between different regions. Thus they had the unique role of being considered above and beyond territorial concerns. Rulers from all areas would give freely to the Namboodiri, as it also brought merit to them to give to Brahmins. Every village, even ones

without Namboodiri illams, used to have a temple, and as one Namboodiri put it:

Every month one temple or another used to have a feast for Brahmins. Namboodiris would go from one to another and carry messages, even between regions which were at war with one another. We were good diplomats. One will say: "Are you going to see the Raja? I have a very good friend, tell him about this man." And another will say: "Y is going to sell land, I think you should tell Z, he might be wanting to buy."

In other words, the Namboodiris had an essential communication function for the preservation of the system. Therefore the Nayars had a value in preserving the position of the Namboodiris as crucial points of the communication network. Indeed, prior to the British, Sanskrit, the language at which the Namboodiris were expert, was the medium for all official communication.

Namboodiri skill in Sanskrit was fostered by the local rulers who often helped to subsidize Vedic sacrifices, recitations, etc. Furthermore, it was often a Namboodiri who taught Sanskrit to the children of ruling families. It should be noted in passing that, because of the close relationship between the Namboodiris and the matrilineal castes in Kerala, there was a far greater Sanskrit influence among non-Brahmins than has been noted for the east coast. Nayars, especially in Central Kerala where the

Namboodiris were most concentrated, were strongly influenced by the daily customs of Namboodiris including their interest in Sanskrit education; in consequence the Nayars of Kerala were far more literate than their equivalents on the east coast.

It is striking that in Kerala, Brahmins were not expected to participate in the important life crisis ceremonies of castes lower than themselves, as did their counterparts in the rest of India. One never saw a Namboodiri coming to purify an ordinary Nayar taravad after a death (though an Embramndiri from South Canara might do this.) There was some exception to this in the case of the highest Nayar or Samandan families, at least for participation in coronation ceremonies, but the Namboodiris who involved themselves in deaths in those families were considered to be very low by members of their own community.

In contrast to Brahmins in other parts of India, the Namboodiris were always wealthy landlords, with even the poorest of them living in relatively spacious compounds and owning land. It would have been rare to find a Namboodiri illam without many servants. Occasionally in the wealthiest illams a few servants might come from poorer illams, but most of the servants were Nayars or east coast Brahmins. Though Namboodiris were ranked in several diverse ways on the basis of their rights and privileges, their wealth, and in part their occupations, they cannot be classified into different sub-castes.¹ All Namboodiri males had the

¹ In his discussion of Nayars and Newars, Dumont has distinguished between what he calls status groups and castes or subcastes. "Among the Nayars, an exogamous lineage or cluster of lineages of a certain status cannot be called a subcaste...All these are actually status groups which may be absolutely (or practically) endogamous at the one end and exogamous at the other." It is clear that this holds with even more force when one deals with Namboodiris. Though it was not a preferred choice, a girl for whom no other suitor was available might have been married to a lower ranking illam. True, after her marriage she might no longer be allowed to enter the kitchen and puja room in her father's house, but she was not outcasted, nor did her family suffer on account of having arranged such a marriage for one of their daughters. As regards occupation, it is true that some Namboodiris rank lower than others, such as the ones who had taken to the practice of Ayurvedic medicine, but it is also true that some other occupational divisions merely marked off specific illams in a larger group, as for example, the two illams in charge of the schools in Trichur and Tirunavaya respectively. And certainly a group like the eight illams having the right to practice medicine could hardly be called a subcaste. I think that Dumont's concept of ranked status groups is more applicable here than the concept of subcaste. (Dumont, 1964 p. 86)

right to dine together, and there was free mingling among the males of different ranks. From the point of view of this article I deal with all Namboodiris in general, though some distinction is made between Vedic and non-Vedic Namboodiris.

Structurally, one of the most significant differences between the Brahmins of Kerala and other Brahmins in South India was the practice of having only the eldest son take a wife or wives from his own caste. The younger sons either remain¹ celibate, or else formed permanent or semi-permanent liaisons with women from the somewhat lower matrilineal castes, who constituted close to 20 percent of the population of the coast.¹ These liaisons, though regarded as marriages by members of the matrilineal castes, were not considered as such by the Namboodiri community. Unfortunately, a full analysis of Namboodiri marriage customs is beyond the scope of this paper, but it is clear that this practice was crucial in maintaining their position as a landed aristocracy and their local power base. Only permitting the marriage of the eldest son meant that the property of the illam was never subject to partition. The large Namboodiri estates thus remained intact, and any new addition by gift or purchase only served to increase a family's position. These wealthy landlords had far more influence and power than they would have had if their property had been split every generation or two, as was the case with the Brahmins of other parts of India.

Younger sons, especially those belonging to families of importance, would tend to form marital liaisons with women belonging to royal matrilineal families such as that of the Zamorin of Calicut, or at least to important local chieftain families.

By means of those liaisons, and the interpersonal relationships so engendered, an individual Namboodiri might gain critical and direct entry into policy. Often through such connections men got themselves appointed as advisers, ministers, etc. to the rulers. Besides, a clever father or brother-in-law of the ruler could exercise considerable indirect influence, even if without actual political office.

REACTION TO THE BRITISH

During the mid-eighteenth century, Kerala underwent a major upheaval as the Mysorean Muslims under Hyder Ali and his son Tipoo Sultan invaded the northern half of the State, and were in the process of pushing on towards Travancore in the South when the British entered the war and defeated them. When the British came to Malabar, the Nayers were deprived of their traditional occupation as soldiers. As the Trichur gazetteer puts it: (A. S. Menon 1962: 174)

But the Nairs, notwithstanding the decline in their political and military power, still formed the chief community of the land... (they) had renounced the sword and shield and taken to the plough.

As soon as western education became available, they rapidly saw it as a way to compete for position and status vis-a-vis one another. Western education could lead to a man's entering the modern world as either a professional or white collar employee; and these rapidly became suitable roles for the younger males in matrilineal households. By the mid-nineteenth century there were numerous Nayar males who were lawyers, doctors, or teachers, in addition to those who held political office.

¹ The custom of only the eldest son marrying was justified traditionally by the Anacharam which stated: "The eldest son should marry and enter Grahasthasramam (a house-holder's life)." Thus it was claimed that traditional law only required that the eldest son need or ought marry. This was very strictly followed except for certain specified and clearly defined instances such as when the eldest son has died without producing an heir, or has married three times but only managed to produce daughters.

In the same way the Tamil Brahmins, both in Madras and Kerala, lacking the great estates of the Namboodiris, often took to western education as a means to enhance their position economically and socially. On the other hand, the Namboodiris, especially those of higher status, completely withdrew from the social and political arenas. As one Namboodiri put it:

When the British came, we were sitting with hatred in the mind toward this education. Only when it came to the point that there was no other go, when we had to make a livelihood, or now when we are going to lose our land, did we accept it.

Using religious purity as their justification, most Namboodiris withdrew haughtily to their estates, and refused to allow their sons and daughters any form of modern education.

As the British assumed political power in Malabar, or as centralization of power took place (as in Cochin and Travancore), and the Nayars lost their role as soldiers and political advisers, the Namboodiris along with them lost their political status, though they retained their (A. S. Menon 1962: 174)

unchallenged spiritual supremacy. They continued to dominate also the economic and social life of the country by virtue of their superior position as *jenmis*.

Put another way, when the power of the Namboodiris as well as the Nayar chieftains was broken by the Maharaja of Cochin and the British in Malabar, it created for the Namboodiris a situation where they had nothing to gain and everything to lose. Entering the new world via western education would certainly have endangered their ritual rank since it would have involved doing polluting or semi-polluting things; at the very least, it would have made it impossible for them to perform certain rituals. They clearly could

not preserve their religious purity if they entered the new political arena with its vastly different rules. Further, they would deny the basis of their traditional political status if they went along with the British, because the British, (as well as the newly consolidated states) had no need for traditional governmental methods based on sacred rights, landed power, and marital relations. They certainly could not have intermarried with the British. But the replacement of the traditional political structure by a new one did not in any way curtail their wealth. They were supplanted, but without land reform or any threat to their ownership of property. Thus they could resolve their status conflict between religious supremacy and political power in favour of the former.

THE NAMBOODIRI REFORM MOVEMENT

Around the turn of this century some Namboodiri males, usually younger sons, began pressing for reform within their community. In its initial stages, the movement was double pronged, emphasizing the demand for English Education and the right for all Namboodiri males to marry within their own caste. The following quotation, from an elderly man who had participated in the movement, illustrates some of the prevalent attitudes of that time:

I came here (to his Nayar wife's house) 60 years back. At that time Namboodiris were only studying Sanskrit. That was their education. Then, the males of this family were studying for B A. and such classes, and a few had become eminent because of their education. So I understood my position. I wanted to study English, but as I was a bit old to begin it, I decided to learn in Malayalam all about history, geography, and all sorts of books. After reading all that, I began to write articles and reviews in the newspapers. Then, I said: "agitate in this society

for English education and for marrying in own caste." Marrying like me, it was just like keeping, not a real marriage. My children cannot make any claim for the property of my illam. At that time I was all on the side of modernization.

By the turn of the century, Nayar males had clearly begun to have more power and increased economic independence (Schneider and Gough 1961 : 647):

In the later nineteenth century, new, small branch-property groups were perpetually being founded through the wives of individuals who had amassed personal property... The Malabar Marriage Act of 1896 was an attempt to... give legal support to the increasing demands for recognition of the status of the elementary family.

Namboodiri younger sons, through their alliances with the Nayars and other matrilineal families, were being continually exposed to the changes going on among Nayars. In a very real sense, the Nayar males became a reference group for the Namboodiri younger sons, and this was reinforced when the Nayars began objecting to marrying their women to Namboodiris, as they were considered old-fashioned and backward and not able to even partially

provide for their wives. In Cochin State, the Nayar regulation of 1920 served to some extent to undermine the traditional relationship between Nayars and Namboodiri younger males, because in part it provided for some legal responsibility for maintaining the wife and children on the part of non-Nayar husbands (A. S. Menon 1962 : 222). This clearly made Sambandan marriages less attractive to the Namboodiris. Thus, Namboodiri younger sons became aware of their position as second class citizens in comparison to the Nayar males who had English education and were slowly acquiring rights over their own children, as well as in relation to their own elder brothers who were permitted to marry within their own caste.

Namboodiri younger sons, though their contacts with Nayar families, were also slowly made aware of the growing agitation among Nayars for permission to partition the family property. In addition, once they began examining things, they became acutely aware of the vast gap between the position of the Namboodiri women and that of the matrilineal women. Under the impetus of a husband who believed in female education and the end of the purdah system, one Namboodiri woman actually organized a series of meetings for women, thus adding another prong to the reform movement.¹

¹ The following quote is from a Malayalam article in *Ummi Namboodiri* magazine (vol. 28, 1947, pp. 63-73) about Parvathy Nenmarimangalam, a woman from a non-Vedic illam of Irinjalakuda gramam, who became a leader for female education with the encouragement of her liberal-minded husband (English translation by C. M. Parvathy, amended) "The young Namboodiris objected to the traditional customs, marriage restrictions, lack of education and financial status. Sri. E. M. S. Namboodiripad and Sri. Kuttan Namboodiripad took the initiative in the search for solutions. The articles and dramas written and acted by young Namboodiris attracted young women, and resulted in a considerable change in their attitudes. The first meeting of antharjanams (married Namboodiri women) was held at Guruvayur... Then came a great commotion among the old orthodox Namboodiri Vaidikars, Odikkan, and Enangan, who became angry and threatened to outcaste them. But... Parvathy Antharjanam presided at a meeting of young Namboodiri women... The meeting held at Karal Mana was attended by about 100 Namboodiri women.

A select committee was formed to enquire into details (in the Cochin Legislature). After hearing Parvathy Antharjanam's speech which discussed the injustices suffered by Namboodiri women, the bill (against polygamy) was passed without any amendment. Thereafter, a sudden change became apparent among Namboodiri women within a few years' time. They began to give up constantly carrying umbrellas; there was a case of a widow who remarried; girls continued in school even after puberty... But at this time some of the leaders like E. M. S... left this organisation as they were attracted by politics."

This movement was crystalized in 1917 around a case involving the Trichur Madham (Vedic School) where many Rig Vedic Namboodiris went to study.

You know the date of the Russian revolution. That month, that same year, was a day of revolution for Namboodiris. Until that time, nobody went against the word of the Wadhyans or Vydikans. But then so many people were against the Wadhyan (the hereditary head of the Madham). Among Namboodiris two parties formed: the youngsters against the Wadhyan and the old Karanavans in the other party. That day, both Karanavan's orders and Wadhyan's orders were not heeded. Also, at that time "X" Namboodiri-pad made speeches that everyone should learn English and for that they made him atone. In 1919 Namboodiri schools were formed. From that day onwards progress came. Next after that was the marriage of younger brother before older brother. That also created havoc. Then the third was temple entry. In Trichur it came first. All Hindus can go inside the temple.¹

It was clear that in order to bring about changes in Namboodiri life, the hold and authority of Namboodiri elders had to be

broken. These men, the heads of the two Madhams or Yogams, plus the Vydikans or supreme authorities on matters of ritual, and the orthodox elders all protested violently against each feature of the reform movement. In order to agitate successfully for social change, the Namboodiri youth had to decide that they did not care about pollution, that they did not care about the maintenance of their spiritual or sacred status, that they were willing to give this up in order to participate actively in the modern world. In this sense, they had to accept a more radical change than the Nayars, whose social position did not have a ritual counterpart.

Today one can find illams almost everywhere on the continuum, from the rare ones that still seem to belong in the early 19th century to those where all castes move freely, both boys and girls are educated, and are in essence hardly recognizable as Namboodiri establishments.² Most of the orthodox Namboodiris, plus the majority of elder sons (eved in modernized illams), have tended to align themselves nowadays with the Congress Party. The same has been true of those Namboodiris belonging to the most wealthy families where even after partition of property each member still has a substantial share. Among younger sons, on the other

1 "The Rig-Vedic Namboodiris, in fact all the Malayala Brahmins belonging to the thirty-two southern villages (Kerala grammam) as opposed to the South Canara grammam, own spiritual allegiance to two ecclesiastical heads or Wadhyans as they are called. These two heads are known as the Trichur and Tirunavayi Wadhyas...The two Yogams...own immense estates endowed from very ancient times, the proceeds of which are spent by the Wadhyans upon their Vedic institutions containing hundreds of Namboodiri youths who are fed and lodged there and who may remain there as long as they wish to continue the study of Vedas. These mutts are thus the seats of Vedic learning in Malabar." (The State Manual of Travancore 1906, p 272) Thus, when the younger generation rebelled against the authority of the Trichur Wadhyan, they were in effect rebelling against the religious establishment.

2 The movement was not even and people in some areas took to the new ways more rapidly than others despite the opposition of the older generation. It is striking though not unexpected that more rapid change occurred among the poorer non Vedic Namboodiris throughout Kerala, and that among the higher ranking Namboodiris it occurred most rapidly in Central Kerala (the area between Trichur and Calicut) particularly among those belonging to the Rig Veda, whose children studied in either Trichur or Tirunavaya. The two regions which stand out as the most backward are around Irinjalakuda in the southern part of Cochin and in parts of North Malabar near Taliparamba. Interestingly, in both areas the majority of illams belong to the Yajur Veda. Yajur Vedis most often studied at home or at the home of a nearby guru and had less opportunity to know what was going on around them.

hand, there has been a marked tendency to accept Marxist or Communist ideologies. Those reformers who have stayed loyal to Congress have consistently tended to side with the more socialistically minded of that group.

One of the prime reasons why many of the reformers, especially the younger ones, have tended to side with the Communists is that the orthodox wing among the Namboodiris, especially those most concerned about the maintenance of their caste purity and caste privileges, have been consistently on the side of Congress since 1947, with respect to economic and social matters. To some extent, the adherence to Marxist ideologies seems to correlate with the degree of frustration which the individual Namboodiri suffered during his earlier years, and to some extent with a genuine involvement with and concern for the lower caste people in the area. It is striking that in Kerala, where Namboodiri Brahmins, despite their wealth and high ritual status, were considered a backward class for many years, there is none of the anti-Brahmin feeling found in Tamilnad. A Namboodiri who sides with the lower castes is not only accepted, but often looked to for advice by less educated low caste people.

One might postulate that the course of modernization and change in Kerala, particularly among the Kerala Hindus, has differed from other parts of South India, because of the fact that the traditional pattern of social and economic relations in Kerala was more of a feudalistic nature. And that the uneven adaptation during the 19th and early 20th centuries had to do with the way in which different structural

elements of the feudalistic society coped with new forms, patterns and opportunities. To the extent that other parts of South India, such as Madras and Mysore, did not have a similar traditional pattern, their adaptation was of a different nature.

In summary, it is clear that the traditional family structure, ritual status, and political position of the Namboodiris, and more importantly their economic position, have prevented them from making any sort of *gradual* adaptation to the new situation. With the Tamil Brahmins adaptation was facilitated by a greater flexibility in many respects: since all the sons were expected to marry, in many of these families it was possible for one or two of the senior males to manage the ancestral land while other males took up residence in the cities with their families and worked at salaried jobs. Thus it was less difficult for them to maintain their traditional family life and their ancestral landholdings, which in any case were considerably smaller than those in Kerala because of the practice of frequent partition. When the Namboodiris attempted to adapt to the changed conditions, it almost invariably required much more radical change in family structure, ritual status, and economic position. Among the Namboodiri reformers, it has been necessary to abandon completely the socio-religious prerogatives of Kerala Brahmins, and most of them have given up their study of the Veda along with many other ritual observances. Thus the dichotomy between the traditional and modern structures has in effect led to a contradiction, which is now in the process of being resolved by radical social change.

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JEWISH COLONIES OF INDIA PAVED THE WAY FOR ST. THOMAS

Dr. Thomas Puthiakunnel

Vincentian Bureau, Ernakulam, S. India

[A discovery of original research regarding the coming of St. Thomas the Apostle to India from the view point of the Pre-Christian era and first century A. D. Jewish settlements on the Malabar and Coromandel coasts]

When we discuss the question of the apostolate of St. Thomas in India, the first problem that pauses itself before us is this: Was it possible for St. Thomas to find an easy passage to India? The solution of this problem is all the more important since a few critics have dared to question the fact of St. Thomas coming to India on the grounds that in those ancient days the Western world is likely to have known very little about India.

Thanks to the researching tendency of Scholars of our times, we have a lot of first rate evidences in support of the commercial and cultural relations India maintained with the rest of the world. First of all, we shall examine the relations which the Middle Eastern countries like Palestine, Egypt etc had with India. As Christianity had its origin among the Jews in Palestine, the question of the relations between the Jews and India before the Christian era and during the early centuries of the Christian era is very important.

**JEWISH RELATIONS WITH INDIA .
DATES BACK ATLEAST TO
TENTH CENTURY B. C.**

We find from relevant sources that even

as early as 10th century B. C. the Jews had considerable intercourse with the Indian sub-continent. The spices, precious gems, ivory, gold and other rare materials of India attracted merchants from all parts of the world even before the dawn of history. For, we read in the Old Testament of the Bible that king Solomon's (972-932 B. C.) tradesmen in company of the Phoenician merchant Hiram traded with Indian sea-ports." And they came to Ophir and fetched from thence, gold, four hundred and twenty talents and brought it to king Solomon". (III Kings, IX, 28). Again we read in the next chapter: "For the King's navy once in three years went with the navy of Hiram by sea to Tharshish and brought from thence gold and silver, ivory and apes and peacocks" (III Kings, X, 22)

Where were these Ophir and Tharshish? Scholars identify Ophir with the present Sopara about 36 miles north of Bombay. The Greek version of the Bible render Ophir as *Sopheir*, *Souphir* or *Sopara*. This Sopara was formerly the capital of the kingdom of Aparanta stretching from Navsari north of Bombay to Gokarnam, the

sacred northern city of Kerala¹. According to some other writers Ophir refers to the sea-port of north Malabar, namely *Beypore* near Calicut². About the place "*Tharshish*" much disquisitions have been made. Many identify it with "*Tharisa*" an extinct coastal city near Quilon on the Malabar coast. The 9th century copper plate inscriptions still existing in Kerala prove that the name "*Tharisa*" existed atleast until the ninth century. The inscriptions are known as "*Tharisa palli copper plate grants*".³

It is natural that Solomon's tradesmen got ivory, apes and peacocks from Indian ports. Another interesting fact is that apes and peacocks are mentioned in the Hebrew Bible in their Indian names. Apes in Hebrew is "*Kop*" and in Sanskrit and old Malayalam "*Kapi*". In the Hebrew text of the Bible, the word '*Tuki*' is used for peacock which in ancient Tamil and Malayalam is '*Toket*'.⁴ Ivory in Hebrew is called '*Senhabbin*', i. e. teeth of elephant, '*hab*' being the Hebrew equivalent for '*habh*' the Sanskrit word for elephant.⁵ Peacocks, elephants etc are not found in Palestine and neighbouring countries. So it is reasonable to think that when peacocks, ivory, apes etc were taken from India, their Indian names also accompanied them to Palestine.

Besides, from the Book of Exodus we learn that cinnamon and cassia which were produced mainly in Malabar and Ceylon and foreign to Palestine, were much in use among the Hebrews. (Exodus, XXXV, 1-24) Logs of Indian teak have been found in the temple of moon at Mugheir and in the palace of Nabuchadenazzar⁶. Such

historical and philological evidences based on the Old Testament prove that the Palestine Jews had intercourse with India even before tenth century B. C.

Based on the Biblical text and authority of several writers, Mr. S. S. Koder, a prominent Jewish Scholar of Cochin says that the first Jewish colony might have arrived in India in King Solomon's fleet⁷. A Beni Israel painter, Mr. Samuel R. Samuel holds that the Beni Israel community of Cochin are pure blooded Jews, the descendants of the immigrants to India from the time of king Solomon⁸. There are references to the colonisation of Jews in Cranganore in the 6th century B. C. as a result of a mass exodus of Jews who were freed from the Babylonian captivity by Nabuchadenazzar (604-562 B. C.) The existence of Jews in India long before the Christian era is asserted also by Anquitil du Peron in his book '*Zent Avesta*'⁹.

MAIN JEWISH COLONIES OF SOUTH INDIA.

From later documents we understand that the Jews had seven or eight important settlements in South India. Interesting accounts of the condition of Jews in India are given by Moses Pereya de Paiva in his book "*Noticias de Judees do Cochim*". He led a delegation of Jews from Amsterdam to Cochin in 1686. According to his report which was printed in Lisbon, there were 4 Synagogues and 128 families in Cochin, 2 Synagogues and 150 people in Anjikaimal (Ernakulam), in Parur one Synagogue and 100 well-to-do people;

1 POTHEN, S. G. "*St Thomas Christians of Kerala*", Bombay, 1962, P. 6

2 PADMANABHA MENON, "*History of Kerala*", 1924, p. 4

3 PANICKAR, K. M. "*Malabar and the Portuguese*", Bombay, 1929, p. 6

4 BISHOP CLADWELL, "*Comparative Grammar of Dravidian languages*" London, 1875, p. 91-92

5 MAX-MULLER, Prof. "*Science of Languages*", London, 1881

6 RAWLINSON, "*Relations of India with Western Nations*", cited in PANICKAR, op. cit. p. 2

7 KODER, S. S., "*Kerala and her Jews*", Ernakulam, 1965, p. 2.

8 MENDELSSOHN, Sydney, "*The Jews of Asia*", London, 1920, p. 105

9 KODER, S. S. op. cit. p. 4.

in Palayur (Juden Kunnu or Jewish hill) one Synagogue and 10 families; in Chenot one Synagogue and 50 well-to-do people; in Muttom one Synagogue and 35 families.¹⁰ Marco Polo (1293) the thirteenth century traveller who visited India speaks of Jews at Quilon.

Thus history tells us that there were Jewish colonies in Cranganore, Parur, Palayur, Quilon, Muttom, Chenot etc. It is a strange coincidence to note that the seven Churches founded by St. Thomas in South India are situated in or near these Jewish colonies.

JEWISH COLONIES OF INDIA ATTRACTED ST. THOMAS.

It is reasonable to think that when Jesus Christ, the Messiah brought on earth the message of salvation, the disciples of Christ were striving to announce the glad tidings of the Gospel primarily to the Jews, the chosen people of God, in whichever part of the world they were living. Hence there is every reason to think that one or other of the disciples of Christ came to announce the Gospel message to Jews living in India. The ships of Jewish traders were coming to India 'once in three years' as in the time of King Solomon or more frequently. Hence, a disciple of Christ could find an easy passage to the Jewish colonies of India. On the opposite, having had such facilities of announcing the Gospel to the Israelites of India, it would have been a wonder if no disciple of Christ ever came to India. Thus the Jewish colonies of India might have been an additional attraction for St. Thomas to come to India. In fact, based on the first century tradition, we have written documents dating at least from the first century onwards that invariably speak of St. Thomas as the Apostle who first brought the message of the Gospel to India.

A NEW APPROACH TO ST. THOMAS' TRADITION.

