



TIRUCHIRAPPALLI
TANJORE
PATTUKKOTTAI
NAGAPATTINAM
TIRUVARUR
MANNARKUDI
PUDUKKOTTAI
PIRANMALAI
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TIRUPPATTUR
ARANTANGI

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PALAYAMKOTTAI

THE RAMNAD KINGDOM

CEYLON

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THE SETUPATIS OF RAMNAD

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S. THIRUVENKATACHARI

M. A., L. T., M. ED., (MADRAS), M. A (COLUMBIA)



DEPARTMENT OF EXTENSION SERVICES

DR. ALAGAPPA CHETTIAR TRAINING COLLEGE

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PREFACE

One of the notable developments in the area of Social Studies teaching in the United States of America which I had opportunity to study at first hand during my visit to that country was the tremendous significance attached to local history. When I was in Maryland I had evidence of the phenomenal interest which teachers and pupils had in the relics and monuments of local history. The house which Barbara Frietchie occupied is preserved as a great monument, and Social Studies teachers are capitalising a good deal on that otherwise unimpressive looking house in their work as teachers of American history. The importance attached to local and regional history is such that millions of dollars are spent in the provision of materials like authoritative books etc., and in the maintenance of essential services like museums and libraries.

In India the teacher of Social Studies is labouring under many difficulties and disabilities. Perhaps the most serious is the paucity of reading material. It is unfortunate that historical research has not bestowed sufficient attention on local history with the result that the histories of many localities, some of which have a great bearing even on national history, are still being written. No doubt, in a country like ours, vast in area, ancient in its traditions and unique in regard to the diversity of the cultures that have gone into the making of its Culture, the task of writing the history of each area is stupendous, and beset with innumerable problems. But all this can be no

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excuse for the neglect of local history. The teaching of national history should be on the sure foundations of local history not only for the reason that the locality is within the range of experience of pupils, but also for the more important reason that national history is nothing but the consolidation and codification of diverse movements, ideas and achievements, having their origin and development in some locality or other. If the informational material furnished by local history is removed from national history, national history will get reduced to a lifeless skeleton.

There are other reasons also why local history is a *must* in any scheme of Social Studies in the secondary school. Any history must have an appeal to the sense of reality, and the most effective appeal to the sense of reality is through reality itself. A walk through Delhi teaches a student more of the vicissitudes of the history of India during the Moguls than all the books in the world. A walk through Delhi is no doubt the privilege reserved for the few; but a walk through *some* Delhi is possible for all. Every community has, at least the community itself, a local geographical environment, local remains and local customs. No ground or area is unimportant to the student of history. All ground associated with human life is, in a true sense, historic ground. All products of human art are historic products. All human customs are historic customs. Therefore, the neglect of the locality would mean the neglect of something of very vital. Moreover, the need for building historical knowledge upon the direct personal experience of the pupils cannot be sufficiently emphasised.

This little book is presented to the teachers in the hope that it would prove a forerunner to many such, or

perhaps, better, attempts on the part of the teachers of Social Studies. The author knows to what extent his product is satisfactory. His one purpose in releasing it with all its imperfections is to break the ice in a field where, in the light of the new responsibilities cast on teachers, no teacher can afford to be content with the "traditional stuff" passing for history. The author was particularly gratified when quite a large number of Social Studies teachers evinced interest in the local history project of the Department, and it was that interest, to a large extent, which enthused him in this work. The lectures given by the author were received with profound interest, and quite a large number of teachers and headmasters desired that as the subject of the lectures has not yet been treated in any book written so far, the author may present them in a compact brochure.

The author owes a deep debt of gratitude to many without whose assistance he could not have got the book even in the shape in which it is presented. Sri Kasinatha Dorai of the Setupati family, Sri M. V. Raghavendra Rao, Diwan of Ramnad, Sri M. Rajah Iyer, Headmaster, Rajah's High School, Ramnad and Sri R. Ramanuja Iyengar, son of the late Mahavidwan Raghava Iyengar, stood by the author through thick and thin and gave him very valuable information during his discussions with them. He is grateful to them, as also to the staff of the Diwan's office who allowed him access to some important records.

