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## **EDITOR'S NOTE**

The Journal is maintaining its all-India character in terms of contributions to it from various parts of the country. I would like to thank our referees for sparing their valuable time for us.

Most of the papers are well researched. But, a few of them deserve special mention here. They are contributions by Ms. Nisha Thakur, Dr. M. Valliammal, Mr. J. Murugan, Mr. Louis Musharay and Dr. S. Babu. I am pleased to mention here that there are five papers on Medieval Indian History this time! We need to continue this.

This time, we are carrying four Book Reviews. They are by Dr. B. Pramila, Dr. S. Ananthakrishnan, Prof. Bishwambhar Jha and Prof. S.N. Arya. We thank them sincerely and request other readers also to contribute to this section so that we could strengthen it.

We are requesting all future contributors to send Abstracts and Key Words along with their papers so that we could implement this tradition too!

I appeal to Senior Professors through this note to encourage their research scholars and like minded persons to contribute much more high quality papers. However, I am happy to record here that some of them are already supporting us.

I would like to sincerely thank Dr. Nanditha Krishna, President, The C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation, Mrs. Malathy Narasimhan, Mr. Narayan Onkar, Dr. V. Sandhiyalakshmi, Dr. G. Balaji, Mr. R. Sathyanarayanan, Mrs. Pitchu Lakshmi and all other members of the Foundation who have helped in bringing out this Journal.

**Dr. G. J. SUDHAKAR**





# **ANCIENT HISTORY**



# 1

## BUDDHA IN KUSHANA ART

**Dr. V. Sandhiyalakshmi**

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Buddha as an icon is extremely interesting and has brought numerous studies and discussions. Buddha's aesthetic representation as an icon has evoked immense feelings of awe and reverence. This paper tries to study the Buddha during the early Kushana period with some sculptures that have not been studied before.

The Kushana art of Mathura earned its fame in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in producing hundreds of excellent Buddhist images that were installed in Mathura and other regions. Buddha was represented in symbolic form before the Kushana period. But Brahmanic icons had already evolved and gained popularity at Mathura and paved the way for Buddhists to introduce image worship. The Parkham *yaksha* image served as a model, hence all standing Buddha and Bodhisattva figures are in the *yaksha* style<sup>1</sup>, but devoid of ornamentation.

Mathura was the first centre of Buddhist art in India. Kanishka contributed to the growth of Buddhist culture. Buddha statues of the second and third year of Kanishka are extant; it is almost certain that Buddha statues of Mathura date from the first half of the second century CE.

In the early Kushana art of Mathura, Buddha was represented both in seated and standing form. The circular halo

is carved with a scalloped border and emerges from the back of his shoulders. Sometime the halo is filled with foliage of the Bodhi tree.

He stands with two arms, the right hand held slightly sideways in *abhaya* pose, with a cushion decoration between the back of the right hand and the shoulder, and the left hand resting at the waist, holding the hem of the *sanghâti*. The hair is arranged into topknot in the form of a coil of hair (*kapardin*) in the style of a snail shell instead of a cranial bump (*ushnisha*). The *urna* is indicated by a raised dot between the eyes, which are wide open. The expression on the face indicates a smile, while some stiffness is suggested by the posture. The ear lobes though elongated do not touch the broad shoulder. The chest is prominent and the navel is deep.

The thin, diaphanous robe is worn over the left shoulder, leaving the right shoulder bare. The lower garment reaches below the knee and a waist band is fastened around the waist supporting the lower garment, with two fillets from the band hanging on the thigh.

## **Buddha in Seated Form**

Buddha is seated in *padmasana* on a throne supported by a pair of seated lions considered to be of Scythian origin. Kushanas introduced the throne in the shape of a chair with a high back and arms and seat supported by lions, showing the royal insignia. This type of throne is very similar to its Iranian counterpart<sup>2</sup>. Symbols indicative of his greatness (*mahâpurusalaksana*) which have been marked on the body and soles of his feet are *svastika*, *chakra* and *triratna*. There are additional thick pleats on the left shoulder. Two celestials hovering in the sky are depicted in the upper part of the halo

and acolytes flanking the deity. The right hand is raised in *abahaya mudra* and the left hand is clenched as a fist and rests on the thigh.

There are some important sculptures which are worth consideration:

The earliest standing stone images of Buddha from Mathura now in the Mathura museum (plates 1 & 2). In these images faint traces of schematic lines are seen in the lower garment whereas in image (plate 2) a scarf is suspended on the left wrist.



Plate -1



Plate -2



Plate -3

The stone image of a seated Buddha from Mathura is now in Kimbell Art Museum, Texas, USA (plate 3) belongs to early Kushana period. An inscription on the pedestal says that the image belongs to the first century CE. (probably 80-82 CE). The upper part of the halo and the top knot *kapardin* are broken in this sculpture. Here Buddha is seated on a throne supported by a pair of seated lions. In between the lions there is a standard of *dharmachakra* which is flanked by a devotee on each side which is similar to the sculpture at Kolkata Museum.

Two identical red stone sculptures of seated Buddha from Mathura were carved in second century CE. One is now in the National Gallery of Australia (plate 4) and another is in Singapore's Asian Civilization Museum (plate 5). These sculptures were smuggled away to Australia and not yet returned<sup>3</sup>. In these sculptures, the lion pedestals are not seen.



Plate - 4

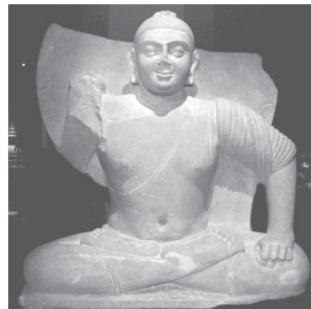


Plate -5

## Conclusion

The images that are depicted during the Kushana period show a mature development of representing the identity and evolution of the icon. The Buddha statues of Mathura in the succeeding Gupta period inherited the technique from the Kushana period. Mathura in the Kushana period was the origin of the Buddha statue in India. It marks an important phase in the history of Buddhist art.

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## **SOME RICE COOKING RITUALS AS GLEANED FROM ANCIENT INDIAN LITERATURE AND CULTURE**

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**Abstract** - Rice is one of the natural foods used by mankind from ancient times. Traditionally, rice has been revered and has several rituals associated with its sowing, transplanting, harvesting, cleaning, cooking and other procedures. Some of these have been described in ancient Indian literature while other rituals and customs have been handed down through generations by the people working in the fields and also by folklore. Although there exist several customs with regard to transplanting, harvesting and so on, the present paper focuses especially on rice cooking rituals as gleaned from literature beginning from Vedic times and also tribal beliefs. These rituals are based on various rice preparations made for various religious ceremonies.

### **Introduction**

Rice is the most widely consumed food in many parts of the world especially in parts of Asia. The ancient people of India evolved a system of identification and classification of the traditional varieties of rice based on colour, shape, size, appearance, aroma, taste, duration, season, and place. The varieties of rice were named based on customs, plant height, mode of tillering, season, period of flowering, grain shape, size, duration, medicinal



use, grain quality, smell, morphological appearance, physiology, taste and so on<sup>1</sup>. Since Vedic times, there have been several rituals and folklore customs regarding rice that have been discussed in the present paper.

## Rice Customs in Vedic and Epic Periods

Rice has been used since Vedic times. The *Yajurveda Samhita*<sup>2</sup> mentions five varieties of rice like *Krishnavrihi*, *Shuklavrihi*, *Ashudhanya*, *Haayana*, and *Mahavrihi*. Several rice preparations and rituals were in vogue in the Vedic period. One of them is *Sthalipaka*, (cooking in a pot). It is a form of sacrifice in which rice or barley was cooked in a dish and used as food. It is sacred to Agni and called *Paarvana* for its first performance on the first Full Moon day after marriage by couples. The *Bharadwaja Srauta Sutra*<sup>3</sup> [VIII.13.1.13 – 14] mentions about *Odana* which is rice cooked and served to relatives of sacrificer and also consumed by all priests. *Charu* was a porridge prepared from unpounded rice or barley grains, cooked in water with butter or milk mixed with it and served in a plate [*Baudhayana Srauta Sutra*<sup>4</sup> II.19]. The *Apastamba Srauta Sutra*<sup>5</sup> speaks of *Brahmaudana* – a mess of rice cooked for Brahmins, four plates of rice cooked in four measures of water [5.5.4.6]. The *Katyayana Srauta Sutra*<sup>6</sup> [20.14] adds that it is cooked also for the priests, king and his four wives and their 400 maidens. The *Apastambha Grihya Sutra*<sup>7</sup> [22.9] mentions *Anvashtaka* ceremony [the 9<sup>th</sup> day of the *Ashtaka* rites] in which boiled rice, *payasa*, boiled rice with sesamum (*krisara*), *Dadhimantha* are offered to the manes and to the female ancestors liquor (*sura*) and scum of boiled rice are given. The *Gobhila Grihya sutra*<sup>8</sup> states that *krisara* (a mess of boiled rice mixed with sesamum seeds covered with ghee, cooked on a dish) to be cooked and eaten by wife. [2.7.9 – 11]. The *Griha Medhiya* is a rite mentioned by the *Apastambha Srauta Sutra*<sup>9</sup> [8.9.8 – 9] wherein a *charu* is boiled in milk and offered to the *Marut*

Gods in evening at *Shakamedha* Sacrifices. The *purodasha* was a large rice cake. *Apupa* was a round cake of barley or rice flour baked in clarified butter on slow fire, honey added to sweeten it. There were also rice cakes made of rice flour called *pishtaka* used in Vedic times.

*Payasa* (sweet rice preparation with milk) is mentioned in the *Valmiki Ramayana*<sup>10</sup> and *Vyasa's Mahabharata*. Rice balls with curds, sesamum were also offered as *pindas* as part of the rice rituals to appease the deceased ancestors. The *Mahabharata*<sup>11</sup> mentions about king Nala [*Vana Parva, Nala Damayanti* episode] who was an expert in culinary arts. The text '*Pakadarpana*'<sup>12</sup> attributed to King Nala speaks of 8 *doshas* in rice and also mentions qualities of rice and various rice preparations like *payasanna* [*Prakarana* IV], ghee rice preparations [*Prakarana* VII].

## Rice Rituals in Post-Vedic Texts

Several Post-Vedic texts also mention various types of rice and associated customs. Panini in the *Ashtadhyayi*<sup>13</sup> mentions *Sali and Vrihi*, In (VII.3.1), he mentions the *Shashtika* rice that ripens in 60 days. Kautilya's *Arthashastra*<sup>14</sup> [II.24.16] mentions two new varieties of rice. The *Sushruta Samhita*<sup>15</sup> mentions 60 varieties of rice [Chp. 46] named after their grain morphological features. The *Charaka Samhita*<sup>16</sup> also adds to several such rice varieties [*Sutra Sthana*.27]. The *Ashtanga Sangraha of Vagbhata*<sup>17</sup> [VII.3 – 12] also mentions several varieties of rice. *Dandi's Dashakumaracharita*<sup>18</sup> [Chp. VI] mentions the story of *Shaktikumara* who gave 1 *prastha* (a measure) of rice to a lady Gomini and asked her to cook it. The text describes how well she managed the 1 *prastha* rice given to her and cooked a sumptuous meal for him. Similarly,

the Kannada text '*Battisa Puttalika Kathe*'<sup>19</sup> based on narration of 32 puppets to King Bhoja narrates the episode of a person who was served rice and other foods in a remote land by a maiden. After the cooking was by her was over, he was served the food and by just tasting the rice, he could identify that it had been cooked using some logs of the cremation ground. Nearly 400 traditional varieties of rice had been in vogue during the olden days in Tamil Nadu<sup>20</sup>.

During *Sankranti* festivals (January – February) known as the harvesting season, *Pongal* rice is prepared in several parts of Tamil Nadu and offered with *dhal* and turmeric to the Sun God. Large quantities of boiled rice coloured red and yellow by mixing *kumkum* and saffron are also offered to crows<sup>21</sup>.

### **Rice rituals and customs in Tribal Folklore**

Several such customs are preserved by various Indian tribal societies. In several tribal communities, rice mixture was prepared with milk or water. Boiled rice was generally eaten with curds, sesamum, butter, *mudga* beans, meat, tubers and fruits. In parts of Kashmir, rice is eaten boiled with meat and vegetable curry along with salt and other pulses<sup>22</sup>. There exist various rice harvesting rituals all over the country that not much have been documented. When paddy ripens, on an auspicious day, the corn is reaped. In Western Orissa, a festive day is observed known as *Nuakhia* (day of taking new rice). Five handfuls of corn sheaves are venerated as Goddess Lakshmi and kept separately in a barn till reaping year is over<sup>23</sup>. In parts of Kerala, paddy is brought from the temple or from the paddy fields. The new paddy, with its leaves taken out is carried into the house in a procession and placed on a plantain leaf with a lamp lit to its right. Offerings of coconuts and sweets are made to Ganapati

and leaves and ears of paddy are attached to various parts of the house with a piece of cowdung, agricultural implements and even to trees followed by a sumptuous feast. *Puthari* (meal of new rice) is also given<sup>24</sup>. At a *Rona* (Oriya cultivator) wedding, the priest who officiates ties to the ends of the cloths of the bridal couple a new cloth to which betel leaves, areca nuts, 7 grains of rice are placed. At end of marriage rites on third day, the rice is examined to see if it is in a good state of preservation and its condition is regarded as an omen for good and evil. During funeral rites, some tribal communities have the practice of throwing coloured rice grains and also white rice over the corpse. The *Pulayam* (agrestic slaves) of Cochin go in procession to temple of Goddess during *Kathiru* festival and scatter packets of palmleaves containing handfuls of paddy (unhusked rice) rolled up in straw among the crowds.

The spectators scramble to obtain them and carry them home to hang it in front of houses for it is believed that their presence will promote prosperity of the family<sup>25</sup>. Several aged persons in various parts of Tamil Nadu and Kerala attest to various rice cooking customs. In ancient days, fire was believed to be a living person which was invoked in sacrificial *attars* and regarded as a messenger of the god. Special types of wood were used to kindle the fire used to cook foods. In this regard, one may mention the various properties of waters heated by different kinds of wood such as those of trees like *Dhatri*, *Madhuka*, *Karkandu*, *Sallaki*, *Khadira Vata*, *Arjuna Palasha*, *Jambuka*, *Kapittha* as stated by *Sushena* in his *Ayurveda Mahodadhi*<sup>26</sup> [*Annapana Vidhi*].

Traditionally, one had to smear the earthen pot with *chunam* or ashes and place it on the fire with water. Rice was washed thoroughly and then a few grains of rice were waved thrice

around the fire chanting ‘*Om Agnaye Svaha*’ and then put into the pot for cooking. It is believed by aged women in parts of Kerala that one must stir the rice with a ladle after it is put in the pot else one begets dumb children<sup>27</sup>. However, such beliefs have not yet been fully recorded or its truth ascertained but, one must trace the relation of such beliefs with rice cooking. These may have to do something with such ritualistic rice cooking rituals practiced since Vedic times. Similarly, the rice after being cooked, the porridge gruel is collected and offered to cows and then a portion of it may be partaken by humans. The cooked rice is then offered to the household deity and then with a spoon of ghee, curry, curds and *dhal* to the crows as an offering to the *Pitrs* (departed ancestor) and then eaten by the household after this process. These rituals bring prosperity to the house.

## Conclusions

Rice cooking rituals have been practiced from time immemorial and have continued to this day. Although many of the ancient rituals associated with cooking, harvesting, transplanting rice have faded away, still literature and folklore abounds in their descriptions. As modern cooking is done with pressure cookers, microwave ovens and other devices, these ancient traditions of cooking are dying out as people cease to believe in these rituals and customs associated with cooking. These are giving rise to unknown unhygienic practices and a whole range of lifestyle food consuming habits which give rise to diseases that medical practitioners are unable to handle. It would be fruitful if one could document such rice cooking rituals from other ancient Indian literature, tribal folklore and local traditions so that they are preserved and handed down as knowledge to future generations.

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### 3

## **SOUL IN JAIN PHILOSOPHY AND DEVELOPMENT OF INDIAN SOCIETY IN THE SIXTH CENTURY BCE**

**Dr. Samarendra Narayan Arya**

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Vardhamana Mahavira (c. 599–527 BCE) was realistic reformer. He vehemently attacked Brahmanical religion and sacrifices through his moral teachings. He observed that the supremacy of the Brahmanas was distorting the society in the name of God. Hence, he questioned His existence.

Mahavira did not believe in the existence of God. He also refuted the idea that God created and controlled the whole universe<sup>1</sup>. As such man emancipation from suffering does not depend upon any such being. By living an austere life of purity and virtue man can escape the ills of life<sup>2</sup>. To him God was the highest, the noblest and the fullest manifestation of all the powers which lie latent in the soul of man<sup>3</sup>. It was all waste of time to recite the hymns or perform sacrifices. Killing of animals, birds or any other living beings could only quench the greed of the yajmani brahmanas. Mahavira put great stress on non-violence (ahimsa). To him, the great moral is non-injury (ahimsa) carried to an extreme degree. He professed that not only men and animals, but also plants, wind, fire and stones had souls. Even in animate objects, the soul is endowed with consciousness and to some degree it is hurt by bad treatment.

The theory of *atma* (soul) embodies all significant tenets of his teachings. The Jainas hold the view that the world is in existence from the very beginning and it will last for ever. It is made of the six elements viz. *Jiva (atma)*, *pudgal* (substance), *dharma*, *adharma*, *akasha* and *Kal* (time). These elements are virtually eternal and imperishable.

Soul (*atma*) is described in Jain canonical texts as colourless, smell-less, tasteless, formless, living eternal and permanent substance of the universe. Having attribute of consciousness the *atma* has different synonym words like *jiva* or *jivastikay*, *pana*, *bheya*, *satta*, *vinnu*, *ceye*, *jei*, *aya* etc.<sup>4</sup>. The soul is said to have pervaded *jiva* ( living beings )and as such it is not a subject of physical analysis. It attains consciousness of infinite modes of all kinds of knowledge, wrong knowledge and undifferentiated cognition or self awareness. It is worth mentioning that the equality of the soul ever consists right whether in elephant or in minor insect.

Soul being immortal, imperishable, unfathomable and impenetrable has not even the slightest connection with sorrow, torture, pain or destruction. It may be studied from eight points of view. When soul exists as substance, it is known as *dravyatma*. Soul having passion is called *kasayatma*. Soul endowed with activity is named as *yogatma*. When the soul is endowed with consciousness, it is called *upayogatma*. Further, the soul endowed with knowledge is called *jnanatma*. Soul endowed with self awareness is addressed as *darshanatma*. Soul in conduct is called *Charitatma*, and last but not the least the soul endowed with energy is known as *viryatma*<sup>5</sup>.

The *Bhagavatisutra* manifests that soul is *jnana* (right knowledge) in some respects and also *ajnana* (wrong knowledge),

but knowledge itself is invariably the soul, for consciousness (*upayoga*) is the attribute of soul<sup>6</sup>. The Jainas gave full and due importance to deeds and actions. In their belief, a man takes birth in a particular family only on the basis of his actions done in the last life. Actions of past life are so important as they determine even shape, complexion, caste etc. Rewards or punishments are also said to have been fixed by past actions. The Jainas believe that the soul is under the bondage of emotions and wealth, besides anger, greed, lust, infatuation, arrogance and envy. Bad feelings lead the soul to emotional bondage. Dirty thoughts when translated into actions misdirect the soul to bondage of dark elements. Noticeably, in Buddhism, the very intention (simple will of committing an evil action) is taken as an act itself<sup>7</sup>.

All the evils, however, enter through our senses and thus, affect the soul. In this way, the soul becomes dirty. The complete purity of soul is said to have depended on freedom from bondage of *maya* (dilusions and illusions wrapped over truth), but, the task is said to be too difficult. One is advised to profess constant endeavours to conquer one's passion which may remove the blemishes and enlighten the soul and lead one to better births and ultimately to deliverance.

Moreover, the path which leads to purification and ultimate liberation of the soul is, according to Mahavira, to arrest the inflow of *karman* by means of austere penance<sup>8</sup>. Penance is grouped into two parts, one external, comprising *anasana* (fasting), *avamodarika* (abstinence), *bhikshacarya* (collecting alms), *rasatyaga* (not to have dainty food), *kayaklesha* (mortification) and *pratisamlinata* (restraint of senses/ passions), and the other, internal comprising *prayashchita* (expiation of sins), *vinaya* (modest behaviour), *svadhyaya* (study of scriptures), *dhyana*

(meditation), and *utsarga* (giving up all attachments<sup>9</sup>. Important to add, expiation of sins is meant for purifying one's inner self,<sup>10</sup> thus enjoying mental peace and spiritual bliss.

Mahavira believes in two personalities of man, the physical and the spiritual. He takes the human physique as mortal and less important, and the spiritual as immortal and more important. The self mortification, the self imposed penances, fasting, all other forms of meditation may weaken the body which is of course, never a matter of anxiety, but, on the contrary, they positively strengthen the spirit. The spirit, being strengthened becomes immune of all passions and ultimately helps the man to attain a stage of high position i.e. domain of real knowledge, real destination and the righteous *karman*. The body perishes at the time of death and the spirit gets out of that cage and attains perfect satisfaction. This satisfaction moves to eternal peace, i.e. *moksha* (emancipation) and now ends the circle of life and death. The ineffectiveness of *karma* upon spirit is another name of *moksha*, the ultimate objective of all Jainas.

Mahavira preaches that knowledge could be acquired by following *triratna* (three great means). These are, right knowledge, right faith and right conduct. And all are concerned with Tirthankaras. The teachings of Tirthankaras are to be followed with complete faith in them. The moment a man becomes free from earthly bondage, his soul becomes pure to its supreme degree, and he attains salvation.

The Jain philosophy based upon reality and morality made it clear that violent acts in the form of killing of animals and birds and performance of *yajna* rituals on the name of god are all meaningless. Purity of heart and true character could only develop a society. The development of sixth century BC Indian

society is attributed to influence and teachings and principles of Vardhamana Mahavira.

In order to make the soul pure and free from all worldly requirements, Jainism lays five great vows (*pancha anuvrata*) to be observed by its all followers, viz. *ahimsa* (non-injury to anyone), *satya* (speaking the truth), *asteya* (not to steal anything), *aparigraha* (not to gather anything for future), and *brahmacharya* (to observe celibacy). At any rate, comprehending and renouncing the causes of sin is a vital issue for the purity of soul<sup>11</sup>. The ascetic is required to hold in his mind *samavega* (desire for liberation) and *nirvega* (disregard for worldly objects) which reach him the divine destination<sup>12</sup>.

To Mahavira, the soul becomes powerful on observing fast and penance. This exercise may lead one to death, which is called 'sanlekha '. But this is considered as the most religious and pious act and a this intends to give strength to the soul and keep the lower matter subdued<sup>13</sup>.

The theory of rebirth is also observed in Brahmanical religious canon. The present birth is considered to be the result of the past actions (*karman*) and the future birth is conceived as the outcome of the present ones. The cycle of re-birth could be broken by absolute surrender to the divine with whole hearted devotion<sup>14</sup>. But in Jainism surrender to Tirthankaras with all divine and moral activities, one attains salvation. Interestingly, Buddha did not believe in the existence of *atma* but he believed that wisdom or spirit of a man enables him to take re-birth and noticeably, rightful activities could lead one to absolute emancipation.

To be more elaborate, Buddha believed in rebirth, but not in the sense that a soul enters a body after the end of the body,

but rebirth means another birth that follows the previous one, just as a lamp can be lighted by another lamp and yet, the light of both cannot be identified; in the same way, despite cause and effect relations between the two, the two births are very different and must be identical<sup>15</sup>.

Mahavira was the first leading pioneer of the sixth century BC who removed the curtain of ignorance and thus, demonstrated the right path to the people. He brought about a new idea of equality and fraternity in the society. People realised that Vedic religion had lost its informal character, and formalities had only increased in the name of costly religion. It was also realised that sacrifices in big ceremonies like *Ashvamedha*, *Rajasuya* etc. were against humanity and morality. More and more emphasis upon austerity than meditation by Lord Mahavira made it clear that this methodology could only make the soul absolutely pure and free from all bondages and only then the goal of salvation could be achieved.

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## SOME RARE DEPICTIONS OF NAIGAMESHA

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In an unpublished gold coin of Huviska (140 CE), son of Kanishka the Kushana king, there is a goat-faced deity (plate 1), facing forward, with a halo behind his head. He holds a standard surmounted by a rooster and fillet in his right hand, the left resting on the hilt of a sword tied to his waist- girdle. He is clad in a long-flowing *dhoti* and boots, a combination of the Indian and foreign or Kushana warrior. He wears a turban or top knot with fillets or side locks flowing out from the sides. The turban or top knot is often used in Kushana art to indicate an Indian noble. He is adorned with bracelets on his wrists and biceps, and his cloak is held by a large double clasp on his chest. This is Naigameya, a little-known form of Skanda or Karttikeya. The depiction is identical to a Mahasena coin of Huvishka, with the same legend, but with the difference of the ram's head.



Plate -1



Sometimes he is a demon with the head of a goat, also called Naigamesha. The etymology of the word is uncertain, but Monier Williams, in his *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, says that it consisted of two elements: *neja* from the root *nij* to wash and *mesa*, a ram. In fact, the word denoted a ram on which the child was seated and bathed, thus purified of the evil eye of the *graha* (planet).

The name Nejamesa occurs in one of the khilas of the *Rig Veda*, and has been conceived as a son-granting deity<sup>1</sup>: “O Nejamesa, fly away and fly hither again bringing a beautiful son; to my wife, who is longing for a son, grant thou an embryo, and that a male one.” In the *Atharva Veda*, he is supposed to seize or injure children<sup>2</sup>. This Nejamesa is none other than the god Naigameya. Naigameya, who is ram-faced and holds a child, is a friend of the god Guha. In the *Asvalayana Grihya Sutra*, he is addressed by persons desirous of sons<sup>3</sup>. Nejamesa is addressed in the sutras as a son-granting god. Thus, in the later Vedic period, Nejamesa was the principal son-granting god and was, therefore, immensely popular.

But in the *Paraskara Grihya Sutra* (1.8.2), Naigameya appears as a demon harassing infants<sup>4</sup>. In early Jaina works like the *Neminatha Carita* (7th Canto) and the *Kalpa Sutra*, the god Naigamela or Harinagamesi appears both as a son-granting and an embryo-transferring deity<sup>5</sup>. According to the *Neminatha Carita*, Krishna once invoked the god Naigamesa to obtain a child equal to Pradyumna for his consort Satyabhama, and Krishna’s prayer was granted. In the *Sushruta Samhita* (a work probably of the 1st century CE)<sup>6</sup>, Naigamesa, Nejamesa, Jaina Naigamesa or Haririagamesi and Naigameya of the great epic and the puranas is invoked as a protector of children.

In Jaina religious art he is depicted as a figure either with the head of a ram. The sculpture depicting Naigamesha with female figures and a small child refers to the legend of the exchange of the embryo of Devananda and Trishala<sup>7</sup>. According to the *Kalpa Sutra*, Mahavira took the form of an embryo in Brahmani Devananda's body. Thinking that an *arhat* ought not to be born in a Brahmanical family, Indra directed Harinegameshi, the divine commander, to transfer Mahavira from the body of Devananda to Trishala, a Kshatriya woman who was also with child. Harinegameshi successfully carried out Indra's order. In Jaina mythology Naigameshin is regarded also as a deity of procreation. The ancient Jainas represented Naigameshin in both male and female forms, presiding over child birth.

Like the Jaina god Harinagamesi who has the power to transform himself, in the *Mahabharata*, Agni transforms himself into the goat-faced Naigamesa who is followed by children and begins to gratify him with toys<sup>8</sup>. He is associated with the *nyagrodha* or banyan tree and the sixth day of the fortnight (*shashthi*) is his auspicious *tithi*. This goat-faced, son-protecting god (*balam palayita devo*) is the same as *chagavaktro bahuprajah* or Naigameya of the *Mahabharata* <sup>9</sup>(III.225.28), who, says the epic, is but another aspect of Skanda-Karttikeya, and is described as his *prishthaja* (brother). The *Mahabharata* further advises mothers who desire children to worship Skanda in the form of Naigameya<sup>10</sup>. It is only in the *Mahabharata* that Naigamesha is definitely identified with Skanda-Karttikeya, although the name appears in the Rig and Atharva Vedas.

Thus, from a fairly early period the god Neamesa or Naigamesha or Naigameya was universally regarded not only as a son-granting deity but also as a guardian-protector of children. Even today, in many parts of India, Karttikeya is worshipped by barren women.

He was a very popular deity in the Kushana period. A large number of stone and terracotta sculptures that have been found. Several notable sculptures of the goat faced deity are found in the early Kushana art of Mathura. The most remarkable is the inscribed *torana* relief found at the Jaina Kankali Tila mound<sup>11</sup>. The goat-faced Naigamesha is seated on a pedestal with his face turned to the right, as if addressing another person, whose image has been lost. To his left there are three standing female figures and a nude male child close to his knee (pl. 2).



Plate -2

The inscription describes the deity as ‘Bhagavat Nemeso’, (the worshipful Nemeso). The present inscription is a variant of the name of the deity Harinegamesi in the *Kalpa Sutra*, a goat-headed god with his horns and ears falling on the nape and shoulders. He has a pointed mouth with prominent eyes.

Naigamesha is a form of Karttikeya, the son of Agni, who is depicted with the head of a goat, or riding a goat or a chariot pulled by goats. The association of the ram’s head with Naigamesha is derived from his association with Agni.

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## COMPASSION TOWARDS ANIMALS - THE TAMIL TRADITION

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The principles of justice and compassion towards animals are an essential part of Tamil literature and culture. Tamil literature is full of stories of compassion and ethical requirements of kindness towards animals. The great philosopher, Tiruvalluvar, who probably lived between the third and first centuries BCE, has studded the *Tirukkural* with admonitions of kindness towards animals and forsaking of eating meat. Tiruvalluvar said

*Manuyir ombi arulalvarku illenba tannuyir anjum vinai*

“The wise say that the evils which his soul would dread will never come upon the man who exercises kindness and protects the life of other creatures” (*Tirukurral*<sup>1</sup>, 244).

*Kollan pulalai maruthaanaik kaikooopi Ella uyirum thozhum*

“All creatures will join hands together and worship him who has never taken away life nor eaten flesh” (*Tirukurral*, 260).

*Onnaenatan unarndavai tunnamai Vendum pirangan seyal*

“Let not man consent to do those things to another which he knows will cause sorrow” (*Tirukurral*, 316). (Those who have realised what is suffering must refrain from inflicting it on others). (*Tirukurral*, 32. 316).

And, as a warning,

*Noyellam noyseydar melvam noyseyyar Noyinmai vendu pavar*

“Sorrow will come upon those who cause pain to others; therefore, those who desire to be free from sorrow should give no pain to others” (*Tirukurral*, 320).

Thus the ethical attitude confirming a distinct morality towards animals was stated in the earliest literature of the Tamils. The *Tirukurral* extols non-violence towards all life and avoidance of eating meat. In *Tirukurral*, 251 he says “How can one, who eats the flesh of others to swell his flesh, show compassion?” Thus vegetarianism is regarded as essential for a good person and ruler to show compassion.

## Compassion

There are several stories of compassion towards animals which are narrated in Tamil literature and which are held up as examples of a moral life.

One day, Shibi - a Chola king - sat in the garden of his palace. Suddenly, a wounded dove fell on his lap. He handed over the dove to his servants and ordered them to give it proper treatment. A few minutes later, a hunter appeared on the scene searching for the dove which he had shot. He realised that the king was in possession of the dove. He requested the king to hand over the dove. He was also desirous of dissuading the hunter from his policy of hunting animals. He cut a portion of his own flesh which was equal to the weight of the dove and gave it to the hunter. The hunter was abashed by this act of the king

and regretted his violent actions. This story is found in the *Silappadikāram*<sup>2</sup>.

There is another story about a Chola King named Manun̄ḍi Cholan. The king was famous for meting out justice. He had installed a bell in his palace. Any aggrieved party who wanted justice could ring this bell. The king would then hear the case and deliver justice. One day, it so happened that the king's only son, while riding a chariot, knocked down a calf and the calf died. Seeing this, the mother cow went to the palace and rang the bell of justice. The king went out of the palace and was surprised to see an animal ringing the bell. However such was the king's devotion to justice that he followed the animal to the spot where the calf had been killed. Grasping the situation, the king ordered that his own son should be run over by a chariot so that proper justice could be rendered. This story is found referred in *Silappadikāram* (20:54-55): *aavin kadaimani uhuneer nenjusudattan arumperar puthalvanai aaliyan madithon*<sup>3</sup>. This incident is also referred to in the *Puranānūru* (37, 39, 43, 46)<sup>4</sup>.

The king defends the whole world; and justice, when administered without defect, defends the king (*Tirukkural* -547); Heaven is the help of the helpless (*Palamoli* - 3). The *Tirukkural* (72) states that "Those who are destitute of love appropriate all they have to themselves; but those who possess love consider even their bones as belonging to others." This statement appears in the *Kamba Rāmāyanam* (65:7 & 7:355); *Kalingāthupparani* (93); *Rajaraja Cholan Ulā* (5-6); *Kulothunga Cholan Ulā* (10-11)<sup>5</sup>.

In *Puranānūru* (9), it is stated that whenever the warriors prepare themselves for battle, they have to make an announcement as follows: "Since the war is going to commence on such and

such a day, cows, priests, animals, couples who have no issue, ladies, patients, and aged people are asked to go safe places<sup>6</sup>.”

In another legend (*The Four Hundred Songs of War and Wisdom*, p.91), the Tamil Velir King named Vaiyaavik Kopperum Pekan was renowned as one of the seven great patrons and philanthropists. The great poet Paranar was a contemporary of this King. The poet has sung about King Pekan. His poem speaks of an incident that occurred when the king was touring his country. The king saw a peacock shivering in the rain. Being compassionate, he immediately removed his gold laced silk robe and wrapped it around the peacock (*Puranānūru*, 145 of Paranar). “With your elephants in rut, with your proud horses, with your fame that does not fade, Pekan, you who gave your cloak to the dark mindless peacock, because it was shivering in the cold”<sup>7</sup>

The Sangam Tamil poet Uruththirankannan also says that the parrots in Brahmins’ houses recite the Vedas. They repeat it because the Brahmins recite it every day (*Perumpānārruppadaḷ*, 300-301).

When three great Tamil kings laid siege to King Pari’s 300 towns, Kapilar trained the parrots to bring grains into Pari’s territory. The poets Avvaiyar and Nakkirar were all praise for Kapilar for this help (*Akam*, 303 and 78).

*Narrinai* gives the information about parrots calling a girl in affectionate terms even after she left home. The poem is about a girl who has eloped with her lover. The girl’s mother says that love is beautiful. However, when she sees her daughter’s friends playing with their toys, tears come to her eyes. The parrot also calls for the girl (*Narrinai-143*)<sup>8</sup>.



*Ainkurunūru* (391), *Kurunthokai* (210) say that “Crows are attributed with the power of predicting arrival of guests. If the crows caw, it is certain guests will come to the house. I attribute it to their strong sense of smell. When women make special dishes for guests, the good smell spreads and attracts the crows. They are intelligent enough to call their friends to share the food.” Crows are used as symbols for sharing in Tamil literature<sup>9</sup>.

“Crows do not conceal their prey, but will call out to other crows to share the food. Wealth will be with those who show a similar disposition towards their relatives” (*Tirukkural*, 527).

The *Tirukkural* has two chapters with gems about compassion which have provided guidance to Tamils over the ages:

“The gains of compassion are most precious; material wealth is possessed even by the despicable” (*Tirukkural*, ch. 25, 241). “Pursue the virtuous path and have compassion; all spiritual quests lead to this companion” (*Tirukkural*, ch. 25, 242). “Those with their hearts filled with compassion will never enter a woeful world of darkness” (*Tirukkural*, ch. 25, 243). “The compassionate, who care for all other lives do not fear for their own lives” (*Tirukkural*, ch. 25, 244). “The fertile world which endows us with breathing air illustrates that there is no sorrow for the compassionate” (*Tirukkural*, ch. 25, 245). “There is no sorrow for the compassionate; all people who live on this fertile earth, endowed with air, are witnesses to this” (*Tirukkural*, ch. 25, 245). “Those who do evil, abandoning compassion, must have forsaken and forgotten the meaning of life” (*Tirukkural*, ch. 25, 246). “The poor do not possess this world; likewise, the uncompassionate do not inhabit the other world” (*Tirukkural*, ch. 25, 247). “Those who lack wealth may, one day, bloom; those who lack compassion are incorrigible, and are forever, doomed” (*Tirukkural*, ch. 25, 248). “The uncompassionate doing

a righteous deed is like the unwise finding true enlightenment” (*Tirukkural*, ch. 25, 249).” When you confront those meeker than you, think of yourself in front of a stronger person” (*Tirukkural*, ch. 25, 249)<sup>10</sup>.

“There exists this stupendous beauty called compassion; and therefore, the world exists (*Tirukkural*, ch. 58, 571). “ It is compassion that keeps the world functioning as it should; there are those who lack it, and they burden the earth (*Tirukkural*, ch. 58, 572). “Of what use is a tune that can’t suit any song? of what use are eyes, which have no compassion? ((*Tirukkural*, ch. 58, 573). “An eye that is not abound with compassion, what purpose is it serving on the face, feigning existence?” (*Tirukkural*, ch. 58, 574). “Eyes are adorned by compassion; but for it, they would be considered wounds (*Tirukkural*, ch. 58, 575). “Trees rooted to the land they resemble, those though born with eyes, don’t use them to be compassionate (*Tirukkural*, ch. 58, 576). “Those who lack compassion have no eyes; who truly have eyes can’t lack compassion (*Tirukkural*, ch. 58, 577). “The world belongs to those who do their duty unfalteringly, while being compassionate (*Tirukkural*, ch. 58, 578). “Being compassionate and patient, even with those who hurt us, is a quality, most admirable (*Tirukkural*, ch. 58, 579). “Even after seeing poison being poured, they will consume it and converse cordially, they who seek to be captivatingly civilized and compassionate (*Tirukkural*, ch. 58, 580)<sup>11</sup>.

Thus the tradition of compassion towards animals was an ancient tradition in Tamilnadu, on which future acts of compassion could be based.

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## 6

### **Buildings in Ajanta Paintings**

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Painting is a bridge to the past, reflecting how people lived. Painting is also a part of tangible material culture where human creations are termed as artefacts and help in understanding cultural values. The paintings of the ancient rock-cut caves of Ajanta exquisitely enshrine a compassionate view of the life styles and buildings of the Gupta age.

In the paintings of Ajanta, royal pavilions were raised on four cylindrical pillars decorated with golden festoons. The royal seat was placed under the canopy of the audience hall which was tastefully decorated. Even the houses of rich citizens were furnished with separate picture galleries and concert halls<sup>1</sup>. The outer views of the Ajanta paintings give us an idea about the buildings pattern. For example, the paintings in caves one, two and seventeen are the best examples of buildings. It is a way of transforming elements of the world into symbols where each has a distinct meaning and can also be manipulated<sup>2</sup>. Compared to sculpture, painting is easier to execute. The paintings of the Ajanta caves although based on Buddhist themes, yet send a secular message.

#### **A palace scene from the “Mahajanaka Jataka”**

In this painting, some girls are dancing on the right hand side. A guest is watching the dance on the left side of this painting. The hall of the guest portion is decorated with many cylindrical

pillars. Each pillar is decorated in three parts like top, bottom and centre. The pillars support the roof. Above the right side of the painting the end of the roof is decorated with zigzag designs in wood cut work. The top of the pillars have a pot- shaped design covered with a cork shape resembling bottles used for science experimental<sup>3</sup>.



Fig-1. A Palace scene from the “Mahajanaka Jataka” Ajanta Cave-I, 6<sup>th</sup> century CE.

#### **In another scene from the “Mahajanaka Jataka” <sup>4</sup>**

A man sits in the centre of the hall while other people are doing their work. The hall is decorated with beautifully jewelled stone work on the top portion of the pillars and red coloured round shaped pillars. The red coloured pillars are topped by a pot covered with an inverted lid. Above the pillars wooden beams support the roof.

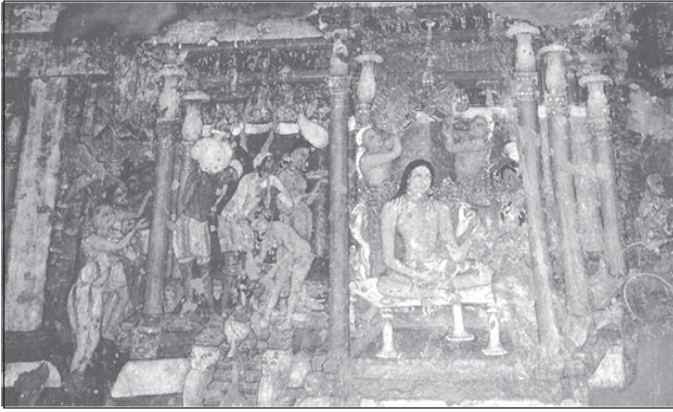


Fig-2. Jewelled Pillars hall scene from the “*Mahajanaka Jataka*” Ajanta Cave-I, 6<sup>th</sup> century CE.