In the light of the logical possibilities and reasonable probabilities mentioned above, when one studies the St. Thomas tradition of South India, one would be amazed to see how well founded and credible is that tradition. The seven churches said to have been founded by St. Thomas on the Malabar coast are situated at Cranganore, Parur, Palayur, Quilon, Kokamanglam (near the Jewish colony of Muttom), Niranam (near Quilon) and Chayal. All the seven churches except that of Chayal, are situated in the ancient Jewish colonies. Chayal or Nilakal was one of the important marketing centres of those days. It is located about 35 miles away from the sea. Here the merchants used to buy pepper, cinnamon, ginger cardamom and other spices directly from the peasants. Being such an important marketing centre, the Jews who were trading in spices might have settled down in Chayal also.¹¹

If the south Indian tradition regarding St. Thomas' preaching the Gospel and establishing seven churches would be a fiction, why should those who made the fictitious story place the seven churches in or near the Jewish settlements only? It is more probable and reasonable to think that, as a Jew bound to announce the message of salvation primarily to the Jews, St. Thomas came and preached the Gospel to the Israelites of the Jewish colonies of India and established churches there. As a stranger newly coming from abroad, St. Thomas had necessarily to seek the help of his countrymen who had already settled down in India. For, setting apart the gift of languages, St. Thomas had naturally to learn the Indian language, customs and manners before he started his apostolic

10 MOSES DE PAIVA, "*Noticias de Judeas do Cochim*", Amsterdam, 1686. (A copy of this book reprinted in Lisbon is with Mr. S. S. Koder)

11 In fact the Jewish Scholar, Mr. S. S. Koder told the author that there are certain writers who speak of a colony of Jews in Chayal also.

activities. Hence it is reasonable to think that St. Thomas had to depend upon the Jews of India atleast for some time immediately after his arrival. In this connection it is interesting to note that the ancient wedding songs of the Malabar Christians speak of St. Thomas landing in Cranganore in A.D. 52 in the company of a Jewish merchant called Habban and his being received by a Jewish flute girl. Thus the scanty reference we get regarding the arrival of St. Thomas in Cranganore is connected with Jews - arrives in the company of a Jew and is welcomed by a Jew.

Among the first Christian converts of India, besides Brahmins and local Hindus, one could expect a large number of Jews also as it was the case in Palestine. That is how St. Thomas happened to establish the seven churches in or near the Jewish colonies.

In this article, I was trying to give an entirely new approach and orientation to the St. Thomas tradition from the view point of the pre-Christian era and first century Jewish colonies of South India. Based on recent historical and archaeological discoveries, Scholars have already treated atlength about the political, cultural and trade relations India maintained with the Graeco-Roman world in the early centuries, thereby establishing an easy passage for St. Thomas to come to India. But hitherto we have not come across with any author who have studied in detail the apostolate of St. Thomas from the view point of the Jewish colonies of South India. Hence we hope that this contribution of ours will add a strong argument which would stand in good stead to prove the possibility and the fact of St. Thomas apostolate in India.

THE SECRET CHAMBER

V. T. Induchudan

The Kali shrine at Kodungallur (Cranganore), in Trichur District of Kerala, is considered to be one of the most important temples, on the West Coast. The structure of this shrine built out of granite is not very big, but is, perhaps medium-sized. There is an outer enclosure having rooms or verandahs and covering the four sides of the inner sanctum sanctorum. One of the chambers of the sanctum sanctorum faces east. This chamber contains a *Siva-linga* planted in a hole of flat square piece of granite stone. This chamber in which the *Siva-linga* is enshrined is an independent hut by itself, unattached to anything else

On the southern side of the Siva shrine, inside the main enclosure referred to above, is situated a pretty long hall. There are two chambers inside this hall. The western chamber is comparatively longer than the eastern one. This chamber is supposed to be the seat of the *Saptamathrukas*. The eastern chamber contains the idol of Kali, the idol and the door facing north. There is also a door facing west, which is usually closed, but occasionally opened for certain privileged persons to get a glimpse of the eastern wall of the sanctum of Kali which happens to be the common wall of another chamber, situated on the eastern side and which is closed on all the four sides. About this, we will deal in greater detail later on. The idol of Kali which is made out of wood, is in her posture of divine fury after having killed the *asura* or demon called Daruka. The story of her birth and assassination of Daruka is well-known and is the subject matter of a large group of

Malayalam songs, connected with various rituals. There was once upon a time an *asura* or demon named Daruka who by his intense devotion and worship of *Brahma*, received from the latter the quality of being invincible and immortal. Then Daruka became conceited and he not only began to oppress humans but also defied the Gods. Therefore the Gods conspired together and taking advantage of the fact that *Brahma* had not, fortunately, given Daruka the quality of not being killed by women, created six ladies who are generally called *Aruvars* or the six, and deputed them to fight and kill Daruka. The six ladies, accordingly, attempted to finish off the demon, but they miserably failed. When this scheme of hostilities fizzled out, the Gods conspired again and Siva, the God of destruction created from his third eye on his forehead, out of a lump of poison which was in his throat, a militant lady called Kali. According to the songs, she had sixteen arms and was black in colour and she went into a rage as soon as she was born. She danced in her naked form, upon which Siva gave her a piece of red cloth to wear. She was then sent with a large army of *pisachas* or devils to fight and kill Daruka. The songs narrate that she rode on a gigantic dragon named *Vethala*. Soon the battle started, in the first round of which Daruka won. The secret of this success was soon found out - Daruka and his Queen knew a mysterious spell, which they had learnt from *Brahma* and which made them invincible. Therefore *Karthyayini*, a comrade of Kali went in the disguise of a beggar woman to the Queen of Daruka and tactfully leaked

away the secret spell. After this, matters became easy and simple. Kali caught hold of Daruka, laid him on her lap, and killed him with her nails - nails, because Daruka had the quality of not being killed with any weapons of war. After the killing of Daruka, Kali returned to Siva in divine rage. At this moment, afraid of her temper, Siva created two kids who rushed at her and suckled her breast. Motherly feelings aroused, she cooled down a little, but her temper was still aflame. Siva danced to pacify her and in the final stages it became naked dance, when she hanged her head ashamed. Siva asked her to go to the earth to be worshipped by humans.¹

On the inside south-western corner of the outer square enclosure, there is an idol of Ganapathi. It is a common-place thing; and there is nothing peculiar. Outside of the square enclosure on the western side, there is a deity in a separate hut, called *Vasurimala* which literally means 'the garland of small-pox'. She is believed to be the vehicle of the disease of small pox. Another hut exists on the north-eastern side outside the outer enclosure. This contains a gigantic statue of a deity named *Kshetrapala*. The word means "the guard of the square".

I have already made a reference to a closed chamber attached to the sanctum of Kali. This appears to be a sort of secret chamber. It has no doors or any other forms of entrance. The roofs of the entire temple is covered and of the secret chamber also particularly covered. What is inside this is anybody's guess. It is certainly not an irrelevant appendage. Special religious importance is attached to this chamber. On the outside of the western wall of this chamber (which is also the eastern wall of the sanctum sanctorum of Kali) is hung a piece of crimson cloth and this is the subject matter of worship when the western door of the sanctum sanctorum is opened on rare occasions. There are

lots of legends connected with this secret chamber. One legend goes to say that Sri Sankaracharya, the great philosopher of the ninth century, had consecrated *Sakti* or divine energy in it. Entrance into this chamber is tabooed. There is a story that a carpenter who got on the roof for repairs became inquisitive, tried to have a glance and lost his eyes as a penalty. One of the traditional beliefs is that there is also an underground passage leading out from the secret chamber towards the east - or north-east, to be precise - about hundred feet long which opens out through a mouth. This mouth lies in the midst of a small groove, very much like a serpent groove common in Kerala. In January-February, there is a festival in the temple called *Talapoli*, in which a row of elephants, the central one carrying what is called the *Tatampu* of the idol of Kali, goes round the temple, accompanied by the beat of drums etc. This procession of elephants goes round clockwise starting from the south-east and when it reaches the underground passage the procession turns back, for fear, it is said, that the passage gets damaged by the heavy weight of the elephants.

But what is this secret chamber? Dr. C. Achutha Menon has attempted a discussion about the nature of this structure. Similar, though not the same type, phenomenon may be seen in other Kali temples of Kerala. In Tirumandhamkunnu, in South Malabar, we come across, on the south-western side of the sanctum sanctorum containing the *Saptamathrukas*, a secret pit. It is called *Srimulastana*, meaning 'the seat of the holy root'. People believe that the power of the mother-goddess is concentrated more here than in the sanctum sanctorum. There is no idol in this pit. There are openings both to the west and to the east and there is a groove nearby. All round this, a wall has been built preventing entrance by anyone. No one has attempted to examine what is inside for fear of the wrath of the Goddess. Daily rituals are conducted here.

1 Kali-worship in Kerala, Dr. C. Achutha Menon, part II, pp. 11-44, 52-68 & 74-121

People pray from both sides looking down. Lamps are lighted and hung above the pit, on a piece of wood and garlands are put on this piece. Sometimes, a crescent made of gold or bronze is also placed on this. This is called the *prabhamandala*.²

In Chottanikkara, located east of Ernakulam District, on the south-western side of the temple, there is a tree growing on a built-up base. The base is divided up into seven compartments. It is believed that originally the Mother-Goddess sat here. She changed her seat from one compartment to the other and finally to respect the wishes of the people (one version says Brahmins), she transferred her seat to the present sanctum sanctorum. In Cherthala, in the Alleppey District, also, on the southern side, remnants of a tree are found and is called, as in Tirumandhamkunnu, *Srimulastana*.³

Dr. Achutha Menon has almost accepted the legends that the original seats of the Mother-Goddess were these mysterious pits or chambers and that there was some sort of shifting later on. In primitive times, according to Menon, there were no idols or structures for the worship of Kali, there were only such crude sacred spots or pits. Later on, as civilisation progressed, structures and idols were built and then the shifting of the holy seat took place. Menon has suggested that the change of seat in Kodungallur might have taken place as a result of the advent of Kannaki cult, during the rule of the Chera king Senkuttuva. A collection of ritual songs of Kali are popular all over Kerala. It is almost the same type of songs with minor differences between those of the North Kerala and the others of the South. However, in the south, in another group of songs, Kali and Bhadrakali are found to be differentiated both names continuing to denote the same deity in the northern areas, and Bhadrakali is equated with Kannaki in the southern regions. From this Menon infers that originally the

conception of the Goddess was the same all over Kerala, but it underwent transformations with the birth of Kannaki cult during the regime of Senkuttuva. Menon goes on to say that this transformation was confined to the regions south of Kodungallur, perhaps, due to the fact that the Cheras held sway in that region.⁴

The origin of the Kannaki cult is well-known and therefore, I am here giving a bare skeleton of the story to help those who have not followed it. There was a young merchant named Kovalan in Puhar, the capital of the old Chola Empire. He married an aristocratic young and beautiful maiden called Kannaki. Some days after the marriage, Kovalan happened to witness a dance performance of a girl named Madhavi and immediately fell in love with her. Kovalan and Madhavi spent their time happily and a girl was born to them and was named Manimekalai. However, sometime later, some misunderstanding arose between them and Kovalan suddenly left his beloved. He returned to his wife, but in the meantime had lost all his wealth. Therefore, the couple went to Madura to start life anew. Kovalan had no money to start business and Kannaki readily gave him one of the precious anklets. He went to a gold-smith to sell the anklet. It so happened that earlier one of the anklets of the Pandyan Queen had been stolen, and this particular gold smith was the real thief. The fellow, as soon as he saw Kannaki's anklet, cooked up the story that this was the stolen anklet of the Queen. The Pandyan King was informed and Kovalan was immediately seized by the King's guards and killed. On hearing this brutality, Kannaki burnt down the city of Madura with the fire of her chastity and leaving the Pandyan kingdom entered the Chera Kingdom across the Western Ghats, where she died and joined her husband in heaven. The tribes in the forest witnessed this wonderful sight and reported the matter

2 Ibid, Part I, p. 30

3 Ibid, Part I, p. 63 and 105-107

to Senkuttuva, who was at the time Monarch of the Chera Empire. Senkuttuva then raised a memorial on her behalf, in his capital. This is a bare summary of the story which is narrated in the great epic *Silappathikaram*.

The Chera capital called Vanji and Karur have been identified with the present locality of Kodungallur, though of course, a section of scholars hold different views on the matter. It is true that legends connect the Kodungallur temple with the memorial to Kannaki. But we come across various difficulties in accepting Dr. Achutha Menon's hypothesis referred to above. In the first place, it is not correct to say that the Chera kings held sway on the south of Kodungallur only. As a matter of fact, more than one Chera king had their seats of power in North Kerala. Nedumcherathan had his capital in a place called Naravu which K. G. Sesa Iyer identified with the place called by the ancient Greek travellers Naura.⁴ And this is according to all calculations supposed to be in North Malabar.⁵ The capital of some of the Chera kings was situated in a place called Tondi identified by scholars with Tyndis of ancient Greek travellers. The place may be either Kadalundi⁶ or Quilandy, both in Kozhikode District of North Kerala. In view of these facts, a transformation or change of seat of Kali south of Kodungallur and the latter process within the temple, due to some particular Chera influence in the southern region, as envisaged by Dr. Menon may not be true. Another difficulty is that the picture of Kannaki and the idol of Kali in the Kodungallur temple do not hold any affinity between each other. The Kannaki cult is popular in South India and Ceylon and there are idols of Kannaki elsewhere. I have compared a bronze idol of Kannaki found in a Ceylon temple with the idol of

Kali found in the Kodungallur temple. This bronze idol which is said to belong to seventh - tenth century A. D. was found in eastern Ceylon. Pattini Devi, as Kannaki is also called, is depicted in this idol as a young, slim, handsome and homely maiden. Her face peaceful, her hair dressed and rolled up vertically, she is half naked, wearing only a piece of cloth below her waist and having no ornaments of any sort. Her breasts are well-developed and her waist is thin. Her palms are held to signify some *mudras* or symbols. The nature of these is not very clear. The left palm may be showing, what is technically called in *Natyasastra*, the *mudra* named *Katakamukha* and the right one may, perhaps, be *Pataka*. Or the *mudras* may be some sort of *abhayavarada* (protection and blessing). The most important aspect of this idol is that it has absolutely no superhuman or unhuman characteristics. Dr. Zimmer writes: "The Ceylonese Pattinidevi of the 7th to 10th century is close to the traditional form with its marked contrast of the slender waist against the heavy breasts and hips. The Goddess, dignified and graceful in this manifestation represents the chastity and virtue of the house-wife and mother. Her image expresses fully the perennial type of Hindu womanhood - though with a certain dryness peculiar to the Dravidian tradition, which accords readily with a work in metal."⁷ The image of Pattini or Kannaki has no comparison with the idol of Kali found in the Kodungallur temple, a superhuman figure with eight arms most of them carrying weapons of war and one gripping the severed head of Daruka and having a face bearing essentially a feeling of vengeance and terror. *Silappathikaram*, the epic of Kannaki, specially mentions in one place that Kannaki is not Kali.⁸ When Kannaki goes to the

4 Cheras of the Sangam Period

5 Seran Vanji, Krishnaswamy Iyengar, p. 50

6 Ibid., p. 82

7 Art in Indian Asia, Heinrich Zimmer, Vol. I, p. 114

8 *Mathurakanda*, poem 20

gate of the palace of the Pandyan king, the guard describes to the monarch the nature of the maiden who has come. The guard tells the king that she is neither *Kottavai* (the war-Goddess) nor the youngest of the six maidens nor is she Kali who killed Daruka. In the light of all these, a transformation of the form and transfer of the seat of Kali with the advent of the Kannaki cult, as envisaged by Dr. Menon, is not a probability.

What then is the secret chamber? We may start with the fact that the chamber has a striking similarity with a megalith. A megalith, as is well-known, is a big stone structure (mega=big; lith=stone) in which our ancestors buried their dead. There are various types of megaliths and these have a wide range of distribution in time and space. We are here concerned only with two or three types and certain general features of others. One type is the dolmenoid cist which is a burial chamber made up of dressed orthostatic stones either laterite or granite; they are placed vertically on the four sides, sometimes in a swastika form to form a chamber. There will also be a capstone to close the chamber, the major part of which is sunk underground. On one side there is an opening and a short passage leading to the surface. Occasionally the whole monument is surrounded by a rude stone circle.⁹ There is a subtype in which the orthostats are completely sunk in the ground and therefore only the capstone is visible outside.¹⁰ Some dolmens found in erstwhile Cochin area in Kerala have orthostats placed on the four sides in a swastika pattern either clockwise or anti-clockwise. The slabs are six to eight inches thick and measure five feet by two feet six inches by two feet three inches. They have

a port-hole on one side.¹¹ The port-hole cist in the same region is made by scooping out a rectangular chamber in the laterite and then lining the floor and sides with granite slabs and lastly covering the whole with a granite roof slab. There is a trapezoidal port-hole in one of the orthostats.¹² Rock-cut caves are found in several places in Kerala. The cave builders first scoop out the surface mass of laterite, thus sinking a stepped pit into the rock, usually rectangular or nearly rectangular of varying depths. Into the straight face of the earth is then cut a small rectangular entrance either a little above the floor level of the open quadrangle or flush with it. Through this narrow opening, measuring on an average 1½ feet square which hardly permits a man to crawl through on all fours, is the hard laterite hollowed out and the cave shaped and fashioned. The floor of the interior of the cave is one foot to two feet lower than the floor of the court outside.¹³ In the Cochin area there are caves with pillars inside and sometimes the caves are multi-chambered.¹⁴ Three main characteristics of these types are that firstly, there is a square chamber either half or fully sunk into the ground; secondly, a passage exists from one side leading out into the surface level; and thirdly the megaliths generally, have an east-west orientation with the passage or port-hole facing the east, occasionally having a slant to the south. In one of the megaliths (megalith No. 5) excavated in Chingleput, a group of skulls were placed at the bottom somewhat pushed to the east. In the same area, a dolmenoid cist (No. 3) was found to have a passage constructed on the eastern side.¹⁵ Megalith No. 1 in the same area is a dolmenoid cist. It contained five terra-legged sarcophagi (which is a sort of long container) with lids of varying dimensions.

9 Megalithic Types of South India, V. D. Krishnaswamy, *Ancient India*, No. 5, p. 37

10 Ibid., p. 37

11 Ibid., p. 38

12 Ibid., p. 39

13 Ibid., p. 40

14 Rock-cut Caves in Cochin, Y. D. Sarma, *Ancient India*, No. 12, p. 93-115

15 The Megalithic problem of Chingleput, N. R. Banerjee, *Ancient India*, No. 12, p. 29

Both the chamber and the sarcophagi were oriented east-west, the exceptions were conditioned by the availability of space.¹⁶ Similarly, megalith No.2 had three sarcophagi placed east-west; both 1 and 2 had opening passages, subsequently blocked up, and these were on the eastern side.¹⁷ The Chovvannur cave (in Cochin area) has a recessed opening on the east, one foot six inches wide and one foot seven and a half inches long and one foot seven and a half inches high.^{17A} There are two caves in Porkalam, in the Cochin area, lying one behind the other, and both are now facing west-north-west. Judging from the nature of the structure, Sarma thinks that since the building of these caves there might have been some subsequent interference and that originally cave No.1 had its outer court extending further north-east.¹⁸ Eyyal cave in the same region, is double-chambered. The main chamber is double the size of the other one, and it faces east.¹⁹ Kattakampal cave, existing in the same area consists of four chambers, two of them lie side by side with passages into the outer court on the eastern side, while the other two chambers are on the north and south of the court.²⁰ R. E. M. Wheeler, in 1947, carried out extensive excavations in Brahmagiri and Chandravalli in Mysore. There were two main types of megaliths, the cists and pit circles. The main characteristics of the cists are not missing. In the eastern wall of megalith No. 1 was a port-hole 1' 8" in diameter, approached by a passage or manhole flanked by vertical slabs. The port-hole had been sealed externally by a double door slab and a dry built wall upwards six courses. Six skulls

and other bones were deposited inside. This deposit was slightly west of the centre of the floor, again showing east-west orientation.²¹ In megalith No. 5, there was a port-hole in the eastern orthostat, 1'11", the approach to which was flanked on either side by a short irregular dry-built wall of three courses. The port-hole had been closed by a door-slab backed by lime-filling. On the floor, west of the centre lay more than one skulls and group of pottery. It may be mentioned that as an exception, one skull lay against the southern orthostat.²² In megalith No. 5 also, there was in the eastern orthostat, a port-hole 1'5" in diameter, approached by a floored passage which was flanked by three orthostats on the northern side and two on the southern. The port-hole had been sealed by a door-slab backed by roughly built masonry between the first pair of orthostats flanking the passage.²³ In megalith No. 4 a port-hole 1'11" in diameter existed on the eastern orthostat; this was sealed externally by a door-slab, which itself was backed by a slab acting as a rut and also by a lump of lime. 10" above the floor and covering an area 1' by 1'5" towards the western end of the cist lay a small bundle of eight or nine human bones.²⁴ In megalith No. 8 the eastern orthostat had a port-hole 1'11" in diameter, covered by two door-slabs which in turn were backed by lime. In this cist also, at an average height of 5" from the floor and overlying four pots was a tightly packed mass of disarticulated human bones including two skulls and covering an area about three feet by two feet towards the western side of the cist.²⁵

16 Ibid., p. 30

17 Ibid., p. 30

17A Ibid., p. 99

18 Ibid., p. 104

19 Ibid., p. 104

20 Ibid., p. 104-107

21 Brahmagiri and Chandravalli 1947, Wheeler, *Ancient India*, No. 4, p. 188-190

22 Ibid., p. 190

23 Ibid., p. 190-192

24 Ibid., p. 192

25 Ibid., p. 192-194

Megalith No. 10 had similar characteristics. As is the usual practice, here also, the eastern orthostat had a port-hole 1'7" in diameter, approached by a passage flanked on either side by a vertical slab.²⁶

Port-holes or passages opening in any other direction than the east is a very rare occurrence. We come across one such in Kunnathur, in Chingleput District. Here, a dolmenoid cist was found to have a port-hole towards the west.²⁷ Other megaliths in the same area had east-west orientation. In megalith No. 5 bones were found in the north-eastern portion.²⁸ In the same megalith a huge terra-cotta sarcophagus measuring 6'6" by 2'8" and having 21 legs in three rows of seven each was found to be placed in an east-west direction. Another smaller sarcophagus was found outside the pit again oriented east-west.²⁹ Material remains of the dead like bones etc., are as is seen, usually found placed towards the east or west. We come across some exceptions in Nagarjunakonda where some megaliths were found oriented north-south.³⁰ In the same region, many others have been found, as usual, with east-west orientation. Even skeletons were placed in this manner. For example in megalith No. 15, over a bed of ash and lime which was about 6" thick, lay a skeleton, 5' long with an east-west orientation, the skull being placed towards the east.³¹ The same phenomena was observed when excavations were conducted in 1960 to

1961 in Bijapur District in Mysore. One megalith had an external passage, about 1½ metres in length, from the orthostat of the eastern side.³²

A class of megaliths excavated in 1954 in Maski, in Hyderabad State, revealed some new characteristics. The graves are oriented north-south, as has been pointed out by B. K. Taper.³³ But, here again, the affinity with east and west is an unconcealed fact. In pit no. 15 was found an extended articulated skeleton of a female, oriented north to south with head to north, but the face of the skeleton was turned towards the west.³⁴ In pit no. 16 a male skeleton was found lying in the same way, the face turned towards the west.³⁵ In pit 28A a skeleton lay oriented north-south with the head towards the south, the face of the skeleton turned towards the east. This skeleton was in a partly flaked condition.³⁶ In Maski itself another type of megaliths, called by Taper "class B(ii)" were as he has pointed out, oriented east-west.³⁷ In pit no. 2 funerary deposits were found to be placed in the eastern half.³⁸ Y. D. Sarma considers east-west orientation to be one of the most important characteristics peculiar to megalithic tombs.³⁹

All the surface indications of the secret chamber in the Kodungallur temple show striking similarity to the main features of the South Indian megaliths. It is a closed chamber; the square granite walls and the

26 Ibid., p. 194

27 Indian Archaeology, 1956-57, p. 31

28 Ibid., p. 34

29 Ibid., 1957-58, p. 37

30 Ibid., 1958-59, p. 6-9

31 Ibid., p. 9

32 Ibid., 1960-61 p. 28

33 Maski 1954, B. K. Taper, Ancient India, No. 13, p. 27

34 Ibid., p. 27

35 Ibid., p. 29

36 Ibid., p. 30

37 Ibid., p. 30

38 Ibid., p. 32

39 Rock-cut Caves in Cochin, Y. D. Sarma, Ancient India, No. 12, p. 110

roof with tin plates are, of course, additions of later times. There is an underground passage leading from the eastern orthostat and opening out into the surface; the only difference is that the passage is longer than any of the known megaliths. The chamber is oriented east-west; the underground passage opens to the east, rituals are also conducted on the western side also. I have already mentioned that a crimson cloth hangs on the western wall of the secret chamber outside. There is a door which faces this orthostat which is opened on rare occasions for privileged persons like members of the family of the local chief, and the devotees worship this part of the orthostat.