Sri P. Doraikannoo Mudaliar, Honorary Director of the Department it was who 'goaded' the author to pay sustained attention to the writing of the brochure and took a very keen interest in its progress. He has been kind enough to accede to the author's request for an appropriate Introduction to the

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book; and the Introduction speaks for itself. The author wishes to express his gratitude to the Honorary Director but for whose support and encouragement this work would never have seen the light of day. The author also, wishes to express his appreciation of the excellent assistance given by Sri T. V. Subramanian, stenographer in the Department.

S. THIRUVENKATACHARI

INTRODUCTION

Till recently there was a consensus of opinion among teachers in the Madras State that with the introduction of the Social Studies, the benefits of historical studies were denied to the pupils. While, in general, our teachers welcomed the integrated approach contemplated in the teaching of the Social Studies, not a small number of them were somewhat concerned that neither national nor world history had been provided for in the Social Studies curriculum, for a systematic and argumentative study. Therefore in the new pattern of Secondary Education, which is now being implemented in the State, a distinction between Social Studies and *the* Social Studies has been indicated. It has retained the nomenclature of Social Studies; but has allotted specific places to history, geography, and civics re-introducing, in a sense, the principle of isolation, in the curriculum of the humanities. As one well-meaning and sincere teacher said, history and geography have been exhumed out of the debris of the Social Studies mass. The new syllabus, from the primary to the higher secondary stage, has been well received; and there is satisfaction that it is in accordance with how the studies of the humanities must be. The protagonists of the integrated approach have lost nothing in conceding the claim that history as a school subject has come into its own.

The tendency of the times has been to aver far more in favour of the sciences than even give a condescending nod in recognition of the values of the study of the humanities. What is the good of history? This is a question repeated *ad nauseum*. History is past politics, and it is the dream-land of the dilettante. It is not a subject for the immature minds of children. Thus say those that see nothing of value in history, especially for children.

Bertrand Russel puts forth a plea for the study of the History of Civilisation, in which no country should be mentioned by name. Children should be taught only the growth of civilisation, and the progress that has carved milestones of the march of humanity. The question is asked, if in the earlier stages, it is possible to present a panorama of civilisation of mankind to children and inculcate in them an appreciation of their varying values. It is also asked if it be possible for our pupils in such a vast sub-continent as India, scattered over thousands of miles, to comprehend questions of national interest. Scepticism apart, the training in national citizenship in a democracy like ours is what our history teachers must impart; and one of the special purposes of history-teaching in our schools must be the development, in children, of a love of their own country; and it is from this concept that the future citizen will be enabled to concern himself with problems beyond his national frontier, and gradually know his place on the globe of the world. National consciousness and world consciousness are not above the heads of pupils even in the primary and early secondary stages.

But our children must first have an elementary historical training, and cultivate an abiding interest in the achievements of their own immediate neighbourhood, learn everything about their own locality and feel one with the human communities which have developed gradually. It need hardly be said that local history should be the corpus of any history syllabus on the secure foundations of which the study of national history should be built. There is no question of the maturity of the class so far as the study of the local historical material is concerned. The material becomes familiar as a result of visits and surveys of the locality, and children enjoy touching and seeing things for themselves. These familiar objects and sights rouse their imagination and create the necessary historical background to their experience. What may appear to be a grand discovery of a historical material for any seasoned student of history, is of no