### **A balcony and window scene of the Naga King Varuna**

This painting depicts the Naga Kings, Varuna. On the right side of the scene two girls are seen sitting on the balcony and

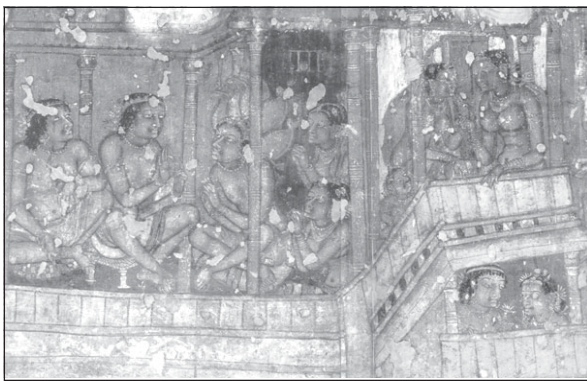


Fig-3 A balcony and window scene from the Naga King Varuna, Ajanta Cave-2, 5<sup>th</sup> century CE.

the four sides of the balcony have a small pillar. The pillars are topped by the pot which supports the beam. The pots do not have a lid. Below the balcony, a man and woman are displaying flowers. On the left side of the painting there is a pillared hall. Three boys and two girls are speaking behind the girls there is a square window, divided into three compartments. One compartment contains a small pot. The roof of this hall is covered with a flat roof and the end of the roof has zigzag wood cutting work.

### **Pillared hall with flat roof and window**

This *Vishvantara Jataka* painting gives more details about building styles. In the centre of the hall men and women are sitting on a bed. The four sides of the hall are covered with decorated pillars<sup>6</sup>. At the rear is a rectangular doorway which leads into a small room. The left side of the hall has a small square shaped window with two women watching out of it. The right side of the hall has a lattice window which is totally different from the left side window. The floor of the hall is red and the wall high. The roof is flat and the ceiling is decorated with



Fig- 4. Pillared hall with flat roof and window,  
*Vishvantara Jataka*, Ajanta CaveXVII, 5<sup>th</sup> century CE.



paintings. The ceiling is divided into squares. Each square of the ceiling is decorated with different types of flowers and birds (refer Fig-5).

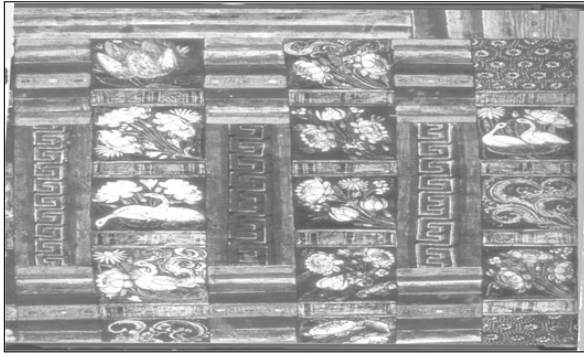


Fig-5. Ceiling Design, Ajanta Cave XVII,  
5<sup>th</sup> century CE.

### The Painting of the Elephant Nalagiri <sup>7</sup>

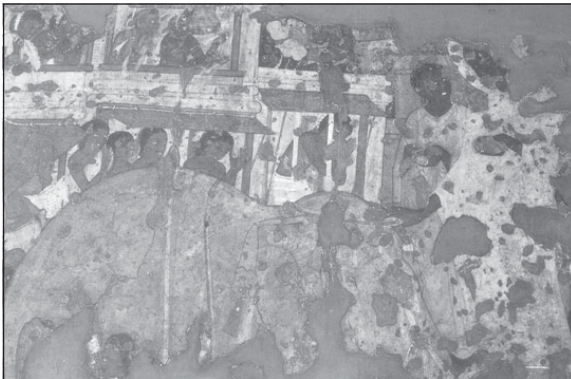


Fig-6. Elephant Nalagiri, Ajanta Cave XVII,  
5<sup>th</sup> century CE.



An elephant is depicted in the street. Some people are worshipping the elephant. Some others are watching the elephant from their balcony. Below the balcony some people are standing and watching the elephant from under a sloping roof, supported by pillars. This type of sloping roof is found even now in front of traditional houses.

### ***Sibi Jataka* wooden architecture inside of the roof<sup>8</sup>**

The *Sibi Jataka* depiction of wooden architecture is a very interesting feature of this painting. On the right side, some people are sitting on the red coloured floor. Above them is a vaulted roof, the inside of which roof is covered with split wooden beams.



Fig-7. *Sibi Jataka* depiction of wooden architecture,  
*Sibi Jataka*, Ajanta Cave XVII.

The roof is very high and has a big entrance. Above the doorway there is a wooden pole, which supports the roof.

### **The Royal Kitchen of King Saudasa<sup>9</sup>**

It is situated in a room that is at a height above the veranda. It is built in the shape of a small hut. This sloping roof of the kitchen is made of thatch. The roof is supported by bamboo poles on the four sides. On the right side of this painting is a rectangular doorway which is covered by a barrel shaped roof.



Fig-8. Royal Kitchen, Ajanta Cave-XVII, late 5<sup>th</sup> Century

Rock Paintings have played an important role in the art history of the world. Art provides us with many examples of original art and architecture. Architecture probably the earliest

known skill of mankind, where development began with primitive tools made up of stones and other crude metals and progressed to hi-tech tools like laser rays. This history, however, is not clearly unveiled till today. In this particular painting, the rich tradition alone is depicted.

Painting was made according to clearly laid down prescriptions. The erection of huge and lofty buildings and small houses would not be possible without a corresponding development in the technique of architectural engineering. High levels of engineering skills were developed in those days and magnificent buildings were the result.<sup>10</sup>.

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## ANCIENT COINAGE OF SOUTH INDIA

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The antiquity of coinage in India may go back to the seventh century BCE. on the basis of literature. Archaeologically, it cannot be dated earlier than the fifth century BCE. The study of coins is known as numismatics. It was recognized as a primary source and was utilized for historiography at least in India as early as the twelfth century by Kalhana, the chronicler of Kashmir. The coins have proved to be a great source of authentic information on Indian history. Thousands of these coins are in two categories: (1) Cast coins and (2) Punch-marked coins. The material used for punch-marked coins is gold, silver and copper, while others are cast in alloys. The practice of punch-marking on the gold coinage lingered long after its disuse on silver and copper.

The coins provide us with a thorough knowledge about the names and titles of the kings who ruled during that period. From the coins, we also come to know about art and its development. The figures of kings, gods and goddesses, along with a lion, tiger, axe, bow and many other articles were engraved on the coins. Coins ascertained the economic condition of the dynasty. They explain that more the coins of gold issued by a ruler, the economic condition of that country was good at that time. And as the number of the gold coins decreased and the distribution of the coins of silver and copper increased, the economic condition of the state was supposed to have deteriorated. So, the coins

communicated the character of the rulers, the economic status of the kingdom, religious beliefs of the rulers, foreign trade etc. Gold was probably used by many during and before the times of Gautama the Buddha. Several ruling dynasties issued coins of their own. By studying them, we obtain certain historical facts. Generally, the coins were issued on memorable occasions. Therefore, coins contained the details of the occasion and glorified the king concerned.

By South India, we mean here the whole peninsula to the south of the Narmada River and the Vindhya mountains. Since a major part of this peninsula was ruled by the Mauryas, the punch-marked coins spread in South India also. It might be exciting to know that the earliest find of the punch-marked coins was discovered in South India in 1800 CE. The *Viddhantaka* coins of the Mauryan period are the earliest coins in Andhra. Coins are available belonging to the pre-Satavahana period from Kotilingala and Dhulikatta of Karimnagar and Veerapuram of Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh. These coins are bearing the legends of Rano Gobhadra, Rano Samagopa, Siri Kamvaya, and Sri Narana. Others like Maharathis, Mahatalavaras and Sebakas are also known from their coins (*JA*. Vol. III, No.2. p.22). But the information is too meagre to reconstruct the dynastic history.

Andhra Satavahanas became independent about the year 230 BCE., and their rule lasted for four and a half centuries. They were the earliest royal family of the Deccan to issue an extensive series of coins of numerous types. One of the first scholars to study the relevant series was Sir Walter Elliot. Their coins of various types have been found in Malwa, on the banks of the Kaveri and Godavari rivers. They minted their money in four metals – silver, copper, potin and lead – the last of which is predominant. Satavahana coins are generally round and

sometimes square. The symbols on them are *Chaitya* (Buddhist chapel), bow, elephant, lion, horse, ship, portrait, tree and the so called Ujjain symbol<sup>1</sup>. Lion type is known on the coins of Satakarni (and Sati ?) and those of Pulumavi II and others. Horse type is common with the coins of many of the later members. Elephant and hill types are very common, particularly the former is the most dominating of all the types and issued by almost all the kings. Both the elephant and horse are important symbols of the sovereign authority of Indian kingship. Bull type coins were issued by Satavahana and Satakarni of the early members. All the silver portrait coins of the Satavahanas are circular. Cast out of double-mould as is evident by the unique lower part of a mould found from the Nagarjunakonda excavations<sup>2</sup>. Ship type coins were issued by Pulumavi II and Yajna Sri Satakarni and most of these coins are found in the coastal districts of Andhra and Tamilnadu. Homo type coins are found in Tripuri containing the legend *Ranosiri Satasa*. He is identified with Kumara Sati, one of the sons of Satakarni and Naganika and the younger brother of Vedisri. There are few rare types namely one coin with camel<sup>3</sup>, one coin with rhinoceros<sup>4</sup>, few coins with *chakra* and few coins with Lakshmi.

Satavahana coins in Andhradesa are found at several places like Bavikonda and Thotlakonda of Visakhapatnam district, Kondapur, Peddabankur, Kotilingala, Dhulikatta, Akkaram, Amaravati, Vaddamanu, Armoor and Sangraredy. Of all these finds, those of Kondapur and, Kotilingala are of special importance, as both the sites seem to be minting places. Among the antiquities found in Kondapur (situated on the right bank of the river Godavari), clay moulds for casting coins are found. In the excavations at Bavikonda Roman silver coins belonging to Augustus Caesar (31 BCE to 14 CE), Tiberius (114 to 37 CE) and one Satavahana lead coin have come to light. The Satavahana lead coin bears the figure of a lion on the obverse with an

indefinite legend (AR Series, no.71, p.7). A number of Satavahana coins have also been found during the excavations at Thotlakonda representing Satakarni, Siri Sata and Siriyana, having on the obverse a ship with two masts anchored on the shore and a tree with railing on its right. This is a unique discovery testifying to the maritime trade during the Satavahana period. At Kotilingala, several discarded coin pieces with fresh chippings are found. These coins can be assigned to sometime between 40 and 30 B.C. with regard to the symbols; (1) elephant with trunk hanging down and up raised (2) triangle-headed standard (3) Srivatsa (4) tree (5) Ujjain symbol, with and without pellets in the orbs and (6) *swastikas* are noticed on these coins. All these symbols were in vogue in those days on the punch-marked and inscribed coins found elsewhere in India<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, it is not easy with our present knowledge to attach any particular significance to the symbolism of these coins. The most remarkable of the Satavahana coins found in recent years, is a bilingual silver coin of Vasistiputras Satakarni<sup>6</sup>. On this coin, the name of the king is in two languages, one is Prakrit and other which may be called Desi. According to D.C. Sirkar, the language is apparently Telugu, which was in older times closer to Tamil than it is now and was the mother tongue of the Satavahanas and they wanted to exhibit their Dravidian character by using an admixture of that language and Sanskrit-Prakrit in the reverse legend on their coins in the northern most parts of their empire conquered from the Sakas<sup>7</sup>. It is learnt that some more bilingual coins of the Satavahana kings, including Gautamiputra Satakarni, have been discovered in the north western Deccan. These coins are a proof not only of the racial affinities and the original home of the Satavahanas but also of the existence of Telugu as a language independent of Sanskrit and Prakrit. This is further supported by the Telugu words found in the Gathasaptasati<sup>8</sup>.

Brahmagiri near Kolhapur and Chandravalli in Karnataka yielded coins of only the later Satavahanas<sup>9</sup>. Coins of the later Satavahanas are found at several places in the Deccan, the Tarahala hoard being one of the biggest<sup>10</sup>. It is reported that few thousands of coins of the latter kings are found at Peddabankur in the Karimnagar district. A hoard of some hundreds of round copper coins bearing the legend Ranoyana Satakanisa, Ranosiri Pulumavisa was found at Akkaram of Nalgonda district<sup>11</sup>. The excavations at Chandravalli have yielded silver coins of Augustus and Tiberius which coupled with the information gleaned from the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea throw welcome light on the commercial intercourse which South India had with the Greek-Roman world. Karsapana, Dramma, Pana Gadyana and Dinara are five coin denominations found in this period. Panini's *Astadhyayi* refers to the *Karsapana* which was the standard silver coin. Its sub-divisions like *ardha-karsapana*, *pada karsapana*, one-eight *karsapana*, (*dvimashako*) and a *masha* or one-sixteenth *karsapana*, *Kahapana* i.e. *karsapana* is frequently referred to in the early portions of the Buddhist *Tripitikas*. *Dinara*, a Greek coin, must have come to the country through trade. But we have no means to determine the exact value of these denominations. They, however, weighed respectively from 35 grams to 560 grams in the rate of 35, 70, 140, 250, 560 grams respectively<sup>12</sup>. Nahapana, the Saka King was defeated by Gautamiputra Satakarni and this is categorically known from the evidence of the Jogalthembi hoard containing a large number of Nahapana coins over struck by Gautamiputra Satakarni<sup>13</sup>. Gautamiputra Satakarni was one of the most victorious kings of the Satavahana family who issued horse type coins. His ten arched hill-coins suggest his rule over ten territories. The occurrence of two masted ships as a device of their coinage points to the maritime activities of the Satavahanas. During this period, Roman imperial coins of gold and silver were imported in considerable quantities



in the course of trade and circulated freely in the country. The small copper coins bearing Roman devices and legends might have been locally produced by foreign settlers. The presence of a large number of Roman coins in South India is an important index of the economic history of the region. The first major capital of the Satavahan<sup>1</sup>s was Dhanyakataka. Later on when their power extended to the north and west, they made Pratistana their capital in the Deccan. Ujjain Vidisha, Tripuri, Halhar etc. were their temporary headquarters, where coins of some of the early Satavahana kings have been discovered<sup>14</sup>.

The coins of the *Mahatalavara* officials of Satavahanas are found in Andhra Pradesh. On the basis of the obverse devices, these coins are divided into two main categories. The horse device coins are more numerous and are found mainly to the north of the Krishna River while the bull type coins are from Chandavaram, Vinukonda and Kalyandurg, all south of Krishna. On the basis of legends these coins can again be divided into two types. The first one having the legend *Mahatalavara* belongs to an earlier period while those with longer legends *Mahatalvarsa Majasamikasa Siva Sebaka* belong to later period, i.e. to the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE. On the obverse of Mahasenapati coins have *Swastika* in the centre and legend around. The reverse side has *Vaisa* and arrow devices but no legend. These coins come from the vicinity of Hyderabad and the area north of it. The Maharathi coins which are more numerous and vary some have legends and some are without them. They yield the names of at least six Maharathis – Sadakan Putasa, Maharathis Mahahathisa, Puta Sivala, Siva Mahahathisa, Khada Pori Hathisa and Sivakhadasa. A majority of these coins were found from Veerapuram (Kurnool district) in the north east Deccan area which might have been the original home of the Maharathis. Their coins bear an elephant on one side and Ujjain symbol with in a square on the other. The Mahagramika coins bear *Swastika*

on the obverse with legend and part of the Ujjain symbol on the reverse<sup>15</sup>. According to D. Raja Reddy Talavara, Rathi or Maharathi and Mahagramika were not the names of dynasties but official designations.

Another ruling family is that of Sada, whose coins have been found in excavations at Vaddamanu in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh. Their coins bear a lion facing right on one side, and a six-arched hill with some small associate symbols enclosed in a double-lined square, on the other. The rulers were Mahasada, Sivamakasada and Asakasada. A ruler called Raja Sebaka, belonging to the Deccan, is known from some stray copper coins. The coins bear on one side a bull or elephant to the right; the other side has a double – lined Srivatsa and nandipada placed side by side.

Ikshvakus in the northern part of Andhra were the feudatories of the Andhra Satavahanas. Ikshvakus imitated the Andhra potin coins, having an elephant on one side and the Ujjain symbol on the other. These coins are somewhat crude and cannot be attributed to any particular ruler.

Hoard of Vishnukundi coins were found at several places in Andhradesa including Yelesvaram, Bhongiri taluk of Nalgonda district, Sultanabad taluk of Karimnagar district and Keesaragutta in Rangareddy district. Vishnukundis were influenced by the Satavahanas in minting of coins. The coins discovered at Yelesvaram are of an alloy of copper and zinc, bearing a vase-lion symbol. The coins from Nalgonda and Karimnagar districts are of copper and round in shape. These coins show a lion inside a circle on the obverse and a vase or *kalasa* flanked by a lamp stand on either side inside a rayed circle on the reverse<sup>16</sup>. During the course of excavations at the complex on the top of Keesaragutta, many Vishnukundi coins, bearing a

squatting lion with a spiralled tail and raised forepaw on the obverse and a *poornaghata* flanked by two lamp stands all enclosed in a rayed circle on the reverse were found<sup>17</sup>. On some of the coins found at Yelesvaram, the letters *vi-ka-ra-ma* is traced. Vikramendravarma II of the Vishnukundi dynasty must be the only king to whom these coins can be assigned<sup>18</sup>.

Before the commencement of the rule by the Kadambas, punch-marked coins were in circulation. After they came to power, they replaced the punch-marked coins by *Padma-tankas*. *Padma-tanka* has on the obverse a *padma* in the centre with four punch-struck retrospect and lions round it and so on the reverse a scroll ornament within a circle of dots. The coin contained its final shape under the Kadambas of Goa and became the pattern of the South Indian Varaha, which became so common under Vijayanagar and even adopted in part by the East India Company in Madras<sup>19</sup>.

The hoard of Pandyan coins were found at Boddinayakanuru. The coins bear five symbols. The first two symbols, sun and the six-armed symbol are similar to the ones in the Mauryan coins. The other three are new, a representation of *stupa*- like architecture, a leafy tree, and trident – battle – axe – in railing. On the reverse of these coins is the Pandyan heraldic symbol of fish<sup>20</sup>. The Pandyan coins are both inscribed and uninscribed and are of two kinds. On one is a horse facing left before a post and on the other is an elephant facing right. On the reverse side of the coins of both types is the fish symbol in outline. On the inscribed coins displaying a horse is an inscription, which is read as *paruvaluthi*. Several rulers with this name have been mentioned in the Sangam literature, although it is not known which of them issued the coins. Coins with the elephant inscription carry the letters *pa ma ka na* interspersed with symbols. The letters may have stood for Pandya, but this is by

no means certain. There are some other uninscribed and inscribed coins with a horse facing the right or left before a post-like object. The uninscribed coins carry on their reverse a wavy double line representing a river along with four triangular hills – peaks. The inscribed coins have only the river symbol along with some other symbols. On them one can read the legend *Malaiman*, written in Tamil-Brahmi. These coins were discovered in and around Madurai in the Pandyan region. Since then, they do not carry heraldic fish symbol and it cannot therefore, be said with certainty that they were issued by the Pandyas<sup>21</sup>. Later, the other two states i.e. Chera and Chola uniformly issued die-struck inscribed and uninscribed square copper coins. The Chera coins are identified by the bow and arrow symbol placed on one side which, according to inscriptional evidence, was the heraldic emblem of the Cheras. The other side has an elephant to the right with a standard in front. The inscriptional coins have a name above the elephant, which has been read as *koliporian*, *koliporian yatan*, and *irumporai*. However, they do not help in identifying the issuers. Besides these copper coins, a small silver coin with a blank reverse side is also found. It bears the clean – shaven head of a king facing right. The coin is one of its kinds. Perhaps the idea of a portrait on the coin was borrowed from the Roman coins. All these coins are dated first century BCE. to the first century CE.

The coins of the Cholas are available in large number. They contribute to the socio-economic history of the Cholas. A study of their shape, size and weight is quite interesting. The coins of early Cholas were *kaasu*,<sup>21</sup> *ilakkasu*,<sup>22</sup> *puttakkam*,<sup>23</sup> *panam*,<sup>24</sup> and *kanam*.<sup>25</sup> But no coin attributed to this period is forthcoming. Gold also served as a medium of exchange and was found in circulation. It was measured in terms of weight i.e. *Kalanju*.<sup>26</sup> Chola coins to light through archaeological excavations at Kaveripattanam. They are square, in different sizes and depict

a standing tiger with its tail upraised, the emblem of the Cholas. On a few of these coins an elephant is seen on the other side. Most of the symbols on the reverse are those that are seen on the early die-struck coins of north India. No inscribed early Chola coin is known so far. Some such coins have been discovered in the South Arcot district with a horse on one side and a zigzag line probably representing a river, on the other. They bear the name *Malaiman*; most probably they belong to the Malaya many rulers of Tirukkcoilur. A hoard of circular lead coins, which may be dated to second century CE., has come to light from the village Andipatti in Tiruvannamalai district, suggesting Satavahana influence. The coins bear an *ankusa* like symbol and the legend *Atinam ethinam Centans* meaning *Atinnan*, the son or successor of Centan. The reverse has the river symbol, similar to the symbol on the coins just mentioned. These coins point to the existence of a chieftain in this area.

The Pallavas issued their own coins in copper, with a bull or a lion on one side. It is suggested that the lion was the insignia of the early, and bull of the later rulers of the dynasty. On the reverse of both types of coins is seen a *sankha* (conch) within a circle, which, in course of time, changed into a pitcher or vase on a stand flanked by a *trisula* (trident) or *dipa-stambha* (lamp-post). These coins do not have any inscription to identity them with any ruler. The Ikshvakus and the Pallavas were replaced in course of time by the Vishnukundis and the Eastern Chalukyas. Copper coins of Chandravarman of the Salankayana dynasty have also been found in Andhra region.

The coins of the Western and Eastern Chalukyas were struck in gold and often cup-shaped, bear the emblem boar and are remarkable for their style of punch-marking. It has been suggested that these are imitated from the Kadamba *padma tankas*. The popularity of the Chalukyan gold bear (*varaha*) type

and it earned the designation *varaha* for these coins. The coins of Eastern Chalukyas (14,433 copper coins were found in Dondapadu of Nalgonda district<sup>27</sup>. The provenance of this largest single collection of coins of the Eastern Chalukya dynasty is important it indicates the Eastern Chalukyan conquest of Vishnukundin territory on the side of the Eastern Ghats. Typologically, the coins related to the Vishnukundin coins, lion with a forepaw raised; flanking lamp stands, and the double trident and the vase in a different position. The coins of the Chalukyas are also found in Dowlaishuleram or Dhavalesvaram of East Godavari district and Gudur. These coins are useful to know the history of the Eastern Chalukyas and the Cholas.

To conclude, several ruling dynasties have issued coins of their own. The coins contain valuable information. The metal of the coins were gold, silver, copper and even lead. The prosperity of the period can be determined on the basis of the metal used for the manufacture of coins. The existence of foreign coinage indicates that there was trade and commercial relations between South India and the foreign countries. Roman coins have been found at various places in the Chera, Pandya and Chola country in large numbers. Thus, the study of the coins will help in the reconstruction of the history and play a vital role in illuminating history not known from other sources. They furnish true information. They have aesthetic and artistic value too. The dies from which coins were struck were the work of the artists of the day. Hence, they reflect the workmanship of the artists and also the aesthetic tastes of the people of those times.

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## SRI VAIKUNTANATHA PERUMAL TEMPLE - HEAVEN ON EARTH

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This *divyadesam* is also one of the *Nava thirupathis* located in the ancient Pandya Nadu and now in Thoothukudi district of Tamilnadu. It is situated on the northern banks of the Porunai River. It is difficult to conclude whether the village was named after the God Vainkuntha Nathar or after the environment. Because the village which is surrounded by a river, tanks, trees, birds and green paddy fields which keeps it fertile and gives it a heavenly ambience.

The principle deity, Lord Vaikuntanatha, is in standing posture with four arms facing east. He holds a mace in his hand. Adhishesha is seen with his hood spread like an umbrella above the head of the Lord Vaikunta. The processional deity is known as Kallapiran (*kallar piran* – deity worshiped by the thief's). He was accompanied with Choranayaki and Boodevi his consorts. This temple has three different *sthala puranas*, each associated with the deities and the temple.

The name Sri Vaikuntam came to be appended to this place because of the incident that happened to Lord Brahma. Once upon a time a great deluge occurred in the *Brahmaloka* that disturbed Brahma and he went into a deep sleep. Somukhan, an *asura*, utilised this opportunity and stolen the book which



contained the secrets of world's creation. Brahma woke up and found his books missing. He decided to seek the help of Vishnu to regain his books. So, he searched for a place for his penance. He created a man out of a stick and sent him to find a suitable place on the banks of river Tamirabarani. But the man got infatuated by the beauty of a damsel and settled in her village by marrying. Brahma came to know of this again created a woman out of his *kamandala* and sent her for the same purpose. This time she found a suitable place that looked like heaven. Brahma was satisfied with the place and started his penance after taking a bath in a pond (*kalasa theertham*). Vishnu was pleased with the penance of Brahma and appeared before him asking what he wanted. Brahma explained his position and requested Vishnu to help get back his secret books. Vishnu fought with the *asura* Somukhan and recovered the book from him after killing the *asura*. Brahma was so grateful to Vishnu and praised him very much for his help. Before leaving this place Brahma named this place Sri Vaikuntam because of that Vishnu appeared before him coming all the way from Vaikuntam. He requested the Lord Vishnu to continue to stay here and bless the devotees<sup>1</sup>.

There is another mythological story behind the name of Lord Kallapiran or Choranatha. Once there was a thief known as Kaladhushaakan who lived with his gang at Sri Vaikuntam. He worshipped Vaikuntanatha regularly before he committed any theft. He also promised the Lord half of the loot he was going to get. One day he tried to loot the king's palace with his gang. But this time some of his gangsters were captured by the palace guards and luckily Kaladhushaakan escaped. He ran to the temple and prayed to the Lord for his protection. Meanwhile, some guards arrived near the temple to find Kaladhushaakan, by that time Vishnu assumed the form of Kaladhushaakan and appeared before the guards. The guards took him before the king and the king asked who he was and why he was thieving.

Vishnu said, “I am Kallarpiran living in Sri Vaikuntam and for my people I looted your wealth which was not being utilised for the welfare of the people”. The Lord explained the king the meaning of Dharma and the duties of a king. Hearing this, the king realised that the thief standing before him was none other than the Lord Vishnu. He prayed to the Lord for his advice and requested him to stay as Kallarpiran in this temple. This is how the processional deity came to be known as Kallar-piran or Chora-natha<sup>2</sup>.

“Paal Pandiyan” is a name very much familiar among the people in this region. They keep this name for their children till today. Behind this name also lies a mythology. During the days of a Pandiyan king the palace cattle herds were sent for grazing in the nearby forest. One day, the milkman found that one cow was not yielding milk. He thought that the herdman might have taken it. But it happened in continuing days and he complained to the king. A few guards were appointed to follow the herd and find out the truth. The guards were amazed to see an unusual thing; one particular cow emptying her milk on a hole of an ant hill on a small mountain when the other cattle were returning to the village. The king was surprised to hear this ordered his guards to explore the place. The ant hill was dug carefully and the sculpture of Vishnu as Vaikuntanatha installed by Brahma was unearthed along with his original temple. The Pandyan king was so happy that he built a new temple to the Lord and ordered for daily milk *abhishekam* (milk bath) to the Lord. So, the Lord here also known as Paal Pandiyan and the custom is followed till date<sup>3</sup>.

The above story has been supported with a lot of inscriptional evidences found on the walls of this temple. The kings Sundara Pandya, Vira Pandya and Kulasekhara Pandya all patronized

this temple and added and renovated it throughout their time. Apart from this, they also made various donations to the temple. Grant of tax free land in Nallur for the construction of Sundara Pandya *thirugopuram* (entrance gateway), *thirumathil* (wall) and another land in Sivalla Valanadu for the construction of Kulasekharan *thirumandapam* (Hall) was made by the king and it is also mentioned that these lands should be called as *thirupanipuram* (lands donated for temple renovation) <sup>4</sup>.

Apart from the above, there are several land donations made for different purposes like; lighting of a perpetual lamp, feeding *brahmanas*, conducting festivals in the month of *Vaikasi* and *Masi* (Tamil months), Sundrapandyan *sandhi* and Virapandyan *sandhi* for Lord Kallapiran, for the regular offerings of Goddess Vaikuntavalli *thayar* and garland and food offerings to the Gods<sup>5</sup>. The king donated his personal land for the purpose of a sacred garden which supplied flowers to the temple and it has been mentioned as *thirunandavanapuram*. Inscriptional records of individual donations are also seen in this temple. Ramaraja a chieftain, donated 250 *pon* (gold coin) for repairs in the temple of Kallapiran. A commander, Perumal Thirumalai Nambi, called himself Vaikuntanatha *dasan*, donated his land and two *achchus* (oil mill) for of burning perpetual lamps in the temple<sup>6</sup>.

Since this temple was situated in a fertile ambience, it received more attention and royal patronage. The Madurai Nayak rulers appointed as feudatories by the Vijayanagar dynasty contributed much towards the architectural development of this temple. They added several additions to the temple earlier constructed by the Pandyan kings. Especially, they added *gopurams*, doorways and *mandapas* which are exquisitely carved with the sculptures of gods, goddesses, saints, royal patrons, mythical figures and many more<sup>7</sup>.

This huge temple complex has two enclosures. The *rajagopuram* on top of the main entrance gate way is tall and decorated with mythological stories related to the Puranas. The inner enclosure also has a *gopuram* on top of its entrance gate. The inner and outer gateways are connected by a pillared hall. The inner enclosure has a *mahamandapa*, *arthamandapa* and *garbhagraha* (sanctum). The inner circumambulatory passage is also covered with pillared *mandapas* on all the four sides. It also houses several sub shrines of gods and goddesses. In the *sanctum*, the Lord Vaikuntanatha stands with four hands and above his head we find Adishesha the divine serpent seen keeping his hoods as a parasol. It is believed that the main deity is made of Salagrama and he receives regular *abishekam* performed with milk. The ceremonial bronze icon of Kallapiran with his consorts, Sridevi and Bhudevi, on either side is in the *arthamandapa* that is the hall which precedes the sanctum.

The inner enclosure houses the shrines of Vaikunta Nayaki and Choranatha Nayaki on either side of the main shrine. There are several small shrines found all over the *prakara* dedicated to Garuda, Vishvasena, Venugopala, Yoga Narasimha, Manavalamamunigal. A small enclosure on the left side of the inner entrance contains the images of the ten incarnations of Vishnu. Here we also find beautiful bronzes of Lakshmi Narasimha and Yoga Narasimha which are used as processional icons.

The inner *prakara* walls are painted with 108 *divyadesams* of Vishnu but only a few are in good condition. The style of these paintings belongs to the late Vijayanagar period. The painters used yellow, green, blue and brown colours prominently. On the ceiling of the four pillared *mantapa* in the outer *prakara*; we can have a vision of the paintings of Vishnu as seen in Nava tirupathi. Each painting carries descriptions written on top of it

in Tamil and Telugu scripts. The wooden doors of the main shrine are beautifully carved with various forms of Vishnu and other deities. The images of *Dikpalas* were found on the *gopuram* is also noteworthy.

We also notice a big *Kalyana mandapa* in the outer *prakara* which is a salient feature of Vijayanagar & Nayak kings found in this temple known as Thiruvengadamudayan *mandapam*. Temple records say this *mandapam* was built by Vadamalayapa Pillai, an official in the court of the Madurai Nayak rulers<sup>8</sup>. At the entrance of this pillared *mandapa* on either side we find life size sculptures of Rama and Vijayanagar warriors. On the right pillar, at the entrance, the Rama image is beautifully carved hugging the monkey king Sugriva while Sita is standing on his left. In the left pillar, Rama is seen hugging his monkey devotee Hanuman while Angada is standing on his left. Friezes of monkey warriors are seen on both the sculptures at the bottom. These images of Rama stands prominently at the entrance suggest that this *mandapa* may have been used for preaching Ramayana. A small shrine of Venkatesa is found inside this *mandapa*. The huge pillars that holds the ceiling of the *mandapa* was carved out beautifully with mythical animals like *yalis*, elephants, birds, *gandharvas* and saints. At the most this temple stands as an artistic glory of Madurai Nayak kingdom. The life size images of these rulers are seen standing in *anjali* at the *Thirumozhi mandapa* in the same temple complex.

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*Gopuram* at the main entrance,  
Sri Vaikuntanatha Perumal Temple,  
Srivaikuntam.



Inscriptions on the inner wall of  
Sri Vaikunthanatha Perumal Temple, Srivaikuntam.

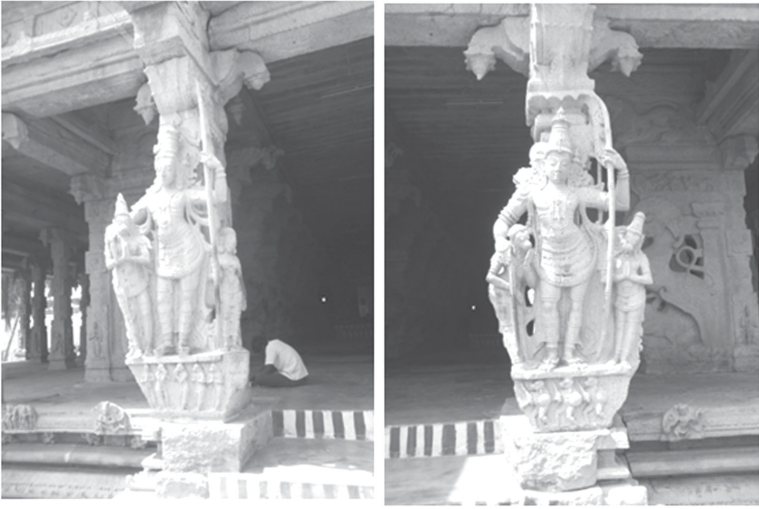


Portrait Sculptures of Nayak rulers who patronized this temple, Sri Vaikunthanatha Perumal Temple, Srivaikuntam

Matsya, Kurma and Varaha sculptures in *Dasavatara* shrine, Sri Vaikunthanatha Perumal Temple, Srivaikuntam.



Thiruvankadamudaiyan Mandapam, Sri Vaikunthanatha Perumal Temple, Srivaikuntam



Left: Rama with Sugreeva and Sita, Right: Rama with Hanuman and Angada and army of monkeys at the base, Sri Vaikunthanatha Perumal Temple, Srivaikuntam.

- Photo credit : Dr. G. Balaji



## **TRIPURANTAKA SIVA AT THIRUVATHIGAI – A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE**

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Among the sixty – four forms of Lord Siva’s manifestations, the form of Tripurantaka Murthy, once received the utmost attention, particularly during the period of the Bhakthi movement, i.e. in between the 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> century C.E. It is one of the earliest depictions of dynamic performances of Rudra-Siva. Perhaps it could be the first and far most association between the Vedic and non-Vedic Gods.

Philosophically, it evinces the highest degree of ideological synchronization between various Hindu Gods. Legends and literature references glorify the act of Tripurantaka Siva over the Tripurasuras in a devotional way. For example, the Tripura Samhara episode alone was mentioned in *Tevaram*, a prominent collection of Saiva hymns in Tamil, for more than 600 times<sup>1</sup>. *Kalithogai*, one of the Sangam literature, mentions that Tripurantaka Siva performed two types of dances, namely, *Kodukotti* and *Pandarangam*<sup>2</sup>. After destroying the Tripuras and killing the demons, Lord Siva smeared their ashes on His body and danced. This dance is being referred as the Tripura Dhandava.

## Royal Patronage

The Tripurantaka theme conceivably served as a source of inspiration to the early Pandyas, Pallavas and the Imperial Cholas, who had fascination of conquest and ascendancy of power in the ancient Tamil country. If gleaned through archaeological perspective, both ancient Tamil monarchs and their subjects were found boastfully claiming their linkage to the Tiripuranthaka at many instances.

For example, in the Dhalavaipuram charter of the 9<sup>th</sup> Century C.E., King Varaguna Pandya, the elder brother of Parantaka Vira Narayana, is referred as a fervent devotee of the Lord Siva, who is holding the *Pinaka* (bow) in his hand. It is presumable that the Lord Siva, revered by that King is Tripurantaka as he is holding the bow in his hand (*Pinakapani*)<sup>3</sup>. The Kanchipuram Kailasanathar temple inscription of Queen Rangapathagai, equates her husband, King Rajasimha with the Lord of Tripurantaka Siva<sup>4</sup>. Rajasimha himself made many bas-reliefs of this form of Siva in his structural temples at Kanchipuram<sup>5</sup> and Mamallapuram<sup>6</sup> shore temple complexes.

The Cholas made very great references to this highly volatile and dynamic form of Rudra-Siva. The larger Leyden grant (Anaimangalam Copper Plates) of the 10<sup>th</sup> Century CE, described King SundaraChola, as *Tripurantaka*<sup>7</sup>. An enormous chariot riding *Tripurantaka*, in *Alidha* pose(fighting scene) is vividly drawn and painted at Brahadisvara temple at Thanjavur. The anger in the eyes and the smile on the lips are brought out very subtly and effectively by the artist. Depiction of many sculptures of Tripurantaka at the Thanjavur temple, confirms the extreme fascination of Rajaraja I about this form of Lord Siva<sup>8</sup>.

At Viliñjam, a sea port town which is 14.8Kms, south of Trivandram (once part of the erstwhile Tamil country), a small rock-cut frontal niche contains a beautiful depiction of Tripurari

Murthy with a bow. This unfinished structure is belong to 9<sup>th</sup> Century CE<sup>9</sup>. This place is noted as the battle field of the Pandyas and Ay Kings.

During the Vijayanagar Naick period the practice of claiming the linkage to Tripurantaka was in vogue among the Kings and commoners. In the Palani Akkasalai copper plate inscriptions, donors belonging to Panchakammalas community claimed that they were the descendants of warriors who assisted to Lord Siva during his *Tripura Dhahana* triumph<sup>10</sup>.

### **Legend of Tripurantakasiva**

The episode of Tripurantaka Siva includes the destruction of the Tripurasuras along with their forts (Tripura Samhara and Dahana) and *Tripura Dhahana* dance. Tripurari is another epithet of Tripurantaka. Three passionate devotees of Lord Siva, namely, Tarakaksha, Kamalaksha and Vidyunmali performed severe penance on Lord Brahma over a period of a million years. They obtained a powerful boon from Lord Brahma that would keep them immortal. They also created three forts in the space made of gold, silver and iron. They are collectively called as, '*Tripuras*'. But the boon also had a rider that they could be destroyed by a single arrow's shot when their three castles are in a linear line even for a moment and this happened once in one thousand years.

They lived in these forts and wandered in the universe. They conquered the whole world and subdued the Devas and by their demonic nature, they started harassing them. As they were the ardent devotees of Siva and due to the boon they obtained from Lord Brahma, no one was capable of defeating them in a straight fight. The Devas pleaded to Lord Vishnu to demoralize the Tripurasuras by teaching non-vedic scriptures. Accordingly,

Lord Vishnu assumed the form of Buddha. Thus, the incarnation of Buddha was deliberately included in the myth of Tripurantaka Siva. As deluded by Lord Vishnu, the Tiripurasuras deviated from the worship of Lord Siva and thereby were constricted to face his wrath. Now all the Devas approached Lord Siva to seek his help for the destruction of the demons. He agreed to this plea, on a condition that half of the power of all the Devas to be conveyed to him to accomplish this feat. By this conferment, Rudra-Siva was elevated to the status of “Mahadeva” among the Devas. Many gods were transformed themselves into his weapons and war-front accompanies at his behest to achieve the feat of TripuraSamhara and Dahana. The popular description about His weapons and war-front accompaniment is given below:

Devas as his army  
Earth as Siva'sratha / chariot  
Sun and moon as wheels of the chariot  
Brahma becomes his charioteer  
Meru, the mountain as his bow  
Soma as the arrow  
Vasuki, the serpent, as the chord of the bow and  
Vayu, the air as a barb of the arrow and  
Vishnu as the shaft of the arrow.

Then, Lord Siva mounted on the *Ratha* from Koovam (Thiruvirkolam) and marched towards the Tripurasuras<sup>11</sup>. Suddenly the axle of the *Ratha* was broken at Achchiruppakkam<sup>12</sup>. At this juncture, the entire army of gods realized their mistake of missing the worship of Lord Ganesha before starting their mission. Immediately Lord Ganesha was offered prayers for the remedy. In the meantime Vishnu, who was in the form of an arrow's shaft of Lord Siva, temporarily became an oxen to give shoulder support to the *Ratha* to prevent its toppling. The

obstacle (Vignam) was removed and with the blessings of the same God, Siva went near the place where the three flying forts were supposed to align in a line for a swift moment of time. By this time, Vishnu returned to his original place in the arrow.

As per the local legend, Lord Siva fixed the arrow and aimed it towards the floating forts of the Tripurasuras from the place called Eithanur<sup>13</sup>. Suddenly He realized that the Devas were gloating that Lord Siva could win the war and destruct Tripurasuras only because of their support. Hence, Lord Siva decided to prove his supremacy over them and instead of releasing the arrow, he smiled at them. A fire ball emerged from Siva's forehead and went straight towards them in a fraction of a second. As the result, they along with their castles were reduced to ashes. Hence, Tripuradhahana and Tripura samhara, are mythologically claimed as occurred at Thiruvathigai<sup>14</sup>. Consequently, Devas realized their foolishness and bowed down their heads in shame. Thus, Lord Siva destroyed the arrogant Tripurasuras and nipped the conceit of Devas by his single act of mere smiling.

After the destruction of the three Tripurasuras, Lord Siva conferred grace upon them as an appreciation of their fanatic devotion to Him. Accordingly, two of them were made as His *Dvara-palaks* (door keepers) and the third became a Gana playing upon the drum (Kudamuzha). In the Achchiruppakkam Atchisvarar Temple, the two *Dvara-palaks* (door keepers) are named as Tarakaksha and Vidhunmali<sup>15</sup>.