But, how is it that a burial has been done in the yard of a temple, if the temple had been there when the megalith had been erected? Or, conversely; how is it that a temple had been built in a graveyard, if the construction of the megalith had been earlier? There is nothing extraordinary in this. According to ancient Hindu religious laws and beliefs, this is quite natural. God Siva has declared that he likes burial grounds and crematoriums for his abode. There is a long dialogue between Siva and his consort, Parvati, in *Mahabharatha*. This is called *Umamaheswarasamvada*. Parvati puts questions to her husband about various things and Siva clarifies her doubts. One of the questions which he asks is how it is that God Siva came to like burial grounds for his abode and Siva answers thus: "the burial ground pleases my heart. Hence it is the sacred abode to me. It seems to me to be the very heaven."⁴⁰ Bhavabhuti describes a temple of Durga or Kali situated in a

burial ground.⁴¹ In Sangam works we come across similar instances.⁴² Provincial legends in Kerala also connect Kali with crematoriums. The popular belief is that Kali visits crematoriums in the deserted hours of the night, dances there and eats the bones.⁴³ There is a legend about a mendicant-philosopher named Naranathu Bhrandan, supposed to be an eccentric man but very wise, who went to rest in a crematorium in the night. The mendicant was cooking his food in one of the funeral pyres, when Kali visited the place. The latter, who apparently expected the place to be deserted, was surprised to see a human being at the dead of night. She tried to scare him away, but the mendicant did not seem to be frightened. Very much surprised to see that a human being existed who was not afraid of her, she told him that she was the Goddess Kali and wanted him to receive some gift by way of blessing. He did not seem to be interested and wanted himself to be left undisturbed; however, when Kali pressed him, he asked her for the quality of immortality. The Goddess said she could not help him to attain this. Then he requested for a postponement of the scheduled date of death. The Goddess was helpless in this matter also. Finally, in an ironical manner, the mendicant asked for a transfer of the disease named elephantiasis, which was on his left leg, to his right leg. The Goddess, it is said, readily obliged him. This is one of the legends connected with the nocturnal visits of Kali to burial grounds.⁴⁴ Achutha Menon suggests that the word Bhadrakali, perhaps, may have been derived from *Pathirakkali* meaning the Kali of midnight.⁴⁵ In view of these facts, there is

40 *Anusasanaparva*, Chapter 141

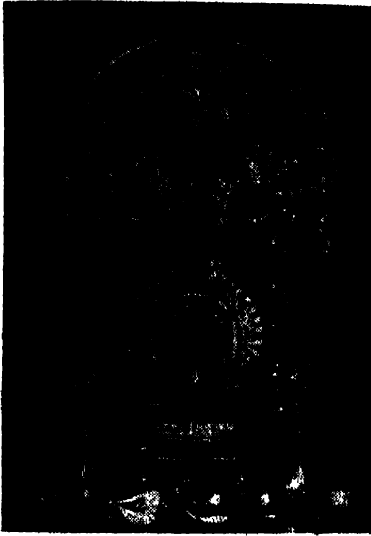
41 *Malathimadhava*

42 *Manimekalai*

43 Kali Worship in Kerala, Achutha Menon, part I, p. 71

44 *Ibid.*, p. 72

45 *Ibid.*, p. 72



Idol of Kali at Kodungallur Temple

nothing uncommon in building a megalith in the yard of a Siva-Kali temple, or vice versa, in constructing a Siva-Kali temple in a burial ground. From middle ages, the Europeans had started to call Indian temples 'pagodas'. In discussing the origin of the word, some scholars have derived it from Chinese pao-ta'h meaning 'precious pile' and others have derived it from Chinese poh-kuh-ta'h meaning 'white bones pile'.⁴⁶ But we are not sure about these.

The question arises, who has been buried in this megalith or secret chamber. We can be definite about one thing. It cannot be any common man or woman who has been buried here. It must be some one very important. This conclusion is inescapable, because the megalith has been the subject of worship and rituals. Is it some royal personage who lies in this chamber? There is no evidence, literary or epigraphic, to persuade us to think in this direction. One piece of literary evidence indicate that some sort of a stone might have been planted somewhere around this locality to immortalise

Kannaki, an event to which we have already to above. We are not going into a discussion about the location of the Chera capital. Dr. S. Krishnaswamy Iyengar and other scholars have already discussed the subject threadbare and have suggested that the capital lay somewhere around the present region of Kodungallur. There is evidence to think that the exact spot



**Idol of Kannaki or Pattini
From Eastern Ceylon
(7th to 10th Century A. D.)**

46 History of Kerala, K. P. Padmanabha Menon, Vol. IV, p. 37

where the Kali temple now stands, was in some way or other attached close to the head-quarters of the Chera monarch, Senkuttuva, who immortalised Kannaki. *Silapathikaram* narrates how Senkuttuva started for an expedition towards the north to bring the holy stone for the memorial of Kannaki. Before he started on this journey the king bathed and went to worship in a shrine of God Siva, who was the King's tutelary God and whose manifestation the King is actually described to be by the poet. The King received the holy gift, *prasadā*, from the priest, in the form of the sacred ash and flowers, *bilva* (marmelosa leaves) usual in Siva temples.

It is difficult to identify which this particular Siva temple is. There are several Siva shrines in Kodungallur now. The most important among them are Tiruvanjikulam, Srīngapuram etc. We can eliminate all others except Tiruvanjikulam, since there is no literary evidence or tradition connecting other Siva temples with the Cheras. The Chera capital of Vanji, may, perhaps have something to do with Tiruvanjikulam. But Dr. Krishnaswamy Iyengar rejects the possibility of Vanji being identical with Tiruvanjikulam.⁴⁷ Vanji means in classical literature a creeper. In *Silappathikaram*, the city is metaphorically called *puvavanji*, meaning unflowering Vanji, in contrast to *pukkumvanji* which means flowering Vanji. Iyengar traces the origin of the word Tiruvanjikulam, from *Tiru+anjaikkalam*. There is a sort of ritual which consists of devotees offering gifts of various kinds including coins which are thrown into the tank in fulfilment of vows made by them. The money thus thrown was called *anjakkam* or *anjaikkam*. Tiruvanjikulam must have

originated from *tiruanjaikkalam*. As a matter of fact, the ninth century saint Sundaramurti uses the word *Anjaikkalam* for the place in his *Tevaram* hymns.⁴⁸ Krishnaswamy Iyengar may be right when he says that Vanji and Tiruvanjikulam are two different sites. *Kokasandesa*, a work of the 14-15th century A. D. uses these two words as if they carry separate and different connotations. In fact, the *Sandesa* links up Kunaka and Vanji together, Kunaka being the present Trikkanamathilakam about three or four miles north of Tiruvanjikulam.⁴⁹ It is more likely that the Siva temple which Senkuttuva visited might be the one which is situated inside the present Kali temple. *Silapathikaram* contains a pretty long description of the achievements of Senkuttuva, one of which is that he brought to Vanji a deity named Chathukkaputha which literally means the protector of the square (*Chathushka* = square; *putha* = guard). According to the narration, the King brought this God to celebrate "the sacrifice of sweetened drinks".⁵⁰ We have no idea what kind of celebration and sacrifice are these. But it is likely that Krishnaswamy Iyengar's identification of Chathukkaputha with the Kshetrapala of Kodungallur Kali temple, may after all, be correct.⁵¹ The word Kshetrapala also means the same thing, the God of the public square. This leads us to think that Senkuttuva's activities were associated with the spot where the present Kali temple stands.

One difficulty crops up with regard to this line of speculation. There no mention of Kali anywhere. *Silapathikaram* only refers to the existence of a Vishnu temple somewhere. The only possible conclusion

47 Seran Vanji, p. 42

48 Ibid., p. 42-43

49 *Kokasandesa*, *Slokas* 54, 58

50 *Silapathikaram*, *Vanjikandam*, poem 28

51 Seran Vanji, p. 39

is that the idol of Kali did not exist at that time. There is no evidence to say with any certainty when exactly the idol was installed. *Kokasandesa* contains a few *slokas* on the idol of Kali in the Kodungallur temple, a translation of which is given below:-

Thou should go and behold
 Sri Kurumbakavu standing
 In the midst of flowers filled with
 honey
 And black beetles hovering over them
 There preside Mahakali, the flame of
 Whose tongue ploughs through
 the sea of
 Blood, shed from the bodies of
 Asuras killed by her.
 Thy worship Kali, as tall as the sky,
 with white canines,
 Who drinketh an ocean of
 blood of Asuras
 Cut down like tender coconuts.
 I worship thee O! Mother, who
 roaring
 And laughing aloud and surrounded by
 her company
 Tortured the Asuras with
Khatwargas ⁵²

But it is rather risky to assert that the idol described in the above lines is the same as the one which exists to-day. Perhaps, there might have been changes. All that we can say is that an idol of Kali existed about five centuries ago. I have at the beginning of this monograph referred to a vast collection of ritualistic songs about Kali. One of the songs gives us a detailed

list of Kali shrines in Kerala.⁵³ Besides this continuous list, there is also mention of Chittoor, "seven mountains" "seventy-two forests" etc. But, nowhere do we find any reference about the most famous Kali shrine of Kodungallur, unless any of the names quoted above can be identified with the Kodungallur temple. The popular name of the Kodungallur temple is, as I have already mentioned, Kurumbakavu. We cannot find anything similar in the above list. Therefore, the only suggestion which may come up in our mind is that the Kodungallur Kali shrine may not have existed at the time of the composition of some of these songs like the one quoted above. If the idol of Kali had existed it would not have been omitted from the list which includes even the names of minor shrines. Logan says that the image was installed only in recent years and that the temple was originally only a *bhoot* or holy tree with a platform. He has not, however, quoted any records.⁵⁴ According to *Keralatpathi*, the legendary history of Kerala, the Kali temple was built in the Kali year *Purudisamasrayam*, corresponding to A. D. 333, the same year, *Keralatpathi* tells us, when Kulasekaraperumal died after 18 years of reign.⁵⁵ But according to historical records, Kulasekaraperumal ruled as late as the 9th or 10th century A. D.⁵⁶

Now, about the age of these songs:- Ullur S. Parameswara Iyer⁵⁷, Dr. Achutha Menon, Dr. S. K. Nayar⁵⁸ and others have attempted to discuss this question. The age of these songs cannot be fixed with any amount of certainty. Achutha Menon has suggested that the myths contained in these songs, namely the killing of Daruka by Kali, may be as

52 *Slokas*, 55, 56, 57

53 *Kali Worship in Kerala*, part II pp. 49, 50

54 *Malabar Manual*, Vol. I, p. 162

55 *Ibid.*, p. 230

56 *Keralacharithrathile Irulanja Edukal*, E. Kunjan Pillai, pp. 107-128

57 *Kerala Sahitya Charithram*

58 *Folk Dramas of Kerala*

early as the Indus Valley Civilization. He bases this conclusion on the fact that Siva and Kali who are pre-Aryan Gods are very much more dominating in these myths than Vishnu and Brahma, essentially Aryan Gods.⁵⁹ Ehrenfels had sometime back pointed out some sort of pre-historic connection between Kerala and Indus Valley Civilization on the basis of cultural similarities like existence of mother-right, worship of the mother-Goddess etc.⁶⁰ Recently R. B. Lal has discovered that the majority of symbols on the Indus seals repeat themselves in the graffiti on the pottery of the Chalcolithic culture centres excavated in Western India like Rangpur, Lothal etc and again in the graffiti on the pottery from the megaliths of South India. The theory is that the Indus people migrated first to Western India when the Indus cities were flooded and a section of them again migrated south when Western Indian culture centres were also threatened with floods some centuries later.⁶¹ These theories may be true and the legend of Kali may be of great antiquity. I have already mentioned that there is a brief reference about this legend in *Silapathikaram* which might have been composed sometime between the second and sixth centuries after Christ although the events mentioned in *Silapathikaram* are said to have happened in the second century A. D.

But, it is beyond doubt that the ritual songs of Kali could not have been composed before the Sangam period, and the age of *Silapathikaram*. The diction and the language of these songs are definitely later than the sangam period, though, of course, we may find number of archaic words in these. Scholars are generally agreed on this point. We, therefore, eliminate the possibility that the idol or shrine of Kali was installed before the period of

Silapathikaram. The *Sivalinga* was the only structure on this spot. Senkuttuva installed the idol of Kshetrapala. The memorial stone to Kannaki was planted somewhere in this region. But where? The possibility cannot be ruled out that some sort of memorial stone or material remains of Kannaki might have been deposited in the secret chamber of Kodungallur temple. There is at present no structure comparable to the Ceylon idol of Kannaki or Pattini, either in the Kodungallur temple or anywhere near the region. The only place where something might have been deposited is the secret chamber. The particular epoch was one in which the megalithic mode of burial was prevalent and popular in South India. R. E. M. Wheeler has, on the basis of dated materials like coins and pottery excavated from Brahmagiri - Chandravalli, fixed the period of this site between 200 B. C. and 100 A. D.⁶² Other megalithic sites extend this side or that side, a century or two. There are a number of references in the Sangam Works about megalithic mode of burial.

Kannaki died somewhere in the wild eastern regions of Kerala some distance away from the Chera Capital. The sight was witnessed by the jungle tribes who came and reported the matter to the palace. According to the story told in *Silapathikaram*, Kannaki was taken away to heaven. At any rate, since the king could have come to know about her demise only after a lapse of some time, it could not have been possible to bury the whole dead body into the megalith. Therefore, it is interesting to speculate what burial rites might have been performed in the secret chamber. From all available evidence from the excavated megaliths, it is clear that this mode of burial does not

59 Kali Worship in Kerala. part I

60 Mother-right in India

61 From Megalithic to Harappa, Ancient India, No. 16, pp. 4-25

62 Brahmagiri - Chandravalli, Ancient India, No. 4, pp. 200-202

involve laying the whole body in the cist. Depositing a few bones and whatever material wealth like pottery, jewels, or weapons in the cist, completes, at least that part of the ritual. Wheeler propounded the theory that the dead bodies are at first put in what he calls macerating pits and then, days later, bones picked up and deposited in the megalith.⁶³ The pit circles in Brahmagiri have been found to be twenty feet to thirty-one feet in diameter, either with a single line of untrimmed granite blocks or with two concentric circles of these blocks which with a heavy scattering of rubble between them, represent a roughly built wall. The pit is circular or oval and in the latter case has the larger axis east-west. Nine pit-circles were excavated and no human bones were found in one, only very few were found in another and a little more secured in the third. How is it that the bones were removed? Wheeler's answer was that the dead bodies might have been first exposed on a bier in these pits and then selected bones were removed from these pits for interment in the cists. Generalising the evidence from Chingleput excavations, N. R. Banerjee writes: "The most crucial and controversial evidence, however, is in respect of the mode of burial itself. The megaliths are found to be burials of a secondary nature; after death, the body was left exposed for a considerable length of time and subsequently the available bones, salvaged from the feasts of beasts and birds, were interred without reference to their normal articulation, along with the other objects, in the megalithic tombs. Usually skulls, a selection of long bones, ribs and mandibles formed the bulk of the collection. Often, more than one skull and bones of more than one individual have been found buried together. Gordon Childe has indeed referred to megaliths being multiple burials, but he has also

suggested that the tombs were probably used as vaults, where interments were made repeatedly. However, evidences of such tombs have not been found in Chingleput. The method of interment involved in the megaliths is called post-exarnation, i. e. after exposure, and there is apparently no trace of or evidence for any primary burning of the body, which would result in the calcination of the bones. Since the skeletal remains do not appear to be calcined, there was possibly no primary burning of the body. Needless to say, the burials entombed in the megaliths are fragmentary. No example of a primary burial has so far been found in Chingleput District"⁶⁴

Summarising the evidence from the rock-cut caves of Cochin, Y. D. Sarma says:- "The rock-cut caves of Kerala are, then, burial tombs of the megalithic people, whose religion comprised belief in the continuance of life for the departed spirit within the tomb. The people buried their dead along with a few necessities of life, as the vessels, grinding stone and rollers and iron implements obtained from them clearly indicate. No complete skeleton has yet been recovered from any cave, but pieces of bones, deposited in sarcophagus, bowl or urn have been found in some of them. These tombs are, therefore, examples of what has been called secondary burial and fall within the megalithic culture complex. But whether the burials in question are exclusively post-exposure or post-cremation cannot at present be ascertained until fresh caves come to light and a thorough investigation of them is undertaken and completed by competent workers in the field."⁶⁵ B. K. Taper says that excepting from two megaliths, one in Chandravalli and the other in Perimbiar, no complete and extended skeleton has been discovered from any megalith so far.⁶⁶ In short, it is definite that the placing of the complete dead body

63 Ibid., pp. 194-197

64 The Megalithic Problem in Chingleput, Ancient India, No. 12, p. 26

65 Rock-cut Caves in Cochin, Ancient India, No. 12, p. 115

66 Maski 1954, Ancient India, No. 13, p. 14

in the megalith has never been the practice in this mode of burial. There are instances of complete absence of bones, only some earthly goods of the dead like pottery or ornaments being placed in the cave.

A famous festival called *Bharani* is conducted in this temple every year, some of the features of which may help to throw light on the problem before us. There are no epigraphical records to know anything about the origin of the festival. Some of the mediaeval European travellers have taken notice of it.⁶⁷ It is a big festival in which people from all over the country used to take part. The ceremony opens on the bharani asterism of the Malayalam month of Kumbham (February-March), and continues till bharani of next month, i. e. the Malayalam month of Meenam (March-April). The ball is set rolling with a Malabar goldsmith going round the temple three times, ringing a bell, at about seven in the morning.⁶⁸ He is supposed to have polluted the temple and this ritual is called *Kavuteendal* which means polluting the temple. It may be recollected here that a gold-smith is an important character in the tragic drama which was enacted in the Pandyan capital and which resulted in the assassination of Kovalan and the ultimate death of Kannaki. The gold-smith played the role of the villain in it and there is nothing wrong if we are forced to wonder if this ritual of polluting the temple is a recapitulation of the drama.

A few minutes after the ritual, the eldest female member of the Pilapilly house attached to the temple, appears and announces that the temple has been swept clean; she should have cleaned the premises before making the announcement. After this, the Nambudiri priest enters the temple and conducts the usual services. White

flags are hoisted on the banyan and peepul trees which stand in the temple yard. The porticoes on the north and the east are also decorated. On normal days, only the northern doors and portico are important and invariably frequented, the idol of Kali having her face turned to the north. But, as can be seen, during *bharani* festival, the northern portico loses its importance and the eastern one located close to the line of the underground passage becomes supreme.

From the day when the gold-smith pollutes the temple till the final day of the festival, the temple is almost considered closed to public worship. Offerings such as *satasatam* (a kind of pudding prepared with rice, coconuts, molasses, kadali plantain fruits and ghee) for Goddess Kali, *guruthi* prepared with lime and turmeric to Vasurimala and *chamayam* (decoration) for Kshetrapala are strictly prohibited.⁶⁹ Perhaps, this may mean that all post-Kannaki consecrations should retire to the back-ground for the time being. Kathakali, the famous dance-drama shall not be enacted, anywhere in the entire region of Kodungallur.⁷⁰ It is a period of mourning.

Pilgrims from all over Kerala begin to arrive ten days before closing of the festival. The pilgrims are called *bharanikkars* meaning men of *bharani*. Men from the south come earlier than from the north. Seven days prior to the finale, the sacrifice of cocks begin. The pilgrims bring cocks, cut their heads and spill their blood on a piece of granite. This is inaugurated by a gentleman belonging to a family named *Bhagavathiyeedu*. The first cock to be sacrificed must be brought from two families of north Malabar. These families are the famous *Tacholi* and

67 History of Kerala, K. P. Padmanabha Menon, Vol. IV, p. 331

68 Ibid., p. 339

69 Ibid., p. 339

70 Ibid., p. 339

Karampilly.⁷¹ What connection these families have with the Kodungallur temple, we do not know. They are situated hundred and fifty miles north of the Kodungallur temple. Both of them have been, through centuries, a leading force in Kurumbranad, located in the northern part of Calicut District. Some personalities of the *Tacholi* families like Othenan Nambiar had been great heroes three hundred or four hundred years back and have been subject of a group of ballads in Malayalam. But there are no historical or literary records to show that these families had any connection with the Kodungallur temple. We can imagine only one possibility: It is well-known that one family of Sangam Cheras existed in a place called Tondi. If Tondi can be identified with the present Koilandi, then the two families of *Tacholi* and *Karampilly* are located very near to it. It is probable that they might have inherited some ancient rights from the Chera line at Tondi. But this is nothing more than wild speculation. However, it is worthwhile to trace the history of these families, at least on the basis of an examination of the ballads of the *Tacholi* family, a big collection of which are available for study.

On the inaugural day of the cock-sacrifice the eastern portico is further decorated with flags and festoons.⁷² The Pulayas or Harijans, formerly considered to be a polluting section, begin the sacrifice of cocks a day before *bharani*. They do this at a place called *Pulappadam*, or the field of the Pulayas. This is located about a furlong away from the temple, and lies on the eastern side of the temple. On *asvathi* the previous day of *bharani*, before ten a. m. what little daily services to Kali remain, are finished by the Nambudiri priest. Then a priest belonging to a particular sect named *Adikal* enters the

sanctum and performs what is called *trichandanapodichartal* which means literally the smearing of the idol with holy sandal powder. This *adikal* is a very rare sect; there is only one family in Kodungallur. We are tempted to compare the title of this sect with the name of Ilam-Ko-Adikal, who was the younger brother of Senkuttuva. This royal poet, as is well-known, who lived in Kunavayilkottam, is said to be a Jain saint. It was Ilam-Ko-Adikal who composed the epic of *Silapathikaram* and immortalised Kannaki; and it may not be improbable if a family of priests devoted to rituals in honour of Kannaki, inherits the same title.

As soon as the services of *adikal* is over, all the doors of the temple are locked up. It will be just after mid-day, the local chief gets on the platform round the peepul tree standing near the eastern portico of the temple and spreads out a green umbrella. This is a signal for the crowds of people who rush forward and run round the temple throwing pepper and other spices into the temple. This is called *Kavuteendal* and the people who participate belong to those castes who were formerly considered to be untouchables.

Next day, i. e. on *bharani*, cocks are sacrificed in front of the western door. The northern door facing Kali remains closed till the seventh day after *asvathi*. The usual daily services also remain closed.⁷³ These six days, only the eastern door is opened for whatever little services that are performed. We cannot decipher the meaning of many of the rituals. These are products of primitive psychology and beyond comprehension with the few materials before us.

In the course of a survey of excavations in Chingleput, N. R. Banerjee made the

71 Ibid., p. 340

72 Ibid., p. 340

73 Ibid., p. 342

suggestion that megaliths have been found in association with large irrigation tanks. He says that the builders of the megaliths were a settled agricultural people and is also of the view that they were introducers of the tank-irrigation system in the south.⁷⁴ We are not sure how far these observation is correct. There are two artificial tanks near the Kodungallur temple, one on the western and another on the southern side. Legends go to say that the Goddess herself dug out one of tanks. At present, the whole area is barren with no vegetation except a few banyan and peepul trees. However the landscape might have been different once upon a time. *Kokasandesha* mentions that the temple was standing in the midst of plenty of flowers and therefore there must have been thick vegetation at that time.⁷⁵

The underground passage from the eastern wall of the secret chamber is at present a very long one. Such long passages and the existing roof of the chamber have not been seen in any other megalith. Originally these might not have existed. Since the building of the megalith one thousand eight hundred years ago, too many changes must have taken place. One is the installation of the idol of Kali, vasurimala and Saptamathrukas. Another is the gradual Aryanisation which involved new beliefs and rituals. A third possible change is the transformation in social customs like introduction of cremation instead of burial in a megalith, prohibition of burial or

cremation in temple premises, cremation to be done in one's own home-stead etc. Along with these, changes must have taken place in the structure of Kodungallur temple and connected legends. For example, we have seen that in *Silapathikaram*, Kshetrapala is a God in whose honour a festival was instituted with sweet drinks. But in some of the ritual songs of Kali, Kshetrapala is portrayed as one of the two boys whom Siva created to suckle the breasts of Kali to appease her fury.⁷⁶ In another song of the same collection Kshetrapala is portrayed as one of the warriors who accompanied Kali to fight Daruka. Such changes must have occurred in the structures of the megaliths also. We can imagine a situation, when burials in temple premises became taboo, people would have hastened to cover up the megalith. Therefore, walls and a roof were constructed, since they did not dare to abolish the original structure; similarly, the opening of the passage from the megalith might have been extended to take it as far away as possible.

Obscene songs are sung by the pilgrims during the *bharani* festival. The songs are mostly sexy, and sometimes connected with Kali herself. It is probable that this is a ritual repetition of the scene in the songs which depict the Goddess in her rage and Siva dancing nakedly to appease her. Here, the naked dance is avoided and instead, sexual songs are sung to cool her down.*

74 Megalithic Problem of Chingleput, *Ancient India*, No. 12, p. 23

75 Sloka, 55

76 Kali Worship in Kerala, Part II

* This article is part of a book being published shortly.