consequence to the pupil though he is fully familiar with the sights and relics of the neighbourhood, every one of which has a very important story to tell him and in which his own ancestors, of whom he is a lineal descendant, had had a part to play. The important objectives at the early stages ought to be to awaken the historical interest and to develop an awareness of the contribution made by his own community; and from these preparatory studies may be developed the concepts of national history in chronological sequence. It is the introduction of the realities, which are close to the child in time and space, that will tend to create an awareness of the realities of the past, and of the passage of time in terms of chronology. Certain localities may give a glimpse into the distant, or even the primitive past. There might be tools and implements and other relics of a pre-historic civilisation. Discoveries such as these might distend imagination to far off times, and foster the realisation that people all over the world sprang from a common pre-historic life. Stories about local celebrities and their contribution to the making of history, will be a spontaneous initiation to the stories of similar historical heroes that have likewise made the history of the world. The subject matter of local history alone is something within the child's ken. It may be of the pre-historic period or of historical times, or lives of great heroes and what they contributed to the elements of social and political life.

In the complex world of today when changes are meteoric and age-long traditions and institutions are subjected to a good deal of carping criticism, it becomes very necessary to safeguard the moorings of our interest in the past, if only the world of men would like to retain standards of reference by which to criticise the tendencies of the present age. History does not merely hearken back to the past; it is also a study of the present, and a means of understanding the future. Its part in the education of the whole man is undeniable. As a cultural subject, its foundations are well-laid when adequate

interest is roused in the pupils' own surroundings which afford possibilities of visits to study archaeological sites, architecture, and the various factors which have contributed to its history. Local history is, in essence, a kind of visual experience in which our pupils are bound to find enjoyment. The direct delights which an explorative study affords under the guidance of a well-informed teacher help in the formation of enduring associations with the thrill of the discovery of knowledge. Such a knowledge of local history can serve the purpose of frequent correlation, reference and attention "for its power of linking the past with the present and thus of making history real."

An odium that is often laid at the door of historical studies in the earlier stages has reference to the ubiquity of subject matter of national or international history that is presented in isolation from the pupils' real present, and their immediate neighbourhood. It must, therefore, be admitted that a detailed history of the locality in which the school is situated, is necessary to stimulate interest and to create a sense of reality. The historical lesson will derive vividness, also establish meaningful and substantial connections between what is learnt in the classroom and what is 'discovered' in the vicinity. Even in the study of current events, the local resources will make ocular appeal to the pupil-learner as factors having a vital bearing even on the history in the making.

The possibilities afforded by local history for valuable activities outside the classroom are many. Through it the pupils are helped to cultivate the attitude of finding tongues in trees, books in running brooks, sermons in stones, and a story in everything. They can collect historical relics, take photographs, and develop abilities for narration. Several historical incidents that have not gone into recorded history are preserved in folklore, dramatic versions, and local tradition handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. Such a wealth of material, our country abounds in;

and if only this aspect of historical survey is made there is bound to be plenty of corroborative evidence relating to several details of history. The school history Museum could easily be equipped with the material having a bearing on local history.

The history of our country is being reconstructed only now. The sources of information are many and varied because of India's very long and chequered past. Local history is rich wherever we go in this hoary land of ours, and when its details are collected, it will be a reliable mine of information on which to build national history. It is said that stones can speak. At a matter of fact, in our country, stones do speak. What stones have revealed has contributed to history far more than any other source. Every locality abounds in very important evidences, which can give meaning to the young learner of history and make history a joy and historical enquiry a delight.

Very few places in our country have not been, at some time or other, connected with historical events. Some of these events have also contributed to national development. For instance, a leader from the local community might have taken part in the larger affairs of the state or the nation; or the locality itself might have been the scene of a national occurrence or event. It is, therefore, necessary to indent upon the facts of local history as often as necessary in the teaching of national history.