It is believed that after Tripura Samhara Dhahana and dance, Lord Siva performed the *Andandha Dhandava* dance at Chidambaram. Even today the very same place, opposite to the main Nataraja Sanctum (*Ananda Dhandavam*), is known as

*Ethirambalam* (opposite hall) in Tamil or *Nritta Sabha* (dancing hall) in Sanskrit<sup>16</sup>. Architecturally this hall was built in the shape of a chariot in granite.

Further intensive study is required by using the primary sources to claim that the pose of Nataraja is the climax of the Siva *Dhandava* dance (*Shanthi Koothu* – Peace Dance). Hence, it could be presumed that 108 Karnas of Bharatanarya Dance are performed by Lord Siva in-between *Tiripura Dahana Dhandva* and *Anandha Dhandva*. An attempt of carved 108 *Bharatanatyas* Karnas in an array is seen in the Brihadisvara temples of Thanjavur (Big temple) and Gangai Konda Cholapuram. Both of them are the produce of the great Cholas viz., Rajaraja I and his son Rajendra I. Among them 84 *karnas* are in good state. The side walls of the first eastern gateway passage at Thiruvathigai Viratanesvarar Temple are adorned with panels of bas-reliefs of dancers who are beautifully depicting 108 *Bharatanatyas* Karnas. Such, sculptural depictions are also seen in Thiruvannamalai, Chidambaram, Vridhachalam Siva temples and Kumbakonam Sarangabani Vishnu temple.

The slaying of the demons and the destruction of their cities by Tripurantaka is called '*Tripura Samharam*'. In North India, it is celebrated as '*Dev Diwali*'<sup>17</sup>. In South India, invariably in all the Siva temples, on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of the annual *Brahmotsavam* festival, a car festival is celebrated in remembrance of this feat<sup>18</sup>. Thus Lord Siva is raised to be a supreme God of Gods.

### **Thiruvathigai – The Epicentre of the Tripurantaka Myth**

Thiruvathigai is one of the very famous eight *Virasthalas* (*ashtavirattanam*) of Tamil Nadu<sup>19</sup>. It is just two kilometers away from Panruti town in Cuddalore District. It is also considered

that the very spot where Tripurasuras were burnt to ashes. Legends and History vie with each other in raising the glory of the temple and sport of the *Ustavar* Tripura Samhara Murthy. The temple stands majestically amidst the agricultural fields as a granite jewel among the emerald scenario on the northern bank of the Kedilam River. Its sculptural wealth and architectural beauty within the sprawling temple complex deserve a visitation for adoration and appreciation of art and culture.

It is believed that this temple was built by the Pallava king Mahendravarman I, on realization of the glory of *Saivism* through Thirunavukkarasar (Appar) whom he subjected to several severe tests. Besides, the original foundation of this temple evinces the style of Paramesvaravarman II (c.728 – 731 CE)<sup>20</sup>. The huge Shodasa Sivalinga (16 facets in the *Bana* of the Sivalinga) installed in the sanctum sanctorum. Its inner back wall, is decked out with a human bas-relief of Lord Siva and His consort Parvathi in the divine marriage pose. The ancient Gunapatheesvaram Siva temple is located just one kilometer away from the Viratanesvarar temple.

Particularly at Thiruvathigai, on the right side passage while entering the temple which leads to the inner court yard, there is an image of very fine eight armed Tripurantaka in a war profile facing the entrance at a height of 3mtrs., is present. One more very fine stucco figure in the chariot posture is contemporaneous next to the Dakshinamurthy's niche in the southern side of the central shrine. Interestingly the *Ustava* idol of the Viratanesvarar temple is known as, 'Tripura Samhara Murthy'. With His consort Uma, Lord Siva is accommodated in a separate shrine facing south before the main sanctum. Before the sixteen pillar *mandapa*, a seated Buddha image is housed on a concrete *Padmapitha*<sup>21</sup>. It was reported that this image was

found from this village sometime ago. As per the legend, it is believed that this image represents the incarnation of Lord Vishnu, who deluded the Tripurasuras.

## **Tripurasamhara Festival**

At Thiruvathigai in the Tamil month of Vaikasi (May – June) the annual Brahmotsavam (Vaikasi Peruvizha) is celebrated in a grand manner. In this gala event around 10,000 devotees thronged the spacious space between the temple premises and the Kedilam river bank. The recent Tripura samharadhahana festival was celebrated on 19<sup>th</sup> May in 2016, on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of the Vaikasi Peruvizha. Until a decade ago, this event was conducted in the middle of the river to avoid any fire accidents. But presently, due to various reasons, the puranic episode is re-enacted in the adjacent space near the eastern entrance of the temple in the presence of the Fire Service Department. Fortunately, in this time, no untoward incident has taken place.

In the morning by 6 am, the Tripura Samhara Murthy, processional deity (*Ustava*) of the Virattanesvarar temple completed his chariot ride around the temple and halted in front of the eastern Rajagopuram. He is waiting to receive the arrow from Lord Vishnu, which is scheduled to be brought to him from the Sara Narayana Perumal temple. It is notable that the name of the Lord Vishnu itself suggesting his role of the participation in the episode of TripuraSamhara (*Saram* – Arrow). Also, it is interesting to find that an arrow is being given by Lord Vishnu to Lord Siva, symbolically indicating the transformation Lord Vishnu into an arrow which is mentioned in many Hindu mythological sources. Throughout the day, devotees from nearby places had the dharshan of Lord Siva.



In the meantime massive effigies of the Tripurasuras are made out of organic materials in bright red, green and yellow prime colours. They are placed in front of the Siva's chariot at a distance of 10 mtrs. A wire string is connected between them and the Lord Siva. This string is the medium of key, to the Tripura Samhara and *Dhana* episode which is to be re-enacted in the night by 8 pm. Now, both Lord Siva and Tripurasuras are waiting for Lord Vishnu's arrival to this venue.

In the evening around 4 pm a special *Abhishekam* (ceremonial bath) is performed to the *Shodasa* Sivalinga in the central shrine. Then the Trustees of the Siva temple leave the temple premises with the auspicious goods like garland, fruits, coconuts, sweets etc., to invite Vishnu from the above said temple which is located 2kms away from the Siva temple. The head priest of the Vishnu temple received the goods as a token of accepting the invitation on behalf of Lord Vishnu. Thus the priests of these two temples are authorized themselves to invite and accept one another to re-enact the Tripurantaka episode. Then, after a special pooja and mangalaaarathi a metal arrow about half –a meter is placed in the right hand of the processional deity of Lord Vishnu and it is carried out of the temple. He is placed in a highly decorated *Ratha*, of course smaller in size when compared to the Lord Siva's chariot. *Tevaram* songs are rendered by the *Odhuvars* (Hymn Singers). In an auspicious moment as previously selected by the priests, Lord Vishnu starts His *ula* (procession) to meet Lord Siva, who is waiting from the morning itself near the temple. With a band of music and sparkling fire crackers the enthusiastic devotees make a very slow and enjoyable procession. By 8 pm, the Vishnu chariot reaches the eastern entrance of the Siva temple and halts just behind the Tripurasamharamurti's *Ratha*.

After a swift *Mangala Aarathi*, the arrow is taken from Lord Vishnu and given to the priest of the Siva temple as a mark of Vishnu's participation in the Tripura Samhara event. The Saiva priest places that arrow in the right hand of the Tripura Samhara Murthy idol. Then, the *saramvidudal* (shooting the arrow) is enacted in a modern way. In Puranic versions, the *Agni* (Fire) was accelerated by Vayu Bhagavan (Air) who acted as a barb (feather) in the mystic arrow. In this 21<sup>st</sup> century the very same *Agni* is sent via this wire connection with the help of fire rockets!

Within five minutes, the images of the Tripurasuras burnt into ashes. When they are completely reduced, a *Mangala Arathi* is performed to Lord Siva as a symbolic conclusion of the episode. Thus, the entire TripuraSamharam and Dhahanam (slaying & burning) episode with rituals is re-enacted for 30 minutes. The actual burning takes place just for five minutes. (Dhahanam)

By 8.30 p.m, both the Tripura Samhara Murthy and Lord Vishnu return to their abodes, after the accomplishment of Tripura Samhara. By 9 pm a special *Prayasiddhi Abhishegam* (a kind of *Pariharam* – solvation) is performed to the Shodasa Sivalinga in the sanctum to get rid of the ill effects of killing the Tripurasuras. *Prasad*, the sacred food (*Neivedhyam*) is offered to Lord Siva and distributed to the devotees who witnessed the TripuraSamhara and Dhahana event. Here no TripuraSamhara dance is re-enacted.

On request by the *Tri-nethra Dhari* (Kannuva Munivar in Tamil), the same event was enacted at Achchirupakkam *Atchisvarar* Siva temple under the *Sthalavriksha* tree (*Sarakkonrai*) in the month of *Chiththirai Thiruvizha* (April – may) in a less grand manner. Similarly at Koovam, the temple car festival is celebrated in a small scale. In the case of Eithanur,

even the daily worship itself is very difficult due to paucity of funds.

### **Importance of Thiruvathigai**

In the cultural milieu of Tamilnadu, Thiruvathigai occupies an important place. Throughout the ages, the place was mentioned as a civilized area i.e. *Adhigai Managar* as per *Tevaram* hymns. It is also surrounded by many ancient settlements like Thiruvannamalai, Thirukkovilur, Thiruvakkarai. All are located within a radius of 50 kms of Thiruvathigai.

At Odai (Bommaiyar Palayam), the finding of an infant skull is dated to 1.66 million years<sup>22</sup>. The Thiruvakkarai fossil park confirms the earliest Paleolithic environment which prevailed in this place. Conceivably, Thiruvathigai may yield more archaeological materials if a scientific enquiry is made.

The Jatavarman Sundara Pandyan inscription in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century character is found on the east wall of the second *prakara*, which is right of the entrance in the Thiruvathigai Siva temple<sup>23</sup>. This inscription reports a dispute on the boundary lands belonging to the temples of Nalmukha Nayanar, Munaiyadisvaramudaiyar and Arhadevar (Jaina). It is also mentioned that the boundaries had been settled on three occasions previously. The Jaina temple at Thiruvathigai does not exist at present.

Archaeologically speaking, at the world level, the earliest well-developed car chariots are known from the chariot burials of the Andronova (timber grave) sites of the Sintashta- petrovoka culture in modern Russia and the Kazhakasthan region which are dated to 2000 BCE<sup>24</sup>. In the Indian context, Daimabad, a later Harappan Site (1600 BCE to 700 BCE) yielded a hoard

of copper objects, which includes small miniature chariots (toy cars) drawn by animals like horse, rhinoceros, elephant etc.,<sup>25</sup>.

In the early centuries of the Christian era, many new settlements were formed and flourished, far away from the central Ganga – Yamuna plain in the territory of still Neolithic hunting tribes to the south of the Deccan. As the Tiripura Samhara festival at Thiruvathigai is culminates in the celebration of chariot (temple car) festival, it reveals the cultural phase of the place. The chariot plays the pivotal role in this entire mythological episode. The paradigm of the Tripurantaka Siva theme might be the continuing trace of the ancient tribes of this region. Hence, based on the above facts, any new findings in future by intensive scientific study in and around Thiruvathigai could bring out novel archaeological evidences, which might unfold the cultural pattern of this region similar to Andronova and Daimabad.

## Conclusion

The entire episode of the Tripurantaka myth is not considered as a single and simple Puranic story of Siva's destruction of the Tripurasuras. On the summit of the Vedic unrivaled and unparalleled in the history of Saivism in South India. During the medieval period, i.e. 7<sup>th</sup> century to 12<sup>th</sup> century CE., it reveals the legitimate process of war and conquests by the Kings of various dynasties. In the evolution of the Saiva Siddhantha phase, the same TripuraSamhara legend is equated with the purification or destruction of the three great basic evils, namely, ego, karma and mayapolluting the human mind.

Among the many Tripura festivals, which are still celebrated in India, the Tripura Samhara and Dhahana festival celebrated

every year at Thiruvathigai aptly evinces the traditional method of remembering the continuous surviving trace of the Lord Siva's heroic deeds in the Saiva pantheon. Consequently, in addition to the literary reference from the epoch of Sangam age (*Kalithogai*) to the archaeological materials, the Tripurantaka myth and practices in Tamilnadu demonstrates the originality in the cultural matrix of South India.

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13. ARE No. 141-147/1933-34–All inscriptions are dated to Kulonthuga I (11<sup>th</sup> Century CE).From these, except the name of the place and legend, no substantial reference is available regarding the Thiripura Samhara episode.
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# **MEDIEVAL HISTORY**

## **A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE AUTHORSHIP OF PANDYAN RECORDS AT ARAGALUR**

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Aragalur is a village in Attur taluk of Salem district in Tamilnadu. The village was once the headquarters of the Banas of Magadaimandalam during the medieval period. The inscriptional records available in the temples of this village reflect not only its glory but the historical significance of Tamilnadu as a whole.

There are forty eight inscriptions of which thirty seven are in the Kameswara temple, nine in the Varadharajaperumal temple and two in the Choleswara temple of the village. These stone inscriptions were issued by the later Cholas, later Pandyas, Banas, Hoysalas, Vijayanagar and Nayak rulers. These inscriptions speak of the grants of jewel, land and villages made either by the king or royal members of his family or individuals. But, the name and genealogy of the king who issued the order is obscure in many records. Scholars who worked on these inscriptions get confused in identifying the authorship and only some have succeeded in their attempt to a certain extent. Hence, an attempt is made in this article to identify the unknown kings of the Pandyan inscriptions at Aragalur.

The Government epigraphists<sup>1</sup> who worked on the inscriptions at Aragalur postulate only seven records to the Pandyan dynasty.

They have denoted the name but not the genealogical order of the king. Since the cognomen is common and appears repeatedly in the pedigree of the Pandyas, it is very difficult to find the lineage of the king. According to V.Rangacharya<sup>2</sup>, there are seven records that pertain to the Pandyas and the author of five records is mentioned as Jatavarman Sundrapandya I (four with question marks) of accession CE. 1251 and one as Jatavarman Sundarapandya III of accession CE. 1303-04. The last one is found with the name of the king but is not in chronological order. But T.V. Magalingam<sup>3</sup> refers to fourteen inscriptions of the later Pandyas viz., twelve of Jatvarman Sundrapandya I, one of Jatavarman Sundarapandya II and the other one of Jatvarman Sundrapandya (unidentified). Even A. Krishnan<sup>4</sup> regards the twelve epigraphs as closely associated with the Pandya rulers. He refers to four epigraphs of the Pandyas in general and eight of Jatavarman Sundarapandya in particular. It is to be remembered that all these epigraphic records belong to the age of the Imperial Pandyas.

There are also some historians who give different opinions about the Pandyan inscriptions at Aragalur. For instance, Prof. K.A. Nilakantasastry<sup>5</sup> mentions two records while N.Sethuraman<sup>6</sup> refers to four records of the Pandyas.

Historical analysis has revealed the fact that there are fifteen inscriptional records relating to the imperial Pandyas in the temples at Aragalur. The characteristic features of those records in terms of Konerinenmelkondan, Thirumugappadi and Aruliseyal help to identify the authorship of the epigraph and to find precisely the name of the king who caused the issue of the order in the form of stone inscriptions.

It is situated in the pillared hall (mandapa) of the Kameswara temple at Aragalur. It is very complex in nature and reveals no

name of the king. When the government epigraphists and V. Rangacharya are silent in this regard, T.V. Mahalingam refers this record to Jatavarman Sundarapandya I and A. Krishnan to Chola Rajendra III. Also the terms like Konerinmelkondan, Kothandaraman Sandi<sup>8</sup> and Kalingaraya<sup>9</sup> lend support to the assumption that the record is that of either the later Chola rulers or the later Pandya rulers. These complexities can be solved by analyzing the inscriptions with such names found all over the state of Tamilnadu.

Although the term Konerinmelkondan is common to both the dynasties, the other two terms are familiar with the later Pandyas. Further, all the Konerinmelkondan records denote the service Kothandaraman Sandi except a few. If these records are of the Pandyas, then there arises a question as to who was the king who bore this characteristic title. A lot of instances are available in the vicinity of Aragalur to clear this doubt. An epigraph at Omalur (Taramangalam taluk)<sup>10</sup> in the vicinity of Aragalur, issued during the sixth regnal year of an unknown king, possesses the same title. The same type of epigraphs are also found at Vedal (Wandiwash taluk)<sup>11</sup> and Panayapuram (Villupuram taluk)<sup>12</sup> with this kind of service but the name of the king is absent. At the same time, there are also 'Konerinmelkondan' records in these places bearing the name Jatavarman Sundarapandya along with the Kothandaraman Sandi instituted after the king. Hence, it could be presumed that the '*konerimelkondan*' record at Aragalur is authored by one Jatavarman Sundarapandya. But there is yet another doubt in identifying the particular Jatavarman Sundarapandya of the four with different accession years viz., CE. 1251, CE. 1274, CE. 1278 and CE. 1303-04.

Prof. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri points out that 'Kothandaraman' is the surname of Jatavarman Sundarapandya III (1303-1319)<sup>13</sup>. Therefore, the '*Konerinmelkondan*' record in Aragalur could be

confirmed to Jatavarma Sundarapandya III. An inscription at Tellaru<sup>14</sup> also refers to Kothandaraman as a surname of Jatavarma Sundarapandya III and his chief officer Kalingaraya. The same fact is also supported by another record from Tirthanagiri<sup>15</sup> and Vriddhachalam<sup>16</sup>. All these instances strengthen the view that the king bearing the title *Konerinmelkondan* and who instituted a *Sandi* after his surname Kothandaraman was, indeed Jatavarman Sundapandya III.

Another record of the temple registers an order of the king to the manager regarding the grant of village Alambalam as the principal for the Ulagamuludaiyar Sandi instituted after his name. But the name of the king is absent in this epigraph. The Government epigraphists and V. Rangacharya did not mention about the author whereas T.V. Magalingam refers in this record to Jatavarman Sundarapandya and A. Krishnan simply mentions the second as the Pandyas.

When the subject matter of the record is well analyzed, it leads us to infer a new conception of the authorship of the record. There are inscriptions at Madurai,<sup>18</sup> Tirupattur,<sup>19</sup> Panayapuram<sup>20</sup> and Tenkasi<sup>21</sup> which refer to Ulagamulududaiyal or Ulagamulududaiyar as the queens of Pandya rulers. These queens made grants, caused shrines to be built and instituted services in the temples but there was hardly any Sandi after Ulagamudaiyal or Ulagamudaiyar. So, there is no chance of guessing the record to the credit of any of the Pandya queens.

Nevertheless, there is evidence to believe that Maravarman Kulasekara Pandya I (1268-1310) was known as *Ulagamudaiya perumal* in two inscriptions of Tiruppalatturai<sup>22</sup> at Trichy. Moreover, the Pandya kingdom under Maravarman Kulasekara I consisted of the Kongu country too. Jatavarman Sundarapandya II ruled this region as a co-regent of

Maravarman Kulasekara. Karur was then the headquarters of the Kongu region. All these factors support the view that the inscription at Aragalur was issued by Jatavarman Sundarapandya II, the co-regent, for the benefit of the potentate Maravarman Kulasekara I. The title *Ulagamulududaiyar* is nothing but this sovereign and a *Sandi* was instituted after his surname in the temple. When all the scholars who worked on the record were silent in this regard, T.V. Mahalingam has misconstrued it as Jatavarman Sundapandya I. This title *Ulagamuludaiyar* is not associated with this king though his chief queen was *Ulagamuludaiyar*.

There are five epigraphical records containing the *parasasti* *Swasthisri Aruliseyal* of which four records are in the Kameswara temple and the remaining one in the Varadarajaperumal temple. These inscriptional records hardly possess any reference about the dynasty or the king who issued the order.

A. Krishnan ascribes one of these inscriptions (*ARE* 438) to Jatavarman Sundarapandya II. But V.Rangacharya, T.V. Mahalingam and the government epigraphists have failed in their efforts to identify this. However, T.V. Mahalingam confirms the identity of Jatavarman Sundarapandya I taking into consideration the other four records (*ARE*: 441,442,444 & 445).

A Critical analysis of the features of two epigraphical records (*ARE*. 441 and 442) would help us to acquire some knowledge on the dynasty and the name of the king who issued or caused to issue the order. The names Kulasekara, Kandiyathevar and Adithan Ganapathy Alwan are, no doubt, closely associated with the Pandyas. These names are often found in the Pandyan epigraphs and the same is advocated by the records discussed previously. The names and titles of officials sometimes help to

identify the authorship. Hence, it could be suggested that these two records are authored by the Pandya kings. Kandiyathevar was a chief of Vadapuvaniyanadu in Kongu mandalam<sup>23</sup> and was a contemporary of Kongu Rajakesari Virarajendra, Maravarman Sundarapandya I (1218-1236) and Jatavarman Kulasekara pandya II (1237-1259). As per the records, he had consecrated a Audaiyar (a sub-shrine) for the good health of one Kulasekarapandya. But the only evidence to affirm a particular king who issued the epigraph is the royal signatory Adithan Ganapathy Alwan alias Kaduvetti Vanadarayan of Kappalur alias Ulagalantha Cholanallur in Mutkur Kurram of Pandimandalam<sup>24</sup>. He figures either as official or minister of the Pandya kings. There are six of such records in the temples at Aragalur bearing his attestation but a couple of them start with Thirumurugappadi and the rest with Aruliseyal.

This kind of investigation leads to the an idea that the Thirumugappadi records were issued by the officer based on the royal order (epistle) of the supremo Jatavarman Sundarapandya I of the Pandya country. This view is also supported by the records no. 425, 426 and 429. But the *aruliseyal* records might have been issued by Jatavarman Sundarapandya II himself as a co-regent in the Kongu region under the overlordship of Maravarman Kulasekara I. Therefore, it could be concluded that the views of A Krishnan are acceptable with regard to the record No.438. T.V. Mahalingam's view with respect to the records [ARE:441 and 442] of Jatavarman Sundarapandya I might be wrong in this sense.

The inscription Nos.444 and 453 could also be ascribed to the same king Jatavarman Sundarapandya I based on the similar features of the records. The Government epigraphists and V.Rangacharya are silent as far as the inscription [ARE:444] is concerned. But T.V.Mahalingam attributes it to Jatavarman

Sundarapandya I and A.Krishnan mentions nobody else but the Pandyas. The two basic aspects – Aruliseyal and the royal signatory *Adithan Ganapathy Alwan*-lead us to think that the author of the record was *Jatavarman Sundarapandya III*.

As far as the epigraph No.453 is concerned, both V. Rangacharya and T.V. Mahalingam relate it to Jatavarman Sundarapandya I but V.Rangacharya is not sure about it (question mark). A. Krishnan simply mentions the record as belonging to Banas since the signatory is a Vanakovaraiyan. Despite all these ideas, this inscription can also be posed to the Jatavarman Sundarapandya III on the basis of the previous record [ARE :444].

Three inscriptions in the Kameswara temple beginning with the Prasasti *Swastisri Thirumugappadi Kochchadapanmarana Tirubhuvana Chakkaravathi Sundarapandya Thevar* (Jatavarman Sundarapandya), are open to suspicion. When a couple of records (ARE: 425 and 426) mention the name of the king as Jatavarman Sundarapandya in general, the third one (ARE :429) points out specifically the king as Jatavarman Sundarapandya I along with his title *Emmandalamum Kondaruliya* which means “who took every country”. It is liable to be doubted as to which of the three Jatavarman Sundarapandyas of accession CE. 1251, CE. 1278 and CE. 1303 is referred to in the first two inscriptions. Scholars who worked on these inscriptions also get confused in identifying the particular king. As far as the first record [ARE:425] is concerned, the Government epigraphists and V. Rangacharya failed to confirm the particular Jatavarman Sundarapandya (?) but T.V. Mahalingam and A. Krishnan denote it to Jatavarman Sundarapandya I. L.D. Swamikannupillai, by enumerating the



dates and natal stars, considers Jatavarman Sundarapandya I to be the more probable.<sup>25</sup>

The second record [ARE: 426] under discussion is also a contrary for these scholars. When the Government epigraphists are not sure about the king, though mentioning Jatavarma Sundarapandya, V. Rangacharya is doubtful in assigning the epigraph to Jatavarman Sundarapandya I. T.V. Mahalingam also considers this record to Jatavarman Sundarapandya I. without any doubt.<sup>26</sup> But A. Krishnan is contra to these views by denoting the king as *Jatavarman Sundarapandya II*. Despite these confusions, the other characteristic features of these two records give an idea on the authorship. Both the records speak of the grant made to servants of the temple for maintaining the shrines of Kulasekara Avudaiyar and Vazhvithamangai established by Kandiyathevar for the benefit of elder brother (*Annalvi*). The first one was attested by Adithan Ganapathy Alwan and the second one by Urayakudi Udayan. The third one being the signatory Adithan Ganapathy Alwan, helps to detect the author or the specific king who issued all these three records. It bears the epithet Emmandalamum Kondaruliya which means the king “who took every country”, a title earned by Jaravarman Sundarapandya I. So the author of these three records is none else but this king.

Further, this fact could also be ascertained by interpreting the term *Annalvi* which means ‘elder brother’. Though it was quite common in the later Pandyan inscriptions, but familiar in the records of Jatavarman Sundarapandya I and Jatavarman Sundarapandya II. But it is here presumable, that this term relates to Jatavarman Sundarapandya I, and it is also proved from the works of K.A. Nilakanda Sastri<sup>27</sup> and A.J. Thinakaran. The term ‘*Annalvi*’ might have been identical with the Jatavarman Kulasekarapandya II (CE. 1237-1260) found in his

records of ninth and tenth regnal years.<sup>28</sup> N. Sethuraman also advocates the same.<sup>29</sup>

Even though the supremo Maravarman Kulasekarapandya I of CE. 1268 is referred to as the elder brother of Jatavarman Sundarapandya II and Maravarman Vikramapandya of CE. 1283 in the works of K.A. Nilakanda Sastri<sup>30</sup> and K.V. Raman<sup>31</sup> and also in the inscriptions referring to Aragalur. But, certain features do not stick to Jatavarman Sundarapandya II based on the epistle (the royal order). All these three records are attested by Adithan Ganapathi Alwan and Urayakudi Udaiyan, the royal signatories of an unknown Jatavarman Sundarapandya. Therefore, the unknown king in the first two records under discussion is more other than Jatavarman Sundarapandya I and the same is supported by the third record. Both T.V. Mahalingam and N. Sethuraman advocate this view, while A.Krishnan has wrongly assumed the king to be Jatavarman Sundarapandya II. Moreover, a doubt of V. Rangacharya in this matter could also be cleared from the above discussion.

Yet another inscription is very particular in its character. It contains two different documents. The first half of it proves to be of one, Pandya king and second half to be, of another Pandya king. The former (419 a) starts with Swastisri Kochadapanmarana Tribhuvana Chakravatigal Sri Sundarapandya Thevarku and the later (419 b) with Swastisri Aruliseyal. These two characters of the record pose the epigraph to two different Pandya kings. But, the Government epigraphists and T.V. Mahalingam merely mention the king Jatavarman Sundarapandya and his 15<sup>th</sup> regnal year. V. Rangacharya refers to, the king Jatavarman Sundarapandya I (?) of the same regnal year doubtfully. But for A. Krishnan, it is Jatavarman Sundarapandya II. A close analysis is what is needed to infer that the two documents are of two different Pandya kings.

The characteristic feature of the first half is the name of a certain Jatavarman Sundarapandya and Chedirayar. The name of the king could be surmised to the three Jatavarman Sundarapandya during the second half of the thirteenth century. But the other name Chedirayar tends to confirm the king as Jatavarman Sundarapandya I. This Chedirayar had been a feudatory of the Chola king Rajaraja III<sup>32</sup> whose reign was just before the ascendancy of the Pandya king Jatavarman Sundarapandya I. Chedirayar would have nominated two brahmins for reciting vedas in the Kameswara temple during the time of the Cholas. But land was granted to those *brahmins* during the time of the Pandyas. This view is also supported by yet another term Kulasekara periyeri<sup>33</sup> (an irrigation tank named after the king Kulasekara) in the record.

The second half is nothing but the record of Jatavarman Sundarapandya II, because of the term Aruliseyal as discussed and proved in the Aruliseyal records earlier.

There are two such records found in the Kameswara temple at Aragalur. These two inscriptions are of public interest, speaking the right to worship and temple management. As far as the ruler at the time of the issuance of the first record (*ARE*: 432) is concerned, scholars differ in their opinion but sure about Jatavarman Sundarapandya. Contradictory views are denoted to specify the king of the Pandya pedigree. Rangacharya's view of Jatavarman Sundarapandya III is different from the view of A. Krishnan and T.V. Mahalingam as they two pose the record to Jatavarman Sundarapandya II. But, N.Sethuraman has proved, after analysing the astronomical details of the epigraph, that the king is Jatavarman Sundarapandya II (CE. 1277-1294).

Interpreting the second one (*ARE*: 439), the Government epigraphists refer only, to the name Sundarapandya but not the specific one. Rangacharya doubtfully mentions Jatavarman Sundarapandya (I?). Both A.Krishnan and T.V. Mahalingam consider this record as connected to Jatavarman Sundarapandya I. L.D. Swamikkannu Pillai beholds it to the possibility of two Jatavarman Sundarapandyas based on the astronomical details of the record. But the views of the majority of the scholars admit this record to Jatavarman Sundarapandya I.

This record is located in the Kariya Varadarajaperumal temple. It contains the phrase *Annalvi Sundarapandya Thevarku* and also conveys the message that the land grant was made to secure the happiness of the king mentioned in the phrase. It creates doubt on the authorship of the record though the royal signatory is the same Adithan Ganapathi Alwan alias Vanakovarayan of the previous records discussed. The Government epigraphists failed to mention the dynasty and the king though there are chances to assign them to the later Pandyas. It is so in the monumental work of V. Rangacharya too. But A. Krishnan relates it to Jatavarman Sundarapandya II whereas T.V. Mahalingam relates it to Jatavarman Sundarapandya I. But further investigation is required to ascertain the identity of the king who issued the record and the Annalvi Sundarapandya Thevar in the record. If the view of T.V.Mahalingam is an accepted one, then the Annalvi might be Maravarman Sundarapandya I (CE. 1215-1238 /39) or Maravarman Sundarapandya II (CE. 1238-1251/52).<sup>34</sup>

There is hardly any historical source to support the idea of A. Krishnan except the article of N. Sethuraman.<sup>35</sup> who held the view that there were three Jatavarman Sundarapandyas of accessions CE. 1250, CE. 1277 and CE. 1278 during the second half of the thirteenth century. But he puts Jatavarman Sundarapandya II of accession CE. 1277 as the co-regent of

Maravarman Kulasekarapandya I (CE. 1268-1312/18) in the Kongu region at first and followed by another Jatavarman Sundarapandya of accession CE. 1278. It shows that Jatavarman Sundarapandya of accession CE. 1278 is not the elder of Kongu fame Jatavarman Sundarapandya of accession CE. 1277. Furthermore, the genealogy of the Pandyas reveals that Jatavarman Sundarapandya I is not one of the brothers or uterines of Jatavarman Sundarapandya II. Hence, there is no chance to pose the term *Annalvi* to his credit.

A Critical analysis of the term *Aruliseyal* in this epigraph misconceptualises the above presumption. It establishes a new idea of the term *Annalvi* which probably refers to Jatavarman Sundarapandya I called so by his contemporary Jatavarman Virapandya I. According to A.J. Thinakaran, the king Jatavarman Sundarapandya I had two brothers viz., Maravarman Vikramapandya II (1250-66), the elder and Jatavarman Virapandya I (1253-83) the younger. The presence of the records of Jatavarman Virapandya I in the Kongu region,<sup>36</sup> Nadunadu,<sup>37</sup> and Tondaimandalam<sup>38</sup> reveals the sphere of Pandya activity in those regions. He had also been the co-regent of Jatavarman Sundarapandya I in those regions. Hence, it would be responsible to assume that Jatavarman Virapandya I was the author of the epigraph.

If the term under discussion refers to Jatavarman Sundarapandya II, then there is a chance to surmise his contemporary ruler Maravarman Vikramapandya III, who earned the title *bhuvanekavira*. It is to be remembered that the same title was also borne by Maravarman Kulasekara I. Both of them were the two brothers of Jatavarman Sundapandya II. The former was elder and the later was younger to Jatavarman Sundapandya II. The presence of the inscriptions of Maravarman Vikraman Pandya III in the modern districts of

Chengalpet, Villuppuram, Cuddalore and Salem reveals that he must have been a co-regent of Maravarman Kulasekarapandya I sometimes in the then political divisions of Tondaimandalam, Nadunadu and a part of the Kongu region.<sup>39</sup> A record very closer of the study area found in Rasipuram<sup>40</sup> shows the co-regency of Maravarman Vikramapandya III in those regions. Further, Jatavarman Sundarapandya II also ruled the Kongu country after the demise of the Kongu Virapandya in the year 1286-87 and Karur was the headquarters. It proves that both Jatavarman Sundarapandya II and Maravaman Vikramapandya III were equal to each other and co-equal to the sovereign ie. Maravarman Kulasekarapandya I in the discharge of order. Therefore, it could be presumed that the term *Annalvi* relates to Jatavaman Sundarapandya II called so by Maravarman Vikramapandya III, who must have issued the order of the epigraph.

Thus, there are three inferences to find the relationships (*Annalvi*)

1. Maravarman Sundarapandya I  
(or) Maravarman Sundarapandya II to  
Jatavarman Sundarapandya I
2. Jatavarman Sundarapandya I to  
Jatavarman Virapandya I
3. Jatavarman Sundarapandya II to  
Maravarman Vikramapandya III.

Further, insight into this epigraph is required to ascertain the fact i.e., the king who is associated with the term '*Annalvi*' and the authorship of the record.

Thus, a critical study of the unique feature of the records in the temples at Aragalur proves that there are fifteen inscriptions of the Pandyas against the various numbers given by scholars. These features also help to highlight the unidentified Pandya rulers who issued or caused to issue the records. Accordingly, there are six inscriptions to the credit of Jatavarman Sundarapandya I and eight inscriptions to Jatavarman Sundarapandya II and one inscription of Jatavarman Sundarapandya III. The following table gives a clear picture of the inference made in this research paper.

<b>Records</b>	<b>ARE. No of 1913</b>	<b>Author</b>
Konerimelkondan	Record 424	Jatavarman Sundarapandya III
Ulagamulududaiyal Sandi	443	Jatavarman Sundarapandya II
Aruliseyal	438, 441, 442, 444 and 453	Jatavarman Sundarapandya II
Thirumugappadi	425,426,429	Jatavarman Sundarapandya I
Two in one	419 (first half) 419 (second half)	Jatavarman Sundarapandya I Jatavarman Sundarapandya II
Koch. Tbn. Chak. Sri Sundara Pandya Thevarku	432 - 439	Jatavarman Sundarapandya II
Annalvi Sundarapandya Thevarku	448	Jatavarman Sundarapandya I (Probably Jatavarman Virapandya I and also Maravarman Vikramapandya III)

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7. It means the potentate King (and having none over to him) There are two terms viz., Konerimaikondam and Konerimelkondan occur sometimes indepentendly and sometimes along with the epithet of the rulers of the later Chola and later Pandya inscriptions. Prof.Y.Subbarayalu translates the term Konerinmai kondan as “unmatched among the contemporary rulers” (*South India Under the Cholas*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2012. p.68).
8. A *sandi* is a regular service to the God in a temple and it is founded by either a king or his subordinates or his family members or ministers or officials for various occasions in the name of the king or in the title earned by him.



9. This name occurs in many inscriptions of the later Pandyas. He appears to be an officer or a minister. Here, in this epigraph, a grant of a village to the temple for a service is instituted on the title earned by the king named Konerinmelkondan.
10. *ARE*, 22 of 1900 (No.7 of Sewell's list)
11. *ARE*, 74 of 1908. But the inscription Nos. 69 and 72 of 1908 refer Konerinmelkondan to certain Jatavarman Sundarapandya.
12. *ARE*, 437 of 1903.
13. Nilakanta Sastri K.A., *Op.Cit.*, p.189 vide *ARE*-1918 Part ii. Para 50.
14. *ARE*, 64 of 1935 (f.14) vide N.Sethuraman-*Pandyar Varalaru. Op. Cit.* p.168.
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16. *ARE*, 84 of 1918.
17. 'Ulagamudaiyar' means one who possesses the whole world.
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## THE NON-PRODUCING CLASS AND TRADE IN MITHILA IN THIRTEENTH-FOURTEENTH CENTURY

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### Abstract

*In this paper I have tried to bring to light the value of the period from the thirteenth to the fourteenth centuries when the region known as Mithila / Tirhut witnessed some major changes in her political life as a result of which the region was opened up and became an important economic center with a flourishing trade and exchange. Centers like Hajipur and Darbhanga emerged during this time as major economic and mint centers during the rule of Muslim rulers. The region of Mithila named variously as Tirhut, Tirabhukti, Videha etc. has been since long been a subject of regional histories. However, its importance has been marginalized while writing the socio-economic histories of the Indian subcontinent primarily because of the few available sources. Prior to Vidyapati (15th century), there are hardly any sources available to construct the history of the region. There are few references scattered here and there in many other sources like the Puranas (Brihad-Vishnu Purana c.400 CE) and great Epics (Ramayana immortalized the region's glory).*

*Thus, an attempt is made here to place two important texts i.e., the biography of Dharmasvamin (13<sup>th</sup> century) and the*

*Varnaratnakara (14<sup>th</sup> century) in historical context through analyzing the economic and political conditions on the basis of the region called Mithila. These two texts are of innumerable significance despite many of its limitations. The Varnaratnakara is not an easily defined text and the biography of the Darmasvamin is a very small account of travellers. But the historical value is not less than any other sources used for the construction of this period.*

**Keywords:** Dharmasvamin, Jyotirisvara Thakkurra, Varnaratnakara, Mithila Region, Economy, Trade, Non-Producing Class.

Mithila is a cultural-linguistic zone of the eastern part of India comprising the whole of the present districts of Champaran, Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga, some parts of the districts of Monghyr, Bhagalpur and Purnea and some parts of the Nepal terai<sup>1</sup>.

Geographically, the area of Mithila has never remained the same, although its description has been mentioned as early as the Satapatha Brahmana (1000-600 BCE). In the Jataka, we have found references to Mithila in terms of geography. In recent times, the territory of Raj Darbhanga, one of the richest and largest estates in India of great zamindars (landlords), coincided very roughly with the region of Mithila, extending into the districts of Monghyr, Bhagalpur and Purnea. The capital of Raj Darbhanga, was the city of Darbhanga. We see a shift from the administrative center to the sacred center of Mithila where the Maithili Brahmins shifting from the different places to the core areas of Soitpura or Sotipur (a sacred geography with its heartland being a small triangle between Darbhanga, Madhubani and Madhepur), where in a group of 36 villages, all the highest ranking Brahmins, i.e. the Shrotriyas, have their residences<sup>2</sup>.

It is often said that by the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the relative stability of dynastic and political life of north India had come to an end. Muslim armies from central India had gained a foot hold in the delta which was subsequently expanded into political control with the conversion of many of the local inhabitants to Islam. Thus the period under review marks a period of transition where the older Hindu and Buddhist dynasties were destroyed in battle or otherwise disappeared from historical record and were supplanted by Muslim dynasties<sup>3</sup>.

Many scholars assume that the period before the Vidyapati (in Mithila in particular) and the period of the pre-Mughal period (the whole of north India in general) was dark and barren from the rulers, nobles, and people from the standpoint of literature and cultural works<sup>4</sup>. They ignored works such as of medicine and music which were composed in the regional languages by the Brahmins (who usually preferred Sanskrit than the vernacular) in the early medieval and medieval periods. There are many Persian and indigenous words scattered here and there in these texts and fables which attracted these writers. The writing of Jyotirisvara i.e. The VR is best the example for this.

During the period when the Tibetan pilgrim Dharmasvamin came to Tirhut, the region was ruled by the local rulers of the Karnata dynasty in Mithila. The name of the ruler mentioned in the text is Ramasimhadeva who was the great grandson of Nanyadeva, the first independent (even first historical) ruler of Mithila. Interestingly, this king who belonged to a family who patronized the Brahmins primarily for their legitimacy as they were migrants (from as far as Karnataka), gave a lot of respect

to this traveler. He was also offered the position of chief-priest of the palace by the King himself, but Dharmasvamin refused it as he was a Buddhist and Tirhut was a non-Buddhist country<sup>5</sup>.

The biography of Dharmasvamin and the Varnaratnakara thus represented a significant period for the whole of eastern India. It marked the establishment of two dynasties in eastern India, the Karnatas and the Senas in north Bihar and Bengal respectively. Both the powers seem to have migrated from as far south as Karnataka state. The Karnatas in Mithila represent an important episode of historical development during the medieval period, a period already known for its significant changes. The society/ region were opened up and it resulted in economic stability.

The texts tell us that the region was highly urbanized on the one hand and represented a huge gap between the 'haves' and the 'haves not' category of people, the lavish lifestyle of the rulers and the nobles, the big merchants, at the expense of the lower classes.

Before discussing the issues, an important point should be made clear. Since the biography of Dharmasvamin is so small (despite its importance) and the Varnaratnakara is so big, this paper received more information on the economy on the latter.

There are two sections in the paper followed by a conclusion:

- a. The region of Mithila and the two sources
- b. The non-producing class and trade

## Part One: The Region of Mithila

In this section, I have tried to situate the texts and the region of Mithila. The physical features and the geographical peculiarities of a region play an important role in determining the mode and conditions of its subsistence. Tirhut was bounded by the Himalayas on the north, the Kosi on the east, the Gandak on the west and the Ganges on the south. It comprised of almost all of northern Bihar and the strip of Nepal Terai<sup>6</sup>.