THE ADVENT OF ISLAM IN KERALA

P. A. Sayed Muhammed

There is historical evidence to show that, even before the advent of Islam, the Arabs had established contacts with Kerala. The produce of Kerala had found a market in Europe even in Roman times and, in the later days, Arabs were the middlemen who handled the transport and distribution of the produce of Kerala to distant lands.

Due to the lack of clear historical records in Kerala, the entry into Kerala of Islam, as distinguished from contact with Arabs, is dated as not earlier than the 9th or 8th century. But it seems likely that, in addition to the usual movement of traders, after 610 A.D., there was also a small current of missionary effort which moved out of Arabia into the neighbouring lands including the West Coast of the Indian peninsula. Arabic records suggest that a few missionaries sent out by the Prophet in his 57th year might have reached Kerala. If this is true, Islam must have entered Kerala even in the early half of the 7th century itself.

According to an early legend, a group of pilgrims set out from Arabia for Ceylon where it was believed there was a hill which retained the imprint of the feet of Adam, the father of the human race. On their way, the pilgrims halted at Kodungallur where they were given a hearty reception by the Perumal or emperor of Kerala. From the pilgrims the Perumal came to know of the new religious resurgence in Arabia and, according to the legend, he went to Arabia with the pilgrims on their return journey.

He was the last of the emperors of Kerala. As against this, there is another legend according to which the ruler divided his kingdom among favourite vassals and ascended bodily to Kailas. Nevertheless, a study of the available records about the Arakkal ruling dynasty will show that one of the more important rulers of Kerala in the early days had embraced Islam.

The Arakkal records show that this Muslim principality was established in the first century of the Muslim era itself, that is, in the 7th century A.D. The seat of this family was where Sridevi, the sister of the Perumal who, according to legend, embraced Islam, resided, was a port. The place in Dharmatam called Arasarkulanzara came gradually to be known as Arakkal. Sridevi's son Mahabali embraced Islam under the name Mohammed Ali and he was Ali Raja I, the founder of the Arakkal dynasty.

To return to the legend about the Perumal who went to Mecca, the story goes that while he was about to return to Kerala he fell ill and died. Before his death he sent envoys to his brother princes in Kerala requesting them to give all facilities to the messengers of the new religion.

Hajaj Ibn Yusuf, the representative of the Umayyad Caliphs in the eastern provinces of the Muslim empire, has stated that when Arab merchant caravans made their entry to Sind, there were already Muslim communities in Kerala. The history of

Kerala, written by the Arab historian Sheik Zainuddin, states that Muslim Arabs had begun to settle down in Kerala even in the 7th century itself. The first important missionary group consisted of Malik Ibn Dinar, Sharaf Ibn Malik, Malik Ibn Habib and others. They are supposed to have landed in Kerala in A D 642-643. In addition to their families, this group had also twenty two missionaries. The group landed in Kodungallur and was warmly received by the ruler. The first mosque was established in the port itself. The group divided into two, both moving along the coast, one northward and the other towards south. The tolerance of the native rulers enabled the group to establish eleven centres, at Srikantapuram, Chaliyam, Dharmatam, Valarpattanam, etc., in the very first phase itself. Around the mosques which began to be constructed, colonies of Muslims grew up and due to the continuation of the mercantile tradition of the Arabs, these colonies became important commercial centres linking the West Coast with the Middle East. It was from Malabar that Islam spread to the Laccadive Islands.

An initial conflict with the Jews who had established themselves as an important trading community in Malabar earlier, ended in the victory of the Muslim Arabs and their associated native population. By about the tenth century, the importance of Kodungallur as a port declined and Kozhikode began to emerge as an important trading centre. The Zamorin who ruled Kozhikode appreciated the prosperity which would accrue to his realm from encouraging the Muslim traders. With Kozhikode as a trading base, the new community was able to extend its activities both in the interior and towards the north end, along with the stabilisation of trade contacts, the religion also spread to new areas in the whole of South India. In the early days of their association, both the Muslims and the Zamorin benefited from it. A traditional national festival in Kerala resembling the Olympic Games of ancient Greece was the Mamankam. The prince of Cochin was at

first the presiding authority over this festival. The Raja of Valluvanad wrested this privilege from him and the Zamorin in turn felt that the privilege should be his. With the help of the 'Muslims' he was able to satisfy this ambition. In fact, Europeans on the one hand, the powerful support of the Muslim community might have restored the Zamorin to the vanished glory of the Perumal emperors.

In 1498, Vasco da Gama from distant Portugal landed at Kozhikode. As the Zamorin was at first reluctant to let the Europeans replace the Muslims, the Portuguese started the familiar game of supporting rival rulers. A fleet of 33 ships under Cabral soon arrived on the Kerala coast. They sank the Arab vessels loaded with merchandise lying at anchor at Kozhikode port and this started a struggle between the Portuguese and shifting coalitions which lasted for nearly a hundred years. The Portuguese won the alliance of the ruler of Cochin who felt that with their help the Cochin ports could replace Kozhikode as new commercial centres. The Portuguese obtained the right to build their fort at Weyp which incidentally was a strategic place to mount offensives not only against the Zamorin but also against Cochin itself.

In the naval engagements which punctuated the whole of the sixteenth century, the Moplah fleet led by such stalwarts as Kutti Ali Marikkar and Kunjali Marikkar, prevented the consolidation of Portuguese power for a whole century. But the Moplah leadership in marine trade necessarily declined and the Muslim community moved over to Ceylon, Tamilnad and the interior of Kerala. The advent of the Dutch saw the further decline in the naval and trading prestige of the Muslims.

A different pattern now emerges. Blocked from their trading activities, the Muslim community was absorbed into the feudal land system and began to bear the heavy burden of primitive tenancy practices. In the middle of the eighteenth century, Hyder Ali of Mysore began to dominate the

political scene in South India. Hyder Ali felt that the domination of the Malabar coast by foreign powers would prove a threat to the new state which he has established. Further he was negotiating with the French for driving out the earlier European groups and for this purpose he wanted an outlet to the sea. Mayyazhi on the Malabar coast had strategic possibilities. The Muslim community also felt that the rise of the power of Hyder Ali would prove beneficial to them. At the request of a delegation led by the Rajah of Arakkal, Hyder Ali wrote to the Zamorin asking him to treat the Muslim community more sympathetically. But when the Zamorin attacked Palghat in 1757, the Raja of Palghat sought the help of Hyder Ali who sent a force which was able to defeat the Zamorin's forces. The occupation by Hyder Ali's forces proved on the whole to be beneficial in the sense that it relaxed the oppressive tenancy regulations and encouraged the agriculturists.

Hyder Ali died in 1782. Trouble broke out between his son, Tippu and the ruler of Travancore. When Travancore purchased the forts at Kodungallur and Ayicotta from the Dutch, Tippu launched an offensive against Travancore. Raja Kesav Das, the Chief Minister and Commander-in-Chief of the Travancore forces, was able to resist this attack, but he needed the help of the East India Company and this paved the way for the English establishing themselves as paramount power in Travancore and Cochin. The further campaign by the English against Tippu drove him out of Kerala.

When Cannanore and Farook were wrested by the English from Tippu, another period of travail began for the Muslims. The British political strategy aimed at building up an intermediary stratum of landlords who would be loyal to them. This led to the utter neglect of the peasant classes. The first peasant revolt in Malabar was the guerilla campaign launched by Unni Moosa in Ernad. When Pazhassi Raja launched his campaign against the British, Moosa and his associated like Assan Kurikka¹ stood loyally by him. Even after the fall of Pazhassi there were serious revolts by the Muslim community in 1841 and 1843. This brought about terrible reprisals by the British, especially in Ernad. Rebellions of serious dimensions continued to break out throughout the whole of the nineteenth century. By this time, the whole issue had become an agrarian conflict. Religious fanaticism entered to a little extent in the Moplah rebellion of 1921. But this was restricted to a small and irresponsible minority, and by and large, this outbreak was an agrarian revolution.

The rest of the story belongs to the larger movement of the struggle for independence. The Muslims of Malabar have played a very important role in this fight. In addition to the work for national emancipation, the Muslim community has had to shoulder the further burden of social reform in its own group. They have played an important role in the history of Kerala and today the members of the community are making significant contributions in the field of social and creative work.

THE KONKANIS AND THEIR ACTIVITIES IN KERALA

N. Purushothama Mallaya

The dispersal of the Konkans from their ancestral homeland, Goa, was no doubt, one of the most significant events on the history of the West Coast of India during the sixteenth century. It was the religious persecution of the Portuguese at Goa that took place in the year 1559 A. D. that drove the Konkans for their settlements into the various parts of India. One section settled first at Calicut but "the rapacity of the Zamorin of Calicut drove the settlers still further south into the Cochin and Travancore States". In Travancore they settled at a place called Purakad. Veera Kerala Varma the then Raja of Cochin granted the Konkans by a Royal proclamation issued in 1648 A. D., a rent-free site in Cherlai known as 'Sanketam' for building their 'Pagoda' (temple) and for their own settlement, with civil and criminal powers within the 'Sanketam'. The temple today is known as the Cochin Thirumala Devaswom - one of the biggest temples in the State.

According to common parlance the Saraswaths locally known as 'Konkans' trace their original habitat to the bank of the river Saraswati in Punjab, and the term Saraswath lends support to this surmise - history records the Monghyr district of Bihar (part of ancient Maghada) as their adopted home. It is reasonably surmised that they migrated to Gomantak (Goa) in the south under the leadership of Parasurama (also known as Konkanasuta)

who recovered from the sea a strip of land and resettled the Saraswaths in sixty-six villages distributed to ten 'Gotras'. These are referred to in 'Skandapurana' as 'Sashastikars'. It is worthy to note that a plot of land in Cochin locally known as 'Sastiparamba' leads one to the conclusion that some of the Saraswaths who migrated from these villages must have found anchorage in this plot of land. That the Saraswaths migrated from the Monghyr is confirmed by the existence in the Ponda Valley of Goa, of a temple dedicated to Lord Manguesh (Siva) at which the Saraswaths in and around Goa worship even today. This deity which had been worshipped by the Aryans in Monghyr was brought by the Saraswaths to the South during their migration. The mother-tongue of Saraswaths is Konkani which is an original language. To quote Dr. Dalgado, "if one examines the organic and the basic vocabulary of Konkani one can clearly infer that it is imported by the hereditary process from Sanskrit, either directly without any phonetical change (tatsanias) or through Bhalabhasha in accordance with the evolutionary process (tatbhavas). And if above all, its grammatical mechanism was minutely compared with that of other Aryan languages as grammar and not lexicon as the distinguishing and the characteristic feature of languages, it could be proved to the hilt that far from branching from any of them it was much closer to the mother language than Marathi itself; that it belonged

to the Gaurian Group....." Further it is linguistically proved that Konkani language spoken in the south is the fusion of two varieties of Prakrits – the Paisachi Prakrit of the Punjab and Kashmir (the original habitat of the Saraswaths) and the Meghadi prakrit of the Aryans in North Bihar (the adopted home of the Saraswaths before their migration to Goa). Today Konkani is widely spoken in Goa, North and South Canara districts of Mysore, and in coastal tracts of Kerala. The earliest inscriptions in Konkani language belong to the Gupta period. It exists at Arvalam in Goa. It reads "Sachipuracha Sirasi", which in Konkani means "on the top of Sachipura." Again, the earliest Devanagari block-printing in India is in Konkani language (1678). It is a testimonium given by three Konkani Ayurvedic Physicians of Cochin by name Appu Bhat, Vinayak Pandit and Ranga Bhat. The enumerated Konkanis' "firsts" of major importance are "1) standardisation in grammar, vocabulary and syntax, 2) acquisition of a sophisticated prose, patterned on the complicated sentence structure of literary Latin, 3) suggesting the idea of the science of comparative linguistics, and 4) adoption of the literary forms of western Europe to Indian writing – a process now firmly established in the sub-continent. Its other "firsts" are 1) Grammar, 2) Printed books, 3) Translations of Bible, 4) initiation of the revival of modern Czech, and 5) assistance in the production of two major pioneering works in Indian Botany, the books of Gracia de Orta (1530-1572) and Hanricus Van Rheede (c. 1631-1691)".

The impact of the Saraswaths on the political, administrative, commercial, cultural and educational fields of Kerala calls for special treatment. The community played a prominent part in the trade and commerce of Kerala especially on account of its contact first with the Portuguese, and then with the Dutch. Sardar K. M. Panikkar writes "The moorish trading community was practically non-existent in Cochin and in its stead there had grown up the

"Canarenes", a Hindu community from Konkani districts who worked as the agents of the Portuguese. The Canarenes – or as we now called them the Konkanis – were wholly dependent on their European masters, so that when the Portuguese went away from Cochin they became equally serviceable to the Dutch". The Dutch had settled at the full tide of Konkani predominance. The trade between Konkanis and European Powers figured prominently in the papers of Malabar Council. Dr. S. N. Das Gupta in his 'Malabar in Asian Trade' writes "Baba Prabhu, the foremost among these merchants, had almost monopolised the companies' commodities. The commandeurs of Malabar had treated him gently, even when his payments were not prompt. He was believed to have enough political influence to bring about a war between the Zamorin and the Dutch". Along with the Konkanis, the Jews, long settled in Malabar had quietly followed their trade. The Rahabi family established close business links with the dominating family of the Prabhus. It was in 1695 that David Rahabi, father of Ezechiel Rahabi first appeared before the Malabar Council as the attorney of the great Baba Prabhu to settle Baba's outstanding accounts with Dutch. A letter written to Baba by the Malabar Council on 22nd March 1694 begins "Your Honour's esteemed letter....." This is quite typical of the letters written to Baba Prabhu. Ezechiel's father, David Rahabi who had been very good friend of the Prabhus had left young Ezechiel in charge of the Prabhus who had initiated the young Jew with the "mysteries of business". It was found that there had been partnership, between Calaga Prabhu and Ezechiel Rahabi which started in 1752 and for several years and they appeared to have undertaken several ventures together. But unfortunately for Prabhu he was indebted to Ezechiel and at the close of the year 1770 Ezechiel took over a warehouse of Prabhu as part payment of the debt without consulting Prabhu about it. But the Governor requested Rahabi to return the keys of the warehouse to Calaga Prabhu. In its refusal, the

Governor became furious and turning to Ezechiel said "You give these keys to Prabhu this day as I ordered or I shall know what to do with you". The keys were returned and the Rahabis kept away from the dispute till the Governor left and Ezechiel was dead. But on 11 November, 1771 a sensational law suit began between the three sons and heirs of Ezechiel Rahabi and Calaga Prabhu. Mention were there in the law suit of the names of the Konkani who were described as prominent merchants of Cochin and who were examined as witnesses on the Rahabi's side and they are, Baba Saraf, Aloe Saraf, Bikoe Kiene and Rama Sinaiji. Calaga then entered with correspondence between the generals of Hyder Ali with the aim to humiliate the King of Cochin and the Jewish nation of the town. The correspondence was detected at the nick of the time. "Had I been late by a couple of hours" wrote Adrian Moens to Batavia "he would have fled and joined Hyder's generals. In the end says Dr. S. N. Das Gupta that "Calaga Prabhu along with his eldest son Chorada Prabhu was exiled to the Cape of Good Hope. Thus the last man of this great Konkani family, whom Moens had occasion to call a "restless spirit", was one of the first Indians to settle in South Africa".

Again Mr. T. I. Poonen in his "A Survey of the Rise of the Dutch Power in Malabar" writes ".....the whole of the retail trade down to that in the smallest articles was in their (Konkanis) hands". The Batavian Diary of 1678 contains excerpts from the long correspondence between two groups of Saraswath merchants; of the two groups of merchants one was under Poilcar Naik and Baba Pattar while the other was under Parimbala Naik and Waman Naik. These two groups between them monopolised the entire trade on the west coast. The 'Memorie' of the 'Secunde' Vosburge dated 11th April, 1689 and appearing in H R. 719, underlines the ascendancy of the Konkani in the trade of Malabar. The names of the various merchants he mentions are almost all Konkani. In the supply of

pepper to the Dutch merchants, mention was there of a Konkani merchant, besides Ezechiel Rahabi, Derwa Naik of Cochin. The vessels from Cutch and Porebandar employed the Konkani merchant Naga Prabhu as their agent at Cochin.

The other community who played a prominent role in the commerce of Malabar were the Jews. Sri T. I. Poonan writes "There was little difference between the Canarins (Konkanis) and the Jews in the matter of trade, utensils, dwellings.....".

Of course, the Konkani merchants monopolized trade in cloth too, and that they had consistently cornered all available "fanams" coins. "Any one who wished to buy from the company lost 6'30 per cent in dealing with the Konkani Shroff". At the progress of the season only grey haired Konkani or 'Banias' were considered as persons "who could tell which way the demand was likely to jump".

Further, the dyeing industry in Kerala was also brought by Baba Prabhu and the dyers were first brought from Tuticorin. In 1766 Govinda Pai appeared as envoy of Hyder Ali to search for the treasures of the fugitive Zamorin in the Kingdom of Cochin. Naranna Prabhu, served as an envoy from the Malabar Council to Calicut in 1784 and it was he who saw on his way the pepper vines and sandal trees being cut down by Tippu Sulthan as he thought that it was these commodities that made the Europeans to wage war on him.

The role played by Saraswaths in Purakad calls for special treatment. Perumbala Naik became the foremost of the businessmen at that port. He had to leave Porka for Trivandrum owing to some illtreatment received by him from the King of Porka. But the King regretted his actions and Perumbala Naik returned to Porka after 4 years and plunged to big business. His plan to construct a big harbour in 1732 at Porka alarmed the Dutch. Another merchant who deserves mention is Govinda Pai who had extensive

dealing before the fall of Porka. He succeeded Poko Moessa as the local *ragladore* and greatly annoyed Commander de Jang with his intrigues.

The role of Saraswaths (Konkanis) in the political affairs of Kerala also calls for notice. Perumbala, a Saraswath Brahmin of Cochin in his letters to the Governor General Rijckl of Van Goens of Dutch India says *inter alia* ".....Your Excellency ought to know that Babha and the King of Calicoilm are both at war with seven Kings namely Queen of Travancore, the King of Betimmeny, the King of Porka, the King of Tekkankur, the King of Berkenkur etc.....". Again, it would appear from an agreement between the Raja of Cochin and the Dutch on 3rd May, 1681 that a Saraswath was the Rajas' Treasurer.

In Cochin, Konkanis enjoyed greater privileges during the Dutch. "Moens, the Dutch Governor settled the disputes amicably, ceded to Cochin the right of collecting the income from Mattancherry and Chellayi to collect the farm and customs of Amaravati and conduct the affairs of Mattancherry and Chellayi and of the Konkani temples. It was also stipulated that the Raja shall impose no new demand on the Konkanis, that they shall have full liberty to complain to the Dutch Governor if aggrieved and that the Raja shall not interfere in any matters of the temple without knowledge and consent of the company".

The year 1791 was marked by the illtreatment and terrible persecution of the Konkanis at the hands of Raja Rama Varma, known in Cochin History as Saktan

Thampuran. Shortly after ascending the gadi, the Raja demanded a contribution of jaggery from the Konkanis. On refusal, the Raja arrested a number of Konkani merchants and ordered to pay customs to the King to those merchants who sold the produce of the land to foreigners thereby violating the agreement which the Dutch made in the year 1772. On 12th October 1791 the leading merchants of the Konkani community were massacred including Deweresa Kini, the ally of the Dutch and who was the agent of the Raja of Travancore. The Dutch on seeing the Raja's atrocities sent an army and attacked the Kings' Palace at Mattancherry but were repulsed. All Konkanis with their belongings fled to the Cochin fort and sought Dutch protection. The Raja plundered the temple of Thirumala belonging to the community. Dr. Das Gupta writes "The loot was calculated at over Rs. 1,60,000 from the temple alone". He further writes "the King of Travancore was exceedingly angry to hear of the massacre of both Deweresa and Nagendra, the son of Ranga Poy, who were his agents and between them took care of a great deal of his money. He urged the Dutch to take vengeance and, then, to pay him a proper compensation. In fact he went so far as to offer assistance. But the English intervened, and the King of Travancore had to withdraw from the dispute. A far-seeing compromise for the Dutch was reached but the sense of older security did not return.

The three of the intended victims, who escaped from the massacre which took place in the 'Pandikasala' of Deweresa gave their testimony of the details of the killings on 12th October, 1791 and they are in the relaas of Saastri Poy and others.¹ The

1 "On 12th Oct., 1791 (runs the relaas or relation of Saastri Poy, Ipparam Bellaboden and Martia Patter) the Sambradi Menon (Secretary) of the King of Cochin came to the *pandal* of Deweresa in Mattancherry (Indian Cochin) where we were present. The Menon greeted Deweresa and said that for the money which was owed to Deweresa (obviously by the King) pepper would be given in payment. He then added that he had something private to say to Deweresa and took the latter into one of the rooms of the *pandal*. When they were having their conversation inside, two or three *Mansouws* (manchuas, large boats), sailed up and stopped to the north of the *pandal*. From them first came the Balia Gamaan (captain of the infantry) of the King of Cochin and a number of men with swords and shields. The Balia Gamaan entered the room where Deweresa was talking with the Menon. The Menon pinned Deweresa down while two of the men murdered him. The rest of the armed men who were in the *mandoe* (main hall?) of the *pandal* murdered the Konkanis Kristnen, Goga Kamoettij Manosko Senaij and the son of Ranga Poy. Of the remaining three Konkanis, Saasta Poy and Martia Patter were seriously wounded and are, at present, in hospital but the Konkani Baboden fortunately escaped." (See page No. 121, 'Malabar in Asian Trade', 1740-1800)

persecuted Konkanis then fled to Thuravoor and Alleppey in Travancore and presented their grievance to the Raja through Dewan Kesava Das who assured them that he would bring about their return to and stay at Cochin as before and in the interim allowed them to stay at Alleppey. At Alleppey they installed their Image, Thirumala Devar, on the banks of the Alleppey canal. After the Raja's death, Konkanis made attempts to bring back their Image at Cochin as the succeeding Raja of Cochin took keen interest in the idol and wished it back in Cochin. The King even addressed a letter to Col. Munro, the then British Resident of Travancore-Cochin dated 32nd Mithunam 991 M. E (1816) but the request of the Raja was turned down by the then Resident at the instance of the urgent representation of the Travancore officers that the "presence of the image (Thirumala Devar) was considered to be intimately connected with the prosperity of the port of Alleppey." Again, the interest which the Government of Travancore took over the Image on its continuance in Alleppey can be had from the letter of Sri M. V. Krishna Rao, Dewan of Travancore to Rt. Hon: George Francis Robert Harris, Governor of Fort St. George, dated 22nd June, 1855. "At Alleppey an important sea-port town of my country, there is a Pagoda called Thirumala. It contains an image, an object of great reverence and of worship with my conganny subjects. The *Pagoda* has been built under the superintendence of the Travancore Sirkar; this Sirkar has endowed it with landed and other property very extensively; its servants are appointed by the Sirkar. It is guarded by the sepoy's of my Brigade." This state of things continued for upwards of sixty years. The desperate Konkanis of Cochin planned the robbery of

the idol by hook or by crook. Ultimately, the idol was clandestinely brought back to Cochin on the midnight of the 7th February, 1853. The aim was laudable, and it being 1853 there was no risk of a head being lost. Since it was found that the Raja of Cochin had his hand in the robbery, the Raja of Travancore put in a lengthy complaint with the Governor of Fort St. George through the Resident, Trivandrum, for the restitution of the idol in question, and the whole matter was referred to the Hon'ble Court of Directors, Madras and a long-drawn suit ensued between the two States of Cochin and Travancore. The Konkanis of Cochin got through all ordeals and finally the idol was duly reinstated in the Cochin temple itself. The Raja of Cochin then gave them back all the properties and most of the Jewellery confiscated by his predecessor, and the Konkanis started to re-build a magnificent temple for the Thirumala Deity in its present place in 1853 and completed the work by 1881 A. D. The temple today has one of the biggest bells in India. The northern Gopuram, a two-storeyed structure with copper plated roof, is of a Pagoda type resembling the Tibeto-Indian style of Architecture. Beautiful paintings done by indigenous craftsmen depicting various scenes from the Puranas and epics adorn its ceilings. The big tank 'Mantapam' on the North-eastern side of the eastern Gopuram is a star attraction for tourists. As in the synagogue at Mattancherry the ceiling of the interior Mantap of the temple is decorated with hanging lamps and candelabra.

The temple maintains a Vedic and Sanskrit Patasala, a full fledged High School, a Lower Primary School, a Girls' School and a Basic Training School in Mattancherry.

INDIAN TRADITION AND MODERN IMPACT

M. Gopalakrishna Adiga

If tradition were a thing of the past with no relation to the present one need not bother about it. One could just cast it off and launch upon a new venture. It is, however, that essence of the past which is continually present, determining and directing the course of human activities in every age. Therefore it can neither be repudiated nor disowned as many have thought. As the working of tradition is more an unconscious process than a conscious one, it is able to influence our action in spite of ourselves. All that we can do about it is to understand it, so that we may work in its context, add to and modify its pattern by our own significant individual contributions.