In the seven year integrated course of the new pattern, local history is, fortunately, assigned a good place. State history is also given its due measure of importance, so that the transition to national history is a natural transition. The obvious relationship between national history and state and local history on the one hand, and the present trend towards the fostering of a world outlook through a study of the history of the world, on the other, will have to be reconciled. The method of approach should be, to make

a start with purely local history, and then to bring about an integration between state and local materials of study, so that national history, which is a broader one, may become impressive and more meaningful. The new syllabus clearly indicates the possibilities of presenting historical and geographical material step by step in accordance with the maxims, from the known to the unknown and from the simple to the complex. The first qualification of the history teacher is that he should be thoroughly familiar with the history of the locality, wherever he may be employed, in the State. To cite a few instances of the abundance of local history: The city of Madras, which is just three centuries old, is so full of historical material, like old forts and ramparts, churches and temples buildings and monuments, plaques and statues, roads and bridges, and above all, war memorials to commemorate the service and sacrifice of the people in battles and wars. Each division, whether a municipality or a panchayat, has a history to unravel, not to mention the historical associations of place-names and the documentary testimonies. The town of Tiruchirappalli, with Uraiyar in its vicinity, has had a history from a very distant past, chequered and continuous, right through centuries. The district of Ramanathapuram with which we are immediately concerned was part of the Pandya country with its capital at Korkai located at the mouth of the Porunai or the Tambraparani, along with the port at Tondi, the Tyndis of Ptolemy. It continued to be under the Pandyas till the thirteenth century, upto the time of Maravarman Sundara. When the Pandya rule declined, the Vijayanagar rule was extended into the Tamil country. The Nayaks, who were feudatories of Vijayanagar for some time, later, held independent sway over it for over two centuries. Thereafter it was included among the Carnatic Nawab's territories, and ultimately brought under the British.

What is of special interest to the pupils of the Ramanathapuram area is the knowledge of the history of the Setupatis whose lineage is traced back to the

period of the *Ramayana*. Sri Rama is said to have installed the first Setupati as the guardian of the Setu. The rule of the Setupatis lasted for a considerable length of time; and what started as the Ramnad Kingdom at first threw up two off-shoots that developed into the Sivaṅṅai Zamin and the Pudukkottai State. Successive Setupatis have conferred on Ramanathapuram the blessings of law, order and justice, besides their patronage of the arts and letters. The Rajas of Sivaṅṅai and Pudukkottai have, likewise, conferred their benefits for the better life of their subjects. The country has preserved a number of traditions some of which may be traced even to the period of the epics like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharatha*. The palaces of the Rajas of Ramanathapuram, Pudukkottai and Sivaṅṅai are not only magnificent but are also full of historical associations with successive rulers. The *Naṅarathar malai*, popularly known as Narthamalai with its rock-cut caves and stone temples, Kudumianmalai and Sittannavasal, with a number of inscriptions, Pallava paintings and Jain caves, Kalaiyarkoil which is the Kanappereyil of historical fame, Tiruṅoshtiyur with its famous temple of four tiers, the island of Rameswaram whose land's end has been commemorated as the Setu, and its temple which claims to be as old as Sri Rama's invasion of Lanka, and Dharbasayanam known also as Tiruppullanai—these are some of the numerous sites of ancient history, and have stood the test of time for centuries.

The "local history" of Ramanathapuram would embrace the history of not only the district of Ramnad but the adjoining districts as well to a considerable extent. In the new set-up of history teaching, it has become obligatory on the part of the teacher to construct an independent syllabus of local history. Most of the places of historical interest such as those listed above for the district of Ramanathapuram, together with sources of information like the State Manuals and District Gazetteers would constitute the basic material for reconstructing the history of the area. The place-names are full of

meaning and interest. Their study would also constitute one important aspect of the treatment of local history. The reality which will impress the minds of the pupils in what they study as local history material will go a long way towards rousing further interest in getting similar insights into state or national history. Even if some details are not of national importance, they are at least, interesting enough as helping to create a lively interest in historical investigation. So the teacher will have to collect all details of interest, and lay stress on historical remains of all kinds, more particularly the life of the people at various points of time. The citizen has to cultivate a genuine interest in the endeavours and achievements of his ancestors exemplified by the institutions and buildings to their credit. It may be necessary also, to collect and interpret folklore, folk poetry, (ballads) and even the literary panegyrics on kings and local chieftains. There are also available modern materials, such as guide books and directories, to sustain further interest both in the antiquities as well as in the living present. A visit to a museum in the locality will reveal relics like palace-furniture, military weapons, tools and implements depicting community-life in the past.