Geographically and strategically, the region of Mithila lay on the way between the important Indian Buddhist monastic centers such as Vikramashila and Bodh Gaya and to the important Buddhist countries such Nepal, Tibet, and China and vice versa. Politically, it lay on the way from Delhi to Bengal and from south Bihar to Nepal. These factors are very important for the proper understanding of the emergence of Mithila, particularly the territorial unit of Tirhut as an important Brahmanical center. The making of the Mithila region, whose sacredness may be ascribed exclusively to this reason.

The biography of Dharmasvamin clearly points out that Tirhut lay on the way from Tibet to Vajrasana (Bodh Gaya). There was a good deal of intercourse between Tibet and Northern India from c.600 to 1300 CE. Many of the Indian monks went to Tirhut during this period, but they were seemingly too captivated in translating Sanskrit Buddhist works into Tibetan. A number of Tibetan monks visited India, studied at Nalanda or Vikramashila. Tirhut lay on their way as is clear from Dharmasvamin's account.

Even in the presence of many difficulties like the Turkish invasions in the region, the Tibetans were bound to go through Tirhut. When Dharmasvamin was about to start for India through

Tirhut, many scholars besought him not to go, as there might be a danger to his life. Tirhut was clearly a non-Buddhist country.

Dharmasvamin tells us that people were unfriendly towards them (Buddhists). In Tirhut, women did not show respect to them<sup>7</sup>. It is also suggested that in Tirhut keeping the Buddhist vows was very tough<sup>8</sup>. It is well known fact that the women were the main agent in preserving the Buddhists vows as householders and their behavior as donors played an important role in Buddhist life. Dharmasvamin did not see any help from the women in Tirhut; this shows that the Buddhists were less respected in Tirhut than in other regions of eastern India.

Grierson described the people of Tirhut in the following words:

Mithila or Tirhut a country with an ancient history traditions of which it retains to the present day, is a land under the domination of sept Brahmans extraordinarily devoted to the mint, arise and camnin of the low. For centuries it has been a tract too proud to admit other nationalities to enter course on equal terms, and has passed through conquest after conquest from the north, from the east and from the west without changing its ancestral peculiarities. The story goes that at the marriage of Ramachandra, the Brahmans of Mithila showed the same pride which is the characteristic of their descendants of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This brahmanical domination has left ineffaceable marks upon the nature of the rest of the population. Mithila or Tirhut is one of the most congested parts of India, its inhabitants increase and multiply and impoverish the earth, nor will they seek other lands on which to practice the one art with which they are acquainted<sup>9</sup>.



The account also indicates that by the medieval period, Nepala (Nepal) had become a prominent Buddhist site. After the Muslim destruction of the important Buddhist monasteries and places of learning in Bihar, Tibetan scholars used to repair the monasteries in Nepal. Many monasteries (Chaityas and Viharas) are known to have been re-located in Nepal<sup>10</sup>. He differentiates the languages spoken in Nepala and India in his visit to Tirhut.

The region of Mithila is said to have been ruled by many powers. The Guptas and the Palas also seem to have ruled Mithila. By the end of the eleventh century, Mithila came under the rule of Nanyadeva (1097-1133), who founded the Karnata dynasty. Historians note that Nanyadeva was the first historical kings of the region. It was during the rule of the Karnata ruler named Ramasimhadeva (13<sup>th</sup> century) the great grandson of Nanyadeva, that Tibetan Buddhist travelers visited the country of Tirhut. Interestingly, this pilgrim named Dharmasvamin, was highly honored and was offered many gifts by the ruler himself. This is an interesting thing to note as Dharmasvamin himself said that Tirhut was a non-Buddhist country, though he was offered the seat of the chaplain by the ruler himself. This offer was declined by Dharmasvamin as he was a Buddhist.

Harasimhadeva, the next ruler, under whose rule Jyotirisvara flourished, was the third and the most beloved rulers of Mithila, who has been credited to have fought with the Turks<sup>11</sup> and also considered to be the champion of Brahmanism. He was the founder of the *Panji Vyavastha*, (means. the official maintenance of the genealogical tables). The Smriti studies (Brahmanical prescribed rules and laws) in Mithila, under both the rulers of the Karnatas and the Oinwaras dynasties also flourished<sup>12</sup>. Therefore the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> centuries marked a turning point in the history of Mithila region.

Jyotirisvara Thakkura excelled the art of writing in many genres prevalent during his time. He was a scholar and belonged to the prestigious family of Brahmins, who had occupied various important posts in the Karnata court.

He was an important yet rarely discussed writer of medieval India. Even though he belonged to Mithila, his writings depict the life applicable to the whole of north India. He wrote an erotic work on called the *Panca-sayaka*, or the Five Arrows (of the God of Love). The work is in five sections, and is in verse, describing the secret processes of love (the *aupanisada-prakarana* of Vatsyayana). The other work is VR (the main source of this paper) is a kind of writing found hardly anywhere in India. It is a kind of encyclopedia. He is also known to have written a *Prahasana* (a farce) named *Dhurttā Samagama*. These writings are important and if seen in totality we have the image of the society in which it was written. There are very few sources available to construct the social and economic history of the Mithila region, but Jyotirisvara's writings tell us that it was an important cultural zone where the art of writing became important.

As is already discussed, the mentioning of Mithila is largely based on inferences and conjectures. There are many persistent ideas found very often in the writings about Mithila. Ancient history had received tremendous attention. As a result, it became the seat of great Vedic sages and Brahmins of great wisdom. While medieval history, on the other hand, has not received much attention. The major reason is the lack of sources. There are very few sources to construct the history of medieval Mithila. Also, the fact that the region as a whole has received very little value when it comes to writing history. Therefore, the writings of Jyotirisvara, written in a crucial time, when hardly any other source is found from the region, stands as an outstanding

contribution. But here again the texts are not used properly by the historians to construct the economic conditions of the region during this period.

Jyotirisvara was brought to academic light by Hara Prasad Sastri. Also Suniti Kumar Chatterjee attests to his authenticity. On the basis of these writings, we can infer that Jyotirisvara's writings fill the gap. It is said that Jyotirisvara was an eminent scholar who was not just a Vedic Brahmin priest, but also someone who had mastered the art of theatre, music, philosophy and also knew many languages. It is also observed that he was someone who broke the general prescription for Brahmins of his times. On the one hand, he wrote a text like the VR which shows the life of his country which is purely brahmanized and in accordance with the brahmanical norms, and on the other hand, he wrote the farce play (*Dhurttā-samagama-nataka*) where he criticizes the Brahmins and shows that how paradoxical the society was. His interesting account shows that the voice against Brahmin superiority was noticed and was recorded in popular writings.

What is more interesting is the fact that while the farce was written in Sanskrit and this is supposed to be against the brahmanical prescribed form, and the VR was written in Maithili. It thus becomes important to revisit such writings to understand properly the social context.

During this period i.e. from the 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century, Mithila saw a shift from the local rulers to the final submission to the Muslim rulers. The Karnata dynasty of Simraon was ruling over Tirhut when Bakhtiyar Khalji captured South Bihar. Tirhut was edged in by four states, Nepal in the north, Bengal in the east, the Turkish chiefdom (formerly the Pala kingdom) of Bihar in the south and Turkish Sultanate (formerly the Gahadavala

kingdom of Kannauj-Kasi) in the west. The Karnata Rajas of Tirhut had come into conflict with the Turko-Muslims since the time of Bakhtiyar Khalji<sup>13</sup>. According to the Bayaz of Mulla Taqia of Akbar's days, Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji at one period in the course of his (successful) military campaign in Lakhnauti marched against Harasimhadeva, the Karnata Raja of Tirhut, who submitted to Bakhtiyar. Following this, Bakhtiyar proceeded back in the direction of Lakhnauti.

Apparently the country of Tirhut was not easy to subdue as the jungles were difficult to infiltrate and the rivers were obstacles difficult to cross. It has been suggested<sup>14</sup> that geography made Tirhut almost a closed country in her long past and it remained immune from Turkish political influence till the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. But this is not supported by the evidence. Before the coming of the Turks, Tirhut had been successfully invaded and subdued by the Palas and the Karnata.

Tirhut acknowledged the sway of the Turks, and its Hindu rajas allowed the Turkish armies to move from the west to the east and vice-versa<sup>15</sup>. Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq, the Turkish ruler, subdued it in the first quarter of the fourteenth century. Also, Dharmasvamin's account tells us that the people were moving in ferries and these boats were big and carried almost 300 passengers at a time from Magadha to Tirhut and vice versa. This proves that economically the region was flourishing and also it was not isolated politically from the rest of north India. Mithila was linked by eight trade routes in ancient times, one of which was the Mithila-Tamralipti route<sup>16</sup>.

Dharmasvamin also gives an account of the city and the region. He says that the city had a clear division between the court (*asthana*) and the city (*nagara*). The text says,

In this country there was a town called Pa-ta which had some 600,000 houses and was surrounded by seven walls. The height of these walls was about equal to that of a Tibetan fort. Outside of the town walls stood the raja's palace which had eleven large gates and was surrounded by twenty ditches filled with water and rows of trees. There were three gates facing each direction, East, West, and South, and two gates facing north. I did not see the two northern gates but the others had bridges in front of them. In front of each bridge, guards were stationed, more than ten arches at each bridge. These protective measures were due to the fear of the Turushkas, or Gar-logs who during the year had led an army (against the town), but failed to reach it. It was also said that there were three men experts in swordsmanship. The Raja owned a she elephant<sup>17</sup>.

The text *Varnaratnakara* is the oldest known work written in Maithili. The subject matter of the text in the words of Pandit Haraprasad Sastri are:

It is a sort of vernacular and Sanskrit terms, a repository of literary similes and conversations dealing with the various things in the world and ideas which are usually treated in poetry. We have in it either bare list of terms, or the similes and conversations are set in the frame work of a number of 'descriptions'.

The text is divided into seven or apparently eight chapters called the *kallolas*. The work is in prose. The chapters are suitably called *Kallolas*' (streams or waves) as the work is a Ratnakara, i.e., Sea. In each *kallola*, there are a number of these list of terms and conventional similes, each of these lists, or descriptions, is preceded by the formula- *atha .varnana*. Each

*kallola* has at its end its name, together with the name of the author and the title of the work.

The *kallolas* are as follows:-

1. Nagara Varnana
2. Nayika Varnana
3. Asthan Varnana
4. Ritu Varnana
5. Prayanak Varnana
6. Bhattadi Varnana
7. Samsana Varnana
8. The title of this *Kallola* is missing.

## **Part Two: The Non-producing Class and Trade**

It has been noted that the region of Mithila was agriculturally one of the most developed and prosperous regions of eastern India. Endowed with geographical features, many urban centers with a potential for trade sprang up in India in general and in Bihar in particular. Hajipur/Vaisali, Janakpur, Purnea, Darbhanga and many others emerged during this time in North Bihar. Vaisali (which later became more important with the emergence of Hajipur) was a prominent economic zone where the people came from very far from early times.

Also the emergence of the religious sites, especially associated with the Vaisnava Bhakti, was the result of this. The Hariharkshetra, a place on the confluence of the Gandaki and the Ganga rivers became one of the important religious sites. It was an important market place too. The Sonapur *Mela* (fair) is the oldest fair of Bihar and even now popular for its cattle market<sup>18</sup>.

At Vaisali, the northern route to Sravasti passed through Setvya and is, identified with Balpur in Nepal. Kapilvastu, Kusinara and Pava and the southern route from Beneras met<sup>19</sup>. The grand route proceeded to Champa (modern Bhagalpur) through Vaisali and one other route linked Vaisali with Rajgriha<sup>20</sup>.

Vaisali, was therefore, linked with almost every important trade center of that time and was located on the trade route. The distribution pattern of asokan pillars, which were placed on important routes, also gives an impression that another important route passed through north Bihar linking Magadha with Nepal via Vaisali<sup>21</sup>. The routes followed by foreign travelers also point to the importance of north Bihar on this account. Fa-Hein reached Vaisali from Mathura through Sankasya, Kanyakubja, Saket, Sravasti, Kailavastu etc<sup>22</sup>. Dharmasvamin also visited Vaisali through Tirhut.

There was migration as the region was surrounded by many rivers and streams. The rivers viz., the Gandak, the Kamala, the Jibachh, the Karah, the Kosi, the Bagmati, the Balan, etc., flow on a raised bed which is constructed out of the silt brought from the mountains in Nepal. The land is free from rocks and stones and dotted with number of pools replenished by the monsoon every year.

The proximity to a river, preferably a navigable one, seems to have been an important consideration in determining the location of any city. Above all, it facilitated the transportation of goods in and out of the urban centers. The account of Dharmasvamin shows that the river Ganga was the main artery of was navigation and navigable throughout the year. The Pala grants were issued from royal capitals on the Ganga which reflects its strategic importance; that river traffic was common can be

inferred from the reference to large number of boats on the Ganga at Pataliputra<sup>23</sup>. Dharmasvamin is said to have crossed the Ganga from Tirhut to Magadha (Patna and Gaya) in a large passenger boat<sup>24</sup>.

Thus, it seems that by means of major rivers such as the Gandak, the Ganges, the Kosi, Mithila region was connected to important market cities such as Bhagalpur, Patna, Calcutta and Nepal. These favorable economic conditions helped Tirhut to overcome, at least partly, its natural land locked position by an easy riverine access to the Agra-Patna-Calcutta route. Therefore, apart from handling its own imports and exports, Patna acted as a medium for transmitting goods to and from Nepal through the region of Mithila, and other regions lying contiguous to its upper and eastern western sides.

The Ganges opened up north Bihar for travelers and served as a conduit for overseas trade, as goods were carried from Pataliputra (later Patna) and Champa (later Bhagalpur) out to the seas and on to ports in Sri Lanka and South Asia<sup>25</sup> as is evident from the large number of goods mentioned in the *Varnaratnakara*.

The role of the Ganges as a 'channel' for trade was enhanced by its natural links- it embraces all the major rivers and streams in both north and south Bihar. By far the most important channels for trade were the sub-Himalayan ranges in Nepal which proceed in a south easterly direction towards Calcutta. Of these, the Gandak was the principal river artery for trade navigable throughout the year.

The text indicates that the trade and fishing constituted the major source of Mithila's wealth along with agriculture. The natural fertility of the soil in most parts, copious rainfall and



irrigation facilities provided since early times, combined with the industry of the peasants, resulted in rich crops, such as cotton, sugarcane lintent, oilseeds poppy, indigo etc., on a large scale. Though agriculture was the occupation of the bulk of the people, there were many important industries in the rural as well as urban areas. This section is divided into three parts:

1. The products and items
2. The Vanikas/traders and merchants
3. Countries

## Products and items

The items are divided among the following sections.

- a. Agricultural
- b. Non-agricultural
- c. Metal/Precious stones
- d. Medicines and other items

## Agriculture

Jyotirisvara mentions flattened rice (*chura*, *chividyani*) and fried rice (*farhi*)<sup>26</sup>. Thus, a fine variety of *Chura* (parched rice) with a heavy coat of thick curd and cream seems to have been a popular food of Mithila. Other items included *mungwa*, *ladivi*, *saruari*, *madhukupi*, *matha*, *fena*, *tilwa*, etc. He took delight in describing these items in feasts of the region<sup>27</sup>.

Vegetables of different kinds are mentioned in the text. These are pumpkins of different kinds, *turai*, *ramjhumni* (lady fingers), *karaila*, *sag*, *sim* (*samba*, both black and white) turnip, carrot, onions (*pyaju*), garlic (*lehsun*), ginger (*adraka*)<sup>28</sup> poppy seeds and spices like *mauri*, *methi* and *mangrail* were grown<sup>29</sup>.

The use of betel-leaves (*pan*) in Mithila was very popular then and now. The people of Mithila were adept in the use of betel leaves and the VR has prescribed a number of methods for the use of betel<sup>30</sup>. Jyotirisvara has mentioned thirteen qualities of betel-leaves and has given a list of the varieties of spices and betel-nuts imported from other places<sup>31</sup>.

Interestingly, there is a famous saying, still prevalent in Mithila, that betel leaves and *Makhana* (a kind of water fruit) are not available even in heaven and hence one should taste them, while living otherwise he will have to repent in heaven<sup>32</sup>.

Flowers of different kinds are mentioned here and there in the text which is significant for religious purposes as well as ordinary purposes. *Malati*, *manaoda*, *levari*, *karuna*, *suvarnaketaki*, *champak* etc names are mentioned<sup>33</sup>. We also get reference of *Arka* plant (*sheer*)<sup>34</sup> and mango (*sahar*)<sup>35</sup>.

## Non- Agricultural Products

Dharmasvamin did not mention any particular list of the items he found in the region except in one instance he says that in Tirhut, in the south-west direction for the road, there was a sugar-cane grove of dark-green colour, greener than the other (grove). Raw sugar (*bu-ram*) used to come from there<sup>36</sup>.

There can be a long list in the category of non-agricultural products. It may include fisheries (the *tivars* or *tiars*, a sub-caste of the Mallahas or a caste of fishermen engaged in fishery)<sup>37</sup>, minerals, salt, opium, and liquor on the one and gold, iron and copper on the other. As for private industries the most important among them were the textile industries, including

printing, calico printing industries, sugar industry, metal work, paper industry, stone and brick works and various other industries, such as inlay of stone works, enameling etc.

Varieties of sandalwood (*canak*) are mentioned in the VR such as *Shrikhand*, *Malay*, *Sambharali*, *Surati* (from Surat)<sup>38</sup>, cardimon (ela)<sup>39</sup>, *Sukhmela* (small cardemon)<sup>40</sup>, *kasturi* (musk)<sup>41</sup> varieties of *Agarak*<sup>42</sup> (incense tree or eagle wood) such as *krishnagura*, *Kalasaye*, *Kaktundò*, *khetang*, *Kharidarak*, varieties of camphor (*karpur*) such as *kanc*, *pakal*, *Rajarasi*, *Bhimsena*, *chandrodaye*, *udayabhaskara*, *hasrosa*, *Chini* (probably from China)<sup>43</sup> was brought and sold here.

There are many spices mentioned in the text. These are *Gulatvak* (daal chini or cinnamon), *teja-patta* (Indian bay leaf, bay leaf), *Laung* (cloves), *jeera* (cumin seed), *jati-phal* (nutmeg or *Supari*)<sup>44</sup>, *Saunf* (fenned seed)<sup>45</sup> methi (fenugreek leaf seed), *pipari* or *Pipalli* (long pepper), *Jamani* (or *ajawain*, *careway*, *henbane*).

Also the items such as alcohol (*madira*)<sup>46</sup>, oil (*Sugandha elatel*) and shampoo of at least four kinds such as *Sondu*, *Gondu*, *Kiratu* and *Kanhru*<sup>47</sup> are mentioned.

We have an elaborate discussion about the textiles and the costumes<sup>48</sup>. It is very interesting to know that in the matter of costumes and dress materials, Jyotirivara does not include the dresses worn by the women. The *nayika varnana* does not include the section on women's clothing. On the contrary, men's wear received much attention. Only at one place is mentioned that the Kancipuram muslin (*Kancivarali aisan agaka vana*) worn by the *sakhi* (female friend)<sup>49</sup>.

The textile industry included the manufacture of cotton, woollen and silk cloths. Dyeing industry, calico printing industry etc. are also mentioned. Jyotirisvara mentions as many as 43 stuff manufactured in the country (*desi*) or imported in the lists named *vastra varnana*, the *desiya varnana*, the *nirbhusan varnana*, the *netavarnana* etc. Some of the stuff are named after the name of the place where it was actually produced. Gujarat and Bengal are some of them. The names of the first category are as follows: *dukula* (*malmal*, a kind of muslin), *ksauma* (linen), *kauseya* (generic term for stuff made of cocoon silk), *kanakapatra*, *vicitra*, *meghavarna* and *megha-udumbara* (both refer to the black silk manufactured in Bengal), *sharam*, *ksrirodaka*, *karppura-cuaka*, *karppuratiaka*, *gangasagara* (it was also produced in Bengal), *suryabandha*, *gajabandha*<sup>50</sup>, *devang* (brocaded silk), *ahinvala* (silk manufactured in Anahilwada, modern Patan, north Gujarat), *Suchisona*, *Suchipali*, *Pancaon*, *Sonapali*, *Ghazpali* (probably silk belonging to the Ghazipur region of Uttar Pradesh), *Kadaligarbha*, *Muktapada*, *Malavidyadhara*, *Srikantda*, *Lakshivilasa*, *Vicitrangada*<sup>51</sup>, *Cakresvari* and *Dandaprakara*.

The list of the countries that made silk (*desiyavastra*) includes *tancera* (apparently silk produces at Tanjore), *gangaura*, *silahati* (silk manufactured at Sylhet in eastern Bengal), *ajayemeru* (probably meant Ajmer), *gandipura*, *rajarupa*, *jagaddharapura* (it may refer to Jagdalpur, the capital of the former Bastar state, now in Madhya Pradesh), *kanchivani* (it could be identified with Kancipuram, still famous for producing fine silk), *colapatana* (the capital of cholas in the medieval period), *dvaravasa*, *nisasantosha*, *sadapi*, *patora*, or *patolah* (*patolah* are the double *ikat* woven sari usually made from silk made in patan, north Gujarat)<sup>52</sup>. *Mangal*, *parijat*, *mani*, *manijal*, *sarvvanga*, *rupamanjari*, *samvalhari* (silk manufactured in the Orissa's Sambhalpuri region, even now famous for its textile), *suryamandala*, *chandramandala*, *taramandala*.

The list of the plain stuff (*nirbhusanvarnana*) includes the *kamaruvala* (manufactured in Kamarupa, Assam), *vangal* (Bengal's plain cotton stuff), *gunjana* (refers to Gujarat), *kathiawala* (refers to textile manufactured in Kathiawad), *telakantha*, *suddhaota* (bleached cloth), *kaci* (cotton stuff of kacipuram origin), *nicadhi*, *jili*, *varahathi*, *majhaotari*, *jhuran*, *vapaya*.

Horses and elephants are also some of the things which received much attention. As the economy was flourishing, people required these things. They served as the means for transport. Even on auspicious occasions they were considered sacred. Horses are frequently mentioned. *Asvavidya*, *asvavahaka*, *asva-ratha*, *asvaprakara* are some of them. *Asvaratha* is mentioned in the list of the *sodasamahadana-varnana*. (16 *mahadanas*, great gifts)<sup>53</sup> the various named of horses are *turang*<sup>54</sup>, *ghola*<sup>55</sup> and *ataji*<sup>56</sup>, horses of 24 breeds are mentioned. Elephants of 8 kinds are mentioned. In the *asthan varnana* we have the *gajavahaka* and the *asvavahaka* are said to have sitting with the *rajakumaras*, *shistaputras*, *shrotriyaputras* and *vanikaputras*<sup>57</sup>. *Asvavahak* is among the important workers (*raja karmachari*) in the *asthana varnana* (royal court).

The rulers demonstrated the importance of having a strong cavalry by assuming the title *asvapati* (lord of horses), along with *gajapati* (lord of the elephants) and *narapati* (lord of men).

## Metals industries

The VR contains innumerable references to articles of different metals. There are dealers in gold, silver, bell-metal, alloy of eight metals (*astadhatu*), jugs, cups, jars, plates, basins, cooking and other important items. He refers to the use of metals (*Dhatu*) like gold, silver, copper and *astadhatu*. Gold is

extensively used. Copper (*tam*) is used on a large scale. It has religious significance and is used for sacred purposes for example the reference of *tamakund*, *tamkundi*, *tamauti*, *kamandalu*, *ghanti*, *tambi* etc<sup>58</sup> Copper was used for the tub, jar, bell, plate etc. stool made up of sandalwood is also mentioned.

The text also tells us about the wood and sandal wood stools and gives an elaborate account of bedsteads. The *samarhala varnana* is an important section in the text where the king is mentioned sitting on an elaborate throne of wood<sup>59</sup> which is beautifully decorated as if prepared by Lord Visvakarma himself.

Iron was used for making items such as *Lohalatak* (a pipe of bubble made up of iron or steel)<sup>60</sup>, *lohaka-katara* (a tool of stringing ornaments of iron)<sup>61</sup> and the weapons mentioned in the VR include many items of iron such as *parashu* (Axe), *churika* (knife) etc<sup>62</sup>. The appearance of Lohara in the list of the *mandajatiyas* shows that the iron was extensively used in the day to day practices<sup>63</sup>. The cavalier is said to have been wearing a breast plate (*Kucaota*) made of iron plates drilled with diamond.

The stone industry also flourished. *Pakhan* (stone) and *Bhindipal* (stone-pelting sling) are mentioned in the list of 36 weapons<sup>64</sup>. Silver (*rajat*) is mentioned in many places<sup>65</sup>.

Ornaments are also very frequently mentioned. Not only the queen (*nayika*), her friend (*sakhi*) but also the king's (*Nayaka*) and *bhat* (court bard) are also mentioned. *Trika* (an ornament worn on forehead), *kangan* (bracelet), and *nupur* (anklet) are mentioned in the section of the *nayikas varnana*<sup>66</sup>. In the *sakhivarnana*, *sonak dorenmadhyabhaga* (worn in the waist), *Kundal* (earring), *nupur* (anklet) are mentioned.

Precious and semiprecious stones are discussed under two separate sections, i.e the *ratna-varnana* and the *upa-manivarnana*. *Ratnavarnana* includes *gomed*, *garudongar markata*, *mukuta*, *manskhand*, *padmarag* (ruby), *heer* (diamond), *renuja*, *marasesa*, *saugandhika*, *chandrakanta*, *suryakanta*, *prabal* (coral), *rajavartta*, *kasaya*, *indranila* (sapphire).

The list of the *upamani* (semiprecious jewellery) includes *kurmma*, *mahakurmma*, *ahichatra*, *shyavagandha*, *vyomarang*, *kitapaksha*, *kuruvinda*, *suryamal*, *haritasagar*, *jiviu*, *yavayati shikhinila*, *vansapatra*, *dhulimarakat*, *bhasmang*, *jamvukanta*, *sfatika*, *karketkar*, *paripatra*, *nandak*, *anjanak*, *lohitak*, *sheleyak*, *shuktichurna*, *tutathak*, *shukgriva*, *garutap-paksha*, *pitarag*, *karpapurak*, *varnarasa*, *kach*.

Other items include the rafter of bedstead (*manikaka pasi*) in the *sayanavarnana* (the account of the bedroom with the elaborate account of the bedstead and bed clothes) shows the lavish lifestyle of the rulers<sup>67</sup>. We have the mention of blanket (*kanval*), and mosquito net (*musairi*).

## Medicine and other items

There are a lot of medicinal items mentioned in the VR. The *Vaidyas* (physician, doctor) formed an important section and they were highly respected. *Jyotirisvara* has mentioned them in a separate section called the *vaidya varnana* (description of physicians) and also the mention of the medicines (*aushadhi*).

The *deorhali varnana* (account of the temple into which the Nayaka goes) is very important. It includes many items that are manufactured exclusively for the performance of the religious rites. The items are *chauki* (table), *pirhi* (stool, usually wooden and without legs), *panigah* (wash basin), *jhari* (a narrow necked

milking pot, a metal pitcher with spout, an ewer), *teal* (tripod), *asan* (seat, sitting mat/chair), *garua* (pillow), *dhupahi* (incense sticks), *thari* (plate, dish) etc<sup>68</sup>. The use of copper is already mentioned in the metal section.

The VR further refers to the cap making, rope making, basket making, and pottery making. Drum and musical instruments were the flourishing industries. We learn that the making of the arrows, bows and other weapons were also very important.

### Traders and their socio-economic status

A detailed study of the text show that intra-regional and long distance trade was by now carried on a large scale and was free from state interference. It was dominated by market forces of supply and demand. The *Asthan varnana* clearly points out the value given to the merchants / *Vanikas* in the royal courts. There were great potentialities of capitalistic developments during this time.

The *Vanikas* or the traders were an important section and they received Jyotirisvara's attention. In fact, he calls all the trading castes as '*Vaniks*'<sup>69</sup>. Interestingly the word '*Vanik*' was not limited to the Vaisyas caste. Any person belonging to any caste was also referred to as a *Vanika*. The point will become clear when one goes through the list of the *Vanikak-putra* in the *asthana-varnana* (*rajadarbar varnana*). They are as follows:

1. *sadhu*- they are interpreted as Sahu. These were also a money-lending community. They were the bullion merchants, jewelers, money changers.
2. *sanuvah*- according to the Aptes' Sanskrit English dictionary<sup>70</sup>, *Sanuk* means mountain and jungles. Therefore,



the *sanivahas* may refer to those merchants and traders who travelled through the forests and the mountains.

3. *Yasavahan* and *Subudhi* – both refer to intelligent men.
4. *Saeen* and *Saratha* are the two very famous communities of merchants who were known for travelling to faraway places. They managed the horses and elephants. They also worked as the state's agents on many occasions.
5. *Sinhal* or the Sinhalese means the sea merchants from Sri Lanka.
6. *Malakar* - dealt with the flowers or the flowerists.
7. *Gandhaevanika*- those dealing with the perfumes and incense.
8. *Ratnaparikshak* - they are the jewellers and they also occupied important place in the economic life of Mthila. *Ratnas* (precious and semi-precious jewelleries) are mentioned under separate subheadings and their names occurred at several places in the text.
9. *velvar*
10. *vaman*

Along with these names the *gajavahakas* and the *asvavahakas* are mentioned. They may be those specialized traders who dealt in many items.

On the other hand, the people mentioned in the *mandajatiyas* section (list of 41 low caste and classes) of the *Nagara varnana* are mostly engaged in the small trade and commerce. These are the *patania*, *gonthi* and the *tivars* (tiars) and they were the sub-castes of the Mallahas or the *malahas* (caste of the ferryman / fishermen). The *Sundi* were the alcohol / wine makers, the *chamara* were the leather workers (shoemakers), *dhalikara* were engaged in the winnowing baskets made of bamboo, *tati* was a weaver caste, *dhuniya* were the cotton weavers, sava

were the traders. The tambouli as a caste dealt in betals. Dharmasvamin also mentions that there were many bamboo along the road<sup>71</sup>.

The *Napit* (barber or the hair dresser) and the *Mardania* (the massager) mentioned in the *samarhala varnana* shows that the slavery was also prevalent in the region<sup>72</sup>.

The other professionals who were not engaged in the production may include the prostitutes, the singers and the dancers, the painters, the sculptors etc.

VR offers us to see the position of women in the economic sphere. She was not just seen as other (when Jyotirisvara speaks of the *kapalikas* and the *dakinis* etc in the *ratrivarana* and the *samsana varnana*) but was engaged in the economic life actively. Although none of the officials and nobles were women in the court mentioned in the *asthana varnana* but the separate mentioning of the *vaisya varnana* and the *kuttani varnana* (the description of an old woman acting as a go-between in love intrigues) is noteworthy<sup>73</sup>. Great money was involved in the institution of prostitution as can be seen in splendid description<sup>74</sup>. The various *dasas* and *dasis* were also hired.

Another women worker is the dancer/actors called the *patra*<sup>75</sup>, *natika*<sup>76</sup>, and *vidyavanti*<sup>77</sup>.

The *Vidyavanta varnana* is also important. They were the professional singers and the music masters or the dancers<sup>78</sup>. His description is so beautiful that one can visualize him performing. He is mentioned as wearing diamonds and gold ornaments<sup>79</sup>. The *Preran varnana* shows that the male dancers were also earning good.

## The Countries

The study shows that the linkages of Mithila was not limited or restricted by political or any territorial limits. Mithila had commercial relations with the outside world. Her chief imports were the horses, mules and articles of luxury for the royal family and nobility. The *dana* (donations/gifts) of horses in the list of the *Sodasamahadana varnana*<sup>80</sup> shows that some articles that were not available in Mithila and surrounding areas were imported from outside and were socially very important.

In terms of the religious activities, Mithila was a famous non-Buddhistic country but it lay on the way to major Buddhist sites. From China through Tibet to Nepal, Tirhut had received tremendous importance from the Tibetan pilgrims, not withstanding the fact that it was a dangerous place. They had to go through the streets and cross the rivers to reach to the other side of the Ganga. Dharmsvamin's account is extremely important to understand the strategic value of Mithila.

In the section of the countries mentioned in the text, the *asthana varnana* seems to have been the most important. There are many representatives from different countries that are known to have sat in the court. They were from Nepala, the Chauhanas, the Cholas, Karnataka, Srihatta or Sylhet, Kamarupa (Assam), Utkala (Orissa), Sinhala (or the sea merchants from Sri Lanka), Maharastra, Jarasinddha, Ayodhya, Magadha, Vesnavara etc. Sinhalese are mentioned twice here<sup>81</sup>. The merchants from China (known for importing camphor) are also mentioned<sup>82</sup>.

Bengal, Gujarat, Kancipuram, Tanjore, Kathiadar, Silhet, Assam, and Gajupur were among the Indian regions from where the goods were exported. The list of the textiles products

are mentioned with the names of the countries. Among the other countries, the names of Malaya, Sri Lanka, China, and even Sakalata are mentioned.

Merchants (*Vanikas*) from Surat, Malaya or Malabar etc. were known in the text<sup>83</sup>. The exchange was most common in the textile field. Cakresvari, Gangasagara, Meghavarna and Megha-udumbara were imported from Bengal, Ajaymeru was apparently from Ajmer, materials from Tancera/Tanjore, Kanchivani which may be identified with Kanchipuram, Samvalahari (silk manufactured from Sambhalpur, Orissa), Sylhet (eastern Bengal), Gunjana or Gujarata, Kamaruvala, which may be identified with Kamarupa and many other places are mentioned in the *Vastravarnana*<sup>84</sup>.

## Conclusion

In the conclusion, some important remarks can be given. While on one hand; the Mithila region represented an active economic zone during the medieval period, on the other hand, the authors of the region were quick to include it in their writings. The period saw change in the field of writing too. The kind of writing which the *Varnaratnakara* represents hardly belonged to any category of literature.

On the one hand, in Mithila, we find a vast tract of fertile land, and on the other hand, a large number of landowners, the *zamindars* (proprietors/rich peasants), peasants (*rai-yats*) and the landless agricultural labor living under surveillance. It is also seen from the texts that the people in Mithila, especially the peasants, had developed some indigenous arts, crafts and trade while living in the towns or the *nagara* and were apparently self-sufficient. A social and economic hierarchy was maintained by the political order.

This is thus a region having all the attributes of a developed money economy supported by an currency system, prosperous urban centers and developed commercial links. Traders and merchants from the far corners of this subcontinent, and also from different Asian regions were a common sight in the courts and streets. There seems to have been no restriction on their movements, and that involvement in trade was not limited by any official interference.

Craft production centers, such as Madhubani and Bhagalpur, advanced financial and credit facilities. Abundant supply of skilled labour and innovations in production techniques have been located in this region, This is the theme of this paper.

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40. *Ibid.*, pp.38.
41. *Ibid.*, pp.11: *bhiti kasturi*, 65.
42. *Ibid.*, pp.65.
43. *Ibid.*,
44. *Ibid.*,
45. *Ibid.*, pp.1.
46. *Ibid.*, pp. 22-49.
47. *Ibid.*, pp.11.
48. Mostly translations of the terms used in the Jyotirisvara's Varnaratnakara are from Raj Kumar, *Encyclopaedia of Untouchables Ancient, Medieval and Modern*. Kalpaz Publications. Delhi. 2008. pp. 215-217.
49. *Ibid.*, pp. 5.
50. Two varieties of *bandha* or tie-dye fabrics i.e., the solar and elephant patterns produced by the *bandha* techniques.
51. Two other tie-dye fabrics also mentioned in VR, *vicitra* and *vicitranghada* are reminiscent of *vicitrapuri*, the tie-dye sari of Orissa. See Constance Sheares, Summary history of Asian Textiles materials and their patterning techniques (*batik*, *bandhana* and *ikat*) based in literary and pictorial evidence and actual remains. *The Heritage Journal*, Vo. 3. 2008. pp.48-59.
52. Moti Chandra in his article entitled '*Costumes and textiles in the Sultanate Period*', *Journal of Indian Textile History*. No. IV (Ahmedabad), 1959: pp. 65-68 quoted in Constance Sheares Summary History of Asian Textile materials (*Op.cit.* p. 56) has condensed and translated relevant excerpts from certain important sources dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries mentions that according to Ziya-ud-din Barani, 'Ala-ud-din (1297-1313) of Delhi received from Deoghar 'Patolah' among other gifts. this is no doubt the patola mentioned VR.
53. VR, p. 21.
54. *Ibid.*, p.66.



55. *Ibid.*, also p. 31.
56. *Ibid.*, p.31.
57. *Ibid.*, pp.8-9.
58. *Ibid.*, pp.12: *sonak tamakunda karu.*
59. *Ibid.*, *Sheer, bharan Morava, akan* etc 13 names are mentioned.
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## CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN TO JAINISM IN MEDIEVAL TAMILNADU

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### Introduction

Jainism has had a long and chequered history over a period of two thousand years in Tamilnadu. It came to Tamilnadu from Karnataka in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE. and spread gradually in the Pandyanadu, Kongunadu and Tondaimandalam regions. The Tamil Brahmi inscriptions found in the natural caverns in these regions clearly prove this fact. It enjoyed royal patronage during the Kalabhra period. After the Bhakti movement, it received a temporary setback in the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE. It emerged again in the 8<sup>th</sup> century CE. Since then it has consistently established itself in different parts of Tamilnadu. A number of Jaina *pallis* were established and they did great service to society. Kings, queens, merchants, monks, nuns and common people contributed a lot to the spread of Jainism. Women's contribution to Jainism was significant only in the period from the 8<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries CE.

This study is based entirely on inscriptions from the 8<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries CE. The total number of inscriptions consulted for this study was about 405. Among them only 51 inscriptions refer to women. All of them are donative in nature. Due to the absence of royal patronage and because of political changes, many medieval Jain centres fell into disuse particularly after the thirteenth century, when the number of supporters of Jainism

seem to have declined and the Jain population became concentrated in the northern part of Tamilnadu. As a result, many of the stone bearing records of Jain patronage and worship in the medieval period were destroyed or displaced. Many of the inscriptions that remain are engraved below images of Tirthankaras and deities that were sculpted on the rock faces of remote hillsides. But, most evidence of Jainism's presence in the villages and towns of medieval Tamilnadu have been erased'<sup>1</sup>. However, the available inscriptions of medieval Tamilnadu throw some light on various important aspects of the history of women. They record gifts to temples and setting up of images. They name a large number of individuals including women. Table 1 gives details of the distribution of inscriptions issued by different dynasties which refer to the endowments given by women.

**Table 1 - Number of inscriptions which refer to the endowments by Women**

S.No.	Dynasty	No. of Inscriptions
1	Pallavas	4
2	Pandya I	31*
3	CholasSambhuvarayas	101
4	Pandya II	Nil
5	Rashtrakutas	1
6	Gangas	1
7	Ay	2
8	No period	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>

(\*Though the inscriptions found at Kalugumalai do not have any date they can be assigned to the eighth century CE. i.e. the First Pandya period on the basis of its palaeography).

Most of the inscriptions, which refer to women, belong to the First Pandya period. Among the 31 inscriptions belonging to this period, 29 are from a single Jain site, namely, Kalugumalai. Women in the Chola period also contributed to Jainism and the number of inscriptional references are 11. Only one or two inscriptions belonging to other dynasties are found. Women of different categories had given endowments to Jain temples and *pallis*. Table 2 gives the numerical details of endowments given by different categories of women.

**Table 2 - Number of donations by Women**

S.No.	Category of women	No. of endowments	Dynasty
1	Nuns/disciples	26	Pandya I (22) Pallava (1) Ay (2) Chola (1)
2	Queens	5	Pallava (2), Chola (2) Ganga (1)
3	Chieftain's wife	2	Pallava (1) Chola (1)
4	Female Official	1	Chola
5	Merchant's wife	1	Chola
6	Maid servant of a queen	1	Rashtrakuta
7	Devaradiyar	1	Chola
8	Others	13	Pandya (10), Pallava (1) Chola (2)
	Total	50*	

(\*One inscription discusses the dispute between two groups of nuns at Vedal).

## Queens

“Queens are defined as women who belonged by marriage or birth to the major dynastic families of South India”<sup>2</sup>. Queens and princesses of different dynasties of Tamilnadu contributed to the growth of Jainism through their endowments to the various activities of Jain temples. The earliest reference to a queen in the Jaina inscriptions is about a Pallava queen namely Lokamahadevi. The inscription issued by Narasingapottaraiyan i.e., Narasimhavarman II in his 18<sup>th</sup> regnal year (708-709 CE.) states that queen Lokamahadevi was affected by a *Brahmarakshasa*. It also mentions an *acharya* of Mahilampalli, the Arivarkoil and a certain Anukkapallavan. It seems to register a gift of land to the Arivar temple. The *acharya* probably would have had a role in alleviating the queen’s affliction from the *Brahmarakshasa*<sup>3</sup>. Another inscription issued in the period of Rajendra I in his 12<sup>th</sup> regnal year (1024 CE.) mentions a Pallava queen namely Sinnavi, who had given a lamp to the Arambanandin temple at Tirumalai. From the details given in the inscription, one can assume that the lamp was not maintained properly. So in the period of Rajendra I some Ilayamanimgai allotted 60 *kasu*, apart from giving a gift of lamp to the temple, for the maintenance of the lamp given by her and for the lamp given by the Pallava queen<sup>4</sup>. The reason for the failure to maintain the lamp and the identity of the Pallava king and queen could not be ascertained.