When we speak of modern impact we really mean the impact of the west on Indian life and its tradition. It was a very unhappy thing that India should have had this modern impact from abroad unlike the countries of the west where it was just a readjustment of human society to changing conditions of life. By the time the west rose to its full stature and began to assert the glory of its youth India was exhausted, its creative impulses rendered impotent and its life stagnant. Therefore this impact came as a terrible shock, disastrous in its immediate effect and disruptive of the established traditional life, giving it no scope to readjust itself to the changing world. India was at that time and even now continues to be complacent to a degree unknown in other countries. It proved, therefore, certainly good in the

long run that this complacency was blasted. Yet in the beginning it was so shattering that the whole nation was stunned for a time. To this impact there have been two contradictory reactions. In an effort at regaining self-respect and dignity, so thoroughly and unmistakably undermined by the *Mlechcha* culture, there arose an inevitable tendency to glorify the past of India, revive the old heroes and saints and set up the spiritual glory of the country against the material grandeur of the west. The other reaction which arose from a painful awareness of the impoverished present, its depravity, poverty and inadequacy was to belittle and repudiate the Indian tradition and go in, heart and soul, for western culture. It can now be seen that both these attitudes denote extreme positions and therefore are mutually exclusive. The real fact was that India had ceased to be fully and creatively alive centuries before the impact of the west. We have always had too much of the past. We have always gone back to the dawn of the Vedic age for inspiration and guidance and have accepted them as final authority on everything. Though the Bible was also held in equal veneration as a repository of all knowledge secular or spiritual, it was never so strong as to inhibit all new ventures as it has been here in India. Every Acharya, even when he was formulating a new school of philosophy, would substantiate his thesis with reference to the scriptures. For more than a thousand years we have been content to conserve the past achievements, to exist in a self-made

shell of complacent superiority refusing always to come to terms with the actual. That this was so in all spheres of life is evidenced by the rigid social structure that endured for centuries. Even in the field of literature all the literary efforts in all the periods that followed the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, every poet of note, including the greatest of them all, Kalidasa, were content to imitate, adapt, abridge or translate the great epics of the past. Not even one of them, excepting those few mystics engaged in a real spiritual adventure, thought that he could make something out of his own age, its events and personalities and out of his own personal experiences at his own particular moment and place. This is an astounding fact of our literature through the ages and it is well to contemplate it and its implications. So long as we could remain complacent about our own past we went on imitating it and when the effect of the modern impact in the form of British culture became irresistible we took to imitating the west. Both indicate a spiritual death and our effort should be to see how a new birth may be quickened and our country may yet see another glorious epoch after the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. What should we do to be at once fully Indian and modern? This is the question that should engage all thinking minds.

When we speak of modernism we should be clear regarding what we mean by it. Negatively it ought not to mean any hostility to or break from the past for the simple reason that time and life do not know any water-tight compartments. It does not even mean that it is essentially or on the whole superior to any other creative period in the past. To be modern is to be fully alive at the present moment, to be creatively alive on all levels of existence, to be consciously participating in the changes and developments taking place now in the human world. The one test of being creatively modern is to achieve an integrated life capable of linking the present with the past, assimilating disparate strands of experience and transforming it into a

social or artistic act that rises beyond time and place. Therefore it is not only unnecessary but also wrong to assert that the modern is superior in all respects to other creative periods in the past. It is superior, certainly, in some respects just as each of those earlier periods were superior in other respects. For any superiority in any human activity in any epoch can never be absolute. What we have to strive for today is that kind of excellence which is peculiar to the modern age. Any cultural rebirth always implies an accent on a particular aspect of living while other aspects take their subordinate but integral positions in the new harmony that is going to be established.

In what we call the modern age the accent is on a scientific attitude to life and world. This attitude implies a peculiar temper of the mind, an attitude of general scepticism, constant enquiry, looking upon every achievement as tentative, a reliance on reason and experiment rather than on authority and faith and a consequent tolerance and even encouragement of dissent. This attitude is basically impersonal, objective and non-humanistic. If we remember this we may understand why the same scientific spirit has given rise to both the liberal democracy of the west and the totalitarian tyranny of the east. What was there in Russia, for example, which did not exist in England, France or America that the very cultivation of the sciences made for this difference between modernity in England and in Russia? This is what we should consider before understanding the relation between tradition and modernity in our own country. The modernism of the west is essentially a development of its past, a continuation of the Christian tradition which while yielding place to the new scientific spirit did still retain its integral place in the social structure thus modifying and restricting the impersonal, non-human aspect of the new scientific spirit, counterpointing it with a profound humanism so that the new scientific age could permit within its bounds a wide range of uninhibited

human activity making for a full life of the spirit. In Russia, on the other hand, we find a conscious effort made by the State with all the resources given by modern science to achieve a complete break from the past so that an absolutely new society may emerge from the ashes of the age-old tradition. This made for the Stalinist nightmare involving the fates of millions of people sacrificed at the altar of absolute power. At the same time the same totalitarian State could, by the use of the impersonal non-human discipline of science, rise in power though not in plenty, to the level of the west. In spite of this supreme effort to break from tradition we find even in Russia the old spirit of man trying to reassert itself crying for freedom, and elbow-room during its short span from birth to death. This should make us understand how dangerous a game it could be to denounce our tradition so completely and so unthinkingly as some of us have been doing, though it has to be admitted that this tradition not only in its decadent form but in its very nature contains very grave defects that have to be understood and corrected.

Ever since the British conquest of India we have been patting our own backs by rather an unseemly proclamation to the whole world that though we are materially poor we are rich in spiritual goods and can supply whatever quantity of it as may be demanded by other nations. This boastful self-advertisement is not only ugly in itself but symptomatic of grave inferiority complex born out of a painful realization of our inadequacy in the modern world. The pity is that most people are even made to believe in this fiction that we are spiritually superior to the rest of the world. If we can think without any such national prejudice we can realise that our people are no less attached to the things of this earth than other peoples. There were certainly some saints here who renounced the world, but that would not make either me or you a spiritual giant. For the generality of mankind it is impossible to become even

decently human, good and kind without a certain amount of material competence. Still we believe that inspite of sub-human standards of life enjoyed by the majority of our people we are spiritually rich. What is the reason for this self-deception, which appears to others as national hypocrisy on a gigantic scale? This may be due to the overemphasis put on the spiritual aspect of life for generations and generations. People like us bound to the flesh, quite naturally found the heights of the spirit too high for them; still they had to accept its superiority over everything else in the peculiar ethos created in the country. The cunning among them devised ages ago, even before the psychological term 'split personality' was coined, a means of escape from this impossible position, where while they liked so much to enjoy the pleasures of this beautiful earth they had to pretend to dislike them if they should belong at all to the elite. They would do justice to both this world and the other by seeking verbal fulfilment for their spiritual yearning while they seeking verbal fulfilment for their spiritual yearning while they could be as sensually attached to material things as their real spirits allowed them to be. This tendency to seek verbal fulfilment, for the noblest in man while actual life can be as ignoble as possible has become naked in the post-independence years. No nation believed so much in the power of words and for years we tried to make international friendships, fight and win wars, establish world peace and bring down heaven to earth by the sheer weight of the words we could release from our mouths. Writers, the majority of whom have been suffering from this ugly disease have to sit up and examine this wide gap between the life they live and the works they produce. A sincere effort will have to be made by the thinking section of our society to reduce this gap between word and deed overcome by proper psycho-therapy this malady of split personality. We have to realise that real self-respect implies humility arising from an awareness of one's limitation and this

awareness is the first step towards self-education.

Another equally harmful strand in our traditional behaviour is an utter lack of a civic sense, a sense of responsibility to the whole society of which one is an integral part, even among the intellectual class. We take very little real interest in public affairs except as excellent material for gossip and feel that we have done our bit against political and social corruption by releasing a volley of words against it. This apathy for public affairs may prove fatal to the democratic form of government constituted after independence. Another aspect of this lack of civic sense is a rather low standard of public morality amongst us which makes us so tolerant of those admirable men who swallow and digest public funds at all levels of our political set up. We may envy them and emulate them and even make some noise against them, but in our heart of hearts we seem to feel that there is nothing really and basically wrong in cheating the public. This is an admirable way of showing our utter contempt for money especially when it is others.

Another very serious national weakness is our vasy submission to authority and to power. We would not fight for what we feel is right or against what is unjust but leave it to others, to our heroes, to time, fate or even God to fight it out for our sake. When things become very hot the only thing we have learnt through ages is to pray to God to do something about it as it is His duty to come down as an avatar to destroy the wicked and sustain the virtuous. Thus refusal to help oneself is a very dangerous aspect of our tradition and is the reason why this country can prove an easy prey to a dictator or a determined group of political thugs.

On the other hand, tolerance is supposed to be and perhaps is, the hall mark of our culture. Though this tolerance might have degenerated into a spiritual apathy and intellectual lethargy it is

certainly a national virtue which could stand us in good stead in our effort to be modern. For one thing our culture being in itself a composite one, has the necessary flexibility to take in and assimilate new ideas. There has never been here nor can be any prolonged war between science and religion. To allow dissent a place in our social set up has been a part of our tradition. All these good points should make it easy for us to work for a new birth involving the establishment of a true democracy here in which each individual may find every opportunity and encouragement to rise to his full stature. Only this spirit of tolerance which is in most cases a means of escape from an actual fight with what one does not like, should be rendered by us more fruitful by making it active so that different castes and groups in the country may come together with mutual respect and enrich one another through contact, association and interaction.

To be modern is to be able to live fully and fruitfully in the context of the new scientific age, to take advantage of science and its technology to make life richly human. A thorough understanding of our tradition is the first step towards a new birth in the country. Then only we shall be able to understand wherein it is deficient and in what manner it can be adjusted to meet the demands of the modern world. The greatest danger in the modern world is the threat to the individuality of a particular man like you and me posed by mass organizations and the concentration of power in a few rulers at the top. The only guarantee against this threat is democracy where the people have the right to change and form governments. This is the reason why we should feel one in spirit with the west where its modern society has been able to establish and run democratic states for the good of all.

This does not and should not mean that to be modern is to imitate the west. We have to be modern in our own way. Our aim ought to be to become modern Indians,

not anglicized or Americanized Indians As intellectuals it is our duty to do our best to bring about a real new birth in this country. We can do this by asserting our individuality as powerful as we can both in what we write and what we do. To be fully alive is to be fully sincere also. In thinking, living and creating works of art we should make as many aspects of our experience as

possible come into play. In this process we have to submit to influences from every quarter of the world, but we have to develop also the necessary strength to assimilate them into a new Indian pattern that is to emerge. I have no doubt that if every Indian learns to assert himself fully on all levels of existence from eating to meditating the rest will take care of itself.

KERALA - A LAND OF PARADOX

Tatapuram Sukumaran

Some say that Kerala is a problem state. Others maintain that it is a land of the incorrigibles. This stretch of land, between the mountain and the sea, smaller than Switzerland, has captured the headlines time and again.

In politics this State stands foremost as the only place where every type of politics has its roots, deep and firm. Kerala's achievements in the field of education are superb. Eight million students keep the torch of learning ablaze in the educational institutions. Men of intellectual abilities like M s. V. K. Krishna Menon and K. P. S. Menon who are able to inspire the world listeners have come out of this cradle, where the great religious leaders and reformers like Sri Sankara and Sri Narayana were born and bred.

LAND OF NEWSPAPERS

Nowhere else in the world can one see such a tiny state with an array of newspapers. There are 44 daily newspapers and hundreds of magazines and other periodicals, the daily papers alone having a circulation of half a million. Kerala has been given many names in an attempt to describe it "a land of paradox" "Kashmir of the South" and "India's most progressive region". Kerala, the smallest State of India is a pleasant surprise and for many who are unprepared to discover it, exciting.

The palm-fringed coast that adorns Kerala is a testimony of its natural beauty. Cochin, in Kerala, like New Orleans,

Louisiana, United States is the shrimp capital of the State. Cochin exports more species and sizes of shrimp than any other country. Industries and crafts keep the cities of Kerala busy. Cultural and commercial exchanges make it lively. Kerala still preserves an exceptional wealth of art, a splendid witness of her age-old civilization.

A BIT OF HISTORY

It will be surprising to learn that Kerala, as is known at present did not exist on the map until 1956, when Travancore, Cochin and Malabar joined to form the Kerala State. But this land has played an important part in the world trade. As early as A. D. 30 Kerala's pepper went to the court of Hippalos, the Greek Navigator. The history of Kerala can be traced to days before Christ. From Asoka's Rock Edicts reference about Kerala as the land of Kerala Puthra, makes it clear that this strip of land was widely known in North India during the 3rd century B. C.

In Kalidasa's *Raghuvamsa* reference has been made about Kerala. The digvijaya of Raghunatha takes him to different Kingdoms, the characteristic of which reveal southern countries of Pandya and Kerala. He talks not only of famous rivers like Tamraparni but of lesser known rivers of the west coast. The great epics Ramayana and Mahabharata also refer to Kerala. Even in Mohenjodaro inscriptions one comes across with the reference of '*Malayala Nadu*' meaning

Kerala. This makes it clear that Kerala might have been in trade with the city of Indus Valley by about B. C. 2500.

BIRTH OF KERALA

Regarding the name Kerala there are many inferences. "*Keralolpathy*" a book dealing with the origin of Kerala reveals that the land came to be called after its first Perumal. Sanskrit scholars are of opinion that the word Kerala has derived from *Kera* meaning coconut which is abundant in the land. But the mediaeval Tamil and early Malayalam explains Kerala as *Malanad*, a land of the hills. Some historians are of the view that Kerala is a variation of the Tamil word "Cheral".

With all these historical background a section of the people believe that Kerala was created by the sage Parasurama. The legend is told like this: Sage Parasurama wanted to do penance for the wrong done to Namboodiries. For this he came to Kasargod, the present northernmost boundary of Kerala and threw his all-powerful *Parasu* (axe) to the vast sea. The axe fell in Kanyakumari (Cape Comorin) and a stretch of land from Kasargod to Kanyakumari had risen from the sea and this he presented to the Namboodiries. This is the reason why Kerala is referred as Parasurama Kshethra in the rights and ceremonies of Namboodiries.

COCONUTS AND TAPIOCA

The coconut palm of Kerala is rightly called the *Kalpavriksha* (the tree of heaven that gives everything asked for) since everything of this palm, from leaf to root is useful to man. Coconut husk is the main raw material for the coir industry. Likewise Tapioca another product of Kerala serves sometimes to solve the food problem. It stood as a staple food during and after the 2nd world war, when acute shortage of rice was felt. Most of the tapioca is consumed locally as food, while some quantity is converted into starch.

THREE NATURAL REGIONS

Kerala can be divided into three natural regions based on physical features. The western ghats are a continuous mountain wall on the eastern side of Kerala. This forest-clad highlands dominate the topography of the land. Bordering the sea are the lowlands and in between the lowlands and the highlands you will find the midlands. The highland is unique for its wealth of cash crops like pepper, cardamom, tea and coffee. The lowland bordering the sea, a testimony of the natural beauty of Kerala, is densely covered with coconut plantation and paddy cultivation. The midland region is seen broken up here and there by isolated hills and plains leading to the forest-clad uplands.

The diversity of the physical features has resulted in a corresponding diversity in climatic conditions. High up in the mountain it is cold, while in the plains and lowlands it is generally hot and humid. Most of Kerala gets fairly heavy rain, in some places it exceeds 200 inches. Due to this agriculture forms the mainstay of the population of Kerala. The heavy annual rainfall has resulted in a large number of rivers and streams. Likewise the coastline is fringed with lakes and lagoons.

IN THE CULTURAL MAP OF INDIA

During the last fifteen hundred years Kerala has made substantial contribution to the common heritage of India. From the beginning Kerala has occupied a special position with regard to Sanskrit learning. There were families in Kerala, specialised for generations in particular subjects like architecture, medicine, science, astronomy and astrology. Kathakali, the dance-drama of Kerala, has become internationally popular. Raja Ravi Varma has made substantial contribution to the art of painting. Swathi Tirunal composed thousands of music, which elicited great popularity inside and outside Kerala.

THE EXPLORATION OF THE JEWISH ANTIQUITIES OF COCHIN ON THE MALABAR COAST



Walter J. Fischel

University of California, Berkeley

A HISTORICAL-CRITICAL SURVEY

I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

THE CONGREGATION of the "White Jews" in Cochin on the Malabar coast has in its possession until today two copper plates on which are engraved in the ancient Tamil language, written in the archaic and obsolete Vatteluttu script, certain privileges granted to a Joseph Rabban many centuries

ago by the Hindu ruler of Malabar, Bhaskara Ravi Varma, whose title was Cheraman Perumal.¹

These copper plates cherished by the "White Jews" as their most precious historical documents, as their charter, their original settlement deed (*sasanam*) are deposited in an iron box, known as *Pandeval*, in the "Paradesi" Synagogue of the "White Jews" and carefully guarded by its Elders.²

- 1 About this dynasty, which ruled over Malabar from the third to the twelfth century, see F. Day, *The Land of the Permauls, or Cochin, Its Past and Present*, Madras, 1863; W. Logan, *Manual of the Malabar District*, Madras, 1887, 1906, 2 Vols.; C. A. Innes and Evans, *Malabar and Anjengo Gazetteer*, Madras, 1903; and K. P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala*, ed. by T. K. Krishna Menon, Ernakulam, 1924 ff., 4 vols.
- 2 *Paradesi*, meaning "foreigner" is applied to the "White" Jews and their synagogue which was built in 1568 and after its partial destruction by the Portuguese in 1662 was renovated in 1664. It is situated at the northern end of "Jew town" and adjoins the grounds of the palace of the rajah of Cochin. This synagogue, one of the most impressive houses of worship in all of India, is remarkable for its magnificent structure, its interior and external architecture, its Dutch-styled clock tower, with its Hebrew lettering indicating the time (built in 1761), the hand-painted blue and white willow-pattern tiles which decorate its floor, the Aron Hakodesh, the ark, and its silver and gold decorated Torah Scrolls, the two brass columns, Boaz and Yachin, recalling the pillars of the Solomonic Temple, the two "Almemors," one in the women's gallery, and the many most valuable ritual art objects (Menorah, Mesusoth, Shofar), its Tora-Crowns, made of solid gold and set with invaluable gems, and the hanging silver lamps.

About the synagogues of the "Black" Jews, see N. Bar Giora's article on "The Synagogues in Cochin" in *Sefunot*, Jerusalem, 1958, Vol. 2, pp. 214-245.

The text of this inscription, according to the generally accepted version reads as follows: ³

“Hail! Prosperity! (The following) gift was made by him who had assumed the title “King of Kings,” His Majesty the king, the glorious Bhaskara Ravivarman, in the time during which (he) was wielding the sceptre and ruling over many hundred-thousands of places, in the thirty-sixth year after the second year, on the day on which (he) was pleased to stay at Muyirikkodu:— ⁴

We have given to Issuppu Irappan (the village of) Anjuvannam, together with the seventy-two proprietary rights, the tolls on female elephants and (other) riding-animals, the revenue of Anjuvannam, a lamp in day-time, a cloth spread (in front to walk on), a palanquin, a parasol, a Vaduga (i. e., Telugu) drum, a large trumpet, a gateway, an arch, a canopy (in the shape) of an arch, a garland, and so forth.

We have remitted tolls and the tax on balances.

Moreover, we have granted, with (these) copperleaves, that he need not pay (the dues) which the (other) inhabitants of the city pay to the royal palace, and that (he) may enjoy (the benefits) which (they) enjoy

To Issuppu Irappan of Anjuvannam, to the male children and to the female children born of him, to his nephews, and to the sons-in-law who have married (his) daughters, (we have given) Anjuvannam (as) an hereditary estate for as long as the world and the moon shall exist. Hail!” ⁵

We are here not concerned with a philological investigation of the text and content of this inscription and with the still unsolved and controversial question of its exact date. ⁶ We are rather attempting to survey at what time and under what circumstances these copper plates and their

3 Published by E. Hultzsch in *Epigraphia Indica*, Calcutta, 1894, Vol. 3, p. 69.

4 This place is usually identified with Codangalur or Cranganore on the west coast of India which is regarded according to the historical tradition of the Malabar Jews as their original home. It is the ancient Muziris, eighteen miles north of Cochin, between Calicut and Cochin, known also from Medieval geographers as Shinkali, Gingalek or Cyngilin.

Being the only natural harbour in the Malayalam-speaking territories on the west Coast, it served from early times on as a natural opening for commercial activities with the West, for seaborne and maritime trade, until the opening of the harbour of Vypeen at the beginning of the fourteenth century and the emergence of Cochin. Through its geographical and strategic position, Cranganore afforded all the facilities for communication between East and West and between the West Coast of India and the interior until the Jews of Cranganore moved at the beginning of the 16th century due to the persecution of the Portuguese to Cochin.

5 At the end of the last plate follow the names of a number of witnesses of this deed, including chiefs of five districts, the sub-commander of the forces and the under-secretary who drafted the grant.

6 The question of the date of this inscription has engaged the attention of many scholars throughout the centuries. Oriental and European scholars have laboured hard to explain and interpret all the details of this inscription but no two experts are agreed on the exact date. Since the date of the inscription can be calculated and interpreted in a great variety of ways, no unanimity has yet been achieved and the dates suggested vary by centuries and range from 379 A. D. up to the 11th century A. D. The majority of the competent scholars fix the date at about 750 A. D.

inscription became known to the Western world and to trace the various phases of the exploration of these Jewish antiquities by Jewish and non-Jewish scholars throughout the centuries.

* * *

In the history of the association of the Jews with the Malabar coast from the 15th century on,⁷ three major periods can be discerned: the Portuguese (1500-1663), the Dutch (1663-1795), and the English (from 1795 to the independence of India in 1948).

During the Portuguese supremacy, when Cochin had attained strategic and commercial significance and became the first stronghold of the Portuguese in India, and the first residence of the viceroys, many travellers, Portuguese officials, and Jesuit missionaries visited this region. In the written accounts of their impressions they

conveyed highly interesting details about the Jewish settlement in Cochin, but none of these sources make any references to the copper plates in the hands of the Cochin Jews. Even so detailed an account as the one by the Jesuit Father Jacob Dioga do Soveral,⁸ who describes in a letter written on January 2, 1556, in Cochin, to his superiors in Lisbon, in all details, his visit to the Jewish synagogues, the ceremonies during their Sabbath service, their knowledge of Hebrew and the large number of Torah scrolls which were shown, fails to mention the Jewish copper plates.⁹ Neither the Arabic chronicle "Tuhfat ul-Mujahidin" by Shaykh Zayn ad-Din (ca. 1577)¹⁰ who dealt with the Jewish community at Cranganore and its suffering, nor the Dutch traveller John Huyghen van Linschoten (ca. 1587), the Secretary of the Archbishop of Goa for sometime,¹¹ who offered the most extensive description of Jewish life in Cochin, refer to the copper plates.¹²

7 It should be stated that reliable references in the works of early medieval geographers and travellers, Jewish, Muslim, and Christian alike, such as Benjamin of Tudela (1167), Qazwini (1280), Oderic of Pordenone (1281), Marco Polo ((1293), Friar John of Montecorvino (1305), ad-Dimashki (1320), Abu'l-Fida' (1331), and Ibn Battuta (1342), leave no doubt that small Jewish settlements in Flandrina, Calicut, Coilan, etc. existed all along the Malabar coast from the early Middle Ages on. See L. Sternbach, "India as Described by Medieval European Travellers," *Bharatiya Vidya*, Vol. 7, 1946, pp. 10-28.

8 For this letter see J. Wicki, *Documenta Indica*. Rome, 1954 Vol. 3, p. 435. With a typical missionary zeal he concludes his letter by stating, "This I write to you that you might.....convert these people to our faith."

9 See also the work of the Jesuit missionary Alessandro Valignano, *Historia del Principio y Progreso de la Compania de Jesus en las Indias Orientales (1542-64)*, Rome, 1944, ed. J. Wicki.

10 See David Lopes, *Historia dos Portugueses no Malabar por Ztnadim (1498-1583)*, Lisbon, 1898, and the rather unreliable translation into English by J. Rowlandson, Oriental Translation Fund, London, 1833.

11 See *The Voyage.....to the East Indies* 2 Vols, Hakluyt Society, London, 1885, Vol. 1, p. 285 ff. For an evaluation of this traveller see Charles McKew Parr, *Jan van Linschoten, The Dutch Marco Polo*, New York, 1964.

12 Silent also are the otherwise important travel accounts by Francois Pyrard (1601-1611), John Nieuhof (1622), Philip Baldeaus (1640), Van Cardin (ca. 1644), and Van Schouten (1662).

One might have expected to obtain some information at least from the few available Hebrew sources. But neither the Hebrew letter—the first preserved communication of the Cochin Jews with the outside world—sent by the representatives of “about 900 householders of Israel in Cochin” (900 families) to the rabbinical authorities in Egypt, to the Chief Rabbi of Cairo, David b. Abi Zimra (=Radbaz) (ca. 1540) and a generation later re-submitted to his pupil and successor, Rabbi Jacob Castro (ca. 1570)¹³ nor the account by the Yemenite Jewish traveller Zecharya b. Sa’adya al-Dabhi (ca. 1565) who spent three months with the Jews in Cochin make any reference or allusions to the copper plates.¹⁴

This silence which prevailed during the Portuguese rule over Cochin is indeed very astonishing and suspicious. It can hardly be assumed—and it is by no means here suggested—that the copper plates were not yet in the hands of the “Black” or “White” Jews. Whether the Cochin Jews or more specifically, the “Black” Jews—apparently the original custodians of the copper plates¹⁵—were afraid during the Portuguese period in the face of the ever-threatening Inquisition, to show their precious antiquities to outsiders, hiding them for whatever reasons, can only be asked.