The teaching of local history must not be confined within the four walls of the classroom. Instead of making the studies unsystematic, it would be necessary to draw up a programme of field-trips or excursions to historical spots in the locality, such as monuments, sites of old battlefields, forts, shrines, churches, or even mounds. Pupil-curiosity can be roused by preparing their minds for what they may have to look for and see. Some historical collection is possible; e. g., old coins, family heir-looms, old manuscripts, old writing material etc. Pupils may also be asked to make sketches of relics, or obtain photographs of as many relics as possible and build up a picture portfolio of the scenes and places of historical validity and interest. They may also be encouraged to document their

observations, and prepare a list of the kinds of sources which might seem most promising for documentation.

The next important source of information is the community. It is a large reservoir of information which may not be accepted for its credence, but listened to for its interest or even for its providing a clue to a problem. The pupils may collect such information, either individually, or at a meeting, in which the member of the community may participate. Whatever facts are gathered can be revitalised by weighing them with the evidence of the past.

Each school will have to develop a local history programme with the means and resources available in the area. This need not be confined to one particular grade; it should be fostered at all grade levels so as to establish possible links and parallels with the subject matter of national or world history. Maurice P. Moffatt suggests the following activities in connection with project on local history to be utilised as individual or group projects. According to him, they will not only have value for pupils currently participating, but also form the nucleus for a local history file of permanent value to the school and the community.

1. Collecting stories, anecdotes, poems, folklore, songs, authentic costumes, pictures, photographs, portraits, and maps.
2. Compiling biographies; records of Indian life; illustrated record of all inscriptions of historical value on tombstones, monuments, markers; descriptive list of incidents and events of historical significance; list of buildings and landmarks;
3. Constructing maps and charts showing growth of community in population, area, industries and so on;

4. Dramatising historic events; making films; recording folksongs and dances;
5. Reporting interviews involving reminiscences and recollection;
6. Tracing geneologies and the history of government.

Moffatt also refers to the importance of local history as a means of furnishing a dynamic approach to the community study. He says, "the community is an important laboratory for learning, and pupils' needs are more easily met, and interests are enlivened, through the use of local resources". Parents and leaders of community are brought closer together by the school, for the benefit of all concerned. "Local history is the departure for comprehending world horizons. Our daily living is enriched by a knowledge of the historical background, the geography and the people we associate with in our interesting community".

The teaching of local history is mostly by the 'source method'. The sources constitute a variety as much as the locality can afford. It is not possible to handle all the source material in the classroom. Nor will it be possible to provide all of it in a text book. The sources get increased and enriched by the passage of time. What is of importance is discrimination in the selection of the suitable material. Some of the sources are bound to arouse pupil interest more than others. The pupils will be able to appreciate the text book presentation of history, after they know that the subject matter of the book is derived from those sources of which they are aware. The difficulty involved in interpreting source material by our secondary school pupils is very often exaggerated. Today we have plenty of such material in many books intended for collateral reading in the regional languages. It is the task of the teacher to select the books containing historical information of the basic type, and to assess its authenticity on the

basis of his own studies. Apart from the prescribed text book, the pupils may be referred to the source books of local history which may be available in the library. It is not that we suggest that pupils should do systematic study and interpretation of original documents or archaeological or numismatic evidences. All that has to be attempted must be to make history, real and living. It may be by means of the laboratory method just to give the necessary experience and insight to the pupils as to the manner in which historical facts are discovered and historical truths are sifted. A mere look at some of the historical antiquities like coins, tools, pottery, inscriptions on plates or stones, even pictures, is bound to rouse the interest and curiosity of pupils and help them find history in every one of them. The use of these simple re-sources would vitalise the otherwise 'dry as dust' facts which usually bore our pupils because they make no meaning to them. On the other hand the joy in the discovery of something new would be the result of their invigorated reasoning and judgment.