The Chola queens also patronized Jainism. An inscription of Aditya I mentions his wife Kadavarkonpavai who revived some endowment made to the Mallinatha temple at Chittamur in South Arcot district which fell into disuse<sup>5</sup>. It seems that this temple was constructed during the reign of Aditya I in about 888 CE<sup>6</sup>. Kundavai, the sister of Rajaraja I was known for her patronage to all religions. She constructed three temples viz.,

Kundavai Jinalaya, Kundavai Vinnagaram and Iravikulamanikka Isvaram at Rajarajapuram. Rajaraja I's inscription at Dadapuram dated in his 21<sup>st</sup> regnal year (1006 CE.) gives details of these temples and the presentation by Kundavai of vessels and ornaments of various descriptions made of gold, silver and pearls to these temples<sup>7</sup>.

Since there are only a few Jaina inscriptions available, it is difficult to trace the continuous history of the contribution of women to Jainism. Some of the royal women strictly adhered to the teachings and practices of Jainism and they even went to the extent of death by starvation. For instance Pullappai, the younger sister of Chamundaraja performed *nisidika*, (death by starvation) and a commemorative stone was installed at Vijayamangalam near Erode<sup>8</sup>. Chamundaraja may be the minister of Gangaraja Rajamalla IV who set up the monolithic image of Gomatesvara at Sravanabelgola<sup>9</sup>.

Not only queens but also their maid servants gave endowments to Jain temples. An inscription issued during the 19<sup>th</sup> regnal year of the Rashtrakuta king Krishna III at Tirumalai records that Perral Nangaiyar, the maid servant of Gangamadevi, queen of Kannaradeva, Pridigangaraiyar gave a lamp to be lit before the *Yaksha* on the Tirumalai hill at Vigavur<sup>10</sup>.

### **Wives of Chieftains and Female official**

Though there are only two references about the endowments given by the wives of the chieftains, they prove their significant contribution to Jainism. An inscription of the Pallava ruler Kampavarman issued in his 6<sup>th</sup> regnal year (876 CE.) states that Manadevi (Madevi), wife of Kadagatiyanayar (Kadagatiyaraiyar) renovated the Chandranathasvami temple at Kilsattamangalam and she was responsible for building the *mukhamandapa*. She

also renovated the *palli*, built a temple for Yakshabhatari and gifted a big bell to the temple<sup>11</sup>. The Cholas were the patrons of Jainism. They constructed new Jaina temples and *pallis* and renovated the already existing ones. This tradition was followed by their chieftains. Maduraikonda Ko-Rajakesari (Sundara Chola Parantaka II)'s inscription of his 6<sup>th</sup> regnal year (961-962 CE) at Tirumalai refers to the Miladu Chief Nattadigal-Siddhavadavan and his wife Ekaviran Danmasankadiyar who was the daughter of Nadalvar Ilankonadigal. One can understand from this inscription that the chief and his wife together made an endowment to the Chandraprabha temple at Tirumalai. But there is no information about the nature of endowment in the inscription.<sup>12</sup> In another inscription a gift of land by an *adikarichchi* is referred to. It was issued in the 10<sup>th</sup> regnal year (995 CE) of Rajaraja I. It seems to record the gift of land for the various services to be conducted in the Appandainatha temple at Tirunarungondai. The *adikarichchi*'s name is not given but she is mentioned as the wife of Aiyaran. The term *adikarichchi* could be taken as a female official instead of a male official's wife. Two more inscriptions issued by Sri Rajarajadeva in his 24<sup>th</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> regnal year (1248 CE) at Tiruvaiyaru clearly indicate that the term *adikarichchi* refers to a woman official.<sup>13</sup>

## Jain Nuns / Disciples

In the Tamil inscriptions, the Jain Nuns are referred to as *kurattis* (teachers) or *manakkiyars* (disciples). They are mentioned not only as recipients of donations but also as donors of gifts. Nearly 50% of the inscriptions (25 out of 51) which record the endowments by women are by Jain nuns and disciples. However they were prominent only in the eighth century. Among the 25 inscriptions, 13 women are referred to as *manakkiyar* and they are also identified in terms of their relationship with their teacher

(*kurattiyar*). ‘The term *manakkiyar* does not designate an ordinary female lay disciple. It is indicated by the fact that some of the *manakkiyar* themselves were *kurattis*<sup>14</sup>. It seems the Jain nuns, despite their belief in *aparigraha* (non-possession) possessed wealth. The endowments and gifts given by them to Jain temples and institutions prove this fact. An inscription from Chitalar in Kanyakumari district dated 21<sup>st</sup> regnal year (889 CE) of the Ay King Vikrmaditya Varaguna states that the nun Muttuvala Naryana Kurattiyar built the shrine of the goddess and endowed a lamp-stand, one gold flower weighing two *kalanju* to the goddess and made provisions for lighting a perpetual lamp in that temple<sup>15</sup>. Another damaged inscription from the same place issued by the same king in his 28<sup>th</sup> regnal year mentions the gift of some ornaments to the Bhatariyar of Tiruchcharanattumalai by Gunantangi-kurattigal of Pereyarkadai<sup>16</sup>.

An inscription at Vilappakkam belonging to the period of Parantaka I issued in his 38<sup>th</sup> regnal year (945 CE) records, the sinking of a well by Pattinikurattigal, the female disciple of Arishtanemipidarar of Tiruppanmalai, who was the preceptor of the local Jains<sup>17</sup>. However, giving such costly gifts by female Jain teachers and disciples is not very common. Most of the donations were given for the purpose of making images of Jain Tirthankaras, *yakshas* and *yakshis*. Out of the 51 inscriptions which mention the *kurattiyars* and *mankkiyars*, 29 inscriptions mention the endowments given for setting up of images. Among these 29 inscriptions, 24 are from a single site namely Kalugumalai and 19 images at Kalugumalai were caused to be made by the *kurattigal* and the rest by other women. It is clear from the inscriptions that the gifts given by them are almost entirely in support of worship, and that too mostly the donation of images. ‘Their patronage of worship expresses the core values of their religion like service, honour, reverence and dedication of oneself’<sup>18</sup>.



The Jain nuns not only served as teachers in the *pallis* administered by Jain monks and imparted education to the Jain community but also run their own *pallis*. One inscription refers to a *Penpalli* at Vilappakkam<sup>19</sup>. The inscriptions from Tiruchcharanattumalai (Chitalar) in Kanyakumari district provide evidence for a Jain university which was run purely by women in the 9<sup>th</sup> century CE. Similarly, about 27 inscriptions of the eighth century CE. at Kalugumalai refer to female teachers and disciples. It indicates that a Jain university functioned at Kalugumalai and the teachers imparted knowledge to their students on Jain philosophy and other subjects. Since it was a famous university, Jain teachers, both male and female, from various parts of Tamilnadu visited this place<sup>20</sup>. The inscription of Aditya I issued in his 14<sup>th</sup> regnal year (885 CE) from Vidal<sup>21</sup> brings to light the fact that a *palli* exclusively for the nuns existed at Vidal. It seems to be a unique establishment with more than 900 resident nuns<sup>22</sup>.

The Jain nuns were respected greatly by Tamil society. In some cases even the image of the nun was made. For instance, an inscription found at Olakkur near Tindivanam records that an unidentified Pallava king made an image of a nun namely Pridvi Vidangakuratti in the 8<sup>th</sup> century<sup>23</sup>. The image of Pridvi Vidangakuratti was flanked by a lamp and canopied by an umbrella. She should have been held in high esteem and so the king himself had caused the making of her image<sup>24</sup>.

There is also reference to a conflict between two groups of nuns at Vidal. The dispute arose between Kanakavirakurattiyar, a female disciple of Gunakirti-bhatara of Vidal alias Madevi-Arandimangalam and 500 her lady disciples on the one side and

a group of 400 nuns on the other side. The cause for the dispute between two groups of nuns and how it was amicably settled are not known. But the inhabitants of Vidal who were the lay disciples of the *palli* to which Kanagavirakurattiyar belonged, undertook to feed them and her lady disciples. This kind of dispute between nuns was very rare.

### Other Women

This category of women refers to those women who cannot be brought under any other category. Inscriptions provide only sketchy information about the women belonging to this category. It includes a heterogeneous group of women. They form the largest category next to nuns. 13 inscriptions give information about the endowments given by them. Most of them caused the image to be made. There are 10 references found in inscriptions regarding this. There are also references in inscriptions to the endowment of money for a lamp and other offerings to Kundavai Jinalaya at Tirumalai,<sup>25</sup> seventeen *kalanju* for providing one *alakku* of rice for one *kalanju* every morning to the Jaina temple by one Pundi Muppavai<sup>26</sup> and a gift of two *kalanju* by Vattamvadugi of Kuvanancheri for conducting a service to the god Ayiramalaidevar<sup>27</sup>.

Most of the women of all categories are identified with their family members. Queens and the category of other women are identified in relationship their father or husband and occasionally sons, but the nuns mostly with their male or female teachers and rarely with their family members.

**Table 3 - Identification of Women in inscriptions**

<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Relationship</b>	<b>No.of references in inscriptions</b>
1	Father-Daughter	8
2	Mother-Daughter	Nil
3	Mother-Son	2
4	Husband-WifeKing-Queen	74
5	Teacher-Disciple	16
6	Brother-Sister	1
7	No Relationship	13 (Nuns - 9 Others - 4)

It is also interesting to study the type and frequency of endowments given by different categories of women in different periods.

**Table 4 - Nature of endowments given by Women\***

<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Category of Women</b>	<b>Nature of endowment</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Total Number</b>
1.	Queens	Land	8 <sup>th</sup> century	1
		Revived endowment	9 <sup>th</sup> century	1
		Lamp and kasu	11 <sup>th</sup> century	1
		Construction of temple	11 <sup>th</sup> century	1

S.No.	Category of Women	Nature of endowment	Period	Total Number
2.	Chieftain's wife	Renovation of the temple and construction of new structures	9 <sup>th</sup> Century	2
		Bell	9 <sup>th</sup> century	1
		Lamp and lamp-stand	9 <sup>th</sup> century	1
		Gold flower	9 <sup>th</sup> century	1
		Land	10 <sup>th</sup> century	1
3.	Woman official	Land	10 <sup>th</sup> century	1
4.	Nuns	Images	8 <sup>th</sup> century	18
			9 <sup>th</sup> century	1
		Ornaments	9 <sup>th</sup> century	1
		Well	10 <sup>th</sup> century	1
5.	Other Women	Image	8 <sup>th</sup> century	6
			9 <sup>th</sup> century	2
			11 <sup>th</sup> century	1
			14 <sup>th</sup> century	1
		Gold coins (Kalanju)	8 <sup>th</sup> century	1
		Gold coins (Kalanju)	9 <sup>th</sup> century	1
		Money	11 <sup>th</sup> century	1
		Village	12 <sup>th</sup> century	1
		Well	—	1

- \* (The number of inscriptions and the number of endowments vary, since there is more than one endowment in some inscriptions.)
- \* The above mentioned table shows clearly that women played an active role in the religious life of Medieval Tamilnadu and they contributed in various ways to Jainism. Their contribution spreads from the 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> centuries CE.

## Conclusion

Women in medieval Tamilnadu were active as donors to different religions including Jainism. Women belonging to various categories like queens, wives of chieftains, nuns and others gave endowments for the construction of temples and for worship. The Jain nuns had a strong presence especially in the eighth century as patrons of Jaina *pallis* and temples. Most of the donations given by them were for the purpose of setting up of images. They had administered their own *pallis*. They travelled to different parts of Tamilnadu, visited important universities administered by nuns and imparted knowledge to their disciples. Almost all the women are mentioned in inscriptions in relationship to male members of their family like father and husband. On the other hand, Jain nuns were referred to in relationship with their teachers, either male or female. But the number of female donors drops abruptly after the eighth century. After that, there are only occasional references to female donors in inscriptions. Only a few queens- wives and daughters of Chola rulers are mentioned in inscriptions as patrons from the ninth to eleventh centuries. After, eleventh century, inscriptions rarely mention women as donors.

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**GROVES, GODS AND SLAVES : A STUDY  
ON AGRESTIC SLAVERY IN  
MEDIEVAL MALABAR**

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Slavery as an organized institution dates back to the very early times. The earliest Bronze Age the civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, China and India had the practice of slavery. The earliest known system of law, the Hammurabi code, recognized slavery. But the percentage of slavery in these early civilizations was less, because male captives were generally killed, while women were enslaved as field labourers or concubines. The first true slave society in history emerged in ancient Greece during the 6<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. In classical Athens, a third to a half of its population consisted of slaves. Slavery everywhere permitted cruelty and abuse. In Saxon England and China, a master could ill treat or even kill a slave with impunity. In many societies, including ancient Greece and Rome, manumission was common and former slaves carried little stigma of their status. Slaves were symbols of prestige, luxury and power rather than a source of labour. In pre-modern societies slaves did not necessarily hold the lowest status. In classical Greece, many educators, poets and physicians were in fact slaves. The Greek philosopher Aristotle developed a new justification for slavery: the notion of the “natural slave”. Slaves in his view lacked the higher qualities of the soul necessary for freedom<sup>1</sup>.



The antiquity of the institution of slavery in Kerala is not clearly known. To study the institution of slavery in medieval Kerala, we have a couple of inscriptions; many legendary accounts and family records, such as *Koodali Granthavari*, *Vanjeri Granthavari* and *Kavalappara* documents. Besides these, many official records and foreign notices are also available pertaining to slavery in Kerala. Analytical studies on slavery in ancient and medieval Kerala are very few. *Slavery in Kerala* by Adoor K.K.Ramachandran Nair (1968), *Slavery in Travancore* by K.K.Kusuman (1973), and *Emergence of a Slave Caste* by K.Saradmoni (1980) are worth mentioning.

The present article will analyse the institution of slavery enforced through religion, articulated and perpetuated by the landlords in the ritualistic context of ‘*kavus*’ (sacred groves) in medieval Kerala. The *Madayikavu* of Kannur district and *Valliyoorkavu* of Wayanad district are taken up as case studies to understand the agrarian dynamics behind the institution of slavery. Along with it, the paper will also highlight how the traditional system of slavery functioned in Kerala and as to who were the affected sections.

## Descriptions of Slavery in Classical Literature

“The word *dasa* has the sense of ‘*slave*’ in several passages of *Rig-Veda*. Slaves, both male and female, are found mentioned in the Vedic literature”<sup>2</sup>. Slaves served even as ‘royal counsellors’ during the Early Vedic period<sup>3</sup>. But they were generally domestic servants and personal attendants. Hence, the ancient Indian slaves were generally regarded as the members of the master’s family. The maintenance of slaves was the pious and sacred duty of his master. If a slave died without a son, the master had to perform the funeral rites for the departed slave. The Vedic law books instruct that a slave’s property

ultimately belongs to the master. According to Manu, the ancient Indian law maker “a man may subject himself to poverty or beat his wife and children but never his slave, who does dirty work for him”<sup>4</sup>. The obligation to slaves were laid down in many *Dharmasastras*, according to which manumission is an act of piety and the emancipation of a slave should be done when the person had paid it with his labour.

The *Arthasastra* is very liberal about the rights of the slaves. The children of the slaves could not be sold except under dire necessity. He could earn money by working during spare time. The slave could own property and inherit it. The *Arthasastra* seeks to protect the chastity of the female slave. If a master violated a slave girl, such act was viewed with seriousness. In classical works and hymns, there are many references to slavery and serfdom. The epic *Ramayana* contains the story of Guhaka Chandal - a *sudra*. The Brahmanical laws described the *sudras* as slaves.

The Buddhist and Jain historical records show the prevalence of slavery in ancient India. Adoor mentioned that “there was a separate section called ‘*Dâsaputta*’ (*skt.Dâsaputra*) among the militia of the times. He says, ‘*Dâsagrama*’ occurring in the Buddhist works meant places where slaves lived. The lady attendant who performs the household work such as cooking was given ‘*Dâsibhogam*’ (remuneration for menial work)<sup>5</sup>. Slave trade was prohibited in the *Dharmasastras*. Different injunctions were laid down in the *Sastras* for the liberation of the slaves. *Manu*, *Yajnavalkya*, *Narada*, *Brahmaspathi*, *Kautilya* and others refer to different modes of slavery<sup>6</sup>.

Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador had recorded that there were no slaves in India. Perhaps Indian slavery was very mild

and less severe than the civilization in the west which might have prompted him not to recognize the *dâsas* as slaves.

## Slavery in Medieval India

About the slavery of medieval India, Salma Ahmed Farooqui<sup>7</sup> mentions that slavery formed an integral part of medieval Indian political system. She further adds: "...prisoners of war were normally taken by the victorious armies as slaves. In India, like in West Asia, slave markets for men and women were prevalent for Turkish, Caucasian, Greek and Indian slaves at high prices. Young slaves were also imported from Samarkand, Bukhara and Tirmiz. Skilled slaves had a higher market value over unskilled ones. The institution of slavery provided the basis for well-trained and loyal martial slaves (mamluks) to the sultans. The Delhi sultans who were slaves themselves, rose to the highest position..."<sup>8</sup>. One of the main aims of the institution of slavery in medieval India was to organize experts in warfare and government. The Slave status was considered honourable in medieval India. Salma wrote: "...A slave was often considered better than son, since the former was tried and tested on his efficiency and loyalty to his master..."<sup>9</sup>.

## Slavery in Kerala

It has been argued that there was no slavery in ancient Kerala. It may be incorrect, because ancient Kerala was an integral part of ancient Tamilakam. N. Subramanian asserts that "slavery was known and practiced by the ancient Tamils. We have no evidence to prove that slavery as an institution comparable to the ancient Greek or Roman forms of slavery existed in the Tamilakam of the Sangam age and we have no reference to entitle us to conclude that human beings were sold and purchased in any market"<sup>10</sup>. Subramanian interprets the word *Urimichuram* found in

*Silappadikaram* as an expression of *adimittiral* meaning a cluster of *evalchurram* (servants)<sup>11</sup>. He says: "...The words 'Adimai' and 'Kudimai' in the sense of slaves are found in the ancient Tamil grammar of *Tolkappiyam Chollathikaram*. In *porulathikaram*, it is laid down that slaves and workers could be made heroes and heroines in poetical works..."<sup>12</sup>. Adoor citing references from Sangam works, says that in the ancient Tamilakam slavery was practiced in a milder form. For instance, references to the upper class (*Melormuvar* - those three above) and the low caste (*Kizhor*- those below) in *Tolkappiam* are there. Also the *Alakasu* in the Sangam works meant slave tax paid by those who owned slaves.

During the medieval period, slavery in Kerala was basically agrarian in nature. Anthropologists and other social scientists observed that the institution of agrestic slavery in Kerala emerged out of the conquest of the original owners of the soil by invaders and settlers from the north"<sup>13</sup>. "The period between 500BCE and 200 CE saw the downfall of primitive communist social order and the emergence of serfdom and slavery...before that period the characteristic feature of Kerala's tribal society was a pattern of relations of production based on primitive communism...no representatives of class divisions as *melalur* (high class) and *kizhalur* (low class) existed...as was characteristic of primitive communal societies, whatever was produced was meant for the benefit of the community at large..."<sup>14</sup>.

In this primitive society, taboos like untouchability were absent. Worship of the departed heroes and inanimate objects such as stone and tree and phallic structures was very common. They worshipped the war goddess *Kotravai* during the Sangam period. The Aryan infiltration into Kerala<sup>15</sup> starting from 4<sup>th</sup> Century CE had a profound influence on the indigenous

classless society. They started the process of division of society on the basis of caste. According to Adoor “the all pervading influence of the new social order resulted in the birth of slavery in Kerala and to carry out the clear cut distinction between Aryans and non-Aryans, they diligently effected the transformation of the primitive society on the basis of occupational identification”<sup>16</sup>. The widely prevalent *Parasurama* legend is not only linked with the origin of a system of landlordship called ‘*Janmam*’ by which the Namboothiri’s developed a superior right over land but also to the origin of agrestic slavery which supported the system<sup>17</sup>. According to this legend the Parasurama, settled the Brahmins in new settlement as the lords and brought *Shudras* as cultivators and slaves. The story is indicative of the origin of Agrestic slavery in Kerala<sup>18</sup>.

### **Inscriptions and Documentary Sources on Slavery**

The important primary sources which contain references to slavery in Kerala are inscriptions, traditional accounts, foreign notices and documents. The inscription of 849 CE of the Venad king Ayyan Adikal Tiruvadikal contains the earliest reference on the existence of slavery in Kerala<sup>19</sup>. An inscription of the 11<sup>th</sup> century CE from Central Travancore mentions the transfer of a Pulaya. A recently discovered stone inscription dated 1679 CE, in the Murugan temple near Nagarcoil corroborates the prevalence of slave trade in the erstwhile Travancore state. In this inscription, the word ‘*Adimai*’ was mentioned. It says that a woman named Ramanachi, daughter of Aachi of Veerakeralamputhoor, who had already gifted some land to the Kumara *coil*, was once again giving agricultural land and slaves as gift to Lord Siva on the 25<sup>th</sup> of the Tamil month of *Thai*. The word used for slaves in the inscription is

'*Aladimayum*', thus proving the existence of slavery in that period<sup>20</sup>.

There are several documents discovered from different parts of Kerala which contain information about the sale of slaves. One such document dated on 1<sup>st</sup> Vaikasi, 606 K.E (1431 CE) from South Travancore mentions that some Vellala men and Vellatties and Pariahs and *Pariah* women were given as dowry, along with cows, paddy fields, and copper and bronze vessels<sup>21</sup>. Another unpublished *Kolezhuthu* sale deed document dated *Mithunam* (June – July) of 766 Kollam Era (1591 CE), discovered from the Kongerattu House in Tiruvella in Alleppey District records that: "...Matai, the daughter of Palakkad Eravi Chiruthai of Kizhkkompathai, Pathakarikka Puzhai Veetil and Konnan, her sons are transferred with all rights to sell if the transferee so desires and to kill if the transferee so deems necessary from the date of this transfer"<sup>22</sup>. It may be the first Kolazhuthu record that lays down clearly the sale of a slave. Certain records of the households show the existence of this practice in the later centuries also. For instance, in the year 1602 CE, the Vettat Raja had offered two fields yielding 48 *poti* of paddy, the compound of Kuruthedathu Namboothiri house and a woman, and man, probably slaves to one temple<sup>23</sup>. The form of slavery which flourished in Malabar was largely agrestic or predial which played a significant role in the production process<sup>24</sup>. Regarding the slave groups M.T. Narayanan remarks that "...they were called as agrestic slaves or soil slaves... The term 'agrestic slave' or 'soil slave' was used to denote those sections of producing classes, attached to the cultivating fields and transferred along with the land..."<sup>25</sup>.

A general assumption was that private ownership of land existed in Kerala even before the Sangam age and owners of

land were *pulayas*, *idayas*, *vedas*, *villavas* all belonging to either cultivators or chieftains<sup>26</sup>. During the early medieval times in Malabar, the jungle tribes called themselves the slaves of the *Jemmies*. The relationship between the *Jenmi* and the tribal folk shows the traditional instinct and natural inclination in the minds of the primitive people to have a lord<sup>27</sup>. The social conditions of medieval Kerala were such that with the emergence of private property, the landed aristocracy, who controlled the means of production, required labour power to cultivate the lands and this was supplied mainly by the members of the lower strata of the society like Cherumars and Pulayas. These last two caste groups were considered as in a state of villeinage and “as persons attached to their master and to the soil”<sup>28</sup>. According to K.P. Padmanabha Menon, the terms ‘Cheruman’, or ‘Cherumakkal’ were derived from the Malayalam word *Cher* which means ‘wet soil’ and *Makkal* (children) meaning there by ‘children of the soil’<sup>29</sup>. Similarly, one English ecclesiastic thought that the term *Pulayan* was derived from ‘*Pula*’ which means ‘funeral pollution’<sup>30</sup>.

Adoor observed that there were three categories of slaves in medieval Kerala<sup>31</sup>:

1. *Dayagathan*: They were the property of other persons by birth. Communities such as Pariahs, Pulayas, Kuravas belong to this category. The terms predial slaves and agrestic serfs used by European travelers denote these groups. Pulayas constituted the bulk of the slave population. They were doomed to be the slaves till their end.
2. *Dandadasan*: A person reduced to bondage for crime or debt was called thus. During the wars between the chieftains of Kerala, the captured prisoners of war were converted into

slaves. Earlier it was the custom that women criminals should not be subjected to capital punishment and they were reduced to slavery. Political and social factors created this class of slaves.

3. *Udaradasan*’ or *Bakthadasan*’: Those who sold themselves as slaves and those who sold their children during times of intense scarcity and famine were grouped under this category. Economically owned but socially disowned, these agrestic slaves were an integral part of the master’s landed property and were described as “being held precisely under the same tenures and terms as the land itself”<sup>32</sup>.

The agrestic slaves were not only untouchables but were unapproachable also. Their presence was considered polluting and they had to maintain a prescribed distance from the high castes. With respect to this, Graeme observes: “a slave of the castes of Poolayan, Waloovan and Parian shall remain 72 paces from a Brahmin and from a Nair and 48 from a Teean; a slave of the Kunnakan caste 64 paces from a Brahmin and Nair, and 40 from a Teean; and other castes generally 48 paces from a Brahmin and Nair, and 24 from Teean...”<sup>33</sup>. Brown stated that “the lower servile classes, where ever they go, give notice of their coming by uttering a particular cry at every four or five paces”<sup>34</sup>.

## Transfer of Slaves

The transfer of slaves was performed in the same manner as the land was transferred. In ancient and medieval Kerala, the slaves were treated differently in different places according to the modes of transfer. Buchanan described “three ways of transfer of slaves that prevailed in Malabar. They were *Jenmam*, *Kanam* and *Pattam*. In the ‘*Jenmam*’ sale, the full value was



given and the property entirely transferred to a new master. In the second case, the proprietor would get loan of money generally two thirds of the value of the slave and also a small quantity of rice yearly as a token of continuance of his partial claim over the slaves. Whenever he repaid the borrowed amount he could recover the slaves for which he was not liable to pay any. The third way of employing slaves was the borrower commanded the slave's labour and gave him maintenance and an annual rent to the master"<sup>35</sup>. In the sale of slaves, family ties other than between husband and wife were not necessarily honoured. Before the establishment of British power in Malabar the agrestic slavery was recognized by the customary law called *Desacharam*"<sup>36</sup>.

## The Folk Traditions

The folk traditions of Medieval Kerala especially the folk songs (ballads) of Northern region (*VadakkanViragatha*), *Tottam pattukal* etc., contain valuable information about the socio- economic conditions of the slaves as well as the political set up in the region. Among the folk songs, *Tottampattukal* (*Tottam songs*) are associated with the cult of *Teyyam*, the folk dance form of Northern Kerala "as a living cult with centuries old tradition, ritual and custom, the *Teyyam* cult embraces almost all castes, classes and divisions of the Hindu community in the region"<sup>37</sup>. The Tottam songs were generally sung by the lower section of the social hierarchy like *Mannan*, *Malayan*, *Pulayan*, *Parayan* and *Velan*<sup>38</sup>. The actual conditions of the agricultural labourers including the soil-slaves are narrated in these songs, a medium to convey their aspirations. They reveal the vast powers exercised by the landlords over their agrestic labourers. One song of *Unnuneelisesam*, stated that "the cultivator who is working in the *viruthi* lands of a landlord do not have even the right to pluck one tender coconut from the

tree nurtured by his own sweat and blood. If he plucked without the sanction of the lord, he expressed his fear that he would be killed by the landlord for that theft”<sup>39</sup>. The *Mudaliar* manuscripts datable to 14<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> Centuries C E are another documentary source on South Indian history which contain some slave deeds<sup>40</sup>.

## **Persian and European Travelogues**

Many European travellers who visited India during the medieval period had noticed and recorded the practice of slavery in Malabar. Varthema who came to Malabar in 1505 CE describes, how the slave people never used the highways but they walked through marshes and bushes by shouting to warn upper strata of the society about their presence. The Persian traveller Duarte Barbosa who visited Travancore in 1515 CE observed that “if a Nair, in ordering work to be done by peasants (i.e. predial slaves) or in buying anything, should accidentally touch a peasant, he could not re-enter his own house without first washing himself and then changing his clothes”<sup>41</sup>. The later records of the British period also contained interesting information about the system of slavery<sup>42</sup>.

## **Nexus between *kavus* and Slavery in medieval Kerala**

The decline of the Chera period witnessed the emergence of feudal set up in Kerala and the political power became fragmented being controlled by the local chieftains. M.G.S. Narayanan has stated that “in social and economic terms, the decline of the Chera kingdom marked the end of the classical order based on central control and the emergence of a feudal order with the greater sense of local independence”<sup>43</sup>. The major landowning functionaries of Malabar belonged to the

ruling chieftains, *Samanthas* or feudatories, *devaswams* and *naduvazhis* or rulers of the subdivisions. These groups controlled all major political, social, economic, religious and cultural activities of medieval Malabar. They had exercised proprietary rights over the agricultural labourers who directly took part in the production process<sup>44</sup>. According to M.T. Narayanan, the process of Aryanisation resulted in the large scale construction of temples, every settlement having its own '*gramakshetra*'<sup>45</sup>. The Brahmin settlements centered on the village temple and functioned as "agrarian caste corporations of non-cultivating landowners placed over a cultivating peasantry"<sup>46</sup>.

During the medieval period, under the aegis of the ancient law book of Manu, a peculiar custom was followed by the land controlling agencies or the Malabar coast. They did not directly involve in the actual cultivation as they considered it inferior to their social and economic position to take part in agricultural production. The condition of the society at that time largely favoured the utilization of the service of other classes of people as their tenants -at- will<sup>47</sup>.

The institution of *karanmay* or tenancy had brought forth a group of intermediary class within the Brahmanical complex who mainly belonged to caste group of Nairs<sup>48</sup>. In the post Chera period of Kerala, it was the Nairs who had functioned in both capacities of *Naduvazhis* and *Desavazhis*. The Nairs of Kerala followed the matrilineal system of inheritance (*marumakka thayam*). The joint family of Nairs was known as *tarawad*. Every prominent landowning Nair *tarawad* had maintained two important institutions through which they played a dominant role in the medieval period. One among them was the '*kalary*' which imparted physical training in all forms of martial arts to the Nair youth; the second was the '*Kavu*' (sacred grove) having a cultic significance. Every *tarawad* had its own

family deity to which the family head used to offer ritual offerings regularly without fail<sup>49</sup>.

In medieval Kerala, there were mainly two categories of shrines, the *kshetra* (temple) and *kavu* (sacred grove). Aryanisation of Kerala resulted in the large scale construction of temples mainly dedicated to the superior deities of the Hindu pantheon like Siva, Vishnu and their consorts, besides Ganapati and Parasurama. In *kavus*, the presiding deities are mostly non- bramanical and in inferior positions like Bhagavati or Bhadrakali, Ayyappan, *Vettakorumakan*, *Kuttichathan*, *Gulikan*, *Mundiyan* and the like. Often these ritual spots in the *kavus* do not have roofs and they would be in the open air amidst dense tree cover<sup>50</sup>.

In medieval Kerala, temples became the centers of all social, economic and cultural activities. When these temples with the Aryan deities became the heart of the social life, the Dravidian Gods and Goddesses and their cult centers called *kavus* were relegated to the background<sup>51</sup>. Later, structural temples were built for the deities in *kavus* and thus the *kavus* become synonymous with the temples of Kerala which served the interests of dominant sections of the society. In the process of cultural and ritual assimilation, the religious centers of the lower castes i.e. the *kavus* went under the control of the high caste Brahmin and Nair landlords<sup>52</sup>. It was through the mediation of religious and cultic activities of the *kavus* that the landlords controlled and perpetuated the Agrestic Slavery.

Agrestic Slavery as a dominant feature of the feudal structure of Kerala was revealed in the family documents of *Koodali Granthavari* and *Kavalappara* papers. The Koodali land holding family known as '*Koodali Thazhathuveedu*' was an aristocratic feudal household in North Malabar. Their family

records preserved in the form of palm leaf manuscripts consisting of mainly land deeds executed by the family for effecting the actual cultivation of the land<sup>53</sup>. The *Koodali* documents shows that they had complete control over the *Koodali kavu*. As the custodian of the local *kavu*, the *Koodali* family influenced the social and economic life of the area.

### The Traditional Accounts

The Kavalappara Nair family was a prominent house of south Malabar i.e. the Kavalappara desam of former Valuvanad taluk. The collection of manuscripts consists of true translated copies of original papers and land deeds relating to the political, social, economic and cultural aspects of the family<sup>54</sup>. The family held lands in both positions as feudatory of Palakkad Raja and also as fief –holder of Cochin Raja<sup>55</sup>. The *Kavalappara* papers clearly prove the existence of Agrestic slavery as an inevitable component in the contemporary society. One of the Kavalappara document states that along with the transaction of 450 *paras* of land, the Nair had mortgaged Kovi, Kannanathu Chakkan Kannan and Charthan from among the *Valliyalars* (bonded labourers) in 1770 to one Abhisheka Rama Patter<sup>56</sup>. The *Kavalappara* family had maintained many temples such as *Eruppe*, *Aryankavu* and *Anthimahakalan kavu* under their control.

It was customary for the tenants and cultivators under the *tarawad* to make offerings and other dues to the *tarawad* at the time of annual festival and other ceremonious occasions in the *Kavu*<sup>57</sup>. They also considered *Kavus* as centers for settling disputes and crimes among the rural people. As there were no written codes of law in the medieval period in practice, various types of trialsby ordeal were used to find out the criminals. The *Kavus* attached to the land owning *tarawads* were also centers of such trials<sup>58</sup>. It is clearly revealed that a major share of the

land property of the *Koodali* family was held in the name of the *Koodalikavu*, the family shrine and the land transactions were also done in the name of *Kavu*. On certain festive occasions in these *kavus*, families of agrestic slaves offered themselves for money<sup>59</sup>. The *Kavus* had also functioned as recruiting centers of slaves. This aspect is evident from the *Madayi Kavu* and *Valliyoore Kavu* of northern Malabar.

### Madayi Kavu

The Madayi kavu situated in the northern part of Malabar was one such centre where the exchange of slaves was carried out. There was a custom for the slaves belonging to various castes at Madayi Kavu to assemble at the time of the annual *pooram* festival. 'Tottam' songs related to Madayi kavu *Theyyam* reveal that people from different regions came to the *Kavu* to procure agrestic slaves<sup>60</sup>. One song entitled 'Karikurikkal Tottam' mentions that one landlord by name Varanat Chenicheri Nair desired to cultivate his Cherikkal lands in Kolathunadu which were lying fallow due to the non-availability of *adiyars*<sup>61</sup>. For that purpose, he wanted to purchase an *adiyal* girl and came to Madayi Kavu. The landlord presented money to Naduvazhi around 1001 *fanams* and purchasing one *adiyan* girl by name Virundhi. A separate hut (*chala*) was constructed for her near the cultivating field. The next year, the Nair again went to the kavu and purchased one male slave by name Kunjikanjan. This time also he gave 1001 *fanams* and an extra 3 *fanams* to the authorities. He was taken to the hut of Virundhi but she did not admit him in her hut. It was only after their marriage was conducted by the Nair according to the caste rules that she admitted Kunjikanjan into the hut. All expenses of the Adiyar family were met by the Nair landlord<sup>62</sup>.

The above mentioned case related to the *Madayi Kavu* brings out clearly important fact that these agrestic slaves of

Malabar also possessed certain customary rights which were not violated by land lords. It makes it clear that these slaves were not sold even if they could be transferred or given as gift for new cultivators. Certain ritualistic songs of north Malabar related to the Theyyam cult refers to the rights and privileges of these agrestic slaves. For instance, at the time of sale of Virundhi, the Naduvazhi says: I am neither selling nor exchanging you but giving you for procreating more children! <sup>63</sup>.

### Valliyoorkavu

The Valliyoorkavu of Wayanad district in northern Kerala is another important place of worship for the tribal communities of the region. This temple is dedicated to Mother Goddess, manifest in three principal forms of Vana Durga, Bhadrakali and Jala Durga. This *Kavu* is also famous as a centre of slave market. The inscriptional evidence of the existence of Slavery mediated through the Valliyurkavu is also found<sup>64</sup>. The inscription mentions: "...While Satya-vakya Konguni-varmmadliaromma-maharajadhiraia, boon lord of the city of Kuvalala, lord of Nandagiri, an arch of fame, the sole hero in war, Srimat Permmnadi was ruling the kingdom of the world;the Twelve of Piriya-Holma in Ede-nad and Olabhara Ayyapa Gavunda, soil of Sivamara-Gavunda, halting, made to Kuchi-Bhata, disciple of Balasakti-Bhata, a grant of the whole lordship, together with the five (slaves) called the faithful maha-Siva, Bhagavati and the others. The Sakti grove, the land assigned for providing for distribution of food to people, that place (in which the food is given), Bhalariyur, the stony red soil, a piece to the north-east of Chikkesvara (temple), the big channel under the lower bank of the Bali tank, one load (of grass) for each family, the paddy land, the balivatta after ten kolagas of rice have been set aside for the god—will pertain (to the donee)..."<sup>65</sup>. The above mentioned

word 'Bhalariyur' is possibly the present day Valliyoore and the 'Sakti grove' denotes the Valliyoorkavu Bhagavathi.

In the medieval period, the whole of Wayanad was owned by a few Nair families. Geographically, the northern part of Malabar was mountainous where cultivation was not as easy as in the case of the plains. Due to this such areas were often cultivated by the Nairs by assuming ownership of the lands<sup>66</sup>. The Wayanad region was divided into ten Nadus<sup>67</sup>. In this region among the tribal communities, Paniyar and Adiyar served as agrestic slaves. Paniyars are the single largest tribal community of Wayand. A report named 'Wayand Initiative' mentioned that "they were bonded labourers even to land holding families of Mullu Kuruman and Kurichian tribes of Waynad"<sup>68</sup>.

Thus the agrestic slaves of Paniyans and Adiyars in Wayanad lived in servitude in every walk of their life which was picturized in their folk songs and folk tales. This was clearly exposed mostly in the folk songs of Adiyar group. One of their folk songs says:

We are the slaves of Gods, Slaves of Lords,  
Slaves of Hills, Slaves of paddy fields,  
Slaves of water.<sup>69</sup>

A type of slave bondage here existed called 'valli'. Earlier, here slave transaction was done on the basis of a custom that from birth to death a slave should be under one master. This system was later changed to contract basis which meant they were to work for a whole year, not whole life under the master. For this they were given remuneration called '*Thalapanam*' (head money)<sup>70</sup>. Actually, the people were not paid in the form of money, but they got paddy as wages. So that in Wayanad



area, slavery was also called *Vallyapanni*<sup>71</sup>. The *Vallyapanni* was a contract in which the tribes of a Wayanad were mortgaged for a nominal payment and the contract was renewed every year<sup>72</sup>. On the eve of *pooram* festival in the Valliyoorkavu which starts every year in the first day of Malayalam month of *Meenam* (March- April) and continues for 14 days, new contracts were formed and old ones renewed. The beginning of this contract is the seeking of '*jenmies*' help for going to the festival in receiving seven and half *seers* of paddy, a piece of rough cloth, two plates of rice and five rupees as *nippupanam* by which a tribal mortgages himself to the landlord<sup>73</sup>. Until the next year of the festival in this *kavu*, he and his family as a whole would be under the control of the present landlord from the second day of the festival.

The sale deeds of slaves in Valliyoorkavu, in the words of Walter Hamilton, were equivalent to that of a quadruped<sup>74</sup>. On the first day of festival, the Nair landlords, by giving a particular amount of money in front of Valliyoorkavu Bagavathi (*Kali*) as '*adimapanam*', purchased slaves. For the married one, they paid the amount at the rate of 10 paise for males and 5 paise for females. They paid only two and a half paise for each unmarried male and female slaves. The ideology behind it was that tribal folk in Wayanad worship this Goddess with great adoration. As they believe that, for any reason they made fault with contracts like escaping from *jenmies*, the *Valliyoorkavu* would punish them by spells of disease upon their whole family. The *jenmies* would make the slaves to work in an unbearable condition. Before the work would start in the paddy field, the slaves were provided with plenty of liquor to drink and betel leaves to eat. The poor folks in an intoxicated mood would sing and do the work in the field the whole day and finish four days work in one day. While standing near the field, some men would beat

the drums and blow the pipe. In this way, the *jenmies* exploited the labour power of their purchased slaves<sup>75</sup>.

## Conclusion

The system of slavery in Kerala was a part and parcel of the feudal structure of medieval Kerala. It is very difficult to estimate the date of its origin, function and influence upon the agrarian communities. These cultivating groups belonged to the lowest strata of the society. The majority of them belonged to the caste group of Cherumars and Pulayas, who were Agrestic slaves. These degraded untouchable and unapproachable castes were often sold, transferred or mortgaged along with the land<sup>76</sup>.

The sacred groves, originally the habitats of the tribal groups and sanctified as abodes of ancestral spirits, were brought into the fold of organized and stratified elite religion and were adopted as centers of temple worship. This process coincides with the agrarian expansion during the Chera and post-Chera period of medieval Kerala when the Nairs and Namboothri Brahmins emerge as the two land owning groups, who perpetuated the institution of slavery as a compulsory mechanism to maintain their control over the agricultural infrastructure. It was through the religious, spiritual and cultural modes, the institution of slavery was forced upon the tribal and other lower sections of the society. The sacred groves played the mediating role in continuing the practice of slavery, where the mythology and legendary accounts were fabricated to create traditional bondage between the landlords and labourers. The Thottam songs amply attest to this nexus between the sacred groves and slavery. The Theyyam folk dance is another mode through which lower sections of the society were brought under the veiled control of the elite groups, by providing them the spiritual and ritual space

in the sacred groves, thereby fixing them into the feudal system. The extraction of the forced labour mediated through the religious and cultic media was one of the characteristic features of the feudal system of medieval Kerala. The relations between the landlord (*Jenmi*) and the slave (*Adima*) appear to be cordial and non-frictional in the initial stages of agricultural expansion in medieval Kerala, when the rights of the servants were honoured by the landlord<sup>77</sup>. During the post – Chera period, as a result of the disappearance of the central authority and the emergence of the petty feudal chieftains in different parts of the empire, competing with each other for the control of the agricultural lands, the conditions of the slaves deteriorated, and they were denied the basic human dignity. They were treated as untouchables and were even prohibited to come physically close to the upper sections of the society. The slave transactions were also carried out in the *kavus*, to give the required ritual authority and sanction to them.