In any case the Jewish copper plates remained unknown and unnoticed during the Portuguese period¹⁶ thus depriving the

- 13 The text of these very important responsa was published in *Ohole Jacob*, Leghorn, 1783, fol. 149-150, and thoroughly dealt with by Alexander Marx, “Contribution a l’histoire des Juifs de Cochin, in *R. E. J.*, Vol. 89, Paris, 1930, pp. 293-304; see also Sh. Gaguin, *The Jews of Cochin*, London, 1956.
- 14 See his *Sefer Hamussar* now ably edited with elaborate notes and introduction by Yehuda Ratzaby, Jerusalem, 1965, Vol. 1, Ben Zvi Institute, Maqama, No. 8 pp. 130 ff.
- 15 The split of the Jewish community in Cochin into “Black” and “White” Jews and into “Meyuchasim” has been the topic of many discussions, which does not concern us here. According to J. H. Lord, the “Black” Jews, and not the “White” Jews are still the “ones who make use of the privileges granted in the copperplate charter. They still carry a silk umbrella and lamps lit at day time when proceeding to their synagogue on the 8th day after birth of sons. They spread cloth on the ground and place ornaments of leaves across the road on occasions when their brides and bridegrooms go to get married, and use then drums, cadanas and trumpets. After the wedding is over, four silk sunshades, each supported on four poles are borne, with lamps burning in front, as the bridal party goes home. The Black Jews say that the White Jews use none of these, and never have done so.” *The Jews in India and the Far East*, Kolhapar, 1907, and his “The Black Jews of Malabar” *Malabar Quarterly Review*, 1902.

For the most recent discussion on the relationship between the “White” and “Black” Jews see Bar Giora in *Sefunot*, Jerusalem, 1957, Vol. 1, pp. 242-275.

- 16 While the accounts of the famous Portuguese historians of that early period, such as Gaspar Correa, Joao de Barros, F. Lopez de Castanheda, Damaio de Goes, Diego de Couto, Faria y Sousa, the *Cartas and Commentarios* of Alfonso d’Albuquerque, and others contain many details of Jewish relevance, the copper plates seem not to have been mentioned by them at all. There is, however, one exception. The historian Damaio de Goes in his *Chronica del Rei Dom Emanuel* (ed. 1749. Lisbon, p. 133; ed. 1790, Coimbra, p. 261) refers to two copper plates in the possession of Mar Jacob, the bishop of the St. Thomas Christians (1543-1544) whose decipherment was due to a Jew from Calicut, who was said to be the only one that could be found to interpret them. The writing on these copper plates was in Pehlevi, Cufic, and Hebrew. These copper plates have, however, no connection whatsoever with the Jewish antiquities of Cochin though some scholars mistook them as such.

For a thorough investigation of this aspect, see Georg Schurhammer “Three Letters of Mar Jacob, Bishop of Malabar (1503-1551)” and his “The Malabar Church and Rome during the Early Portuguese Period,” both now published in *Bibl. Instit. Histor.*, Vol. XXI, Rome, 1963, Vol. 2, *Orientalia*, pp. 333-349.

Western world of the knowledge of the very existence of such historical documents.

It was only under the Dutch rule of Cochin that the news of the existence of such copper plates penetrated into the Western world and then they became a topic and object of investigation.

II. FIRST CONTACTS OF THE JEWS OF AMSTERDAM WITH COCHIN (1676-1687)

When the Dutch conquered Cochin on the Malabar coast in 1663, they accorded the Jews not only complete civil freedom, religious communal autonomy, and political equality and unlimited economic opportunities, relieving them from the oppression and discrimination under which they suffered during the Portuguese rule (1500-1663), but they opened also a new chapter in the relationship between the Jews of India and the West.¹⁷

Responsible for the establishment of a link between the Jews of Cochin and those of Amsterdam was probably the Dutch

Commander Hendrik Adriaan van Rhee, an able administrator and at the same time a well-known scholar (1671-1677),¹⁸ whose short account on the history of the Jewish community of Cochin as inserted in his "Memoir" written in Low Dutch in 1677,¹⁹ must have turned the interest of the Portuguese-Sephardic congregation in Amsterdam²⁰ to the fate of their brethren in so remote a part of Asia.

Anxious to learn more about their origin, their past and their present conditions the representatives of the Portuguese-Sephardic community of Amsterdam engaged in a correspondence with the leaders of the Cochin Jews as a result of which they received in 1676 A. D. (5436 according to the year of creation)—probably from the prominent Jewish merchant of Cochin, David Rahabi²¹—a Hebrew letter addressed to the "Parnassim of the Portuguese Nation of the Holy Congregation in Amsterdam".

Though the original text of this Hebrew letter was soon lost or misplaced²² a

- 17 For the general background on the Dutch rule over Malabar see A. Galletti et al. *The Dutch in Malabar* Dutch Records No. 13, Madras, 1911; T. I. Poonen, *A Survey of the Rise of the Dutch Power in Malabar (1603-1678)*, Travancore, 1948; P. K. S. Raja, *Medieval Kerala*, Annamalainagar, 1953; K. M. Panikkar, *A History of Kerala (1498-1801)*, Annamalainagar, 1960; and the literature mentioned in note 1.
- 18 About him see W. Wijnaendts Van Resandt, *De Gesaghebbers der oost-Indische compagnie op hare Buiten-Comptoiren in Alze*, Amsterdam, 1944, p. 181.
- 19 *The Selections from the Records of the Madras Government, Dutch Records No. 14, Memoir written in the year 1677 A. D. by Hendrik Adriaan van Rhee, Commandeur of Malabar.....for his successor*, Madras, 1911. It was a standing order in Dutch India that each retiring Dutch commander or governor should leave a memorandum on his administration for the guidance of his successor. Due to this practice some of the most valuable data also on the Jews have been preserved.
- 20 About the Portuguese Jews in Amsterdam at this juncture, see J. S. da Silva Rosa, *Geschiedenis der Portugeesche Joden Te Amsterdam, 1593-1925*, Amsterdam, 1925; and Mendes dos Remedios, *Os judeus Portugueses em Amsterdam*, Coimbra, 1911.
- 21 About David Rahabi (d. 1726) and his successors, especially Ezekiel Rahabi see later, chapt. VI.
- 22 According to A. s'Gravezande (see later) a Mr. W. Budde and Notaris Genitz in Holland are said to have tried very hard to recover the original Hebrew letter. Genitz wrote in 1778 not only to the Parnassim of the Portuguese Synagogue, but also to the Hoogdeutsche Synagogue (Ashkenazim) but without avail.

translation into Portuguese had been preserved. On the basis of this "Carta escrita dos magnates dos Judeus de Cochim em a costa de Malavar aos Parnasim d. Nosso K. K. desta cidade no ano 5436 (1676)" an "Extract" in Latin was published in 1698, entitled "Excerpta ex Epistola Hebraica.... ex India Orientali huc transmissa de Judais in ora Malabarica degentibus."²³

This Hebrew letter of 1676 gives an account of the origin of the Cochin Jews, their first settlement in Cranganore (Shingali), the various waves of migration of Jews from other parts of the Jewish diaspora, from Spain, Constantinople, Germany, Egypt, Aleppo, and further details about their numerical strength, their liturgy which followed the Sephardic rite, their communal organization and other aspects.²⁴

In this letter was included also a revealing statement:

.....Now all this was written and sealed with the King's seal, and cut on a bronze

tablet with an iron pen with diamond point, so that his successors may never accuse us of lying or change the agreement. This was done in the year 4250 after the creation of the world,²⁵ and that bronze tablet is still present to our eyes.²⁶

Thus this Hebrew letter is not only the first thus far known direct communication between the Jews of Cochin and Amsterdam, but also the first documentary evidence which had reached the West pertaining to the existence of an inscription on copper plates in the possession of the Jewish community of Cochin granted to them by the emperor Cheraman Perumal.

A decade after the receipt of this first important letter of 1676 from Cochin, the Portuguese-Sephardic community of Amsterdam, interested in this ancient community at Cochin, sent in 1686 a delegation to Cochin headed by Mosseh Pereyra de Paiva and included as its members Isaac Irgas, Isaac Moscat and Abraham Vort.²⁷

23 See *Bibliotheca Librorum Novorum Collecta a I. Neocoro et Henrico Siklo*, Trajecti ad Rhenum, 1698, Vol. 3, pp. 868-872. See W. Chr. Pieterse, "De Geschiedenis der Joden te Cochim," in *De Opbouw* (Ha-Binyan), Amsterdam, 1962, Vol. 15, pp. 6-7; see also G. Oppert, "Über die Judischen Colonien in India" *Semitic Studies in Memory of A. Kohut*, Berlin, 1897, pp. 396-409.

24 The historian Jacques Chretien Basnage (1653-1725) must have learned of the existence of this letter in Amsterdam, and must have been familiar with its content since he referred to it in his "History" as follows:

"I know not what we ought to think of a long letter which the Jews of Cochin wrote some years ago in Hebrew, to the Synagogue of Amsterdam.....I will not determine whether this letter be false or spurious, having no proofs.....we must conclude only from this narrative, that there are now some Jews dispersed in the East Indies. There are some of them at Cochin, Goa, Malabar, China....."; see J. Chr. Basnage, *The History of the Jews from Jesus Christ to the present Time*, London, 1708, p. 747.

25 The year 4250 would equal 490 A. D., a dating, which as already mentioned in note 6 above, is still controversial.

26 The Latin text reads, "Hoc vero omne scriptum est, et sigillo Regis obsignatum, incisumque tabulae aeneae stylo ferreo, acumine adamantis, ne unquam successores ejus mendacii nos arguerent, aut pacta mu tarent. Factum hoc est anno a creatione mundi 4250, et tabula ista aenea adhuc hodie est coram oculis nostris."

27 The Dutch governor at this juncture was Commander Gilmer Vosburg (1683-1687), who warmly welcomed the Jewish delegation. See about him Van Reesandt l. c., pp. 184-185, pp. 285-286.

The impressions which the Jewish delegation obtained during its visit to Cochin (November 21 to November 28, 1686) ²⁸ were put down by Mosseh Pereyra in a report entitled "Notisias dos Judeos de Cochim" ²⁹ which is the most comprehensive account ever written until then about these "Remnants of Israel" in Cochin and a source of unestimable value for the understanding of their history and actual conditions. In this report repeated references are made to the copper plates and a special chapter dealt with "Traslaço da olha de Cobre, ou provizao de rey Cheram Perimal, passada a Josepo Rapano," ³⁰ which offered a free translation of the inscription on the copper plates, from the "Lingua Malabar" into the Portuguese language which was carried out in the presence of Mosseh Pereyra de Paiva with the help of the local leaders of the Jewish community

III THE VIEWS OF A. HAMILTON (1707) AND J. C. VISSCHER (1723)

While these early references to the inscription on the copper plates stem from the Jewish side, it was in the first decades of the 18th century that also non-Jewish travellers and scholars began to pay attention

to them and tried to obtain more detailed information about them. The first in this line was the English traveller Alexander Hamilton, who, in his "New Account of the East Indies," inserted a rather fantastic account of the Jews of Cranganore, stating "in times of old it bore the name of a Kingdom, and was a Republic of Jews, who were once so numerous, that they could reckon about 30,000 families, but at present are reduced to 4,000" He maintained also to have seen during his repeated visits to Cochin the copper plates and made the startling assertion that "in the synagogue of the Jews of Cochin, situated not far from the King's palace are carefully kept their records, engraven on copper plates in Hebrew characters; and when any of the characters decay, they are new cut, so that they can show their own history from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar to this present time".³¹

It is obvious that this statement is in every detail faulty and erroneous and conveys a completely distorted picture. Neither is the inscription written in Hebrew characters, nor does it contain their history!³²

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- 28 The impact of this delegation on the Cochin Jews was unprecedented and led to a close contact between the Jews of Amsterdam and Cochin which lasted all through the 125 years of the Dutch rule over Malabar until 1795
- 29 The title page of the "Notisias" reads *Notisias dos Judeos de Cochim, mandadas por Mosseh Pereyra de Paiva Acuya Custa se imprimirao Em Amsterdam, estempado in caza de Ury Levy em 9 de Ilul 5447 (1687)* This very rare booklet of 15 pages has been reissued with an introduction by Moses Bensabat Amzalak, Lisbon, 1923

About other versions in Yiddish, Spanish, etc. see M. Steinschneider, *Catalogus Librorum Hebraeorum in Bibliotheca Bodleiana*, Berlin, 1859-1860, p. 2723.

- 30 See *Notisias*, ed. Amzalak, text, p. 10 and 12

- 31 A. Hamilton, *A New Account of the East Indies*, Edinburgh, 1727, 2 vols., Reprint London, 1744; 2nd ed. by William Foster with introduction and notes, London, 1930, 2 Vols. He spent many years in India after his arrival in Bombay in 1688 and visited the Malabar coast repeatedly in 1702 and 1706. He returned to London in 1725 where he died in 1733. See Vol. 1, pp. 109-180

- 32 A Mr. John Collet of Newbury, Berkshire, England, was one of those who, spurred by the remarks in A. Hamilton's *New Account*, tried to obtain further information about these copper plates. He urged a friend of his, Mr. Hiob Baster, around the years 1753-1754 to write to the Jewish community in Cochin. He seems, however, not to have received any reply. See s'Gravezande's work, later, chapt. VI.

Much more sober and informative was the information supplied by Jacob Canter Visscher, the Dutch Chaplain on the Malabar coast (1717-1723). Deeply interested in the Jews of Cochin, their origin, history and present status, this author incorporated in his "Letters from Malabar" a special chapter entitled, "On the Jews, Black and White".³³ During his stay in Cochin he tried hard to find reliable sources and stated "I have enquired of the principal persons among these Jews the reason why they have kept so few records of the history of their nation here. Their answer has been that their records had been torn from them by the Portuguese in the year 1662, when that people devastated their synagogue"

Visscher was thus dependant on the tradition of the Malabar Jews as told to him by the Elders and his account is a reflection of the current traditions and stories. He dealt in great detail with the disputes and conflicts between the "Black" and the "White" Jews, their separate synagogues and different occupations and estimated the number of the "Black" Jews at 2000, much more numerous than the "White" Jews.

He refers also to the "certain privileges which were inscribed on copper and are still preserved," a copy of which he himself had seen. He enumerates some of the privileges, such as "permission to use trumpets and drums, sedans, and similar trifles, which are much thought of in this

country," and observed that the Emperor, "placed over them a Jew named Joseph Rabban, who as well as his successors received the title of Chiramand Mappela i. e., the merchant whose office it is to furnish the Emperor's lamps with wicks, which must be regarded as a tribute paid to the monarch in acknowledgment for the dignity." ³⁴

Visscher failed however, to appreciate the significance of these privileges and by referring to them as "certain frivolous grants" he did not realize that though "many of the privileges sound strange to European ears, they were granted in a country where to this day a low-caste man must wear a cloth of a certain cut, and must not carry an umbrella, or ride in a palanquin, where a low-caste woman must not cover the upper portion of her person, or wear but the prescribed cloth round her loins" ³⁵

IV ANQUETIL DU PERRON IN COCHIN (1757-58)

A new chapter in the annals of the exploration of the Jewish antiquities in Cochin was opened by the famous French Orientalist Abraham-Hyacinthe Anquetil du Perron (b Paris, 1731, d 1805), the pioneer in the exploration of the Zend-Avesta and Veda who spent about five years, from 1757 to 1761 in India travelling extensively throughout this sub-continent in search of ancient Persian and Hindu manuscripts, books and documents.³⁶ His

33 J. C. Visscher, *Letters from Malabar*, printed in Dutch, and translated into English by Major Heber Drury, Madras, 1862

34 K. P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala*, ed by T. K. Menon, Ernakulam, 1924, Vol. 2. used these *Letters from Malabar* as "the thread on which to string the ancient history of Kerala" Foreword, p xx For his notes to Letter No. 18, see pp 504-531

35 R. Collins, *Missionary Enterprise in the East* 1893, quoted by K. P. Menon, *History of Kerala*, l. c.

36 About his life and activities see J. J. Modi "India as seen by Anquetil du Perron" in J. of the Cama Institute, Bombay, 1925, pp. 54-118, Raymond Schwab, *Vie d'Anquetil du Perron*, Paris, 1934; G. Sarton, "Anquetil du Perron," in *Osiris*, 1937, Vol 3, pp. 193-223; and now K. C. Kormocár "Anquetil Duperron and India" in *Bengal, Past and Present, J of the Calcutta Historical Society*, Vol. 77, Part II, 1958, pp 83-98, his paper read at the 26th International Congress of Orientalists, New Delhi, 1964, on Anquetil du Perron and his work "L'Inde en Rapport avec l'Europe."

monumental work "*Zend-Avesta-Ouvrage de Zoroastre*"³⁷ contained a thorough investigation of the theological, religious and moral ideas of Zoroaster, a French translation of the original Zend, accompanied by elaborate notes pertaining to the history of Ancient Iran.

From his "*Discours Preliminaire*"³⁸ we learn that Anquetil du Perron had arrived in Pondicherry, the French possession on Indian soil, on August 9, 1757, and had travelled throughout Bengal and along the Coromandel Coast and the Malabar coast to Cochin where he stayed from December 31, 1757 to January 25, 1758 prior to his going to Surat, the capital of the province of Gujarat.

At the time of Anquetil du Perron's visit, Cochin was under the Dutch rule and its governor was Caspar de Jong (1756-1761).³⁹ During his short stay in Cochin, Anquetil du Perron acquainted himself with the various ethnic and religious groups, with the St. Thomas Christians, Armenians, Catholics, Muslims, and Jews and their historical relics, but he paid particular attention to the Cochin Jews and incorporated in his "*Discours Preliminaire*" a detailed account of his research in regard to their Jewish antiquities.⁴⁰

The Jewish settlement in Cochin was at this juncture very strong and prosperous and amounted to about 2000 persons of so-called "White" and "Black" Jews.⁴¹

Determined to learn as much as possible about the historical records, monuments and documents of the Jews of Cochin, Anquetil du Perron, thanks to the help of the Secretary of the Dutch Company, Mr. A. Van Vechten, and the Carmelite Pere Anastase was able to establish a direct contact with some of the leading Jewish residents of Mattanchery, the place a few miles south of the city of Cochin, known as "Jewtown", where the Jews had their quarters.⁴²

Anquetil du Perron was fortunate in meeting a number of learned Jews in Cochin through whose corporation he was able to carry out his research. In his account he mentioned by name one Elih (Elie), "un riche Juif," one Ezekiel whom he called a "Rabbin," a Mudaliar and a young Jew by the name of David Cohen.

The identity of these individuals who assisted him remained an enigma. Newly discovered records from the Archives of the Dutch East India Company, in The Hague as well as from the Indian Archives in

37 *Zend-Avesta, ouvrage de Zoroastre*. Traduit en Francais par Anquetil du Perron, Paris, 1771, 3 Vols.

38 He stayed in Surat from May 1758 on for two years, where his brother Anquetil du Briancourt functioned as the chief of the French factory. See Francois Abbe Sevin "Relation historique du Consulat a Surat" in *Lettres sur Constantinople*, Paris, 1802; pp. 137-138.

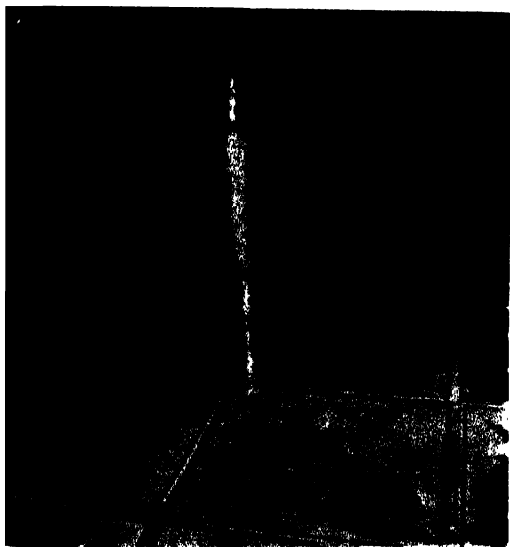
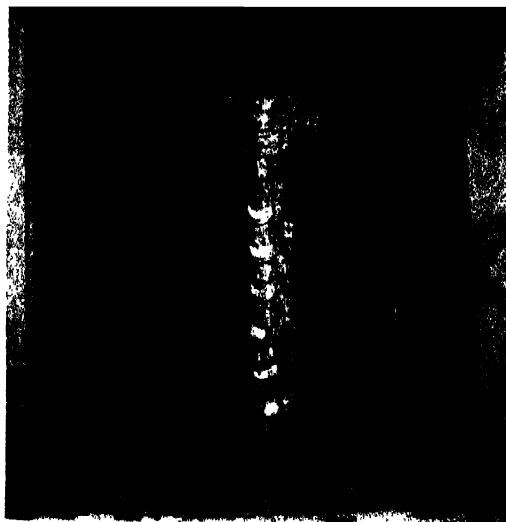
39 On this Dutch commander, see van Resandt, l. c., p. 193. Anquetil du Perron paid him a courtesy visit upon his arrival in Cochin and explained to him the nature of the research he intended to conduct *Zend-Avesta*, Vol. 1, p. 149.

40 Though all the pages in his *Zend-Avesta* are paginated in Roman numbers, we give here the Arabic numerals for convenience sake. See especially, pp. 147-192 and the plates.

41 The numerical strength of the Jews of Malabar at this juncture is not indicated by Anquetil du Perron, but we may assume that they numbered about 2000 persons as mentioned by Visscher a generation earlier and by A. Moens a generation later.

42 All the Western visitors of Cochin have given elaborate accounts of this remarkable "Jewtown"; for a description by a native Cochin Jew, see A. B. Salem, *Eternal Light or Jewtown Synagogue*, Ernakulam, 1929.

Torah in silver case with gold crown



Prayer in gold for a Torah scroll for weddings and other ceremonial occasions, taken against background of the yellow willow pattern tiles

Gold Crown for the Sefer Torah presented by the Maharajah of Travancore in 1805



Madras, Ernakulam and Bombay and the Indian Office in London, now shed, however, light on them and their activities.⁴³

* * *

When Anquetil du Perron came to Mattanchery, Pere Anastase of the Carmelite Mission introduced him to a Jew, named Elikh (Elie) who offered him a small room of his house which Anquetil du Perron accepted during his sojourn in Mattanchery and whose hospitality he gratefully acknowledged. This Elikh was no one else but Elias Rahabi, a well-known Jewish merchant (1712-1786) and one of the three sons of the prominent agent of the Dutch East India Company, Ezekiel Rahabi.⁴⁴

It was through this association with Elikh Rahabi⁴⁵ that Anquetil du Perron learned—undoubtedly for the first time—of the existence of these ancient copper plates on which were engraved in the Tamil language, in the archaic and obsolete Vatteluttu script, which he called “privileges accorded to the Nation Juive” by the Rajah of Malabar with the name of Bhaskara Ravi Varma, whose title was Cheraman Perumal.

Anquetil du Perron must have been greatly excited when he heard of this copper

plate inscription and asked his host to allow him to see these ancient monuments. Elikh Rahabi promptly introduced Anquetil du Perron to the very person in whose custody these copper plates were carefully guarded.

This was the leader of the “White” Jews of Cochin who had the title of a “Mudaliar” and whom Anquetil du Perron called “le Chef de la nation Juive”.

* * *

The institution of the Mudaliar⁴⁶ as the head of the autonomous Jewish community in Cochin goes back to the early time of the Jewish settlement in Cochin, when the Rajah of Cochin under Portuguese rule granted the Jews full autonomy and freedom. As a sign of his authority and dignity, the Mudaliar was allowed to bear “a wand with a silver knob, a kind of staff which both the Rajah and the Company give to anyone whom they wish to honour, or who is appointed to certain offices, such as that of Merchant to the Company. The Mudaliar has power to enforce some punishments and to impose and remit fines, subject to the Rajah’s judgment.....but capital causes were tried by the Rajah himself, and the Company had, however, some jurisdiction over them, too”.

43 On the staggering abundance of these records which I was able to find and utilize during two visits in 1959 and 1963, thanks to a Guggenheim Fellowship and a Fulbright Award, see my study on “The Indian Archives as a source for the History of the Jews in Asia,” in the 75th Anniversary Vol of the Jewish Quarterly Review, Philadelphia, 1967, pp. 192-209.

44 About Ezekiel Rahabi, see later. Many data on the economic and diplomatic activities of Elikh Rahabi could be derived from the hitherto unexplored Dutch records. He died in 1786—a victim of the bubonic plague of that year. During his lifetime he was closely associated with his father’s commercial activities in which also his two brothers Moses and David played an equally important role.