Slavery, once a '*Desacharam*' in Kerala, became forced extraction of surplus labour during the medieval times. Servitude, originally a free personal relation based on voluntary contract for a definite period of service, in lieu of transportation and maintenance, tended to pass into a property relation, which asserted control of varying extent, over the bodies and liberties of the person during service as if he were a physical commodity<sup>78</sup>. The *Madayikavu* and *Valliyoorkavu* stand testimony to the patronage and perpetuation of slavery by the elite sections, by giving the ritual and religious sanction through the institution of temple, to maintain their hold on the economic assets of agricultural production.

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## **PERSPECTIVES OF ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES DURING THE MUGHAL PERIOD**

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### **Abstract**

*The Concept of ecology was coined by Reiter and Haeckel in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Today, ecology has become an interdisciplinary and complex science. The Science of ecology requires specialisation with specific area of enquiry. Thus has evolved different sub-disciplines in ecology with their own sets of concepts. All these various disciplines are really looking at the unified field of ecology. Any cultured civilisation must sooner or later become concerned with the environment and its protection. Human beings must realise that the planet earth and all its resources are only an inheritance that should be bequeathed to future generations. Moreover, we share the planet with numerous other species that have an equal right to enjoy the fruits of the earth. The object of this paper is to delineate and describe the Mughal emperors' method of observation and chronicle the ecology of the sub-continent. By this process, we can learn more from the past and also how man can live in harmony with the various other species that inhabit the planet.*

### **Introduction**

A remarkable feature of the Mughal era was the interest shown by the Mughal emperors in natural history. The founder

of the dynasty, Babur, has drawn attention to the flora and fauna of the sub-continent in his famous work *Babur Nama*. In this work, he has described in detail the geophysical features of the country which he conquered and then describes in detail the mammals, birds and even aquatic animals. He describes their physical appearance and usefulness as well as their food and habitat. Babur is even interested in the migratory patterns of birds (*Babur Nama*, 494)<sup>1</sup>.

## Biodiversity in the Babur Nama

### Faunal diversity

Babur has mentioned that a large number of elephants are found in Hindustan and they are called elephant (*hat(h)i*). He has also noted the presence of camels, rhinoceros, horses and wild buffalo. The wild buffalo was much larger than the domestic buffalo and these were mightily destructive and ferocious animals. The other animals he has mentioned are the *Nila-gau* (blue-bull) which resembled the yak. Further, he has mentioned the hog-deer (*Kotah-paicha*) which may be the size of the white deer (*aq kiyik*) and lived only in the jungles. Another deer was the *kiyik* which the Hindustanis called *kala-haran* (black buck) and which had been softened in pronunciation to *kalahara*. The *gini-cow* was another small animal. He also noted the monkey (*maimuun*) which the Hindustanis called *bandar*. There was another animal called Nawal (*nool*) which was also known by the name of *mush-i-khurma* (palm-rat). The Hindustanis felt that it was the animal of luck. The mouse (*T.sichqan*) was called *galahri* (squirrel). This could be the tree-mouse and not a squirrel; it may be the species *Vandeleuria olracea*.

## Birds

Babur has also described some of the birds of the country in his memoirs. He has beautifully described the size, feathers, colours and habitat of the peacock (Ar. *Taus*); *mor* is the name given to it by the Hindustanis. Babur noted that the parrot (*H.tuti*) was trained by the Hindustanis to speak words. This was the jungle parrot and there were many of its kind. One among them was the Kashmir parrot. There are many kinds of (P.) *sharak* (here, house mina). Another bird was *loo(u)ja*, and this was called (Ar.*Bu-qalamun* (chameleon) because it had five or six changing colours. He has also mentioned the *p(h)ool-paikar* (*Trapogon melanocephala*), wild fowl (*shahrai-taugh* / *Gallus sonneratii*), house fowl (*ghair mukarrar*), the quail (*P.boo(u)dana*), the Indian bustard (*P.kharchal*), *tughdaq* (the great Indian bustard / *Otis tarda*), the florican (*P.chars*), the Hindustan sand-grouse, the *saras* (*Grus antigone*), the *lag-lag* (*Ciconia alba*, the white stork), the *augar* (grey heron), the large *buzak* (black ibis), the *gharm-pai* (spotted-billed duck), the *shah-murgh* (*Sarcidiornis melanonotus*, comb duck or *nukta*), *zummaj* (*Aquila chrysaetus*, the golden eagle), the (T.) *ala-qargha*, which was otherwise known among the Hindustanis as the pied crow (*Corvus cornix*). Another bird which looked like the crow (*T.garch*, *C.splendens*) and the magpie (Ar. *'aqqa*), the great bat was called in Hindi as *chumgadur* and the *kuil* (*Eudynamys orientalis*, the *koel*).

Besides, he has also mentioned some of the aquatic animals and they were the water-tiger (*P.shir-abi*, *Crocodilus palustris*), the (Sans.) *g(h)arial* (*Gavialis gangeticus*) and water-hog (*P.khuk-abi*, *Platanista gangetica*, the porpoise) which was found in the Hindustani rivers. Also, there is the *kalah* (or *galah*)-fish (*baligh*) called as *kalah* or *galah* fish in Hindustan.

## Plant diversity

Babur has also noted that among the edible fruits, the mango was supreme. Some of the fruits worthy of praise were the musk-melon, *Kardi* peach and plantain fruits. He has also mentioned the trees such as tamarind (*imli*), *mahuwa* (*Madhuca longifolia*), mimusops (Sans. *Khirni*, *Mimusops kauki*), red jujube (T.chikda, *Eleagnus angustifolia*), Jaman (*Eugenia jambolana*), *Kamrak* (*Averrhoa carambola*), jackfruit (*Artocarpus integrifolia*), monkey jack (*Artocarpus lacoocha*), lote-fruit (Sans. *ber*, *Zizyphus jujuba*), the *karaunda* (*Carissa carandas*, the corinda), the *paniyala* (*Flacourtia cataphracta*), gular (*Ficus glomerata*, the clustered fig), *amla* (*Phyllanthus emblica*, the myrobalan tree), the *chirunji* (*Buchanania latifolia*), date palm (P.khurma, *Phoenix dactylifera*), coconut palm (*nargil*, *Cocos nucifera*), tar (*Borassus flabelliformis*, the Palmyra palm), the orange (*naranj*, *Citrus aurantium*). It is interesting to note that Babur describes the orange like fruits which are named: *Citrus aurantium*, nagangi; *Citrus decumana*, the forbidden fruit; *Citrus medica limonum*, *jambhira* and *Citrus acida*, the lime.

In Hindustan, there was a great variety of flowers, one of which was the *jasun* (*Hibiscus rosa sinensis*), *kanir* (*Nerium odorim*), *kiura* (*Pandanus odoratissimus*, the screw pine), and *yasman* (jasmine), the white *champa* by name (Babur Nama 1922, 488–515)<sup>2</sup>. Babur was thus a keen observer of the vast biodiversity of Hindustan. It is worthy of praise that even in the midst of numerous battles to conquer the country, Babur found time to chronicle this facet of Hindustan.

There was a famous incident involving the Emperor Akbar. The emperor had gone hunting in the Punjab salt range in 1578 CE. He had organized a massive animal hunt in which thousands

of animals were driven into a large area so that they could be easily killed by the emperor and his courtiers. However, on this occasion, the emperor laid aside his weapons, fell into a trance and ordered all animals to be set free (Beveridge 1939, 347)<sup>3</sup>. From this time onwards, Akbar began to eschew hunting which was in tune with the Indian tradition of non-violence (Moosvi, 2010)<sup>4</sup>.

Babur's great-grandson Jahangir showed an even greater scientific bent of mind (Alvi and Rahama, 1968)<sup>5</sup>. Jahangir patronized a large number of artists whom he ordered to portray animals and birds. He also commissioned accurate paintings of flowers. Foremost among these artists was Mansur who painted the flora of Kashmir in great detail (Verma, 1998)<sup>6</sup>.

Not only the emperors but also the nobles and high ranking officials also used to commission such paintings. There is a record of a middle ranking official who used to collect animals for his private zoo from places such as the Deccan, Kalinjar, Bahraich and Kashmir. Not only did they collect these animals, but they also had pictures drawn of them.

The Mughal emperors and their nobles also displayed a great interest in the laying out of gardens. Whichever provinces they conquered, one of the first tasks was to lay down gardens, parks and resting places. These were known as *gulistan*. They also introduced new types of fruits. For example, Akbar's governor Ali Quli Afshar introduced sweet cherry into Kashmir by grafting (Irfan Habib 1996, 129–130)<sup>7</sup>.

The Mughal princes and nobility also used to create public gardens which were accessible to the common people. For example, Abdur Rahim Khan Khanan laid out public gardens at

Burhanpur and Ahmadabad. The Emperor himself caused a garden to be created at Ahmadabad. Even the famous Taj Mahal garden was open to the public (Irfan Habib 1996, 135 – 137)<sup>8</sup>. A notable feature of these gardens was that they were so designed so as to be in harmony with the natural setting. These can be seen in the paintings of *Babur Nama* and in the Shalimar garden at Srinagar built by Jahangir. The Mughals were environmentally conscious. There is a text on ethics written by Abdul Qadir Badauni which lists the three sins of cutting down of a shady tree, making a profession of killing animals and selling human beings. Badauni also quotes the prophet Mohammad who condemns those who kill a cow, cut down a tree and sell a human being (Haq ed.1972, 264)<sup>9</sup>. There was a practice in Sind province of zamindars putting cloths on jungle trees and freeing their own animals such as horses, cows and buffaloes (Bhakkari II: 28)<sup>10</sup>.

The main source of our knowledge of Jahangir's interest in natural history is his autobiography, the *Jahangir Nama*. This work clearly brings out the fact that he was not only a great sovereign, but also a naturalist, ecologist, aesthete, hunter, patron of arts and collector (Jahangir, 1624; Khan, 1864)<sup>11</sup> who investigated, observed, recorded, depicted, measured and enumerated (Koch 2009, p.298)<sup>12</sup>. He experimented with and dissected various animals such as the mountain sheep, the lion and the wolf. He took a particular interest in investigating the mammals and birds of Kashmir such as the wild ram and the ibex. He even experimented with the cross breeding of a Barbary goat with a mountain ram. He also discovered that the Humay bird, which is a native of the Pir Panjal mountains ate small bones. He ordered Mansur the painter to draw a likeness of the Gil-Char'd which is a bird which lives in the streams of Kashmir. Similarly, he ordered the painters to draw a likeness of the

Markhor goat. He also investigated the fish of Anant Nag spring, some of which were reputed to be blind.

Jahangir was responsible for laying out some of the finest gardens in Mughal India. He also made it possible to cultivate high altitude trees like the cypress, juniper, pine and the Javanese sandal tree in the plains of India. He commissioned more than a hundred paintings of Kashmir flowers such as the lotus, lily, tulip, jasmine, hollyhock and saffron flowers. Thus, it is evident that Jahangir qualifies as a keen researcher and fine observer of the flowers of Kashmir (Numani 2015, pp. 72-80)<sup>13</sup>.

He also catalogued, observed and investigated the fruit trees of Kashmir in a scientific manner. This included the pear, the guava, grapes, pomegranates, mulberries and the Persian melon.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, we may say that the Mughals were the pioneers of the study of natural history in medieval India. In spite of their onerous administrative and military duties, most of the Mughal emperors took a keen interest in observing the variegated flora and fauna of this vast subcontinent. Not only that, they commissioned artists and scientists to chronicle the same for posterity. By doing so, they have left a rich legacy of scientific knowledge for succeeding generations.

## **Acknowledgement**

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# **MODERN HISTORY**

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

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**Abstract**

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

*continued exploitations of the commercial resources of Assam and ruined the image of the Nagas.*

**Keywords:** Colonialism, Nagas, Assam, Otherness and Representation.

## Introduction

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

On account of the Nagas persistent incursions, the British government in Assam discarded their approach to control the Nagas through peaceful measures, and actuated the army to take on the Nagas. They sent military expeditions to the Naga Hills, commencing in 1839 and ending with the battle of Khonoma in February 1879 (Ratan 2008: 93). The consequences of these military expeditions were representations of the Nagas as ‘backward,’ ‘uncivilized,’ ‘wild,’ ‘head-hunters,’ ‘filthy,’ ‘naked,’ and ‘immoral’ in the military write ups. Projecting the Nagas as lower form of mankind through the choice of assorted

‘barbarism’ seems to be a colonial ‘realness’” a by-product of the colonial efforts to protect their commercial interests in Assam with the use of military force.

According to Nicholas Dirks (2010: 194), the interest of the British in the ‘barbarism’ of the colonized was to use it as a means of realizing their objectives; i.e., justifying military expeditions, distinguishing the colonials from the colonized, and endorsing the project that would control the colonized ‘other’. It was precisely the same in the Naga Hills. During military expeditions to the Naga Hills, the British officials took digs at Nagas’ differences by describing them as ‘barbarians’. This was aimed at portraying the Nagas as though they required to be civilized. However, the Nagas were not transformed with the British presence. And the British illustrations of the Nagas became merely catchy phrase which rationalized colonial military expeditions. In addition to this, the barbarity of the Nagas helped the British officials to separate the colonized Nagas from themselves, increasing feelings of inferiority and superiority. And finally, the colonially conceptualized notion of barbarity exhorted the British army to go to a greater distance in the Naga Hills, under the pretext of modernizing the Nagas” and at the same time making economically and politically progressive. However the outcome was just tightening of the British control over the colonized Nagas. Referring to the British rationale for military expeditions, Sindhu Menon (2008: 70) in her work *Images of Colonial India in British writing 1757-1857* wrote “the officers in India had in most cases to put economic reasons to justify their political actions”.

This paper analyses the British colonial ideas and motives in representing the Nagas in racial jargon through a study of relationship between the British commercial interests in Assam

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

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

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

The British commercial interests and governance of colonized territories both in the heartland of India and as well as in Assam, operated in close collaboration<sup>2</sup>. The colonial governance of colonized territories facilitated transforming of indigenous commercial resources into colonial commercial items. These increased both the colonial commercial exploitations and

commercial profits. Similarly, the increase in commercial profits helped the British to secure and strengthen their position of power over the colonized. This nexus between imperial and commercial interests is examined by Menon (2008: 71). She writes, “Economic and imperial interests thus functioned hand in hand.....”<sup>3</sup>. As it is stated by Menon, there are evidences for the existence of connections between the British imperial and economic interests, one for exploiting the colonized ‘others’ economically and another for being supreme in the political arena.

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

The endeavours of Scott and Jenkins to draw the attention of the Company’s government towards tea partially succeeded with an identification of Bruce’s tea as *camellia* (species of tea grown in China) by Calcutta Government Botanist. This resulted



in the commencement of tea plantations in Lakhimpur in 1835 under government initiative (Cooper 1873: 74). However, the government soon sold their tea estates to the European owned Assam Company in 1840 (Gait 1906: 349). Since then, the tea industry in Assam turned out to be a prime commercial sector for the Assam Company's investments. With a booming of tea industry, there was rapid expansion in the areas of tea plantation too. This fast growing tea industry was further expedited by the government policy of allocating extensive acres of land to companies at throw away prices under waste land tenure act of 1838 (Dasgupta 1914: 1281) <sup>4</sup>.

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

The assessment in Table A exhibits that there was a continual rise in the output of tea products. This suggests that a huge profit was made from investment in tea plantations. Therefore, tea remained as the most important commercial item for the British commercialists in Assam. In short, tea that was untapped by the

indigenous population of Assam became a thriving colonial industry. Thus, the British were determined to protect the interests of planters by combating repetitive Naga raids into the territory of Assam and through carrying the war into Naga territory with the aid of the army.

Tea was indeed a chief commercial item of interest for the British in Assam; however, they were not neglectful of other commercial items. They were equally engaged in making profits from various marketable articles, such as rubber, forest, and minerals. Like tea, rubber was another valuable merchandise products in Assam. However, it was not extracted by native populations on large scale. Investment on this product was expected to bring a substantial amount of income for the investors. On realizing the prospective return of profit, the Company's government stated dubbed the native tappers as inefficient and ignorant. Citing the latter's dubbed incompetence and uneconomical way of extracting rubber as a major cause for decline in rubber productions, they did away with the earlier system of letting out certain areas of rubber estates for tapping" and imposed a duty of twelve rupees every mound. Through this, the Company's government was asserting their right over rubber trade. Henceforth, there was both increase in rubber products and in profits of the Company's government. Hence, the rubber products in the later years from 1890-1891 reached a total of 5,903 mounds, which meant that the British Government had received an average income of Rs. 70836 per annum from taxation on rubber products (Physical and Political Geography 1896: 37-38).

In addition to above mentioned commercial items, Assam possessed rich deposits of mineral resources, such as coal, petroleum, etc. As these natural resources were economically

valuable, the colonial government sought to convert Assam into a reservoir of raw materials. With this motive, the colonial government sold away the right to extract and process minerals in Assam to European companies. By this way, they maintained not only a regular supply of raw materials required for British industries (Dutt 1916: xii),<sup>5</sup> but also amassed profits from selling. The profits acquired by selling those natural resources and the finished products, if spent in improving the condition of colonized 'others' at least would have made their material conditions better. However, it was not utilized for that purpose; instead, it was siphoned off to their home country, England (Dutt 1916: xii). This draining of acquired capital was largely due to the entry of commercial companies in mining minerals from deposits and selling it off. One of the economically viable and extensively available minerals in Assam was coal. Coal which was extracted since 1865 by a few interested individuals like Mr. Good enough of Calcutta and Mr. Jenkins of Khoyang in Lakhimpur (Hunter 1979:377) was given to the Assam Railway and Trading Company, and Assam and Singlo Companies by the British government. From then on, these companies extracted coal that was found in Makum fields and from fields located in the south of Sibsagar district. The chunk of extracted coal were sold to India General and Rivers Steam Navigation companies. This company used it on their steamers, exported to other steamers going to the oceans, and for other purposes. With the commencement of export, demand for Assam coal increased manifold. It led to augmentation in extractions of coal in Assam. Such was an increase in mining of coal that by the year 1903. it reached a total figure of 239,000 tonnes with a mere investment of £ 357,000 (Allen 1906: 58). And yet, the colonized subjects in Assam did not receive any benefits from such exploitation.

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

Another economically viable avenue in which the British in Assam were interested was forest. The forest of Assam with valuable trees like *teak*, *sal*, *sam*, *sissu* and *ajhar* would considerably contribute towards improving the economic condition of those who possessed it. Because of this economic capability, forest did not escape the attention of the British government, who aspired to make a hard bargain from it. Driven by desire for profit, the British government sought to take control of forests in 1870 through leasing forests (Hunter 1979: 300) to private enterprises. Subsequently, classifying forests into 'reserved' and 'unreserved' forests, the British government took complete control of the forests. In the first category of forests, which is reserved forest, full government protection was extended, and in the second group, although there was no provision for government protection, the colonized could not cut down trees without prior payment made to government (Misra 2005:222).

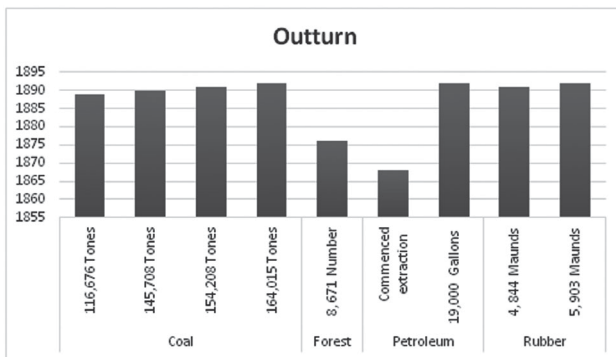
**Table A.** Comparison of growth in tea industry both in the areas of plantation and products between the years 1859- 1874

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

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

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

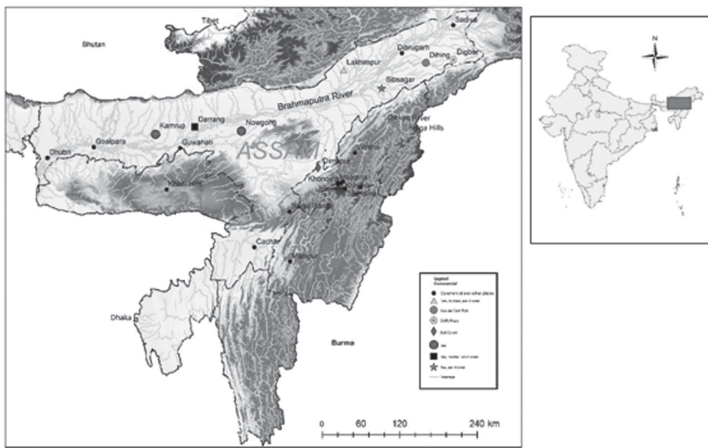
**Figure 1**, indicates an increase in the commercial outturn.



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

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

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



**Figure 2.** Places of Commercial importance which were frequently raided by the Nagas

## British Colonial Military Expeditions: Assertion of Authority

The British colonial administrators having decided to stop the Naga incursions by the use of military force sent the first military expedition to the Naga Hills on December 3, 1839, under

Lieutenant E. R. Grange, the then assistant political agent (Grange 1840: 947, 950). Through this expedition, Grange asserted British authority over the Angami Naga by securing compliance from the Angami Chiefs of Khonoma and Mozema that they would refrain from raiding British territory (Neivetso 2005: 31). After this agreement, Grange might have felt that he had resolved the border crisis. Therefore to forestall further recurrence of raids, Grange again toured the Naga Hills, exemplifying the British defined boundary of Barail range and to receive the Angamis' submission. However, he was proved wrong when he was attacked by the Angamis. Retaliating Angami assault, Grange scorched five Naga villages (Shakespear 1914: 213- 214). Through this retaliation, he sought not only to traumatize the Nagas but also to bring end the Naga incursions into Assam.

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

Very soon after Granges' expedition, Lieutenant H. Bigge enriched himself in knowledge about the Nagas which led to another expedition to the Angami Naga territory in 1841. Bigge by staying away from direct show of aggression, demonstrated his affection towards the Nagas through opening a salt depot at Dimapur, which was requested by the Nagas (Shakespear 1914:



125). His act of kindness not merely won the heart of the Nagas but also made them submissive. In addition to this, it cleared the air of suspicion which the Nagas were maintaining towards the British since their first entry into the Naga Hills.

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

However, peace in the western frontier region and as well as understanding between the Angami Nagas and the British in Khonoma lasted only for a short time. Very soon trouble again started between the British and the Nagas over the collection of tributes. As taxation was aimed at subduing the Nagas, the British kept on imposing and collecting tributes from the Nagas. The Nagas on the other hand, were not eager to tribute to the British. As a consequence of this tug-of-war, the Nagas again attacked the British official team in the Naga Hills which came to collect tributes. Retaliating this Nagas attack, the British officials made counterattacks through sending a punitive expedition under Captain Eld in 1844. They had both inflicted inhuman violence on the Nagas and caused serious damage to their properties by burning of the Naga villages (Allen 1905:12).

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

Shortly after his appointment, Butler along with the armed forces visited the Angami village in 1845. In this visit, he went about reconciling with the Nagas, described them in racial jargon, and picturized their territory as well. He was indeed affably received by the Nagas and honoured with gifts of various articles like ivory and traditional clothes. A few Nagas even came narrating their tales of constant feuds and requested his assistance in their fight against their foes (Lotha 2007:18). This left Butler with a feeling of importance. However his sense of elation was merely for short time and did little to place the British in a superior position over the Nagas. The Nagas, after Butler's departure from their territory, resumed their usual internecine war (Misra 1998: 3277). Through this fratricidal war and their warlike temperament, the Nagas continued to threaten both the colonial commercial establishment and the colonial administration in Assam.

Therefore, Butler along with others continued forcible entry into the Naga villages with a good reason of prevailing upon the

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

The Nagas confronted the British invasions through repeated raids into the British territory and at the same time by reacting aggressively to the British expeditionary squad. The British authority in Assam deputed Lieutenant G. F. Vincent to lead another military expedition to the Naga villages in 1850. This time with little confrontation, Vincent seized Mozema. Further, he visited Jakhama, the Angami Naga village. He accused the residents of Jakhama village of forging alliance with the enemies of the British (others Naga tribes opposed to the British). To sever the prospect of a unified allegiance against the British and simultaneously to instil fear amongst the Nagas about the British, Vincent's team, assisted by some friendly Nagas set on fire the whole of Jakhama village (Sana 2013: 37).

However, burning of the Angami Naga village and cutting off the enemies' supplies did little to help the British to defeat the Angami Nagas. Hence the British government in Assam sent another expedition in December 1850 to suppress the Nagas. In

this military assault, the British troops captured Khonoma which was deserted by the Nagas. However, the British expeditionary team could capture Kekrima only after they had fought a hard fought battle with the Nagas, and this made them to realize that asserting complete control over the Nagas was an uphill task. The ensuing decision of this realization was to pull out troops from the Naga Hills in 1851 (Allen 1905: 15). But the British animosity towards the Nagas persisted even after the withdrawal of armed forces from the Naga Hills.

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

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

of India, Lord Dalhousie. He said in his Minute of February 20, 1851 thus:

“I concur in the conclusion to which the Hon’ble the President in Council has come respecting the relations to be maintained with the Angami Nagas, and consider that His Honour has judged wisely directing the withdrawal of the forces which has been sent, and of the post which had been established in advance in that country.” (Mackenzie 2013: 113)

Following this consensual decision of moving out from the Naga Hills, the troops were withdrawn. Subsequent to a withdrawal of British troops from the Naga Hills and with nobody to intervene in their affairs the Nagas carried out twenty two raids into Assam. This made the British in Assam to contemplate the effectiveness of the non-interference policy (Allen 1905: 16). They feared that if the raids and feuds continued unrestrained, Assam would soon be broken up into smaller regions, and they would be driven out not only from the frontier regions but from the whole province of Assam. Hence, after a few years of dilemma over what course of action was to be adopted towards the Nagas, Sir George Campbell, the Lieutenant Governor, came out with a decision of establishing political control over the Nagas (Mackenzie 2013:124).

On approval of Campbell’s plan, the responsibility of establishing political control over the hill tribes rested on the Chief Commissioner of Assam. As an initial step of asserting political supremacy over the Nagas, the Naga villages were brought under the colonial protectorate on payment of revenue. Further, to exercise active control and bring additional Nagas like the *Lothas*, the *Hathigorians* and others under their rule, the British headquarters in the Naga Hills was transferred from

Samaguting to Kohima. However, despite relocating headquarters in a more centrally located region in Naga Hills, raids and troubles continued. For this reason, the colonial forces fully took over Kohima in November 1878 and Jotsoma in November 27th, 1879. Subsequent to the seizure of Kohima, many more Naga villages were made dependent on the colonial rule. However, it was not all over. The colonial army had to engage in a hard bug of war with the Angami of Khonoma. They resolutely resisted the invading British army since November 22, 1879 and finally surrendered in March 28, 1880 (Physical and Political geography 1896: 94).

With the surrender of Angami of Khonoma, the Nagas who were resisting the invading forces for quite a long time, came under the political domination of the British government. From then on, the Nagas had no longer self-rule. They were reduced to a dependent status of the British. Despite this, minor Naga raids continued particularly from the Ao and the Lentah Nagas. Subduing these Nagas, the British government with a view to avert fresh Naga raids brought more Naga territories under their control by expanding the areas of revenue collection, and also defining the Dikkoo Rivers as the boundary (Shakespear 1914: 225-226). Further to assert effective control, the British resorted to the creation of Naga Hill as an administrative district of the government with Kohima as the seat of administration. This assertion of authority by the British over the Nagas was rationalized by the logic of civilizing the uncivilized 'other' Nagas.

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

The British, as they had embarked upon an aggressive use of military force to suppress and then to establish absolute

authority over the Nagas, had to construct theories that highlighted Nagas' differences, and at the same time provided justification for military expeditions.<sup>7</sup> This task had been accomplished through the representations of 'other' Nagas in such a way that the Nagas were in need of British colonial interventions to become civilized<sup>8</sup> or in other words to be human beings akin to British colonial selves, leaving behind primeval behaviours of barbarians. Referring to the British colonial project of civilizing mission, Tezenlo in his article '*Thy Kingdom Come*': *the Impact of Colonization and Proselytization on Religion among the Nagas* wrote, "In order to civilize, the colonized must be first 'uncivilized' or 'primitivized'; otherwise, the project of the civilizing mission cannot be implemented" (Tezenlo 2010: 45:595). The contention of Tezenlo is that the British colonial identification of the Nagas with primitiveness as their fundamental nature was motivated by their requirement to employ it as an appropriate idiom to cover up their intention to control and to project themselves as idealized and big-hearted out there to elevate the Nagas from a stage of rudeness to enlightenment. It is precisely this idea that this section of the paper carries forward to different aspects of colonial representations of the Nagas. Further, it argues that the portrayals of the Nagas through different ideas and images which always demonstrated primitiveness of the Nagas were colonial acts in response to their apprehensions. This way of looking into colonial portrayals of the Nagas might reveal overlooked motives and ideas of the British. As for instance, Butler, when he said, "when our rule will prove a blessing to these benighted tribes, who would henceforth enjoy the fruit of their labours in peace and prosperity," (Butler 1855: 67) was not really referring to a wellbeing of the colonized Nagas; rather, he was vaguely implying to a moment in time when the Nagas would be completely subjugated to British colonial rule, so that

the Nagas ceased to be potential threats to their commercial interests in Assam.

From the very time the British had commenced visiting the Naga villages, the British were constructing discourses, defining who the Nagas were. The British had defined and interpreted the 'other' Nagas in comparison to themselves changing according to circumstances. It was to harmonize with all the jargon, which depicted the Nagas in wildness and served colonial purpose of presenting themselves as enlightened (Nag 2012: 70)<sup>9</sup>. Accordingly, Rowney in his work *The Wild Tribes of India* had delineated the Nagas by correlating them with 'serpent.' Through this association, Rowney was belittlingly characterizing the Nagas through qualities that serpent is generally attributed with. As serpent symbolizes primitive rituals and evils in the history of human civilizations, the 'other' Nagas" in view of Rowney" were residues of ancient people, representing primitiveness and all vices. By this inference, he was illustrating the Nagas as primitive, evil, ruthless, and malicious (Rowney 1882: 168). Correspondingly, Dalton in his *Caste and Tribes of Bengal*, equating the Nagas with snake and described them as decorative, filthy, nude, and venomous (Dalton 1872: 38). And similarly in the *History of Upper Assam, Upper Burma, and North -Frontier*, Shakespear elucidated Nagas as "naked" by relating the term "Naga" with the Sanskrit word "Nanga" (Shakespeare 1914: 195). Hence, the Nagas were described as untamed, deceitful, head-hunters, subtle, treacherous, and above all hard-bitten barbarians who would not simply give up incivilities (Butler 1855: 58-70).

All these wildest conceived colonial notions and images about the Nagas of Naga Hills served the British intention to separate self from the colonized 'other' Naga. As wildness was a nature of pre-civilized man, the primitiveness of Nagas became



convenient pictograms through which the British colonial officials, differentiating themselves racially and ethnically from the colonized 'other' Nagas, continued to project themselves as superior and civilized men and derided the Nagas just as inferior and uncivilized men. Indeed, the Nagas were culturally a little less progressive than the British. However, the propagation of intense racial chauvinism through contradicting terms in portrayals between the colonials and colonized Nagas did not really spring from the status of British colonial being more advanced than the Nagas. And instead, it arose from the irrational and illogical claim that the British were making about their biological origin. It lacks in substance and it was solely a politically motivated illustration, emerging from their ignorance about the Nagas' moral and political behaviouralism. Thus, W. Said in 'Orientalism' has stated "Along with all other people variously designated as backward, degenerate, uncivilized, and retarded, the Orientals were viewed in a framework constructed out of biological determinism and moral-political admonishment" (Said 1979: 207).

The Nagas in colonial representations were distinguished as barbarians and inferior not only from colonial self alone, but also Naga from other Naga. The Nagas under British colonial regime were isolated from and used against other Naga tribe. Thus dividing the Nagas into two groups i) the Kilted Nagas, comprising of Angami Nagas, irrespective of regions, and ii) the Non Kilted Nagas, that consisted remaining Nagas (Woodthorpe 1882: 58). The Angami Nagas were categorized and raised above other Nagas as sturdy, superior in valour and aggressiveness, and as well as in ingenuity and courteousness (Rivenburg 1887: 84). However, the Angami Nagas continued to be viewed as barbarians. Likewise Aao, a different Naga tribe was written off in British representations as warlike and incorrigible, differing from the illustrations of the Angami Naga. Furthermore, the Lotha and the Rengma Nagas were depicted as odds with aforementioned

picturization of the Naga tribes. They were typified by the British officials as filthy. However, they were applauded for exceptional qualities in the performance of domestic chores. And finally the Sema Naga, a different Naga tribe, came to be stigmatized not so much as savage but as notorious burglar and boozier (Shakespeare, 1914: 201- 203). Getting to know both virtues and vices of the Nagas, the British officials availed this knowledge to subjugate one Naga tribe through another Naga. For example, the Angami Nagas were used against the Aao, Rengma, and others. And the end result was nurturing of groupism and continuous feuds, causing insecurity among the Nagas. Thus, Jenkin, pointing out colonial unjustifiable interest in classifying the colonized 'others' argued, "the obsession with classification was not only for academic interests and colonial justification but also for the more practical goal of administration" (Jenkin 2003: 1149)<sup>10</sup>. Her opinion leads us to arrive at the conclusion that the British colonials in Naga Hills in order to dominate over the Nagas administratively injected feelings of groupism and hatred amongst the colonized Nagas. Through this way, the British weakened the Nagas, reduced their resistance to the British, and in the end, brought them under their control" under the pretext of providing lasting peace.

The Colonial government inject the Nagas a spirit of hatred for one another and at the same time with a feeling of groupism that reduced the Nagas to anarchists. As anarchists, the Nagas in British colonial points of view were less human and more problems, emerging from array of savageries, barbarism, murderousness, and above all from statelessness. Because all these behavioural problems are things that required to be condemned and to be controlled by any society that is civilized and the British availed aforementioned negative ideas about the Nagas to justify their aggressive and destructive military expeditions, which they had launched against the Nagas. Hence,

the British despite of not having mind to civilize the colonized 'others explained away their unjust military expeditions in civilizing the uncivilized Nagas. And consequence of this justification was by no means the Nagas being civilized, but just an appearance of the British as civilizer and the Nagas needing to be civilized. And this is authenticated in the words of Metcalf in his *Ideologies of the Raj*. Examining colonial rationalization of military expeditions through the 'otherness' of the colonized, he concluded, "They had to set in place principles that would enable them to justify to themselves their rule over India. And they had further to establish enduring structures to order that governance" (R. Metcalf. 2007: 17).

The British Colonial project of control, indeed, explained away in civilizing mission was not to reach its culmination so long as the colonized 'other' Nagas remain a potential danger to the British commercial interests in Assam. This was apparently evident in continuous pursuits of the British to produce different and new information about the Nagas<sup>11</sup> that led to a further categorization of the Nagas. Further, it undergirded the British colonial sway over the Nagas with a new administrative system. Therefore, to get a new administrative mechanism operational and to establish firmer control over the Nagas, the British divided the Nagas again, isolating them ethnically. The Nagas found themselves in secluded groups, which they themselves had never known till that moment in time. The Nagas like the earliest tribes were divided into three distinct tribal groups: a) the western Nagas, comprising of Angami, Sema, and Rengma b) the central Nagas, consisting of Ao, Lhota, Tensa, Thukumi and Yachumi and c) the eastern Nagas that included Konyak, Phom, and Chang (Grierson 1967: 268). To these categorizations, Lotha describes as tribalization (2008: 55). Lotha is right because through these bizarre categorizations, the

British colonial officials were relegating the Nagas to primitivism. All these divisions of the Nagas into classes although stated and done to provide good governance merely helped the British colonial government to tighten their grip over the colonized Nagas. And in another way, the British colonial government might have taken to categorizations with an idea to endorse their argument that the colonized Nagas still required to be controlled by the colonial government to become wholly civilized.

The Colonial demonstrations about the colonized Nagas that they still required to be controlled led to further divisions of the Nagas into different groups by forming geographical boundaries, based on the Nagas place of inhabitancies. The Nagas inhabiting in northern, southern, and western regions of the Naga Hills were categorized as Nagas 'administered.' They, in colonial perspective, had become civilized on account of their governance. The residual Nagas, living in the central Naga Hills, were described as 'unadministered' Nagas. These Nagas in British views were the Nagas, necessitating further subjection to colonial rule to become wholly civilized. And the last group of Nagas, according to the British colonial officials were 'free' Nagas, living in the regions bordering Burma (Lotha 2008: 55). For the British officials, these Nagas were still primitive and cut off from the civilized world. By dividing the Nagas into civilized, semi-civilized, and uncivilized groups, the British officials were substantiating themselves as rulers and committed to civilizing the Nagas. However the end result of these groupings was not a transformation of the Nagas into civilized ones nor deterioration of those Nagas who remained unaffected by the colonial civilizing mission. Rather, it was just a candid confirmation of colonial authority over other Nagas and at the same time transformation of the Nagas into obedient colonized subjects of the British colonial power.

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

## Conclusion

The 'barbarianism' of the Nagas was a construction necessitated by the colonial protection of commercial interests in Assam. In order to salvage commercial establishments in Assam from the havoc caused by Naga raids, the British sent a series of military expeditions to crackdown on the Nagas. Captain Butler was one of those British colonial personnel, entrusted with the mission of subduing the Nagas, particularly the Angami Nagas. He conducted a number of military expeditions into Naga territory. While recounting his experience, he portrayed the Nagas as wild,

head-hunters, uncivilized, and filthy. His accounts were full of his own perceptions and imaginations about the Nagas. Similarly, L. W. Shakespear, the then colonel of the Gurkha army, who fought battles with the Nagas, described them as warlike, backward, treacherous, nude, etc. Shakespear's notions about the Nagas came from his hasty conclusion deduced from hardships which he had to endure while fighting against them. Mushirul Hassan in *Colonial Ethnography in the Nineteenth Century*, referring to the colonialists knowledge about the colonized, wrote, "Some represent nothing but superficial knowledge based on census data or an inadequate generalization without any serious proof or any systematic analysis of the facts" (Hassan 2012: xvii)

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

The British effort to control the Nagas with their pretence of benevolence got enmeshed in endless categorizations and misrepresentations of the Nagas. For example, creating groups

by attributing superior traits to one Naga tribe to discredit of another produced far reaching consequences. It categorized a particular tribe as changed into 'civilized', another as 'semi-civilized', and stills others as 'barbarians'. Further, the Nagas were alienated as central, western, southern, administered, and free Nagas. All these groupings not only prevented the Nagas from resisting the British but also made them submissive to the British rule. With the Nagas being submissive to the colonial administration, the British might have caused irreparable loss to them economically and politically and exploited the commercial resources of Assam.

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

## Acknowledgment

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## Notes

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



10. Jenkin's, Another "*People of India*" Project in Colonial and National Anthropology" in *Journal of Asian Studies*. Vol. 62. No.4, (Nov. 2003) gives an elaborate analysis, regarding colonial motives in classifying the colonized 'others' based on caste, see p.1149.
11. Inden criticising Western powers constructed notions of unchanging essences of 'others', stated that the latter were made and remade according to situations that served the former purpose. See *Imagining India*, p.2.
12. For detailed analysis, see Tong, (2012), "*Civilize Colonizer and Barbaric Colonized: Reclaiming Nagas Identity by Demythologizing Colonial Portraits*" In *History and Anthropology*, p.390.

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**NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION:  
ULTIMATE OUTCOME OF MONTAGU'S  
VISIT - A CRITICAL ANALYSIS**

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The year 1917 was one of the most eventful years in Indian history, as the cataclysmic events of the World War had an immediate impact on the British political, social and economic structure and three years had elapsed since the commencement of the war. The repercussions of the World War was far-flung and the political conditions were extremely precarious, and Britain was not in a state to take the burden of any political upheaval in India, as India was the most scintillating diamond of the British imperialistic crown. The Home Government was acutely conscious of the political and economic devastation due to the war, and therefore, measures congruent with the parlous situation was *sine qua non*.

At first, the Government believed that a policy of firm discouragement to stem the political uproar was imperative, but what occurred was just contrary to what the British intended, and it was perceived that reforms were the only viable alternative, for the nonce, to engender contentment among the political segments of India, which would bottle-up the burgeoning nationalistic feeling. Soon, the Government relinquished the accustomed reluctance strategy, and without further ado, adopted a placatory move to produce intended results and to display

their benevolence more precisely, the Home politics on the legendary dictum of discretion is better part of valour and allowed a responsible designation to make a visit to India and circumvent the difficulties; and thus, by leaps and bounds, an astonishing volte-face that was politically expedient was witnessed in Government's perspective.

Post-haste, on August 20, 1917, the Secretary of State for India, E.S. Montagu, made a 'historic pronouncement' in the House of Commons, outlining the goal of the British policy in India<sup>1</sup> and described it as the "most momentous utterances ever made in India's chequered history<sup>2</sup>". The pronouncement was described by the Viceroy Lord Chelmsford "as a landmark in the constitutional history of India" as "it points the goal ahead<sup>3</sup>." The captivating declaration of Montagu immensely aroused the curiosity of the people, and enraptured them with exhilaration.

However, the principal political parties' viz. the Indian National Congress, the Muslem League, the Home Rule League, reacted distinctly upon Montagu's historic declaration and a broad consensus of opinion was witnessed throughout the country. The Moderate Party emphatically welcomed it as the Magna Carta of India; but, the Nationalists, were not in concurrence with the declaration and held the opinion that it "fell far short of the legitimate expectation of India."

Prior to the historic announcement, the increasing polarity between Nationalists and Moderates was apparent in the Calcutta Congress session of 1917, where Besant in her Presidential address made an earnest plea for "the establishment of self-government in India on lines resembling those of the Commonwealth, preferably by 1923, and in any case, not later than 1928<sup>4</sup>." A micro observation to the resolutions passed in

the session indicates that the discrepancies had crept in by now, as the first resolution was a sop to the Moderates and reflected a nature of compromise; whereas, the other two reflected the fervent and avowed views of the Nationalists. The pleasure of the concerted effort was ephemeral, as the ominous signs of political split in the Congress, was now pellucid.

The escalation between the two political thoughts, eventually led to the bifurcation of the Congress, where the Moderates organized themselves and established a separate organization under the nomenclature, The National Liberal Federation of India. The Federation was established in Bengal on June 1918 with S.N.Banerjea as its President, and the avowed object was “the attainment of Responsible Government in India as an integral part of the British Empire by methodical and ordered progress<sup>5</sup>.” At the foundation, the Federation primarily composed of the Moderates separated themselves from the main body of the Congress and were attuned to the Montagu’s scheme of reforms. The Federation comprised of Moderates like Surendra Nath Banerjea, S. Nair, Tej Bahadur Sapru, C.Y.Chintamani, C.H.Setalvad, V.S.Srinivasa Sastri, Bhupendra Nath Basu, Sir Narayan Chandvarkar, Ambika Charan Majumdar and S.P.Sinha.

In the interim, just after a month of the Federation’s establishment, the Montford Report was published on July 8, 1918, and the entire political climate of India witnessed a radical change, as the dichotomy between the different political segments was now overt. The discontext against the Reform Proposals soared high, as the Nationalists found it a blind alley and felt that the Montford proposal was only a blandishment. They were taken aback and staggered by the published Montford Report, as Montagu’s action contrasted sharply with his historic announcement and the feeling that the results were

contrary to the expectations of the people ran high; on the contrary, the Moderates possessed a complete antithesis view to that of the Nationalists and proffered their adhesion to the Reform Proposals.

The Moderates were in concurrence with the Reform proposals and lent their support to the new move, by declaring it to be “a real and substantial step towards self-government and a sympathetic and honest attempt to give effect to the declaration of August 20, 1917<sup>6</sup>.” Thus, the Reform Proposals became the bone of contention between the two political parties and the discrepancies became so prominent that nothing worked out to obviate the hapless fate and restore the short-lived unity.

Although, the National Liberal Federation was formed in June 1918, the spadework for the formation of such an organization was accomplished previously and Montagu’s visit was made with the intention to keep a check on the course of action adopted by the Home Government to produce the envisaged results. The correspondence carried out between the Home Government and the Government of India brings to the fore the significance of the Moderate support to the British. Lord Willingdon, the Governor of Bombay, had previously of making acquainted the Government of India and also the Secretary of State, with the desirability an early declaration of their policy in order to “strengthen the hands of the Moderates<sup>7</sup>.”

Chelmsford, the then Viceroy of India, too, possessed a similar opinion, which is reflected in his letter written to the Secretary of State, in which he has heeded a warning that the declaration of a definite policy was obligatory “in order to arrest the further deflection of the Moderates<sup>8</sup>.” On January 17, 1917, the Home Member of the Government of India wrote in a confidential report, “The position is one of great difficulty. The



Moderate leaders can command no support among the vocal classes who are being led at the heel of Tilak and Besant. The Moderates should be placated by and early sanction of the reform proposals already made to the Secretary of State, which recommended greater Indianization of local bodies and increase in the Indian elements in the Legislature<sup>9</sup>.”

The Home Government was apprised of the up-coming dangers by Lord Chelmsford, who, in a confidential letter, stated, “Mrs. Besant and Tilak and others are fomenting with great vigour the agitation for immediate Home Rule and in the absence of any definite announcement by the Government of India as to their policy in the matter, it is attracting many of those who hitherto have held less advanced views<sup>10</sup>.”

To put a lid on the tense situation, it was *sine qua non* for the Government of India to acquire the same support of the Moderates and the Muslim leaders, which they had achieved in the previous years. Chelmsford perceived that the truculent behavior of the Moderates and the increasing amiable relations with the Nationalists was solely due to the absence of any definite policy and, he invited the Secretary of State to visit India in order to make the circumstances propitious for the Home Government and also for the Government of India.

Chelmsford’s trepidation is more discernible on observing his letter to the Home Government in which he states, “If our proposals are sanctioned, I am convinced, that they will appeal to all Moderates section and will give them a rallying cry<sup>11</sup>.” Chelmsford reported to the Home Government that any delaying in the announcement on the constitutional measures would be deleterious for the Empire and forewarned the Government thus, “In the absence of any definite announcement of policy would cause embarrassment to the local government, alienating the

Moderates and leaving the field free to the Extremist's propaganda<sup>12</sup>."

Montagu's visit to India was an event of immense significance, as hitherto, in the history of British India, the Secretary of State gave an announcement of his visit to a subject country. What was the purport behind displaying such a propensity for his arrival? A significantly important extract from Montagu's speech needs a mention here, which he delivered on Indian Reforms at a meeting of the Cambridge Liberal Association, on July 27, 1918, stating the rationale behind his visit to India.

Montagu stated, "Unfortunately India was at the moment not ready and disaster would await anyone wishing to give Home Rule to India to-day. The principle of our Government of India should be progressive realization of responsible Government, step by step, as India has proved to the satisfaction of the people of Britain and their representatives in Parliament that she was ready for it, until one day we should complete the process, and India too, would take her place, as one of the free nations in the Commonwealth of Nations called the British Empire. That was the principle, that was the mission, on which he went to India to grant Responsible Government within the British Empire, and that was the principle, on which the Report was founded<sup>13</sup>."

Although, it is abstruse to extrapolate the purport behind Montagu's advent, but one thing was pellucid, that his conception was definitely not the one declared in the foregoing speech and the extracts from the Government correspondences and also from his Diary lends credence to the facts.

The ostensible object of Montagu's visit to India was to formulate proposals for Constitutional reforms in consultation

with the Viceroy, after ascertaining the views of the people, and also the officials, but Montagu was already possessing a different scheme of reforms, and as far as, consultation with the Viceroy, officials and also the Indian politicians is concerned, it could have been done efficaciously from Britain, without coming to India. Therefore, a very genuine question of primal importance, which arises here, and is of an enigmatic character, is that what was the real motive and original intentions behind Montagu's arrival in India? What prompted Montagu to give a declaration in the House of Commons regarding his visit to a subject country, with all haste, at such a perilous time? A panoramic view of the concurrent political development is pertinent to the matter to draw precise inferences.

The world war had been going on and outlining the goal of the British policy in India was enough to give a shape to the inner thought of the Indians. An important dignitary like that of the Secretary of State for India, not only visited a subject country, but also remained here for a prolonged period of six months, from November 10, 1917 to May 10, 1918, when Britain was in the clutches of the war. The announcement was made in haste, with great promptitude, outlining the goal of the British policy in India, besides the fact, that the desirability of giving an early announcement regarding British policy had begun, long time back.

*Au fond*, the Lucknow Congress was the most eventful in the eyes of the British government. The political imbroglio of 1907 manifested that the Moderates and Nationalists could under no circumstances, unite, as they embraced distinct political ideologies and this disassociation between the two schools of thought was the elementary weapon of the British, on the basis, of which they had succeeded in giving a firm footing to the Empire. Hitherto, the *Divide et Impera* policy of the British

proved to be immensely successful, but the events leading to the Lucknow Congress impressed them to cogitate over the policy.

The sugar coated announcement made by Morley and Minto, to grant separate electorates to the Muslims, brought the Muslims within the political process as it was intended by the Government, and by creating a Mohammedan bloc, the British triumphed in acquiring the blanket support of the Muslims, which was imperative for the prolongation of British hegemony in India; but soon, both, the Moderates and Muslims, deviated from the course of loyalism and presented a united front to the Government and buried the notion that the two communities could never unite. The Lucknow Congress intoxicated the Indians with joy, imbued them with a fervent nationalism and this intoxication was perceived by officialdom too, which impressed upon them the need to change the imperial policy.

Undoubtedly, the metamorphosis in the British perspective was due to national solidarity and this concurrence between all the divergent political ideologies became one of the most vexed questions for the Home Government, as they now discerned that their long time tested formula of divide and rule, was on the verge of being defeated. It was also foreordained by the British officialdom, that the war situation would bring India on the road of political revolution and their prophecies somewhere prove to be a truth. The India which the British now perceived was reactionary, revolutionary and united by all means, whether political or communal.

The war was at its extremity and the conditions were tremendously grim and at such a stage of extreme political convulsions, Britain was in no mood to take any further political turmoil, and most importantly, the Russophobia factor was upper-most in the British minds. With the entry of America in

the war, the condition for the announcement of the goal of the British policy became paramount, as President Woodrow Wilson's reiteration 'to make the world safe for democracy' and 'to give the right of self-determination to the people in choosing their own government' had a direct impact on the British perspective. The American entry into the war on the ground that it was, thereby, defending the liberties of the small nations<sup>14</sup>, stirred the pulse of the political conscious section of India.

Observing the political flux, both in the national and international scenario, it was *sine qua non* for the Home Government to allow a responsible dignitary to make a visit to the subject country, and set the sights on curbing the harmony and concord established. Sending Montagu's mission to India was one of the most tactical moves on part of the Government, as his arrival was not genuine, but was a sham and possessed an ulterior purpose. The formulation of the proposal for constitutional reforms after ascertaining the views of the Indian people was just a smokescreen; *au-fond*, the real intention was to restrain the intractable political situation and derail the train moving expeditiously on the track of unity.

Montagu was *au-fait* of the fact that the Nationalists were resolute and uncompromising; on the contrary, the Moderates were sympathetic, generous and liberal and his strategy would work far better on the latter and would produce the intended results. Montagu in "*His Diary*" wrote, "My visit to India means that we are going to do something and something big. I cannot go there and produce a little thing or nothing; it must be epoch-making, or it is a failure; it must be the keystone of the future history of India<sup>15</sup>."

Besides the fact, that circumstances were not propitious for Montagu, then too, he displayed his astuteness and successfully

rallied the Moderates and enlisted their loyal support, by providing a way to make a separate organization, the National Liberal Federation of the Moderates, and succeeded in creating a defensive wall for his proposals. He successfully enlisted the backing of the Moderate leaders with the premeditated purpose of “creating a nucleus of the people who will support” his scheme and ensure its successful working. Within a month of Montagu’s arrival, on December 12, 1917, he wrote in his *Diary*- “A new organization of Indians to be collected, assisted in every possible way by the Government, for the propaganda on behalf of our proposals and to send a delegation to England to assist us.” On January 28, 1918, Montagu has written- “We talked about the formation of a Moderate Party. They were very enthusiastic and talked about editing newspapers and so forth. I think they mean business<sup>16</sup>.”

The political segment comprising of the Moderate opinion was of immense importance to the Government, and Montagu was *au fait* of the fact that possessing the support of the elementary political ideology was not only imperative for the Government, but would also render weightage to his scheme of reforms. To give a firm footing to the Empire at the crucial time of war, it was *sine qua non* for Montagu to secure the lost loyal support and backing from the Moderates, which the British enjoyed in the previous years, and he was also eager to do so.

He was conscious that the Nationalists were imbued with the cry of self-government and their single-mindedness would, under no circumstances, allow them to render their approbation to the Reform Proposals. Thus, to rally with the Moderates was the watchword of Morley and Minto and so was of Montagu and Chelmsford.

The announcement of Montagu's visit set the whole country astir and the Indians were agog and it was hard to discern the true intentions of Montagu, as speculations, expectations and anticipation on the Reform proposals soared high. One never even thought that its repercussions would be utterly detrimental. Montagu's visit was merely the tip of the iceberg. Perfect in his strategy, Montagu with a single arrow triumphed in targeting the movement and through his magnanimous gesture of granting responsible government he precisely applied the policy of *Divide et Impera* and succeeded in creating much dissension between the established political ideologies, by bringing them to loggerheads.

A percipient onlooker, Montagu, somewhere possessed the opinion that although, the Indians represented a united front to the Government, but the roots of political thought was not akin, as in retrospect the schism of 1907 represented the most ignominious episode in the pages of Indian history, and all he had to do was to break this unity with his diplomacy. It was as plain as a pikestaff, the less unity, the greater chance of success, as according to the British policy. The disunity factor was in a direct pro rata to the success. Thus, the ingenious solution, which he devised to obviate the up-coming problems, was to create a deep cleavage between them.

Perfect in his assessment, Montagu was conscious of the fact that the Moderates resolutely believed in the policy of four P's and were benign and cooperative in their nature. They were men of much experience, and therefore, whatever was conceded to India by the British, as a virtue of necessity, they would emphatically render their assent, and once they lent their countenance to the Reform proposals, they would automatically be separated from the Nationalists, thereby giving a seal of validation to his Machiavellian scheme.

His visit was projected in such a manner, as if, the British were showering their benevolence on Indians, but the real story behind the curtain was something else, something really big. Whatsoever reason may be outlined by the Home Government or by Montagu himself, the real motive, to all intents and purpose, was to create a wedge between the leaders of the national movement and to push back the movement; and this is an axiomatic fact, otherwise, how was it possible, that an important functioning such as the Secretary of State, besides tackling the grim conditions in Britain thought it fit to visit a subject country and stay there for six months, thinking about nothing, but the formulation of Reform proposals.

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## **HISTORIOGRAPHICAL CRITIQUE OF SELECTED WORKS ON GENDER STUDIES OF SOUTH INDIA**

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This paper analyses works like “Class and Gender in India” by Patricia Caplan, “Wives, Widows and Concubines” by Mythili Sreenivas, “Nityasumangali” by Saskia C. Kersenboom, “Nationalism and Women’s Movement” by P.N. Premalatha and “Socio-Economic Conditions of Tribal Women in South India” by D. Janaki. In other words, it considers their approaches and evaluates their contributions not only to the study of its micro-areas but also to the over-all study of gender.

Patricia Caplan in her book “Class and Gender” mentions that there are three dimensions of women’s relationship to class among the urban elite<sup>1</sup>. First, their relationship through their domestic role. Given the almost universal norm of marriage, the majority of women play roles as wives, mothers and daughters-in-law, while also continuing to be daughters of their parents. They are extremely important for the reproduction of the class system, not only in terms of their biological work of reproduction, but also through their domestic labour and their socialization of the next generation.

Second, a minority of women have a role as a paid worker<sup>2</sup>. Women generally occupy specific niches in the labour market,

even those in the minority of highly educated professional women who work outside the home.

Third, many women at this class level, whether employed or not, belong to voluntary women's associations, which have a very important role in class formation<sup>3</sup>. Even more significantly, women's organizations play a major role in the provision of social welfare facilities in India.

The second part of the book examines the sphere beginning with a history of the women's organizations, followed by a discussion of the relations between the women's voluntary organizations and the State, particularly as mediated by the social welfare boards. Case studies of five such organizations in Madras city are presented with their membership, activities, funding and types of clients are examined, and their political significance in relation to class, caste and gender is considered. The ideological functions of the women's welfare organizations are discussed primarily through the examination of their rituals and language. It is shown that the women's organizations propagate certain norms regarding female behaviour and express class relations through their activities as dispensers of charity to the lower classes.

In the final chapter, Patricia Caplan examines the politics of sex and class in the context of the women's organizations. She writes that the relationship of women to the class structure is a very complex one, which has to be viewed on the levels of reproduction(domestic labour), production (women as workers), and, in this case, voluntary public work in social welfare.

It is thus the argument of Caplan is that women play as active a part in class formation, not only as housewives and workers, but also as members of voluntary organizations and

dispensers of social welfare. However, although in the process they gain a certain amount of political power, neither their membership in organizations, nor the kind of activities they engage in, much less the ideology they propagate, does very much to change the situation of the women themselves. Nonetheless, it is impossible to view them merely as passive recipients of a system not of their making. Men are strong and intelligent, seeking to make sense of a rapidly changing social situation and, above all, struggling to maintain the positions of their families within it.

Many women see clearly that there are problems in their own lives, in those of their families, their neighbours and their friends. They see that there are enormous problems in Indian society, particularly the poverty of the great majority, and they seek to do something about the problems. By upholding “tradition” and religion, they feel that they are creating a haven of security in a too rapidly changing world, and yet by joining organizations and “learning new things” that they are adapting to these changes as indeed they are.

This book has focused on the relationship between gender and class. It has not been meant simply as another attempt to “integrate” women into the class structure of a particular society, by stretching and pulling concepts such as modes of production. Rather, it has argued that in order to understand properly what is meant by class, we must pay as much attention to reproduction, including the sphere of the family, as we do the production.

In part two of this book, Caplan has tried through an examination of reproduction and production to show how there is a clear interrelationship between these areas. Most women in India are not “producers”, largely because they have been

assigned specific reproductive tasks which form an integral part of the total social system.

Part three of the book has considered voluntary organizations, and looked particularly at their social welfare activities. This is a field that highlights the relations between the dominant and subordinate classes, as well as between the former and the state.

It seems likely that much of the analysis of India in this book might well be true of other capitalist societies, in different times and places, depending upon their specific stage of historical development.

Mythili Srinivas's book *"Wives, Widows and Concubines"* is organized chronologically and thematically around questions attending the reconstruction of families and family ideologies from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century<sup>4</sup>. Each chapter highlights a particular moment of tension in the redefinition of Tamil family ideals and situates these tensions in relation to shifts in gender ideologies, political economies, and discourses of community, nation and state. In each case she asserts that "the family" acted not simply upon by other historical forces. Rather, shifts in family ideologies and experiences both motivated, and were motivated by, other historical changes in the Tamil region.

Families in South Asia-Hindus as well as others- suffered political dislocations under colonial rule<sup>5</sup>. She says that during the bureaucratic colonial regime, several kinships, lineage and household broke from state authority and it disrupted the politics of families<sup>6</sup>. In a process akin to the establishment of modern states elsewhere, the colonial administration thus removed kinship from the process of establishing kingship. Once denied access to ruling authority, the de-politicized households of

erstwhile ruling classes became available for colonial intervention, typically via laws and legal regulations, into “native” society. Women, in particular, bore the brunt of these changes as legal assumptions about caste and rituals distinguished the rights and privileges of “wifehood” from the lower status of “concubine”. Yet, despite their importance to the state’s regulation of family life, women were typically situated as objects within, rather than subjects of, legal discourses. Reading women’s testimonial narratives against the grain, she begins a discussion of how women may have reconstructed wifehood under changing familial circumstances.

Men of the landed classes invoked forms of joint property ownership in the name of Hindu tradition and patriarchal privilege. Once again, women bore the brunt of these contradictions and were ultimately figured as the representatives of “tradition” within the “modern” conjugal family property unit. As such, even as wives became discursively central to the assertion of male individual ownership rights, women themselves (as either wives, widows or daughters) were excluded from individual rights to property and rendered dependent upon the “joint family”.

The aim of *“Nityasumangali”* by Saskia C. Kersenboom is to investigate the phenomenon of the “devadasi” tradition within Hindu culture, as well as these signs in themselves as represented by the traditional tasks of the “devadasis” in the temple ritual in Tamil Nadu<sup>7</sup>.

In order to be able to do so, we will have to turn away from the present state of Hindu temple worship to those periods in the cultural history of South India when this mythico-poetical universe was still intact. This cultural historical context has been dealt with in the beginning of the book and

it shows that the “*devadasi*” phenomenon is older than her appearance in the temple , and is based on a concept that can be found at all levels of society and culture throughout historical times<sup>8</sup>.

The specific “dramatic content” of the phenomenon of the “*devadasi*” as a temple dancer and singer is dealt with in the early part of the book where her role within the structure of temple ritual is described in detail.

The ordinary female is transformed into a “*nityasumangali*” by a number of rites and is recognizable by a number of cultural markers (*lakshanas*)<sup>9</sup>. These rites of passage are dealt with in the another part of the book which is based mainly on the accounts of “*devadasis*” who were attached to different temples in Tamil Nadu until 1947 when the tradition of dedicating females to temples was legally forbidden (*Devadasi Act*).

In conclusion, the suggestion is that the “*nityasumangali*” is a multivalent concept that has existed throughout the recorded history of South India and its entire culture. The concept is larger than the “*devadasi*” proper who is a type of “*nityasumangali*”, functioning within the structure of Agamic temple ritual and in the rituals for the king. Even though the tradition of the “*devadasinityasumangali*” has lost its socio-economic base, the concept (and thus the need of *nityasumangali*) is still very much alive.

It is precisely the multivalence of this concept in the Hindu cultural consciousness which has contributed to the enigmatic character of the “*devadasi*” tradition. On the one hand, the “*devadasi-nityasumangali*” is transformed into a synonym of the auspicious goddess but, on the other hand, she shares with other

*“nityasumangalis”* the frequent, direct exposure to the dangerous, uncanny and oppressive divine, which makes her unpopular.

The anti-nautch, “anti-devadasi” movement succeeded in destroying the most prominent and refined class of *“nityasumangalis”*. It did not destroy, however, the basic cultural motivation. What has remained, nowadays, are on one side of the scale the more crude variants of the concept, and, on the other extreme, highly skilled professional group without proper platform, and an art that is scattered and mutilated by the demands of modern publicity.

Though women had contributed significantly to the social and economic progress of our nation, there has been a lack of conscious effort to dig out and organize the scattered and fragmented records which speak volumes about their contributions. There is a great need to integrate women in history and include their contributions in the building of our nation. This work *“Nationalism and Women’s Movement in South India 1917-1947”* by P.N. Premalatha is an attempt in that direction.

The most striking feature of this book is that it has not only explored the contributions of women for their own liberation but also to our country’s liberation. The status of women from the ancient period to the early part of the twentieth century, the factors responsible for the awakening of women, their role in the freedom movement, the establishment of Women’s India Associations, the first All India Women’s Organization in Madras in 1917<sup>10</sup> and its contributions in connection with ameliorating the conditions of women are some of the important features covered in this book. This work provides a comprehensive picture regarding the status of women and women’s movement in the southern part of our country till India attained its independence<sup>12</sup> in 1947<sup>11</sup>.



Departing from such a framework, the venture by D. Janaki on the topic of the socio-economic conditions of tribal women in South India is, a modest but sincere endeavour to place gender in cultural matrix. Signifying the issue of the distribution between men and women in the context of status conditions<sup>13</sup>, Janaki has relied upon the notion of the balancing forces of men and women for a stable social relationship.

Restricting herself to a study of this issue in a tribal society, Janaki has gone along with the notion of cultural distinctions without getting trapped into structural theorization. She has also relied more on historical and archival records and less on fieldwork. Thus, the issue of credibility has been balanced between the data obtained from records and fieldwork. Janaki has endeavoured conventional classificatory principles in presenting the material on the subject. They are as follows: description and definition of the unit of observation and representing ceremonies relating to childbirth, education and educational system, unfolding women's position in marriage linking economic development with the issue of backwardness in women<sup>14</sup> and finally portraying religion and the tribe<sup>15</sup>. Janaki has embarked on the programme of the Government geared to the tribal societies in order to explicate the issue of the continuum of transition from static level.

## Conclusion

Caplan's use of Marxist methodology, Mythili and Janaki's use of sociological tools, Saskia's stress on Fine Arts and Premalatha's use of historical methods bring out the fact that different disciplines are required and used to study gender issues scientifically.

These five selected books highlight the fact that women's conditions still leave a lot to be desired. Moreover, they not only bring out their contributions to society and knowledge in general but also the spirited effort that they undertook through women's organizations and other methods to protect their rights.

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## **TOWARDS WOMEN'S EMANCIPATION: THE FOUNDATION OF INDIA'S FIRST WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY**

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On 23 February 1916 in Poona while presiding over a lecture by Professor D.K.Karve regarding India's first Women's University, Mahatma Gandhi said:

“Everyone here knows the gentleman who will soon address us. Hence, I need not speak at length by way of introducing him. He has taken up the mission of founding a university for Indian women. The task will entitle the revival of different regional languages. He proposes to start in June an examining and teaching university. It is said that in our society as it is today men suffer from *ardhangavayu* [paralysis of one side of the body] and this charge, by and large is well founded because we are not able to make our ‘better halves’ keep pace with us. Circumstances are chiefly responsible for this state of affairs. Prof. Karve has undertaken this work in order to improve the condition of women and has set about it briskly. I must indeed admit that his enthusiasm is matchless. If I may introduce him in the words of Mr. Gokhale, he is truth incarnate. We are therefore confident that, even if his work is not crowned with all the success one may hope for, no harm is likely to result from it anytime. He has devoted twenty years of service to the Fergusson College and has been managing a widow's home for as many years. Now, at the age of 59, he has started on a new

venture, a mark of the highest self-sacrifice and zeal. In Gujarat, we do not have the spirit of self-sacrifice that we find in Poona. This should make us feel ashamed of ourselves. Gujarat has therefore, much to learn from the life of Prof.Karve<sup>1</sup>".

This was a great tribute paid by the Mahatma to the Maharshi. The social reformers of India beginning with Raja Rammohun Roy were deeply concerned with the miserable status of women. They had realised that for the creation of a just and equitable social order, it is paramount that the women must enjoy equal rights and opportunities with men. This objective could only be achieved by giving them education which was the key to their advancement in life. It was in this context, following the lead given by such enlightened reformers as Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Justice M.G. Ranade and Dr. R. G. Bhandarkar in Maharashtra, that the founding of the first Women's University by Maharshi Dhondo Keshav Karve in 1916 assumes paramount historical significance<sup>2</sup>. "An Enlightened Woman is a source of Infinite Strength" is the motto adopted by Bharat Ratna Dhondo Keshav Karve for the University. The S.N.D. T. Women's University with its all-India jurisdiction has grown into a major centre of academic excellence and it symbolises the emancipation of women in our country. To trace the genesis of the foundation of India's first women's University, it is necessary to recapitulate the social conditions of India at that time.

For centuries, women in India had suffered from social discrimination and subjection. Sir Charles Wood's Despatch on Education, 1854, stressed the need for encouraging and actively supporting women's education in India. It recommended that all schools for girls be brought under a comprehensive educational system and assisted through grants-in-aid<sup>3</sup>. In the year 1857 the Universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras were



founded. But their benefits had been one-sided; the advantages had been accrued to the boys, and not to the girls. Except in a few mission schools, women had no access to education. Such was the apathy towards female education that Margaret Wilson, wife of Dr. John Wilson, who founded one of the first girls' schools in Bombay in 1829, observed that 'the teachers had to go every day to all the girls houses and pay them to get them to schools and even then very few attended'<sup>4</sup>. Such were the difficulties that John Wilson noted: 'I am more and more convinced that in seeking for the moral renovation of India, we must make greater efforts than we have yet done to operate upon the female mind...In India it is the stronghold of superstition. Its enlightenment ought to be an object of first concern with us<sup>5</sup>.' After Margaret's death, Wilson called two ladies from Scotland to manage the girls school and a 'Ladies Society for Female Education in India', was formed which supported girls school in Bombay, Poona and other districts of Maharashtra<sup>6</sup>. The Bethune School of Calcutta in 1857 had only six girls at the college level. In 1857, the University of Bombay had refused admission to a Parsi girl to appear for the entrance examination. It was not until 1883 that the Bombay University lifted this ban<sup>7</sup>.

Between 1854 and 1882, women's education made little progress. The Education Commission of 1882, better known as the Hunter Commission, had commented on the extremely backward condition of women's education in India, while noting the increasing public interest in this area. Some of its recommendations included expansion of secondary education, training of women teachers and the appointment of women inspectors. It also recommended that liberal grants-in-aid be made available for women's education. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the progress of female education was still slow<sup>8</sup>.

The genesis of the first Women's University in India goes back to 1896, when the Hindu widows' Home was founded by Maharshi Karve. Born in 1858 and graduating from the Elphinstone College, Karve had taught in three schools in Bombay. In 1891, he commenced his work as a Professor at the Fergusson College in Poona. In 1893, he lost his wife and was determined to inaugurate his work in the cause of the remarriage of Hindu widows by himself marrying a widow Godhubai (later known as Anandhibai Joshi). She was the sister of his college friend and the first widow to get the benefit of Sharda Sadan, an institution established by the prominent social reformer, Pandita Ramabai. For marrying a widow, Karve was ex-communicated by the people in his village and his mother too was persecuted. These actions shocked him and Karve decided to get child widows married or at least provide them with a shelter and education. In 1896, he established the Ananda Mahilashram or the Hindu Widows Home in a small house in Poona which was later shifted to Hingne in a thatched hut on the outskirts of the city. Its chief object was to 'educate widows so as to enable them to earn an honourable living.' So successful was the education thus imparted, that classes were added for unmarried girls, and subsequently for married women. Parvatibai Athavale, Anandhibai's widowed sister, played a significant role in the growth and expansion of Karve's school. After studying in Karve's school, she became a teacher and then a superintendent<sup>9</sup>. In 1901, Karve saw the wisdom of separating the two causes of women's education and widow remarriage and commenced to devote himself to the former, transferring the management of purely social reform cause to a friend. The two movements have since then continued to be separate. In 1907, he founded the Mahila Vidyalaya which was intended to be an institution for the encouragement of marriage at a later age than has been customary by Indian tradition. Soon, he also inaugurated the movement to establish a self-denying body of women, mainly

widows, to devote their lives to the administration of the Mahila Vidyalaya, which was intended to promote education and general social reform. It bore a striking resemblance to G.K. Gokhale's Servants of India Society founded in 1905.

The service rendered by Professor Karve is all the more remarkable when we consider the importance of the work he had undertaken as also the unassuming and steady personal devotion to the cause to which he had sacrificed so much of his unbending spirit and resources. The Widow's Home is a unique institution. The Mahila Vidyalaya is also unique for its two special features such as the Brahmacharya and the programme of studies. Its objects were to create a band of women workers for social good, to admit men workers and commence the work until a complete staff of women workers is secured. Another objective was to conduct boarding schools and day schools for women, and to give help to institutions engaged in works of the above mentioned character by means of men and money. Interestingly, appreciating the efforts of Karve for the women's cause in Poona, and believing that depriving women from education amounted to a waste of intellectual resources and wealth, Mahatma Gandhi, then in South Africa, wrote in his journal the *Indian Opinion*:

The benevolent Karve has been running an institution in Poona for the education of widows. Women are given training in midwifery and nursing. Mrs. Kashibai Devdar, Mrs. Namjoshi, Mrs Patwardhan Athavale and Mrs. Deshpande have been giving honorary service to the institution through their self help and without Government aid<sup>10</sup>.

The Hindu Widow's Home sent, through the New English School, Poona, a few private students for the Matriculation examination of the Bombay University<sup>11</sup>. It remained a private

and an independent institution for long and had not fixed its goal till an incident completely changed the prospects of the Widow's Home. A friend of Karve sent him a pamphlet describing the work of the first Japan's Women's University established in 1900. On reading this he wrote: '[I] read it from cover to cover. I was simply electrified. New life coursed through my veins as it were<sup>12</sup>'. Karve felt that Japan's model would suit India better than the western co-educational Universities. He, therefore, gave free expression to his views during his presidential address at the National Social Conference in Poona on 30 December 1915:

We must recognise that both national and social economy require that women should occupy a status of their own distinct from man. That they are as integral part of the social organisation as men is beyond question, but that the office they have to fill is different, though equal perhaps greater in importance, is equally true<sup>13</sup>.

On 13, February 1916 a meeting of the Managing Council of the Ananda Mahilashram was held and it was suggested that the proposed University be named as the Indian Women's University. Karve met many eminent people for advice. Mrs. Annie Besant, a noted reformer and a friend of India, advised him to establish the University on an All-India basis and Rabindranath Tagore, the famous poet and prose writer, cautioned Karve not to waste time in securing government recognition. In fact, while blessing the infant institution, Tagore said that 'it is far better that you should win Government recognition at the end than pray for it in the beginning<sup>14</sup>.' Mahatma Gandhi totally approved of the idea of imparting education through the mother tongue though he did not approve of making English as a compulsory language<sup>15</sup>.

It was under these circumstances that the Indian Women's University was formally inaugurated on 3 June 1916. It heralded a new era in the history of women's education in India. The first Chancellor of the University was Dr. R.G. Bhandarkar and the first Vice Chancellor was Dr. R.P. Paranjpe. The University made provision for the higher education of women through Indian vernaculars as the media of instruction; to regulate pre-university education; to begin, aid, maintain and affiliate institutions for such education and to formulate courses of study, especially suited to the needs and requirements of women; to make provision for the training of teachers for primary and secondary schools; to institute and confer such degrees and grant such diplomas, titles, certificates and marks of honour in respect of degrees and examinations as may be prescribed by the regulations; in short, to spread secondary and higher education among Indian girls far and wide.

The chief characteristics of the University were:

1. Courses of study specially suited to the requirement of girls, for example, inclusion of domestic science, human psychology, child psychology, hygiene, fine arts etc. in the curricula.
2. Use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction and not a foreign language like English as in the case of schools and colleges for boys.
3. Permission to candidates to appear for the examinations of this University without attending a school or college thus making it possible for girls in villages and outstations to take advantage of the University education.
4. Inclusion of English language as a compulsory subject in the course of studies.

The idea of establishing a University exclusively for women generated varieties of reaction in those days. Some said it was a 'Utopia' while others described it as a 'dream of an idealist'. Even R.P. Paranjpe, a close friend and earliest biographer of Maharshi Karve, advised the latter to 'hasten slowly'. In a series of articles in the *Mahratta* in early 1916, B.G. Tilak opposed the idea of introducing any curriculum other than Home Management skills, cooking, hygiene, sewing and the lessons of Puranas<sup>16</sup>. Despite such vehement protest, Karve went ahead with the foundation of the Indian Women's University. In the first few years the University depended for its existence on the donations given by some public-spirited men such as Dr. V.R. Lande, Seth Mulraj Khatau and Mr. N.V. Gadgil<sup>17</sup>. Sir William Wedderburn, a retired civil servant and a sympathetic friend of India, also made generous donation. But these were hardly enough. Only four girls appeared at the first matriculation examination conducted in June of the same year and were successful.

A substantial financial aid was made possible by the foresight, vision and generous donation of Sir Vithaldas Thackersey (1873-1922). Born in 1873, he belonged to the Bhatia community known for its generosity. He was well known for his business acumen and his rapid rise in public life and the high standard of industry, self-discipline and public duty which had he set before himself. He was a member of the Bombay Municipal Corporation, Justice of the Peace, and a member of the Provincial Legislature. He was a firm believer in providing education for women. He realized that the progress of the country was intimately bound up with the emancipation and uplift of women<sup>18</sup>. His interest in women's education could be seen from a letter which he wrote to his wife Premlila Thackersey (1894-1975), before his marriage to her in 1913 in which he advised her to follow the ideals of Ramabhai Ranade ( the wife of Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade),

and the founder of Seva Sadan. Premila Thackersey prepared herself well to play this role in the future<sup>19</sup>. In 1919, Vithaldas along with his wife and Smt. Sitabai Annegiri, a member of the Hingne Home, who was sent by Karve on the former's request to accompany them on a world tour which they had planned. Their visit to Japan was marked by a study of the Japan's Women's University which impressed them deeply. This Japanese institution provided various courses of instructions especially suited to women. Sir Vithaldas considered this worthy of imitation in India.

Soon after their return to India in 1919, Vithaldas decided to pay a visit to Karve in Poona. During their meeting, Vithaldas gave a generous donation of fifteen lakhs and expressed the condition that the University should be named after his mother Smt. Nathibai Damodar Thackersey University. Karve recalled in his autobiography: 'I saw him [Sir Vithaldas] with Dr. R.P. Paranjpe and Prof. K.R. Karandikar. I could not believe myself when he offered a donation and mentioned the sum of Rs. 15 lakhs<sup>20</sup>.' This University is perhaps the only one in India which started with little or no capital and it owed its existence to the contribution of men with philanthropic mind. It was then relocated to Bombay<sup>21</sup>.

In 1932, sixteen years after its foundation, the University made satisfactory progress in all directions. In 1916, it had only one school with 125 students on its rolls; in 1931, there were fifteen schools recognized by the University, having on their rolls 1,950 students. In 1916-17, the Women's University had only four collegiate students. Its sixteenth annual report shows that the number of students receiving higher education in colleges ran on lines laid down by it, at Poona, Bombay, Baroda, Ahmedabad, was 107. In 1916, only four students passed its Entrance Examination. In 1937, R.P. Paranjpe delivered the

Convocation address in which he said that just as the name of Madan Mohan Malaviya was associated with the Benaras Hindu University and that of Aligarh Muslim University with that of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, the name of the Srimati Nathibhai Damodar Thackersey will forever be associated with Maharshi Karve. According to him, the special feature of this University was: The medium of instruction and examination since its very inception was the mother-tongue of the student, though English was and is a compulsory subject at all its examinations. The S.N.D.T. Women's University can thus take credit that it was the first to make a thorough-going experiment of this nature and stuck to it through difficult times<sup>22</sup>.

The University right from its inception and to this day has four media of instructions : English, Marathi, Gujarati and Hindi.

The founder of the University was of the view that as there was a paucity of colleges and the social conditions that discouraged women from pursuing higher education, women be allowed to appear at the University's examination as private candidates. The University took care that the standards did not fall. This was another important contribution of the University that helped many women to continue with their educational progress. The courses that were offered were of practical nature that would help women, such as home science, fine arts and the optional subjects included mathematics, physics, chemistry, sanskrit, hindi, drawing, music and even foreign languages such as French and German. The first Chancellor Dr. Bhandarkar decided that the three-year degree course led to the degree of G.A. or Grahitagama, that is graduate in arts and the post-graduate course offered in this University led to the degree of P.A. or Pradeyagama, that is Proficient in Arts. It was done to mark them out from the traditional degrees such as B.A. or M.A. which



were originally conferred on those who passed their examinations. According to Dr. Bhandarkar, the actual meaning of G.A. means one who has acquired knowledge; and that of P.A. means one who imparts knowledge. The S.N.D.T. Women's University was the first to introduce these nomenclatures. However, when in 1951, the University gained statutory recognition, the nomenclatures of the degrees were changed to B.A. and M.A. to fall in line with other Universities<sup>23</sup>. The duration of the degree courses were also made to four years as compared to the earlier rule of three years. Another very special feature of this University is that it has an All-India jurisdiction to provide a broad-based education for women.

The motto of the University as defined by the founder is as follows: 'An enlightened woman is a source of infinite strength'. From the years 1916 until 1930, the University had sent out sixty-four graduates out of whom more than forty were engaged in doing educational work in girl's Schools all over the country. Over eighty girls were being educated in these colleges affiliated to University and about 1,800 girls were learning in the sixteen schools following the courses laid down by it. On the occasion of his 71<sup>st</sup> birthday in the year 1928, the Poona City Municipality presented an address to Prof. Karve whose devotion and sacrifice in the cause of women's education had been most exemplary. The characteristic zeal and enthusiasm with which he had founded, "Home for Hindu Widows" in a small hut, had gradually developed into the Shreemati Nathibai Damodher Thackersey University.

In 1939, when Mahatma Gandhi was camping in Rajkot, Premilila Thackersey met him personally and invited him to address the Convocation day function at the University. However, Gandhi declined the invitation but promised to personally come and bless the students. The then Chief Minister of Maharashtra B.G. Kher

was invited for the Convocation address. A galaxy of national leaders such as Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Sarojini Naidu, Sir M. Visveswaraiyya, Subhash Chandra Bose made the Convocation memorable by their presence. In 1941, the University completed twenty-five years of devoted spirited service. Dr. Radhakrishnan, the then President, graced the function to mark the silver jubilee. In 1951, the University received statutory recognition, which came with the rare privilege of all-India jurisdiction. Lady Premila Thackersey became the first Vice Chancellor of the Statutory University.

By 1949, in addition to the Arts courses, the University expanded to include Home Science, Library Science, Education, Nursing and Fine Arts. The University celebrated Maharshi Karve's birth centenary in 1958. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was the chief guest for the function at the Brabourne Stadium in Mumbai. Even, when the state of Bombay was divided into two separate states, as Maharashtra and Gujarat, the affiliated college in Gujarat continued to be affiliated to the S.N.D.T. Women's University.

In 1966, the University completed fifty glorious years. The Golden Jubilee celebration was graced by the then Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi. During the fifty years, the University had grown from a seedling to a huge banyan tree, branching off into different directions. In the early years of the University, there was only the Arts faculty with large number of Arts colleges in Bombay, Poona and Gujarat. Nursing and home science Faculties soon began besides a library science college to train librarians. The training was made available up to post-graduate and research level. M.C. Chagla, who delivered the golden jubilee convocation address said<sup>24</sup>:

I am of the opinion that women's emancipation will never be complete unless women are economically independent. Today, most of us believe that women must be dependent for livelihood upon her father, upon her husband, upon her brother and sometimes even upon her son. Very few of us feel that a woman should be taught to stand on her own feet. Till you have women economically independent, you will never get real advance in women's position.

As the strength of the faculties and number of students increased, it became necessary to create a campus. This could be done with the generous donations of a new spacious land at Juhu, the cost of which was donated by the University Grants Commission, the Government of India and the Government of Maharashtra.