45 Before leaving Mattanchery Anquetil du Perron gave to Pere Anastase some presents which he asked him to present to Elikh as a token of gratitude for the hospitality he enjoyed and for the “room which I have occupied for twelve days”. Later Anquetil du Perron had learned that Elikh had refused to accept anything.

46 About the Mudaliar, see Vischer, *Letters from Malabar*, l. c. Letter No. 18, and the notes by Menon, l. c., pp. 521-523.

The first Jewish Mudaliar is said to have been Barukh Joseph Levi, who came from Cranganore, whose name is connected with the building of the Kadavumbhagam Synagogue in Cochin in 1544. He was succeeded by his son, Joseph Levi, one of the builders of the Paradesi Synagogue in 1568.

The title and position of the Mudaliar went then over to the Castiel family, the first bearer of which was apparently Samuel Castiel. Menasseh ben Israel referred to him in "THE HOPE OF ISRAEL," and stated, "In the year 1640, died Samuel Castiel, governor of the city, and agent for the King, and David Castiel, his son succeeded in his place".⁴⁷

At the time of the Dutch conquest of Malabar (1663) the Mudaliar was Shemtob Castiel, who is reported to have renovated the Paradesi Synagogue (1664). When the Dutch delegation from Amsterdam headed by Mosseh Pereyra de Paiva came to Cochin in 1686, the Mudaliar who received them was one David Levi, whose grandfather came from Germany.

Later the title of 'Mudaliar' was conferred on one of the family of the Halleguas, who hailed from Aleppo and it became then hereditary in that family ever since.

The Mudaliar to whom Anquetil du Perron was introduced by Elikh Rahabi

was one of the members of this Hallegua family who resided in the "Bazaar of the White Jews". From the available Dutch records and internal Hebrew sources we know that he was a very wealthy Jewish merchant, owner of large tracts of land which he had purchased from the Company and on which he had planted thousands of coconut trees.⁴⁸

Anquetil du Perron gives an account of his visit to the residence of the Mudaliar, describes his large library of Hebrew books and conveys above all his impression of the copper plates which he was shown by the Mudaliar. He observed that the inscriptions were written on two well-preserved copper plates, that the first plate was engraved on both sides while the second had only an inscription on one side. These two plates were covered by a third one on which nothing was engraved, just serving as a kind of protective cover over the two engraved plates. He compared the inscriptions with the Malabari Ollas which are to be read from left to right.⁴⁹

Anquetil du Perron, in voicing his excitement about these most cherished antiquities of the Cochin Jews praised them as "un monument qui paroître precieux a ceux qui sont curieux de litterature Orientale". He must have been most gratified that the Mudaliar allowed him even to take these plates home to his room and to copy them there. This is a rather surprisingly

47 Menasseh ben Israel, the Dutch scholar and diplomat, referred to the family of Castiel already in his "Humble Address" to Cromwell in about 1651; see his *The hope of Israel*, London, 1652. It is still not ascertained through what channels Menasseh ben Israel had obtained his information about the Cochin Jews. The copper plates are not mentioned by him.

48 About the ancestors of Joseph Hallegua, see J. J. Cotton, *List of Inscriptions on Tombs or Monuments in Madras*, Madras, 1915 in the chapter on "White" Jews Cemetery at Cochin, p. 274, No. 1150; see also D. S. Sassoon, *Ohel David. Catalogue of the Hebrew and Samaritan Manuscripts*, London, 1932, Vol. 2, p 967 ff. Joseph Hallegua was the brother-in-law of Ezekiel Rahabi

49 Ollas (Ollas) or palmyra leaves are the materials on which the letters are written or rather inscribed with an iron style. The letters themselves are sometimes called olas. See Menon, l. c., Vol. 1, p. 511.

generous gesture since these rare and valuable relics of the Jewish community would usually be kept under the watchful eyes of the Mudaliar and no one was allowed to take them out of the Pandial, that box in which they were deposited.

At his house, Anquetil du Perron began to copy the Tamil text, sheet by sheet, line by line, and form by form, exactly as he found it in the original. He entitled his copy "Inscription en ancien Tamoul, renfermant les Privileges accordees aux Juifs, il y a environ mille ans par Scharan Peroumal, Empereur de la Cote Malabare". When he returned the copper plates to the Mudaliar, showing him his copy, he requested from him the favour of certifying the correctness of his copy by adding his, the Mudaliar's signature. Though the Mudaliar himself was no expert in the Tamil language and not familiar with the archaic Vatteluttu script in which it was written, he agreed and added at the end of Anquetil du Perron's copy a short Hebrew line as a sign of confirmation

Anquetil du Perron stated explicitly that "la ligne en Hebreu de Rabbin est le certificat de ce Chef des Juifs," and incorporated it together with his own copy in Tamil

in its facsimile, in his "Discours Preliminaire" of the "Zend-Avesta".⁵⁰

This Hebrew line has thus far remained unnoticed and no one seems to have made any attempt to read and decipher it. Though there are some uncertainties in regards to the meanings of some of the Hebrew words a tentative reading of the Hebrew certificate of the Mudaliar confirms the exact date of Anquetil du Perron's visit in Cochin, namely January 1758, and the name of the Mudaliar, namely Joseph Hallegua.⁵¹

Anquetil du Perron, was, however, not satisfied with the mere copying of the Tamil inscription. He wanted to go further and to decipher and to understand its meaning, for which purpose he enlisted the cooperation of some native scholars, Canarians, Brahmins, and others, but all of them expressed their inability to understand even one word of it.

Here again Anquetil du Perron was fortunate in being directed by his host, Elikh Rahabi, to the latter's father, Ezekiel Rahabi,⁵² le Courtier des Hollandais a Cochin," whom he erroneously calls Rabbin"⁵³

50 *Zend-Avesta*, I. c., Vol. I, plates 1-3 attached to p. 170; this is the first facsimile of the copper plate inscription published by a Western scholar, but was followed by other and more correct reproductions, as will be discussed

51 As far as it could be deciphered, this Hebrew line written by the Mudaliar reads "Written in Cochin in truth and justice this is the inscription (seal) by Cheraman Perumal completed on Friday, the fifth day of the month of Shebat in the year 5518", (Signed by) Ha Za'ir Joseph Hallegua...

My friend Dr. O. Lehman (formerly of Oxford) kindly conveyed to me his observation. (See reproduction at end of article.)

52 About him see later.

53 Like other visitors to Cochin Anquetil du Perron, probably misled by the similarity of sound or spelling, took Ezekiel's family name "Rahabi" or as written in Dutch sources "Rhabby" as a title and called him a "Rabbin."

See Edward Ives in *A Voyage from England to India in the Year 1754 and a Journey from Persia to England.....* London, 1773, p. 193, who speaks of "One Ezekiel, a rabbi now living at Cochin, a man of consequence, and his word is held in high estimation; he is a lover of science, and understands astronomy." See Fra Paolino di San Bartolomeo, *Viaggio alle Indie Orientali (Voyage to the East Indies)*, Rome, 1796, who also refers to Ezekiel Rahabi as "Rabbi a Coccino."

Through the intervention of his host, Elikh Rahabi and the Secretary of the Dutch Company, Mr. Anthony Van Vechten, Anquetil du Perron was introduced to Ezekiel Rahabi.

When Anquetil du Perron learned at this meeting that Ezekiel Rahabi had in his possession a transliteration of the copper sheet inscription into the Rabbinic-Hebrew script—made by Ezekiel Rahabi, probably a decade or so before Anquetil du Perron's arrival in Cochin—he was naturally most anxious to obtain this “Recueil Rabbinique” of Ezekiel Rahabi. This he indeed achieved and Ezekiel Rahabi even loaned Anquetil du Perron his “Recueil” which contained the transliteration of the Tamil text in Rabbinic Hebrew characters. Ezekiel Rahabi had ascertained this transliteration through close cooperation with some native scholars who explained it to him word by word.

Anquetil du Perron inserted into his account the exact title of this Hebrew-Rabbinic text as carried out by Ezekiel Rahabi as follows: “Haatakah schel schefeod (?) vehou tass nehaschet sche natan Scheran Perimal,” and mentioned that at the end of Ezekiel Rahabi's copy are the words, “ze hou khotam schel Scheran Perimal, c'est-à-dire, tel est le sceau de Scheran Peroumal”.

Anquetil du Perron was fully aware of the importance of this Hebrew-Rabbinic

transliteration for the understanding of the copper plate inscription. But he could not make full use of it because it was probably written in Rashi script⁵⁴ unless he could find some assistance for the purpose of rendering it into Hebrew square characters which was evidently more familiar to him than the Rashi script of Ezekiel Rahabi's “Recueil”.

This assistance was rendered to him by another resident of Cochin, a young Jew by the name of David Cohen. Very little is known about this David Cohen, and Dutch records, usually so abundant in details, have yielded, thus far, only one, but very important document, pertaining to the background of this David Cohen, namely his Last Will. From his Last Will, made in Cochin on March 31, 1769 and preserved in the Indian Archives,⁵⁵ we derive that he was a “Joodse Vriyburger,” a Jewish free merchant in Cochin,⁵⁶ a bachelor who bequeathed the larger part of his estate to the “Joodse Tempel” outside of the city of Cochin. He apparently was of German origin, as attested by one of the witnesses to his Will of the Dutch Council who claimed to have known him in Berlin. David Cohen's German origin is indicated by the rather unusual term “temple” used in his Last Will.⁵⁷ No native Cochin-born Jew would have used this term for the synagogue. He appointed as the executors of his estate and the guardians of his two

54 There are enough indications that Anquetil du Perron was acquainted with Hebrew. He took along on his journey to India a Hebrew Bible, see also *Zend-Avesta*, Vol. 1, p. 167 and 175n. where he explains the era of the Jews, giving the Hebrew months Shebat, Adar, etc.

55 Found in the Madras Record Office, Vol. 782. (Wills 1765-1770, Document No. 238), under the year 1769, fols. 1146-1148.

56 This David Cohen should not be confused with other bearers of the same name who appear in the Dutch records.

57 The presence of Ashkenazic Jews in Cochin, from Frankfurt and other places is well attested by the available sources. Most prominent among them was the family of Rotenburg; see my study on “The Rotenburg family in Dutch Cochin” in *Studia Rosenthaliana* Vol. 1, No. 2, Amsterdam, 1967, pp. 32-44.

illegitimate children the Jewish merchant (Joodse Koopman) David Rahabi (Rabby) and Isaac Benjamin of Cochin. It is highly significant that this Will was signed by David Cohen in English as well as in Hebrew.⁵⁸

It is with this David Cohen that Anquetil du Perron spent two nights in order to transliterate the Rabbinic Hebrew (Rashi script) of Ezekiel Rahabi's "Recueil" into "beaux caracteres Hebraïques".

* * *

Anquetil du Perron was, however, not yet satisfied with the results of his exploration of the Jewish antiquities in Cochin. Though he had succeeded in copying the Tamil inscription of the copper plates, though he had made himself acquainted with its meaning by using the Hebrew-Rabbinic transliteration of Ezekiel Rahabi, and though he had transliterated it into Hebrew square characters with the help of David Cohen, he wanted to go a step further and to offer also a French translation of these "Privileges des Juifs". He was, however, unable to carry out this explicitly announced intention and expressed the hope that at a later date when the time permits he would provide in French the Hebrew translation of the inscription compared with the Tamil text and with additions from the "Recueil."⁵⁹

He turned, however, his attention to two other categories of copper inscriptions in Malabar of whose existence he learned during his stay in Cochin, namely the copper plate inscriptions in the hands of the Muslims and of the St. Thomas Christians on the Malabar coast. Anxious to copy the Muslim inscriptions, he obtained from his host Eliak Rahabi a letter to the Moorish (Muslim) chief in Panani called Magdoud, requesting his assistance for Anquetil du Perron. After having left Cochin, Anquetil du Perron stopped at Panani to meet with this Muslim chief, but heard that these inscriptions were in the hands of another person, the Sidi of Koelandi, so that Anquetil du Perron had to give up this idea.⁶⁰

Anquetil du Perron made a further attempt to investigate also the privileges accorded to the St. Thomas Christians and for this purpose he went to Anjikaimal where he found in some Christian scholars the necessary help to interpret the texts in "assez mauvais Portugais". He inserted in his "Zend-Avesta" a very extensive chapter on the Christian churches in Malabar with copies of the French translation of the various inscriptions in the hands of the St. Thomas Christians.⁶¹

In evaluating the efforts made by Anquetil du Perron to explore the Jewish antiquities in Cochin, it should be borne in mind that he was the first Westerner, who

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- 58 Dozens of documents and letters in Dutch but with Hebrew signatures by various leading Jews of Cochin of the 18th century were acquired during my research in the Indian Archives
 - 59 See *Zend-Avesta*, Vol. I, p. 171.
 - 60 See *Zend-Avesta*, Vol. I, pp. 191-192.
 - 61 Anquetil du Perron dealt very extensively with the Syro-Malabar Christian communities and their copper plates, Vol I, pp. 175-183. On the problems involved see, apart from the literature in note 1, G. Rae, *The Syrian Church in India* London, 1892; T. K. Joseph, *Malabar Christians and their Ancient Documents*, Trivandrum, 1929; L. W. Brown, *The Indian Christians of St. Thomas*, Cambridge, 1956; E. Tisserant, *Eastern Christianity in India*, Bombay, 1957; S. G. Pothan, *The Syrian Christians of Kerala*, Bombay, 1963; and G. M. Moraes, *A History of Christianity in India*, Bombay, 1964.

approached critically the Jewish antiquities of Cochin with the eye of a scholar and who went to the very source, to the very text of the copper plates inscription by trying to establish a textual basis for a proper understanding of the Jewish copper plates.

Deficient and inaccurate as his transliteration and interpretation of the inscription on the copper plates proved later to be,⁶² his merit lies in the very fact that his was a pioneering penetration which laid the foundation for a more solid and sound evaluation of this aspect.⁶³

V. THE "EXTRACTS" OF L. I. J. VAN DORT (1757) AND F. G. C. RUETZ.

While pursuing his research on the Jewish antiquities of Cochin, Anquetil du Perron did not lose sight of his major purpose in going to India, namely to search for manuscripts and to investigate the ancient culture of Iran and India. In regards to this aspect, the Secretary of the Dutch Council, Mr. A. Van Vechten advised Anquetil du Perron to contact the Dutch scholar Leopold Immanuel Jacob Van Dort,

then in Colombo, Ceylon, who would be in a position to provide him with much information about the history and religion of ancient India, about the origin of Indian idolatry and about ancient inscriptions and the Ceylonese characters.

Indeed Anquetil du Perron wrote a letter in Latin to Van Dort⁶⁴ in Colombo and he received his reply of February 22, 1758 after his arrival in Surat in May 1758.⁶⁵

Though Anquetil du Perron's correspondence with Van Dort had no bearing on matters of Jewish interest, it is Van Dort who can claim our special attention in this connection because he, too, had delved into the past of the Jews of Cochin during his short stay there in 1757, quite independently from Anquetil du Perron, of which neither Van Vechten nor Anquetil du Perron had been aware.

The available biographical data about this Van Dort are very scanty.⁶⁶ This Van Dort was a Jew, born in Doordrecht in the province of Gulich (Juliers) in Holland

- 62 G. Oppert, "Ueber die Judischen Colonien in India," l. c. is one of the few scholars who took cognizance of Anquetil du Perron's research on the Jews of Cochin as did prior to him the Dutch scholar A. s'Gravenzade.
- 63 G. Sarton's appraisal (*Ostris*, l. c., p. 203) of Anquetil du Perron's major contribution to the *Zend-Avesta* can also be applied to his exploration of the Jewish antiquities in Cochin, namely "in spite of all its faults... it is one of the greatest monuments in the history of erudition."
- 64 See *Zend-Avesta*, Vol. I, pp. 151-152. He spells his name erroneously, "Van Dorts". See also Kamalkar, l. c. *Bengal: Past and Present*, p. 95.
- 65 Whether this Latin correspondence with Van Dort is preserved in the literary legacy housed in Paris and London cannot yet be ascertained.
- 66 I am most grateful to the Secretary of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society and the Secretary of the Dutch Burghers' Union in Colombo, Ceylon for their efforts to find for me biographical data on Van Dort and his background. The detailed genealogy sent to me of the Van Dort family in Ceylon, compiled and published by Mr. D. V. Altendorff in the *J. of the Dutch Burghers' Union*, Vol. 28, Colombo, 1937, pp. 17 ff., did not, however, include our Van Dort.

However, the data received through the kindness of Mr. M. P. H. Roessingh of the Algemeen Rijksarchief in The Hague were most helpful. The search for further biographical data will undoubtedly shed additional light on his personality.

and became a convert to Christianity. He studied at Leipzig and other German universities (1744) Hebrew and Oriental languages and became a "preceptor in the Eastern languages". After having completed his studies, the Christian Theological Seminary at Colombo, Ceylon appointed him as a professor of Hebrew in 1758 and Van Dort travelled on a Dutch ship via Malabar to Colombo. He remained in his capacity as professor of Hebrew at the Christian Theological Seminary ⁶⁷ from 1758 until 1760, when the teaching of Hebrew as a result of the reforms of the Dutch governor of Ceylon, Jan Schreuder⁶⁸ (1757-1762), was discontinued and Van Dort had to return. Nothing yet is known about Van Dort's further movements and activities after having discontinued his teaching in Colombo.

It is firmly established, however, that Van Dort on his way to Ceylon stayed in Cochin for some time, in the year 1757, searching for ancient records and manuscripts pertaining to the Cochin Jews and that he did succeed indeed in discovering a manuscript of an ancient Hebrew chronicle. He made "Extracts" from this chronicle, translated them into Dutch and affixed to his translation his name and the date, "Cochin 1757".⁶⁹

Van Dorts "Extracts" from the Hebrew

chronicle are a mixture of legend, fiction, and facts, dealing with the alleged origin of the Jews of Malabar, with the various stations of the Jewish exiles in Yemen, Arabia, China, etc. and with the Holy Books which they had carried with them until their final settlement in Hoddu (India).

He referred also to the privileges which were given by the emperor of Malabar, Sheram Perimal to their leader, Joseph Rabban and to the 72 families who went with him to the land of Malabar and stated explicitly that he himself had seen the privileges "engraved on two copper plates, guarded by the present Nasi (Mudaliar) Joseph Hallegua".⁷⁰

The "Extracts" from this Hebrew chronicle made by Van Dort had a very strange history. Nothing was known about them in scholarly circles for almost thirty years.

How did the "Extracts" of Van Dort's Dutch translation of the Hebrew chronicle become known? During his short stay in Cochin, so it seems, Van Dort associated himself with a certain Mr. Marcellus Bless, born in Tilburg, a civil servant of the Dutch East India Company, who came to Malabar in 1737 as under-merchant of the company and occupied a variety of positions in the service of the Dutch East India Company ⁷¹ Van Dort prior to his

67 C. A. L. van Troostenburg de Bruyn, *De Hervormde Kerk in Nederlandsch Oost-Indie onder de Oost-Indische Compagnie*, Arnhem, 1884, p. 516.

68 On Governor Schreuder see van Resandt, l. c., p. 79.

69 On Van Dort's stay in Cochin see J. G. Eichhorn, *Allgemeine Bibliothek der Biblischen Litteratur*, Leipzig, Vol. 1, 1788, p. 929, and Vol. 2, 1790, II p. 569; 583.

70 His name is spelled in the German translation and the title assigned to him is "Nasi" which corresponds to the Mudaliar. This is the same Jewish leader of Cochin with whom Anquetil du Perron had his contacts, sometime later.

71 Mr. Bless was characterized as a man with a good gift of observation, who though not a scholar by profession and unacquainted with Hebrew, collected many interesting data. See on him Steinschneider, l. c., 2722, and the references supplied by the Rijksarchief in Kol, Arch. No. 660 fol. 174, No. 655 fol. 42, No. 687 fol. 23.

departure to Ceylon in 1757 must have given the manuscript of his Dutch translation of the "Extracts" to Mr. Bless who took it with him to Holland. There the manuscript must have come into the possession of F. G. C. Ruetz, a Lutheran pastor of The Hague who made a German translation of it.

In 1787 a Mr. H. E. G. Paulus learned that "Extracts from a Hebrew Chronicle" of the Jews of Cochin had been translated into Dutch "by a certain L. I. J. Van Dort, a former Jew" and that they were now in the hands of Mr. Ruetz. Paulus suggested their publication to the editor of "Allgemeine Bibliothek der Biblischen Litteratur", Mr. J. G. Eichhorn in Leipzig and indeed the editor invited Ruetz to publish the German translation of the "Extracts".⁷²

Ruetz, a conscientious and diligent scholar, tried first of all to verify the existence of the complete original Hebrew chronicle. To this end he got in touch with the Jewish banker Tobias Boaz⁷³ of the Hague, (1787) asking his intervention with the Jewish leaders in Cochin, offering to pay all expenses for a copy of it. He, however, did not get any direct reply from Cochin. The "Extracts" of Van Dort in the German translation appeared finally in 1790 under the title, "Extract aus der hebraischen Chronik, die bei den Juden zu Cochim, auf der Malabarischen Kueste gefunden wird....."⁷⁴

While the "Extracts" made by Van Dort and published by Ruetz can hardly claim to have advanced substantially the exploration of the Jewish antiquities of Cochin, they had at least the merit of having aroused an enormous interest in the past of the Cochin Jews and initiated a chain of publications and exchange of letters by various German and Dutch scholars⁷⁵ in the last decade of the 18th century.⁷⁶

VI EZEKIEL RAHABI (1771), ADRIAAN MOENS (1781), AND A. S'GRAVEZANDE (1782)

Of all the Jewish residents in Cochin who cooperated with Anquetil du Perron and his effort, none has made a greater contribution of his own to the exploration of the Jewish antiquities of Cochin than Ezekiel Rahabi, who can be regarded as a pivotal figure in the annals of the exploration. During a period of almost 50 years (1723-1771) this Ezekiel Rahabi served as the chief merchant and agent of the Dutch East India Company in Malabar. He must have been a most extraordinary personality ever to emerge out of the "White" Jewish community of Cochin and his role in the political, economic and cultural arena of Dutch India constitutes one of the most glorious chapters in the annals of the India-Jewish association.

Though deeply involved, as the leading agent and merchant of the Dutch East India Company, having to deal with manifold

72 For Paulus' letter see *Allgemeine Bibliothek*, l. c., Leipzig, 1788, Vol. 1, pp. 925-934.

73 About him see later

74 See *Allgemeine Bibliothek*, Leipzig, 1790, Vol. 2, pp. 567-583.

75 Further contributions to the discussion of these "Extracts" were made by Ruetz. "Weiter e Nachricht von der vorgeblichen hebraischen Chronik zu Cochim", *Allgemeine Bibliothek* l. c. Leipzig, 1790, Vol. 3, p. 182; by J. P. Lowe: *ibid.* pp. 183-185 and by the same author Vol. 5, 1793, pp. 399-419.

76 A further indication of the interest which this chronicle had aroused is the fact that Van Dort's "Extracts" in the German translation of Ruetz were translated into Hebrew and published by N. H. Wessely in "Ha-neassef." Vol. 6, pp. 129 ff. See also Sh. Gaguin, *The Jews of Cochin*, London, 1956, pp. 21, 25, 26.

diplomatic and commercial assignments,⁷⁷ Ezekiel Rahabi was a scholar and historian and delved into the past of his community. He made two major contributions (a) through his "Letter of 1768" and (b) through his translation of the copper plate inscriptions.

It was in 1767 that the Jewish merchant and banker Tobias Boaz in The Hague,⁷⁸ who had entertained commercial connections with Ezekiel Rahabi for some time, sent a questionnaire to Ezekiel Rahabi containing eleven questions relating to the past and present of the Cochin Jewish Community, and enjoined Ezekiel Rahabi to reply to all these eleven questions put before him

Ezekiel Rahabi's reply in Hebrew on the twenty-fifth, Tishri 5528 (1768) dealt with all the aspects of the Cochin Jewish groups, their tradition, their origin and history from Cranganore, their

beliefs, their festivals, their customs and practices, the division into "Black" and "White" Jews, their synagogues, as well as their relation to the Jewish diaspora in Asia.

This "Epistola Jecheskiel Rahabi ad Tobias Boaz (A. 1768)" ranks next to the "Notisias" of 1687 as one of the major historical sources, and a milestone in the exploration of the Malabar Jews,⁷⁹ enhanced in its value by the fact that its author was so authentic and reliable a person as the very leader of the "White" Jews in Cochin, Ezekiel Rahabi.⁸⁰

One could have expected that Ezekiel Rahabi would also deal with the copper plate inscription in this letter to Tobias Boaz; he refrained from doing so, however, announcing, "I am sending you a translated copy of the copper plates from which you will be able to glean all the details."⁸¹ We

77 Ezekiel Rahabi's commercial and diplomatic activities do not concern us here; see for this aspect W. J. Fischel, *The Jews of India, Their Contribution to the Economic and Political Life*, Jerusalem; 1960 pp. 97-111 and his "Cochin in Jewish History" in *Proceedings of American Academy of Jewish Research*, New York, 1962, Vol. 30, pp 30-59; see also Ashin Das Gupta *Malabar in Asian Trade (1740-1800)* Cambridge University Press, 1967.