The above review of the development and progress of the University bears out its noble motto that "An Enlightened Woman is a Source of Infinite Strength." The same ideal is reflected in Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's view that 'one of the truest measures of a nation's advancement is the state of its women, for out of the women forms the new generation and it is from their lips that it begins to learn'<sup>25</sup>. In 1958, on the one hundredth birthday of Maharshi Karve, the Government of India conferred on him the highest civilian award—Bharat Ratna. Today the University has more than 50,000 (fifty thousand) students studying in the 39 post graduate departments of the University, 13 institutions, as well as 174 affiliated colleges spread across seven states in India. The University has more than 250 programmes ranging from arts, social sciences, home science, management, technology, communication and media studies. The University has three campuses—two in Mumbai and one in Pune. The fourth campus is coming up in Shreevardhan in the Raigad district of Maharashtra.

After a strenuous life of a hundred and four years, Maharshi Karve died on 9 November 1962. Maharshi Karve deserves to be venerated for his devotion, commitment and stupendous achievements<sup>26</sup>. In 1976 Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma released a special commemoration stamp to mark the diamond jubilee. Maharshi Karve had to face many problems and single-handedly organise and supervise each and every aspect of the institutions that he established apart from touring all over India and the world seeking donation. His was the first privately managed higher educational University in western India. He devoted his entire life to the cause of Indian women and the only consolation he sought for all his practical labours is the absolute emancipation of Indian women from the thralldom of age-old superstitions. Frederick Gould, in his preface to Karve's autobiography, wrote: 'He [Karve] saw his goal, he walked, he persisted, he achieved<sup>27</sup>.'

## References

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5. George Smith, *The Life of John Wilson* (London, 1878), p. 265. See also *A Review of Education in Bombay State, 1855-1955*(Government of Bombay, 1958), (Maharashtra State Archives, Mumbai).
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7. The first two girls to graduate in 1883 belonged to the University of Calcutta and the first girl to take a degree from the University of Bombay in 1888 was Ms. Cornelia Sorabjee.
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9. For a life story of Mrs Parvatibai Atavale, see Parvatibai Atavale, *My Story, The Autobiography of a Hindu Widow* (New York, 1930).
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12. *Ibid*, p.130.
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14. *Ibid*,
15. An appeal for funds made by Karve was inserted by Gandhi in his *Young India*, 5<sup>th</sup> April, 1928.
16. See editorials on 'Indian Women's University', in *Mahratta*, 9<sup>th</sup> January 1916, 20 and 27 February 1916.
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21. For a biographical study of Karve see G.L.Chandavarkar, *Dhondo Keshav Karve* (Bombay, 1958).
22. *Shreemati Nathibhai Damodar Thackersay University, Golden Jubilee Commemoration Volume*, hereafter *Golden Jubilee Commemoration*, Bombay, 1968, p.176.
23. See 'Bombay Act No, LI of 1939', S.N.D.T. Women's University, *The Handbook Act, Statutes and Ordinances*, (Bombay, 1962).
24. *Ibid*. p.4.
25. Cited in *Golden Jubilee Commemoration* , S.N.D.T. Women's University.
26. Maharshi Karve was awarded the D.Litt by the Benaras Hindu University in 1942, followed by the University of Poona in 1951, S.N.D.T. Women's University in 1955 and

the L.L.D. by the University of Bombay in 1957. He received the Padma Bhushan in 1955 and the highest civilian award Bharat Ratna in 1958. The University's motto is *Sanskrita stree parashakti* (An enlightened women is a source of infinite Strength), with particular emphasis on the empowerment of women since its very foundation and this will continue to be a strong policy of the University.

27. D.K. Karve, Frederick J.Gould's, Preface, *Looking Back*, 1936.

## **TRANSGENDER - THE THIRD SEX: THEIR PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS**

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Of all the creations of God, human beings are the most unique entities as male and female. But among them, there is one more category of people who are abnormal people – neither male nor female and recently labeled as transgender. They are individuals of any age or sex whose appearance, personal characteristics or behavior differ from the normal men and women. Their existence has been recorded in the history of every culture, race and class since the beginning of human life. In its broadest sense, transgenders include any one whose identity or behavior falls outside of the normal gender norms. In India, there are a host of socio-cultural groups of transgender people and their number is miniscule, when compared with the total population of the country. This biological aspect of sex led to a lot of discrimination against the transgender people in social life in the Indian society. They face a variety of problems in the Indian social system. They perceive that they have been excluded from participating in social, cultural, economic, political and even in the decision making processes. A primary reason of this exclusion is perceived to be the non-recognition of their social status. Reports of harassments, violence, denial of services and unfair treatment against them in the spheres of education,



employment, housing and public accommodation are quite common. In general, the transgender people are deprived of the fundamental rights available to the other two sexes, i.e. male and female, and are not recognized as an equal sex. They are treated as non-entity and as unusual. They are generally objects of ridicule and even fear on account of superstition. All human beings are born free and are equal in dignity and ought to be entitled to enjoyment of human rights without discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Despite constitutional guarantees, they are discriminated and ill-treated. An attempt has been made in this study to throw light on some of the major problems haunting this community in the contemporary society despite being recognized as the 'third sex'. Amelioration of their condition is an urgent necessity in the present situation as an egalitarian society.

## Meaning

The term transgender has become popular in the mid 1990's from the grassroots community of gender different people. It is used to describe a wide range of people including transsexual, male and female cross-dressers, inter sexed individuals, whose appearance or characteristics are gender atypical. They come from sexually ambiguous background (born inter sexed), born as male or female but fail to develop fully as normal human beings or males who choose to live like woman. Other current synonyms for transgender include conforming "gender variant", "gender different" and "gender non-conforming", "neither male nor female"<sup>1</sup>.

## History

Sangam literature has the word '*Pedi*' to refer the people born with intersex condition. In India, there are a host of socio-

cultural groups of transgender people like *hijras*, *aravanis*, *thirunangai*, *kothis*, *kinnars*, *shiv-shaktis*, *jogtas*, *jogappars*, *aradhis*, *sakti*, etc. with regional connotations and they as a group have got a strong historical presence in India in the Hindu mythology and other religious texts<sup>2</sup>. They have got a historical presence in India leading an individual life or as an organized community under a *Guru*. The most significant relationship in the *hijra* community is that of the *guru* (master, teacher and *chela* (disciple). *Chelas* are forced by their *Gurus* to lead a life of servitude and bonded labourer<sup>3</sup>. Transgenders have performed a wide variety of functions in many different cultures: courtiers or equivalent domestics, treble singers, religious specialists, soldiers, royal guards, government officials and guardians of women or harem servants.

## In Mythology

Transgender have an important place in India in Hindu mythology and other religious texts. One of the forms of Lord Shiva is *Ardhanari*, in which his left half of the body is Parvati, especially worshipped in North India and has special significance as patron of *hijras*, who is identified with gender ambiguity<sup>4</sup>.

The ancient Indian work, the *Kama Sutra* refers to the people of a “third Sex” (*triteeyaprakrti*) who can be dressed either in men’s or in women’s clothes and perform fellatio on men. The Hindu epics, Puranas and mythology are replete with courageous feats of true hermaphrodites and referred as the ‘third sex’<sup>5</sup>.

## Ramayana

In some versions of the Ramayana when Rama leaves Ayodhya for his 14 years exile, a crowd of his subjects followed him into the forest because of their devotion to him. Soon Rama

notices this and told them not to mourn and that all the “men and women” of his kingdom should return to their places in Ayodhya. Rama then left and completed his exile for 14 years. When he returns to Ayodhya, he finds that the *hijras*, being neither men nor women have not moved from the place where he gave his advice<sup>6</sup>. Impressed with their devotion, Rama granted them the boon to confer blessings on people during auspicious inaugural occasions like childbirth and weddings. This boon is the origin of *badhai* in which *hijras* sing, dance and give blessings<sup>7</sup>.

## Mahabarata

In Mahabarata during *agnanavasam* Arjun attires as a eunuch-transvestite and performs rituals during weddings and childbirths that are now performed by *hijras*<sup>8</sup>. Further, in the *Kurushetra* war, the Pandava brothers had to sacrifice one warrior to gain tactical edge over their warrior cousins Kauravas. Their war council selected Aravanan, one of epic hero Arjuna's sons to sacrifice. The boy agreed to die for the holy cause of defeating the wicked Kaurava cousins, but he expressed to fulfill his last wish of getting married first. To solve the problem Lord Krishna assumed the form of Mohini, a beautiful woman and married Aravanan. Since then in South India, *hijras* claim Aravanan as their progenitor and call themselves as “*Aravanis*”<sup>9</sup>. The temple in Koovagam, Ulundurpet Taluk, Villupuram District of Tamil Nadu is devoted to the deity Koothandavar, who is identified with Aravanan. Every year in the month of April-May, *hijras* celebrate an eighteen day religious festival. During the festival the *Aravanis* re-enact a story of the wedding of Lord Krishna with *Aravanan* followed by *Aravanan's* subsequent sacrifice. They then mourn *Aravanan's* death through ritualistic dances and by breaking their bangles and removing the *Mangalsutras*. *Hijras* from all over the country

throng to travel to this place and celebrate the festival in a grand manner<sup>10</sup>.

## **Medieval India**

During the medieval period, they were frequently employed in imperial palaces by Hindu and Muslim rulers and as servants for female royalty, as guards of the royal harem, and as sexual mates for the nobles. Some of them attained high status positions in society. Ziauddin Barani, a medieval writer, describes in much detail about them. They were highly valued for their strength, ability to provide protection for ladies in the harem and were allowed to live amongst women. This enabled them to serve as messengers, watchmen, attendants and guards for palaces. Often they became a part of the King's court of advisors<sup>11</sup>.

## **Under the British**

During the era of the British Raj, the authorities attempted to eradicate the *hijras*, whom they saw as a breach of public decency.<sup>12</sup> But a law outlawing castration, a central feature of the *hijra* community was left intact, though rarely enforced. Under the British rule in India, they were placed under the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 and labeled as a "Criminal Tribe". They were subjected to compulsory registration, strict monitoring and stigmatized for a longtime.<sup>13</sup> After independence, however they were de-notified in 1952, though the centuries of old stigma continues.

## **Present Status**

The recent census says that there are 4.9 lakh transgender people living all over India and the majority of them are living in Uttar Pradesh numbering 1,37,000.<sup>14</sup> Of the total number of transgender people identified by the census, almost 55,000 are

in the 0-6 age group. This has come as a big surprise to the community as they did not expect so many parents to identify their children as belonging to the third gender. Nearly 66% of the people who are identified in India as third gender are living in rural areas. The census data also revealed the low literacy level in the community, just 46%, compared to 74% literacy in the general population. They drop out of school because of the harassment and discrimination they face in the society.

### Statistics

State	No. of Third Gender persons	Percentage
Uttar Pradesh	137000	28
Andhra Pradesh	44000	09
Maharastra	41000	08
Bihar	41000	08
West Bengal	30000	06
Madhya Pradesh	30000	06
Tamil Nadu	22000	04
Odisha	20000	04
Karnataka	20000	04
Rajasthan	17000	03

### Stigma

Ancient myths bestow them with special powers to bring luck and prosperity. But the gender variance makes them to face social stigma. Stigma expressed as discrimination, harassment and violence causing immense psychological distress to transgender individuals. Since 2006, the Government has employed *hijras* in

the state of Bihar as tax collectors singing loudly about the debt outside the defaulters premises, until they are shamed into paying up, especially in the city of Patna receiving 4 per cent commission<sup>15</sup>. Similarly, B. R. Shetty of Mumbai, a former banker, employed a group of transgender people to help him recover the dues of his credit society. Shetty's unique Recovery Services housed in Matunga in Mumbai, played a significant role in recovering bank loans and other such lending from reputed financial institutions in an unabashed manner. Shetty's transgender employees go about their task diligently, at times creating an ambience of light humor and fun. This has been more effective than other threatening tactics. Afraid of being ridiculed by these thoroughly uninhibited groups, people who shy away from payment decided to pay back their loans within a reasonable time span. Shetty devised this unique plan with the help of suspended former Mumbai Deputy Municipal Commissioner G.R. Khairnar. Shetty firmly believed that they are better equipped with the power of persuasion than traditional debt collectors. Thanks to Shetty's enterprise at least some of them in Mumbai now have a chance of decent livelihood. The firm today has redefined the lives of Meena, Venkatesh, Francis, Priya, Karishma, Shabnam, Dilnaz, Neetu, and many more. These 'agents' were also a part of Khairnar's rescue team for minor girls active in Kawmathipura, the city's prime red light area<sup>16</sup>.

## Problems

Transgender people in India face a variety of problems in their day to day life. They perceive that they have been excluded in participating in social and cultural life; economy and politics and in the decision making processes<sup>17</sup>. The first and foremost problem faced by them is that they are thrown out of their families when they are identified as neither male nor female. They are

forced to resort to begging for survival. Lack of social recognition prevents them in exercising their civil rights as they desire. Denial of housing and public accommodation is quite common in the Indian society<sup>18</sup>. Discrimination, teasing and insults make them school dropouts resulting in poor educational background and job opportunities<sup>19</sup>.

They are the victims of sexual exploitation and forced prostitution by normal gender due to poverty and desertion by their families<sup>20</sup>. Lack of social protection and unavailability of legislative enactment in the protection of rights of the transgender until recent times are other handicaps in the Indian society. Lack of medical facilities like HIV care and hygiene, depression, hormone pill abuse, tobacco and alcohol abuse, problems relating to marriage, property, electoral rights and adoption are some of the problems faced by them commonly. They are not properly documented in census. Further, they are exploited by their gurus to lead a life of servitude and bonded life.<sup>21</sup> There is lack of public amenities like separate or identified wash rooms for them in the common places. Continued harassment and discrimination in the public places make them to have low self esteem and in turn becoming the most disempowered and deprived groups in Indian society. Based on their class and gender they are verbally abused in any social friction. On the basis of gender, they are denied admission in educational institutions. Even victimization takes place in the multiple settings like family, educational institutions, workplace, health care settings and public places<sup>22</sup>. Thus, the transgender people are facing multiple problems in their day-to-day life because of gender variation.

## Prospects

The Government of India has recognized transgender people as a “third sex” in 1994 and granted them the basic civil rights

of every citizen<sup>23</sup>. In India, now they have the option to identify as transgender (T) on passports and on certain government documents. On April 15, 2014, Justice Radhakrishnan declared transgender to be the third gender in Indian law, in a case brought by the National Legal Services authority (NALSA) against the Union of India and others<sup>24</sup>. Even though insignificant in number, they are still human beings and therefore they have every right to enjoy their human rights. They must be treated as “third gender” for the purpose of safe guarding their rights under part III of our constitution and the laws made by the Parliament and the state legislature<sup>25</sup>.

Transgender persons’ right to decide their self identity as transgender was also upheld and the central and state governments were directed to grant legal recognition of the third gender. Further on April 15, 2014, the Supreme Court of India declared that the transgender people as a socially and economically backward class and entitled to reservations in education, jobs and also the directed Union and State governments to frame welfare schemes for them<sup>26</sup>.

Though they are miniscule in the population, Tamil Nadu became the first state to introduce a transgender welfare policy. According to the policy, the transgender can access free sex reassignment surgery (SRS) in the government hospitals (only for MTF), free housing programmes, various citizenship documents, admissions in Government colleges with full scholarships for higher studies, alternative sources of livelihood through the formation of self help groups (for savings) and initiating income generating programmes (IGP). It is also the first state to form a Transgender Welfare Board in April 2008 with representatives from the transgender community.<sup>27</sup> However, it is now defunct with the change of government in Tamil Nadu.



On April 24, 2015 the Rajya Sabha passed the rights of Transgender Bill, 2014 guaranteeing rights and entitlements, reservations in education and jobs (2% reservation in government jobs), legal aids, pensions, unemployment allowances and skill development for transgender people. The bill also provides for the establishment of welfare boards at the central and state level for transgender rights courts. The bill was introduced by DMK, MP, Tiruchi Siva, and remarked that for the first time the house had passed a private member's bill in 45 years. The bill was passed unanimously by the house. However, the bill contains several anomalies and a lack of clarity on how various ministries will co-ordinate to implement its provisions.<sup>28</sup> Social Justice and Empowerment Minister, Thavar Chand Gehlot stated on June 11, 2015, that the government would introduce a comprehensive bill for transgender rights in the monsoon session of Parliament. The bill will be based on the study on transgender issues conducted by a committee approved on January 27, 2014. According to Gehlot, the government intends to provide transgenders with all rights and entitlement currently enjoyed by Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes<sup>29</sup>.

## Political Mobility

When these people were denied equality status and discriminated in all walks of life they got mobilized to create awareness among them and to get their rights through political activities. The pioneering work was done by people like Priya Babu in arousing their consciousness. This led to the birth of the All India *Hijra Kalyan Sabha* and fought for over a decade to get voting rights, which they finally got in 1994. In 1996, Kali contested election in Patna under the then Judicial Reform Party and gave the Janata Dal and BJP a tough fight. Though he lost, they are still participating in Indian politics<sup>30</sup>. The election of Shobha Nehru in 1998 for the city Council seat in Hissar,

Haryana opened the gates of politics for the transgenders. In 1999, Kamala Jaan won the position of Mayor of Katni in Madhya Pradesh. Shabnam Mausi was elected to the legislative assembly. She was the first transgender to be elected as the member of the Madhya Pradesh State Legislative Assembly during the period from 1998 to 2003.

In 2003, Shabnam Mausi became India's first transgender Member of Parliament. In 2003, *Hijras* in Madhya Pradesh established their own political party called "Jeeti Jitayi Politics (JJP) which literally means politics that has already been won. The party has also released an eight page election manifesto which claims why they are different from mainstream political parties<sup>31</sup>. Before 2012 they cast their voting rights either as male or female and after that gender column included them and given place as 'T'.

Kalki Subramanian, a transgender rights activist, writer and actor tried to get a DMK ticket in the 2011 Assembly Elections from Villupuram constituency<sup>32</sup>. Again in March 2014 Kalki announced in Puducherry that she would contest in the forthcoming elections from Villupuram constituency in the Tamil Nadu. She is likely to be among the very few contestants fighting in the national elections from the transgender community that faces discrimination and ridicule. On January 4, 2015, independent candidate Madhu Bai Kinnar was elected the Mayor of Raigrah, Chhattisgarh, India's first transgender Mayor<sup>33</sup>.

## Individual Achievements

Despite discrimination and lack of recognition by the majority in the society, the transgender people have excelled in some areas on par with normal human beings. Transgender Swapna and

transgender activist Gopi Shankar from Srishti Madurai protested in the Madurai Collector's office on October 7, 2013, demanding reservation and to permit alternate genders to appear for examinations conducted by TNPSC, UPSC, SSC and bank exams. Swapna incidentally had successfully moved the Madras High Court in 2011 seeking permission to write the TNPSC Group II exams as a woman candidate. Swapna is the first transgender person to clear the TNPSC Group IV exams<sup>34</sup>.

Manabi Bandhopadhyay became India's first transgender Principal of the Krishnagar Women's College in Nadia District in West Bengal, affiliated to Kalyani University due to her academic credentials and administrative acumen<sup>35</sup>.

When Transgender Prithika Yashini, she attended the Sub-Inspector of Police selection test in Tamil Nadu, she was disqualified stating that her name did not match with the one mentioned in the original certificates. Later, based on a court directive, she took part in the written examination held on May 23, 2015. She was successful in the written test and she took part in field trials on August 5. She lagged behind other provisionally selected candidates by just one second in 100 m sprint. As a result, she was not selected for the interview. Again Yasini approached the court seeking direction to the authorities to permit her to take part in the interview.<sup>36</sup> The bench said she may be permitted to take part in the viva voce subject to the outcome of the writ petition. The court posted the matter for further hearing on November 3, 2015, and the Honorable Chennai High Court directed Tamil Nadu Uniformed Services Recruitment Board to consider her for the post of Sub-Inspector of Police and now she is the first transgender police officer<sup>37</sup>. Further, the order paved the way for including the transgender category in the application for posts in

government services. Now, the transgender Yasini aspires to crack civil the services too as it is her life ambition<sup>38</sup>.

Of late, the transgender people have turned to modelling for fashion photo shows received an honorary mention at the International Photography Award 2015. Photographer Bhagath Kumar of Makka studios, who gave the fashion industry a refreshing twist and pleasantly surprised many through his fashion photo shots in which he used transgender models. "Many of them are eligible and well qualified and some of them are studying law, pursuing fashion and more. One, just needs to sit and talk to them, and stop judging them"<sup>39</sup>.

## Conclusion

Transgender people are also human beings and they have been living since ancient times in all cultures. But they are not recognized as human beings by the majority in the society. Just because of biological differences, they should not be discriminated and ill-treated in the social system. They must be recognized as part of society and should enjoy all the privileges entitled to everyone in a democratic society. To overcome the problems of transgender, the children must be taught sex differences from their childhood in their curriculum. This will accord recognition to them as part of the social system in the exercise of their civil rights in their desired gender. India is one of the few countries in the world legally which has recognized them as 'third gender'. Like any men and women, they are also part of the society and excelling in every sphere on par with other people. What we need is a mindset to accept and recognize them as equals. They should be given priority in education and employment like anyothers and necessary incorporations should be adopted in this regard. A proper census must be conducted of these people in order to extend social

welfare benefits to them on par with other sections of the society. Their rights to live and work like normal human beings should not be violated. There should be a separate educational policy for them so that they are not forced to beg for a living. Trained transgenders enjoy the fruits of labour. But there are many among them who choose the easy way out by begging out. It is time to shake them out of their old habits. Education is the first step in the amelioration of their condition in an egalitarian society. The government should come forward with a policy to ensure that they are not discriminated and that they enjoy equal rights like any others. The day is not far away when they can be living with others enjoying equality in all walks of life.

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## BOOK REVIEW

### **Southern Tamil Nadu through the Ages**

edited by

**K.A. Manikumar & Vinod Vincent Rajesh**

This volume, *Southern Tamil Nadu through the Ages* is a collection of essays from various College and University Professors. The first chapter, *History of Parathavas: A Different Interpretation* by Vinod Vincent Rajesh depicts the lives of people in various *tinais* i.e. the geographical divisions of Tamil Nadu during the ancient period with special reference to the lives of the Parathavas who were considered to be the natives of the ecological zone of *Naidal*, which is normally the coastal region. The author has discussed the opinions and interpretations of the erstwhile historians both the native and foreign scholars. Finally, he concludes that in spite of the research that had been undertaken, the origin of the Parathavas still remains mysterious.

**Contest over Control of Sea and its Coastal Ports during the Sangam Age**, the article written by Dr. P. Chandrasekaran, mainly discusses the trade and commerce carried over by the people of the five tinais. He explains the various commodities in which these people carried over their trade and the rivalry among the ruling dynasties to have control over the seas to have flourishing trade. Collective kinsmen labour was the basic unit of production in each Sirukudi, which was the habitat where kinsmen lived together in small numbers. The author explains vividly about the products of these tribal people from paddy to

sea products. This article gives details of the system of exchange, which was mainly the barter system. However, they received gold coins for exchanging their product with the Romans. Due to this flourishing trade between the ancient Tamils and the Romans and north Indians, the coasts were studded with many ports and market towns. All these resulted in the formation of new chiefdoms. It is stated that with the decline of overseas trade in course of time led to the decline of urban centres. When the commodities in their circulation generated merchant capital, it led to the formation of statehood and control over seas fell to the hands of the state.

The article *Kumari Continent: A Perceptive Account* discusses the theories related to the existence of the place beyond Kanyakumari and, in course of time, was engulfed by the sea as Poompuhar and Dwaraka in the north. The author S. Padmanabhan, comments if oceanic exploration had been made, many details regarding this place could be known to the world.

Another article, *Oral History of Karkuvel Aiyanar Temple* gives the picture of Aiyanar temple located in Tiruchendur taluk of Tuticorin District. This article speaks of the location of the temple, which normally is in the midst of dense forests, the myth behind the deity, the festivals etc., Dananjayan tells about the temple situated in Tuticorin district of Tamil Nadu, which attracts not only devotees but folklorists too. The oral tradition gives us information regarding the land and the disappearance of the deity, Lord Aiyanar. The information collected from the local people on various occasions including at the time of festivals at the temple provides details on the myths.

By the treaty signed by the British East India Company with Nawab Mohammed Ali in 1781, the British got the right to

collect revenue from the Palayakarars of Tirunelveli. They revolted against this and their revolt was suppressed by Lushington who was posted as Collector of Tirunelveli in 1799. Subsequently, the British realized the necessity of the establishment of a Collectorate and formed it in 1801. The article *Establishment of the Tirunelveli Collectorate* by B. Maria John provides information about the revolt of the Palayakars and the reaction of the British to it and measures taken to collect revenue.

The article, *Indigenous Policing in Pre – Colonial Tamil Nadu* by S. Ravichandran depicts the formation, functions, and categories of Kaval (police) system during the pre-colonial period. The *kaval* system was dominated by the castes of people who normally worked in the army of the chieftains and the Poligars etc.; before the British period it was a native system and formed the integral part of the society both in the urban and the rural areas.

R. Santhakumari in her article, *Agricultural Bondage in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* discusses the position of agriculture, the condition of peasants and the existence of the slave system in agriculture. In addition, this article provides information on the various legislations enacted for the welfare of the slaves and consequence of the slave system.

*Shipwrecks on Southern Coromandel Coast, 1800 to 1850* by S. Jayasankar is about the problems faced by the mariners on the southern Coromandel coast during the said period. The formation of the rescue teams could, to a certain extent, save the lives of the mariners and the properties they lost. Though the printed guide materials could help the mariners prevent the

loss of human lives, it was felt that it was time consuming and an affair of blending tradition with scientific advancement.

K. Ragupathi has depicted the movement of Pallars of colonial Tamil Nadu in his article, *Devendrar Movements in Colonial Tamil Nadu: Identity, Ideology and Politics*. The structure of the organizations formed to carry out the movement, their programmes including protest against untouchability and Anti – Hindi ideology. These movements also protested against alcoholism, landlordism, and took an active part in freedom movement also.

*Development of Tuticorin Port, 1842 – 1980* by C. Veeramuthu gives a clear picture about the role played by the port, which was once a major area of pearl fishing and then an important centre for India's internal and external trade. This article gives the historical background of the port right from the ancient period to contemporary days. The statistics on the number of vessels, various products of the trade, the percentage of imports and exports involved are impressive.

K. Madhusudharsanan has explained the *Development of Irrigation in Tamil Nadu From 1952 – 1962*. He has portrayed the various irrigation projects like, the Lower Bhavani project, Amaravathi project, Mettur Canal scheme, Sathanur project, Kodaiyar reservoir project, and so on. He discuss the fund allocation during various Five Year Plans for the development of irrigation, and the schemes to attain self – sufficiency in the field of agriculture.

*Dowry Menace in Thoothukudi District: A Study* written by T.S. Rajeswari is a case study of blocks taken in the district. She puts forth the evils of the system, critically discusses the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 and the amendments of the Act, and finally explains the communities that practice the system

with the statistics of the cases registered and the status of the same. As everyone knows and accepts, attitudinal change and the timely implementation of the Prohibition Acts only could solve the issue.

K. A. Manikumar in his article, *A Dalit Village Revisited: Transformation from 1961 to 2001* has dealt with the demography and composition of the inhabitants of Keelakottai village. His article discusses the role played by Christianity in providing education to the dalit population and the economic status of the people, the pattern of agriculture, and explains the identity politics of the residents.

There are four articles in Tamil by G. Stephen, Kandhaiya Arunthavaraj, A. Sivasubramaniam and D. Dharmarajan, and they discuss the practice of disposing the dead, Indo – Srilankan political relations upto the period of the Cholas, about a new sect in Christianity and the history and religious significance of a female deity popular in the villages respectively.

The articles in this volume depict the various aspects of the history of southern Tamil Nadu, especially of Tuticorin and Tirunelveli districts.

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## 2

### BOOK REVIEW

#### **G.A. NATESAN AND NATIONAL AWAKENING**

**Prabha Ravi Shankar**

*Promilla & Co., Publishers, New Delhi, 2015*

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G.A.Natesan was a pioneering publisher and an ardent nationalist belonging to the moderate school of thought. In October 1897, he founded his own printing press called Natesan & Company with the support of his elder brother G.A. Vaidyaraman. He published a steady stream of pamphlets, books, biographies of eminent Indians, their speeches and writings. He also edited a journal, *the Indian Review* for fifty years. He was one of the earliest acquaintances of Mahatma Gandhi and used his journal to further his struggle in South Africa. He was the first to publish a biography on Gandhi in India in 1910.

Natesan's family had moved from Tanjore to Madras in Mylapore. He had his education in Kumbakonam and later on in the Hindu High School. His headmaster of the school, S. Ananthanarayana Aiyer, commented on the dynamism of Natesan which was quite different from other students. He obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree from the Madras Presidency College in 1894. At college, he was smart and suave and projected himself as a pleasing person to all. He made a mark at the College Debating Society, C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar would comment that it was Natesan who forced him to take part

in the debating in College. He made this association into an important forum and made an impact in then intellectual scene in the Madras. Natesan starting the Press was hailed by all. In the words of the renowned educationist, the Reverend George Miller, he was “one who was not in the race for Government service but began a printing press to instruct, educate and awaken the sleeping consciousness of Indians”. In 1900, the Indian Review was started with the help of Vaidyaraman, his brother and other prominent men who supported him were G. Venkataranga Rao and C. Hanumantha Rao. After being apprentice with Glyn Barlow of the Madras Times from 1894-95, he started his own printing establishment.

The firm of Natesan came out with a series of books on political, religious, historical and social subjects. The publication began with patriotic literature, a manuscript of P.S. Sivaswami Aiyar on an appeal pending before the Privy Council. He then published biographies of then distinguished Indians. It was a fact that he was probably the first to render assistance to Gandhi in the first decade of the twentieth century. He had published in detail the problems of Indians in South Africa. Natesan was the first Indian publisher to bring out a biography of Mahatma Gandhi. He then played host to Gandhi's visit to Madras and published many of his seminal works. Thus, was a publisher of political biographies of several Indians who had played a role in India's development.

Natesan was one of the earliest to popularize Indian mythological literature. He published the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Bhagavata*, by bringing abridgements of the original texts. His publication of religious and philosophical books were also numerous. He published many pamphlets on industry, agriculture and economic problems and irrigation. All these books created an awareness of the sufferings of India

under the colonial rulers and aroused the people to the misdeeds of British rule.

Natesan also published the Friends of India Series which was a tribute to eminent foreigners who had laboured for the cause of India. It should be mentioned that his association with Mrs. Annie Besant was very fruitful.

The most prominent of Natesan's literature was the corpus of publication pertaining to the Congress movement and its leaders. He published more than a thousand pages entitled *Indian National Congress, Its Aims, Objects, Full Text of Presidential Addresses and Resolutions with Extracts from Welcome Addresses, Notable Utterances and Portraits*. His publication about the Congress is huge and he did his best to spread the message across to all sections of society.

Other than this, he also published many books on classical literature, a hand book on Criminal Law, on ancient classics and popularised sacred literature. He was himself a progressive reformer and realized early that national reconstruction was not possible without development of all aspects of the society. The writer comments, "it is rare for publishing firm to witness its golden jubilee celebrations, and rarer still that the publisher himself gets to see his press complete these milestones. It also coincided with Indian Independence."

The *Indian Review* was known as a journal that avoided sensationalism and controversial articles. Known for its catholicity, it was patronised by the members of the Civil Services, 'who found the pages of the journal fair and reasonable'. The Journal from the beginning was patriotic and nationalist and more so it was about moderate nationalism. C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar paid Natesan a great tribute, 'even if Natesan's life work had been



confined to just a journal, he significantly contributed to the national awakening.'

In politics, Natesan was a moderate liberal holding progressive views and followed Gokhale's political ideology of constitutional methods of agitation. He was an ardent Congress and his genius for friendship was boundless and comprehensive; it ranged from Pherozeshah Mehta, D.E.Wacha, Gokhale, Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore to Sister Nivedita. He was equally close to Annie Beasant, Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Tej Bahadur Sapru and P.S. Sivaswami Aiyer.

Indeed Natesan and Mahatma Gandhi shared a special bond. He supported Gandhi's and Indians cause in South Africa and got a biography on him written. Played host on his first visit to Madras. However, disagreed with him on *Satyagraha*. Though Natesan remained a steadfast friend and admirer of Gandhi, he openly differed with his political views and described Non – Cooperation as a 'perilous policy'. Gandhi's words penned to him in 1947 sums up their wonderful relationship, "you have no business to be ill. Who is older you or me?"

He was ill and bed-ridden but still continued to edit *the Indian Review* and on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1949, he passed away. Rajaji wrote to his son (Manian Natesan), a tribute that spoke of Natesan's greatness in the following words, "Be worthy of the respected position your father had earned for himself in the highest circles in India and abroad".

## Conclusion

The book is an outcome of the painstaking research for five years about this enterprising Madras publisher and one of the

pioneers in national awakening. The author has diligently and meticulously accessed the hundreds of books published by him and scrutinized the back files of the *Indian Review* that he edited for half-a-century. It is rightly argued in the book that no book on national awakening would be complete without writing about him. He was indeed the most luminous star of Indian journalism in the first half of the twentieth century, and by very nature a true liberal. Despite the vast corpus of books on national awakening, the books on personality or national awakening in the South or Tamil Nadu are few and far between; indeed this book fills a gap in the understanding of national awakening precisely.

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**BOOK REVIEW**

**The Political Dimensions of  
Indo-Bangladesh Relations, Issues and  
Problems between 1972 & 1992,  
Sita Singh, pp. VI+158, Rs. 500.  
Delhi, 2012.**

The splendid emergence of Bangladesh as a nation in 1971 is solely credited to the adventurous endeavours of India; Smt. Indira Gandhi then representing the nation as a Prime Minister left no stone unturned to defend and safeguard East Pakistan. The ball of magnificent victory came up to her hands and new christened Bangladesh soon after its formation earned glorious recognition of its identity from each great nation of the world. Time rolled on and in the subsequent periods, numerous differences sprang up between India and Bangladesh. Misunderstandings and near-sighted diplomacies on the part of the latter may be called accountable factors for such unfortunate developments.

The book under review focuses on the above details. It comprises broadly theoretical aspects and certain case studies. Together, it has been a successive endeavour to analyse the broad political relations between India and Bangladesh (1972-1992). Divided into seven chapters including a conclusion, the monograph discusses in the first one, the politico-geographical imperatives and incentives which led to the foundation of Bangladesh. It also sketches how East Pakistanis were subjected to a world of economic exploitation at the cruel hands of

West Pakistanis; cultural, political and administrative domination over the former were the order of the day. The ethno-linguistic differences between these two antagonists were considered as a strong factor for widening their distances from time to time.

The second chapter looks at the historic period of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, his endeavours for creating better economic and socio-cultural co operation between the two countries by several treaties and making alliances. The chapter also throws light on the end of Mujib and coming power of Ziaur Rahman both as Chief Marshal Law administrator and President of Bangladesh.

The Farakka barrage issue which has been narrated as both a matter of tension in India- Bangladesh relations and its solutions to sort out differences are discussed in the third chapter. This division also includes an in-depth examination of the problem of the sharing of Ganga waters between the two countries.

The fourth chapter raises sensitive paradigms of illegal immigration of Bangladeshis to the northern eastern parts of India. The issue of such foreign infiltration continuing for a long time is attributed to the lack of natural barriers and porous Indo Bangladesh borders. Chapter V describes the issues of refugees and insurgencies. The Indian government has always been receptive to these tribal non-Muslim people on humanitarian grounds. The writer, however, believes that the question of illegal infiltration grew more and more complex day by day. The chapter VI is devoted to problems of land and maritime boundary and questions of certain passage disputes. The concluding chapter VII presents a gist of all the issues discussed above. The writer has presented penetrating analysis to give a vivid picture of two decades of Indo-Bangladesh relations. Apart from discussing the support of India to the emergence of the new country, Sita Singh

in her conscientious work rightly makes it clear that despite social, economic, historical and geographical intermingling of the two countries, the personalities and ideologies of their ruling elites have much more bearing on their relations. Bangladesh is authoritarian rulers' search for legitimacy and political survival has been the crucial factor in vitiating the closeness of the two nations.

Of course, this book gives a detailed magisterial survey of the two decades of relations between India and Bangladesh, but certain minor blemishes have crept in unfortunately. Overlapping of material in chapters accounts for sluggish and slothful study. Accounts collected are principally descriptive and seldom analytic. A thorough study of works like *Domestic Roots of India's Foreign Policy* by A. Appadurai and looking for recent material in Archives is Patna could have enriched the monograph. Lack of an introduction to the book is a serious lacunae in the book.

Developments in Indo-Bangladesh relations are dealt in a very simple, lucid and impressive manner. Three extremely well written appendices on different pacts between these two nations, followed by a good select bibliography have enhanced the value of the monograph. On the whole, the book is a valuable contribution to scholarship on the Indo-Bangladesh relationship.

**Dr. Samarendra Narayan Arya**

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## BOOK REVIEW

**Imaging the Past: Indian History from Harappan Times to the Present Age, Samarendra Narayan Arya, (ed), (Bhakat Prasad Mazumdar Commemoration Volume), Aakar Books, Delhi, 2013, Pp. Xi+268, Rs.895/-**

The book under review is an edited work on History by Samarendra Narayan Arya in commemoration of late Professor B. P. Mazumdar, a perfectly gentle man and noted authority on Ancient Indian socio-religious history. Divided into two segments the first one relates to life and academic achievements and all sorts of his reminiscences penned down by five scholars, namely Bhagaban Prasad Mazumdar, C. P. N. Sinha, Rajendra Ram, S. N. Arya and R. N. Nandi. A detailed information regarding Professor Mazumdar's works described herein may add to our knowledge of Ancient Indian History.

The second segment consists of odd learned essays by eminent scholars from all over the country covering a wide range of issues and debates in diverse fields of indological studies from Harappan times to the twentieth century. The specialised areas of research involving these studies include Archaeology, Literature, Numismatics, Epigraphy, Iconography, Ethnography and Government papers. Most of the studies relate to fresh data excavation and consequent modification of known ideas. Over all, the intention of the volume is to provide miscellaneous tastes and interests among general readers as well as specialists.

R.C. Thakaran in his presentation underlines that human settlements are not confined to water course alone, rather these are located in greater number in areas away from the rivers. R. N. Nandi in his study holds the view that the term 'pur' occurring more than a hundred times in the Rgveda always represented a fort, a rampart or a strong hold. Further he strongly says that the Vedic Aryans in their pur-encounters always intended to capture the forts with surrounding agriculture land and water bodies and not destroy them as is commonly considered.

S.C. Mishra in his paper goes at length on different aspects of the cults of Rama Hwastra as described in the Zend Avesta. Then follows the article of R.K. Sharma in which he discusses well and truly the problem of identification of the river Saraswati. He concludes that the river Ghaggar was evidently the lower part of Saraswati. P.C. Venkatasubbaiah professes in his article that the socio-cultural and economic groups of agro-pastoral and pastoral cum agriculturists can be identified on the ground of diverse eco-system in which these originated and flourished. Suvira Jaiswal in her study examines the interaction of gender, class and caste in agricultural production on the basis of north Indian sources. Annapurna Chattopadhyaya in her paper contends that the people of Bihar and Bengal were closely associated and connected in cultural and ethnic environs during later Vedic and post Vedic periods.

P. Gupta in his document examines scientifically Buddhist stupa architecture. Shailendra Mohan Jha in his article argues in favour of a new methodology in relation to the study of punch marked coins. Vivekanand Jha in his paper analyses Asoka's Dhamma as a great venture of his extraordinary far sight. G.P. Singh provides a new dimension to the study of travel accounts of two travellers, one Greek and other Assyrian who

visited North West India in the first century CE. These accounts have so far not been studied at length.

On the basis of literature and epigraphic sources S.N. Arya in his study examines various terms denoting the resting places of different brahmanical deities in early India. Significance of oral tradition in history has been well depicted in the essay of Radha Madhav Bharadwaj. Shanta Rani Sharma in her paper lays stress on the significance of wide spread monetary exchange during the Pratihara rule. Karabi Mitra describes Saraswati as a mighty river during the early Vedic times and full-fledged divine during the early medieval period.

The claim of Rajput origin by Chauhan kings of South Kosala has been seriously examined by Shishir Kumar Panda in his study full of references from Kosalananda kavyam and other resources. Conflicts between left hand and right hand castes of South India during the 17th and 18th centuries are well analysed on solid evidence in the study by Radhika Sheshan.

Sumanta Niyogi in his study discusses in details the similarities and differences between the European and Indian renaissance. Susnat Das in his interesting paper points out clearly that there was of course a common national motivation behind the upsurge of 1857. The study of Binodini Das examines the interplay of socio-environmental compulsions behind the origin and development of a number of socio-religious celebrations in Orissa.

In his study, The Chittabrat Palit argues that Gandhi was a prophet of environment family sustainable growth. Lipi Ghosh in her paper makes a micro-study of Indian foreign policy aiming at developing greater understanding and co-operation vis-vis South East Asian countries. G.J. Sudhakar in his paper probes



into socio-economic survey of the functions of Madras Provincial Co-operative Society during the period 1935-45.

It is gratifying that the work is an outcome of S.N. Arya's meticulous efforts. The printing and the get- up of the volume are excellent and worth the name of Aakar Books as the publisher of it. The publisher deserves our admiration for bringing out such a nice volume presenting all research oriented articles by renowned scholars in different fields of history.

**Bishwambhar Jha**

*University Professor,*

*Former Head,*

*Department of History,*

*LNMU, Darbhanga (Bihar)*

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Please make sure your contribution is related to Indian History and / or culture in one way or another.

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