78 About Tobias Boaz, his family and firm. see H. K. Brugmans and A. Frank, *Geschiedenis der Joden in Nederland*, Amsterdam, 1940, pp 419-420; 597-598.

79 This Letter of 1768 remained rather unknown until almost twenty-two years later it was published in Hebrew by Naphtali Herz Wesseley in "Hameasuf" 1790 (5550) Königsberg-Berlin, Vol. 6, pp. 129-160 and pp 257-276.

It was later translated into German with annotations by P. J. Bruns "Von den Juden zu Cochin (Aus dem Rabbinischen)," in *Repositor fuer Biblische and Morgenlaendische Litteratur*, Tuebingen, 1792, Vol. 1, pp. 383-400. See also J. Winter and A. Wunsche, *Geschichte der Poetischen, Kabbalistischen, Historischen und Neuzeitlichen Litteratur der Juden*, Trier, 1896, pp. 459-462.

The leader of the "White" Jews of Cochin of today, S. S. Koder Jr published an English translation in "A Hebrew Letter of 1768" in *J. of the Rama Varma Archaeological Society*, 1949, Vol 15, pp. 1-6.

80 This letter of Ezekiel Rahabi was regarded ever since it became known as the most authentic chronicle of the Jewish community of Cochin and became the arsenal of information from which subsequent writers, including native Cochin Jews derived their knowledge. The various Hebrew chronicles on Cochin preserved in the D. S. Sassoon collection have used this letter extensively. See D. S. Sassoon *Ohel David, Catalogue of the Hebrew and Samaritan manuscripts*, 2 Vols., London, 1932, in particular, Vol. 1, p. 371, No. 268; Vol. 2, p. 997-68, No. 974; 934; 1023; 975. Also S. Raffaloviz, *Kadmonoth Ha-Yehudim E' Malabar*; repr. Ernakulam. 1966 Jerusalem 1901.

81 So stated Ezekiel Rahabi in his answer to the first question.

do not know if this copy was ever sent, and, if so, if ever received, but Ezekiel Rahabi's second contribution filled that gap amply.

This second contribution consisted not only of a Hebrew-Rabbinical transcript of the Tamil inscription on the copper plates which, as we have seen, he allowed Anquetil du Perron to use, but of a complete translation of the copper plate inscription into the ordinary Malabar language with the help of native scholars, and the into Dutch.

* * *

Important as Ezekiel Rahabi's translation may have been, its inherent significance lies in the unexpected consequences it had. It stimulated the exploration of the Jewish antiquities of Cochin by the highest authority of the Dutch East India Company at that juncture, no less a person than the Dutch Governor of the Malabar coast, Adrian Moens.

This Dutch governor (1771-1781) took a profound interest in all the various religious and ethnic groups he was confronted with during his administration in Malabar—St. Thomas Christians, Catholics, Muslims, and above all the Jews of Cochin.

He found in Ezekiel Rahabi, who served under him as the Dutch Company's chief merchant, his major source of information, and derived from him and through his own observation all the data in regards to the past as well as to the actual conditions of

Jewish life in Cochin during his time which he incorporated in his "Memoir" of 1781.⁸²

He included in his "Memoir" also a very exact description of the copper plates and stated: "These copper plates are pierced without any injury being done to the writing, like the olas (palm-leaves) of the Malabaris, in order to be tied together with a string. They are written in engraved characters, which are still to this day found in the three different dialects of the Malabar language."⁸³ He incorporated the Dutch version of Ezekiel Rahabi's translation of the copper plate inscription, but he was not ready to rely on this translation and ordered two more translations of this patent, one through the interpreter Barend Deventer, from an old Malabar linguist, and the second through another interpreter of the Dutch East India Company, Simon Van Tongeren.

A. Moens justified the inclusion of these three translations into his "Memoir" because of the widely differing interpretation, divergency, and discrepancy of these three translations. He observed that when

"these three translations are compared one with another, it will be observed at once that in the first these privileges are granted to the Jew Joseph Rabban and to the 72 Jewish families; whereas in the second no trace will be found of the word Jew; in the third Joseph Rabban is not called a Jew, but the minister of the King.....It is also certain that the name Rabban is not exclusively

82 *Selections from the Records of the Madras Government*, Dutch Records, No. 2, The *Memoir*, written in the year 1781 A. D., by Adriaan Moens, extraordinary member of the Batavia Council, Governor and Director of the Malabar coast, Canara and Vingurla, for his successor, Madras, 1908. An English translation of Moens' *Memoir* appeared as Dutch Records, No. 13, under the title *The Dutch in Malabar* Madras, 1911, with an introduction and notes by A. Gallego, A. J. Van der Burg, and O. Groot.

This volume contained also the English translation of the *Memoir* by the Dutch commander J. V. Stein van Gollenesse, composed in 1743.

83 All the subsequent quotations are taken from the English translation of Moens' *Memoir*, Dutch Record, No. 13, pp. 192-198.

Jewish. Further, the first and last translations grant the privileges not only to Joseph Rabban, but also to the 72 Jewish families, while according to the second translation in the same are given only to Joseph Rabban, his family and offspring. Nor does the second translation know anything of the privilege granted and the permission to spread the Jewish religion among the five castes. Thus it is obvious that these three translations do not agree, but that the first and third agree more with each other than with the second; for this reason the first and last deserve rather more credit than the second, which stands alone; but that even so we have not got real proof from the plates what the plates should prove."⁸⁴

Though A. Moens believed in the antiquity of the copper plates inscription he regarded the incorporation of all three translations into his "Memoir" as being in the best interests of scholarship and in order not "to allow the Jews to be the judges in their own affair, but rather to enable the reader to judge for himself in this debatable matter."

In his search for objectivity, Moens had tried to find even another expert for an additional translation, but admitted that "I have been unable hitherto to find either among the Malabaris or Canarese, among the learned priests and natives, anyone who had sufficient knowledge to translate this old writing for the fourth time though I sent a copy of the inscription to the North and South of Cochin to have it deciphered."

* * *

The efforts made by Ezekiel Rahabi and then with his help by the Dutch governor

A. Moens had far-reaching repercussions and led to the climax in the exploration of the Jewish antiquities in the 18th century. It ignited the curiosity and interest of the Dutch scholar Adrian s'Gravezande, who composed, what could be regarded as the most authentic and thorough treatise on the Jews of Cochin. This Adrian s'Gravezande, a Dutch minister at Middleburg (Zeeland), deeply interested in the Jewish diaspora of Asia and particularly India, combed the then available European travel literature for any information on this topic. He tried to obtain more detailed information even about that early letter sent by the Jews of Cochin to the Portuguese-Sephardic leaders of Amsterdam in 1676, about the "Notisias" of 1687, but being unsuccessful in obtaining any substantially new information, decided to correspond with the Dutch governor of Cochin A. Moens between the years 1771-1774.

As a result of this correspondence with the Dutch governor, s'Gravezande could accumulate a most impressive array of details and the result of his research represented perhaps the most comprehensive survey and investigation of the Jewish antiquities in Cochin. In his work s'Gravezande gives full credit not only to A. Moens, but to Ezekiel Rahabi, the very source of A. Moens' information and admitted repeatedly his indebtedness to Ezekiel Rahabi and stressed that his work was the fruit of the cooperative endeavours of both Ezekiel Rahabi and A. Moens.⁸⁵

The work of s'Gravezande the first part of which appeared in 1778 and the second in 1781 was entitled "Geschiedkundige Narichten, Betreffende de Blanke en Zwarte Jooden, Te Cochim, op de Kust Van

⁸⁴ See *Memoir*, pp. 195 ff. See also I. Sonne, "Jewish Settlements in the West Indies," *Publication of the American Jewish Historical Society*, New York 1947, Vol 37, pp. 358-359.

⁸⁵ This was also recognized by P. J. Bruns who justified his translation of Ezekiel Rahabi's letter of 1768 into German on the grounds that "Ezekiel Rahabi verdient wohl selber gehoeft zu werden" since most of the details which Moens conveyed to A. s'Gravezande are due to Ezekiel Rahabi. See *Von den Juden zu Cochim*, I. c., p. 384.

Malabar; Opgemaakt, uit Briefwisseling met den Gouverneur en Directeur derzelve Kust, den Wel Ed. Gestrengen Heer Adrian Moens, Extraordinaris Raad van Nederlandsch Indien; en met berichten van verscheide schrijveren vergeleeken, door Adrianus s'Gravezande."⁸⁶ In it he analyzed very thoroughly the three versions of the translations of the copper plates which Moens had sent him and added a facsimile of the inscription made by himself which he called, "eine in Kupfer gestrichene Kopie"⁸⁷ This copy in which the original Tamil words were transliterated between the lines and then explained in Dutch translation on the margin was entitled by him "Copia Patent dat door den Keyser Cheran Peroemael aan Joseph Rhabby," and incorporated in his work.⁸⁸

Experts agree that the facsimile showed all the marks of a thorough and serious investigation.⁸⁹

VII. SAMUEL ABRAHAM (1789)
AND J. FORBES

It was at this juncture that also the Jews of the Western Hemisphere learned rather unexpectedly of the Jews of Cochin and their antiquities. In 1789 the Sephardic-Portuguese congregation of New York received a letter⁹⁰ from a Cochin Jew written in Hebrew together with an account on "The History of the Jews in the Land of Malabar." in which many details concerning the early settlement of the Jews on the

- 86 It appeared in *Verhandelingen der Genootschap der Wetenschappen te Vlissingen, Middleburg, 1778, Vol. 6. pp. 517-586 and 1782, Vol. 9, pp 515-575.*
- 87 Prior to the publication of the second part of his work in Dutch, s'Gravezande published a condensed German translation of his first part under the title, "Nachrichten von den weissen und schwarzen Juden zu Codschin, auf der Malabarischen Kuste, gesammelt aus dem Briefwechsel mit dem Gouverneur und Director dieser Kuste Herrn Adrian Moens, (damals extraordinairn jetzt aber ordinairn Rath des niederlandischen Indiens) und mit anderen Nachrichten verschiedener Schriftsteller verglichen durch Adrian s'Gravezande Prediger zu Mittelburg in Zeland nun aus dem Hollandischen ins Hochdeutsche ubersetzt," in *Magazin fur die neue Historie und Geographie*, ed. A. F. Buesching, Halle, 1780, Vol. 14, pp. 125-152.
- 88 The facsimile of the "Patent des Kaisers Cheran Peroemaal fur Joseph Rabby," is included in both the Dutch and the German study. By "Joseph Rabby" s'Gravezande meant, of course, "Joseph Rabbān" (Isuppu Irabbān) of the Tamil inscription. It should not be construed as a title.
- 89 At this juncture, another copy of the inscription was made by a Jewish merchant of London, Daniel de Castro, who had resided at Fort St. George and who presumably had sent a copy to Benjamin Kennicott in London. How de Castro obtained this copy and whether it is preserved can not yet be ascertained. See s'Gravezande, l. c., pp. 534-535.
- 90 It was sent to Solomon Simpson, a wealthy merchant of New York who was deeply interested in the Jewish communities of India and China and also engaged in foreign trade.

About Solomon Simpson see H. Simonhoff, *Jewish Notables in America, 1776-1785*, New York, 1956, pp. 83-86.

Malabar coast and their religious and cultural life have been conveyed.⁹¹

The author of this "History" was a Cochin Jew by the name of Samuel Abraham, whose identity could be established only recently in the light of newly found Dutch and English records.⁹² This Samuel Abraham, interested in the history of his community, was originally a native of Poland, a man of learning, years and respectability, one of the most eminent merchants at Mattanchery around 1772, after the death of Ezekiel Rahabi.

His account contained also a Hebrew translation of the text of the privileges granted to them "which were engraved on a tablet of brass."

Though this translation could hardly claim an accurate and exact rendering of the inscription, it surely served its purpose and made the Jews in the Western hemisphere for the first time acquainted with the antiquities of the Jewish community of Cochin.

This Samuel Abraham disseminated the knowledge of the antiquities of his own community also in another way, namely

through his friend, J. Forbes, an Englishman, who spent over 17 years in India (1766-1784).

When Mr. Forbes, an agent of the English East India Company, first in Bombay, then in Anjengo, came to Cochin he met with Samuel Abraham from whom he learned many data "respecting the Jewish tribes settled in the king of Cochin's dominions". J. Forbes was deeply moved by the very existence of this ancient Jewish community in Cochin and paid a glorious tribute to the Jews as a whole. In his "Oriental Memoirs," a work of considerable importance, he expressed what occupied his mind while standing on that spot of this old Jewish community. "The history of the Jews is the most wonderful of any in the annals of time: They are indeed a standing miracle! and however modern philosophy may raise doubts of revelation in some particulars, a people scattered over the face of the earth, yet preserved distinct and separate from every nation among whom they dwell, affords incontrovertible evidence of its truth....."⁹³

He learned also through Samuel Abraham that the Jews of Cochin "had in their

- 91 Samuel Abraham's "History" and "Letter" remained unknown until Benjamin II came to New York (1859) and discovered them. The original has since disappeared, at least all my inquiries to locate it proved unsuccessful.

Israel Joseph Benjamin—known as Benjamin II—the famous Jewish traveller and author of *Eight Years of Travels in Asia and Africa* (1846-55), Hannover, 1858, and *Three Years in America* (1859-62), Hannover, 1862, found, while searching for historical documents in the archives of the Portuguese-Spanish Congregation "Shearith Israel," this document in the Hebrew language and in Hebrew square characters.

We refer here to the English edition, translated by Chas. Reznikoff, with an introduction by Oscar Handlin, Philadelphia, 1956, 2 Vols, esp. Vol. 1, pp. 57-62.

See also H. B. Grinstein, *The Rise of the Jewish Community in New York, 1654-1860*, Philadelphia, 1945, pp. 416-419, 436, 590.

- 92 For all details about Samuel Abraham see my study "From Cochin to New York", in *Harry Austryn Wolfson Jubilee Volume*, Jerusalem, 1965, pp. 255-274.
- 93 *Oriental Memoirs*, 4 Vols., London, 1813-1815, see esp. Vol. 1, pp. 328-330; on Forbes, see C. E. Buckland, *Dictionary of Indian Biography*, London, 1906, p. 149.

possession a royal grant of Cranganore, and the district allotted to their ancestors, on the first establishment in Malabar, engraved on metal, and signed by the Brahmin sovereign of the country."⁹⁴

VIII CLAUDIUS BUCHANAN (1807) AND DAVID D'BETH HILLEL (1828)

During the British rule of Cochin from 1795 on, Cochin continued to engage the attention of many travellers and scholars. The first who at this juncture undertook an investigation of the Jewish history and antiquities of Cochin was Rev. Claudius Buchanan, whose work "Christian Researches in Asia,"⁹⁵ contains an account of what he had seen and done during his visits to Cochin 1806-07 and again in 1808. He collected in Cochin many manuscripts and books in Hebrew as well as in Syriac which he later deposited in the public library of the University of Cambridge

He was, as could be expected, particularly interested in the copper plates inscription which, according to his description, "having been given by a native King, it is written of course, in the Malabaric language and characters and is now so old that it cannot be well understood. The Jews

preserve a Hebrew translation of it, which they presented to me, but the Hebrew itself is very difficult, and they do not agree among themselves, as to the meaning of some words".

Buchanan, anxious to bring to Europe a copy of these ancient copper plates, obtained permission from the leaders of the Cochin Jews to employ an engraver in Cochin to execute a facsimile of the original plates on copper on the basis of which he produced also an English translation⁹⁶.

It should be stated that the facsimile on copper as prepared by Buchanan caused great confusion since it was erroneously believed that he had taken the original copper plates with him and left his own facsimile with the Jews in Cochin.⁹⁷

The first Jewish visitor to Cochin under the British rule who has left us an account of his observations, two decades after Claudius Buchanan's visit was Rabbi David d'Beth Hillel, the author of *The travels of Rabbi David d'Beth Hillel: from Jerusalem through Arabia, Koordistan, part of Persia and India to Madras*.⁹⁸ During his stay in Cochin (1828-1829) he observed very clearly the social, religious, and economic life of

94 Mention should be made that Samuel Abraham's letter and account stimulated a lively discussion among Jewish scholars; see Z. Frankel, "Zur Geschichte der Juden Amerika's," *M. G. W. J.*, Breslau, 1863, Vol. 12, pp. 370-373, and pp. 431-433; M. Kayserling, *Geschichte der Juden in Portugal*, Leipzig, 1867, pp. 164-166; G. A. Kohut, "Correspondence between the Jews of Malabar and New York, a Century Ago," in *Semitic Studies in Memory of Alexander Kohut*, Berlin, 1897, pp. 420-434.

95 *Christian Researches in Asia*, London, 1812, esp. pp. 219-233.

96 See Th. Chr. Tychsen, *De Inscriptionibus Indicis et Privilegiis Judaeorum et Christianorum S. Thomae in ora Malabarica cum explicatione inscriptionis trilinguis a Buchanan adlatae*, see esp. Chapter 3. pp. 12-17, *De privilegiis Judeorum malabarensium*, Cambridge, 1819; Thomas Yeates, *Collation of an Indian Copy of the Hebrew Pentateuch, Lectiones Codicis Malabarici*, Cambridge, 1812; the study by S. M. Schiller-Szinessy, Cambridge, 1876; and S. Schechter, "Notes on Hebrew Manuscripts in the University Library of Cambridge," *J. Q. R.*, 1894, Vol. 6 pp. 136-145.

97 For a critical view of Buchanan's method of collecting his manuscripts in Cochin and his interpretation see T. Whitehouse, *Some Historical Notices of Cochin on the Malabar Coast*, Cottayam, 1859, pp. 31-34; F. Day, *The Land of the Permauls*, l. c. and David d'Beth Hillel.

98 Madras, 1832. This is one of the rarest travelogues in Jewish geographical literature and ought to be republished.

this oldest of all Jewish settlements on Indian soil and dealt with that threefold division of the community into "White" Jews, "Black" Jews, and "Meshuhrarim" which prevailed in Cochin and confronts every visitor until today⁹⁹

He found about 1500 families of "Black" Jews in Cochin and the surrounding villages and about 200 families of "White" Jews. He described the synagogue of the "White" Jews by stating "They have a very fine synagogue paved with porcelain from China. It is so fine perhaps not existing in any parts of Europe and Turkey which I have travelled hither. The Dutch presented the synagogue with an excellent clock for which a separate tower is built. It is richly endowed with garden lands. On festival days there is a grand display of gold and silver ornaments, some of which are placed upon the manuscripts as they are carried from the holy ark to the pulpit where the law is read and occasionally explained....."

Of particular significance are his remarks about the copper plate inscriptions "One of the privileges granted to them in their ancient charter is the royal distinction of bridegrooms wearing a golden chain, and the firing of guns during the fourteen days of the wedding festivity. This charter is engraved in copper in the Malvalim language and characters. It was granted by the five contemporary kings whose signatures are affixed, and from whom they are allowed by this charter to make converts"

He also referred to another privilege to "the holding of their paternal lands from the crown at the half the annual acknowledged value which would be due from the same lands. If any other Jew or foreign White Jew may purchase these lands they retain the privilege which would be lost if the property should pass to another class of people. I do not know the date of this copper charter, but I have reason to suppose that the "White" Jews arrived there some little time before the Portuguese."¹⁰⁰

This view of the late arrival of the "White" Jews to Cochin contradicts the "official" opinion of the "White" Jews though it is shared by a number of scholars.¹⁰¹

IX. THE FINAL PHASE

The exploration of the Jewish antiquities of Cochin reached its final stage in the 19th century when a galaxy of scholars and experts of great repute made the copper plate inscriptions of Cochin the object of sound philological examination. It was in particular H. Gundert, the great Malayalam scholar who turned his attention to the copper plates and accomplished in 1819 a critical edition, which was published, however, only in 1844.¹⁰² In the same year there appeared also another critical edition by F. W. Ellis,¹⁰³ a Madras civil servant who is regarded as the real founder of Dravidian comparative philology to which a tracing of the original copper plates was added by Walter Elliot.

99 About the author and his work see W. J. Fischel, "David d'Beth Hillel: A Hitherto Unknown Jewish Traveller to India in the 19th Century," *Oriens*, Leiden, Vol. 10, 1957, pp. 240-247 and his study *In the Time of Harvest, Essays in Honor of Abba Hillel Silver*, New York-London, 1963, pp. 170-185.

100 For these quotations see *Travels*, l. c., pp. 116-123.

101 See above note 15.

102 H. Gundert, "Translation and Analysis of the Ancient Documents engraved on copper in possession of the Syrian Christians and Jews of Malabar," *Madras J. of Literature and Science*, 13, 1845, Vol. 1, pp. 115-146, Vol. 2, pp. 11-14.

103 F. W. Ellis, "Analysis of the Copper-Grant in the Possession of the Jews," *Madras J. of Literature and Science*, 12, 1844, pp. 1-17.

On the basis of these two versions of Gundert and Ellis, Mr. A. L. Burnell published his own version which was accompanied by a bronzed reproduction of the original inscription.¹⁰⁴

In 1894 E. Hultzsach published a new and probably final translation of the copper plate inscription based on the research done by Gundert, Ellis, and others with his own additional explanation and corrections—a text which has served ever since as a basis for works of a general nature on India during the twentieth century.¹⁰⁵ All subsequent publications on the Cochin Jews have made use of the results achieved by these scholars and have copied the text of the inscription as achieved by Hultzsach and his predecessors.

The facsimiles of the copper plate inscription, first brought to the notice of

Europe by Anquetil du Perron in 1771, then around 1780 by A. s'Gravezande and in 1806 by Buchanan have been supplanted by the meticulous critical work carried out by experts in the field during the nineteenth century, thus affording a sound basis for the understanding of these remnants of the Jewish antiquities in Cochin.

* * *

This historical-critical survey may have indicated the great efforts made throughout the last two and a half centuries to acquaint the Western world with these Jewish antiquities of Cochin. During the 20th century, the interest in them did not diminish as attested by the flow of publications by casual visitors as well as serious scholars.¹⁰⁶

104 A. C. Burnell, *The Original Settlement Deed of the Jewish Colony at Cochin*, *Indian Antiquary*, Bombay, 1874, Vol. 3, pp. 333-334.

105 E. Hultzsach, *Epigraphia Indica*, Calcutta, 1899, Vol. 3, p. 69.

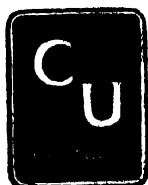
106 Among those from the second half of the 19th century, mention ought to be made of Benjamin II (1850), J. Sapir (1860), S. Reinman (1884), E. N. Adler (1906), E. Thurston (1909), C. Z. Kloetzel (1938), and D. Mandelbaum (1938).

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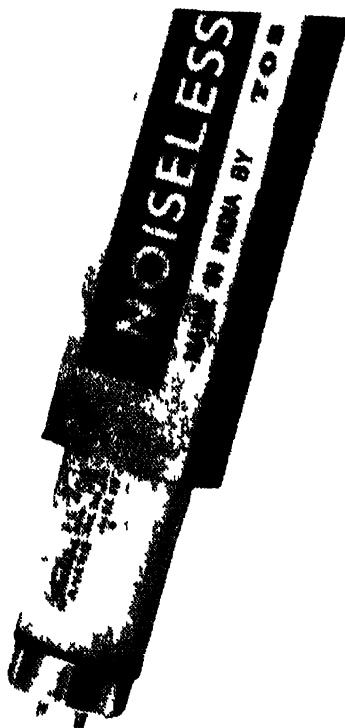
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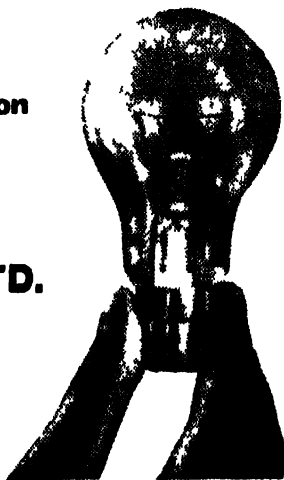
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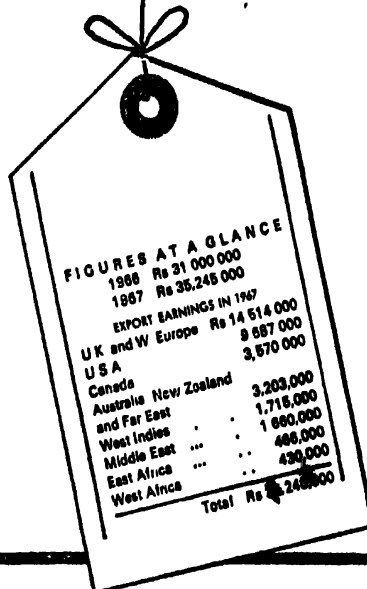
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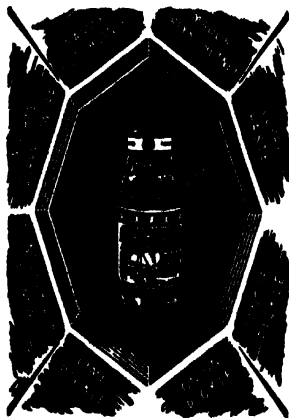
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