Prof. S. Thiruvengkatachari, an enthusiastic student of history, has been able, by actual visits to several places in the district of Ramanathapuram with a passion characteristic of a historian, to reconstruct the history of the Setupatis of Ramnad in order to provide a very reliable referencer for the teacher of history, who in these parts finds himself in a quandary when he has to teach or interpret local history. The revised syllabuses of the seven year integrated lower secondary and the higher secondary courses have created a compelling necessity to be thoroughly acquainted with local history. So far as the district of Ramanathapuram is concerned, the history of the Setupatis is the only local history that comprehends the whole region. This has been put in an authentic form, so that teachers of history may be easily able to draw from it reliable historical material to work upon in their classes. The book has been the product of the author's arduous and indefatigable efforts to get at the material which, after a scientific appraisal, he has been

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able to incorporate in the construction of his work. I am quite sure that teachers of history in this area will have no need to be in dismay or despair in regard to material for the teaching of local history. The book issued as a publication of the Department of Extension Services under the aegis of the Directorate of Extension Programmes, New Delhi, will be received with gratitude by the numerous teachers of history in this part of the country.

P. DORAIKANNOO MUDALIAR,
Principal & Honorary Director.

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I. THE MARAVAS AND THEIR COUNTRY

1. INTRODUCTION

The Setupatis belong to the Marava clan. The Maravas are known to have lived in the Tamil country from the earliest times. Many of the earliest Tamil works extant like the *Purananuru*, the *Ahananuru* and the *Silappadikaram* refer to the warlike qualities of the Maravas¹. The Maravas, as the name implies, were the warrior clan of the Tamil country, just like the Rajaputs in the north. They followed fighting as a hereditary occupation for many centuries, and are celebrated in Tamil literature for their courage, chivalry, code of honour, consideration for the weak and righteousness. Unfortunately the term Marava was, until recently, subject to a good deal of misinterpretation with the result that the people to whom the term refers were sometimes mistaken for miscreants and marauders². 'Maram' in Tamil means heroism and 'Maravar' means those who engage themselves in acts of heroism. There is no warrant for any other meaning. The section devoted to the Maravas in Thurston's *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* hardly does any justice to the traditional warrior clan of the Tamil country and is just an example of the kind of misunderstanding that was propagated during the last one hundred years about many of our ancient communities.

There is the tradition that Sri Rama himself entrusted the responsibility of guarding the south-eastern coast of India to the Maravas. From this and other stories circulated about the origin of the Maravas, the only inference permissible is that the Maravas were an ancient people inhabiting the southern part of the Tamil country. It was because of their being expert warriors it was possible not only to defend the South from foreign invasions, but also to build three great empires in the South. The Cholas and the Pandyas had Marava soldiers in their employ; and the immunity of the South, especially the Tamil country, from north Indian invasions and domination over a major part of the ancient and mediaeval periods, must be attributed to the efficiency of the Tamil army which had the traditions built up by the hereditary warriors of the South. It would not have been possible for Rajaraja and Rajendra to have crossed the seas and won victories in such far off lands as Kadaram or Lanka but for the reputed valour of the Tamil soldiers who had been trained in the Marava discipline and the Marava way of fighting.

Maravas inhabit all the places in the Tamil country. They are found in large numbers in Ramnad, Tirunelveli and Madurai districts. But the traditional Marava country is the area included in the Ramnad district and the former Pudukkottai State³. The Maravas are associated with the *Palai Nilam* among the five regions mentioned in Tamil literature⁴. Their hardihood was the result of their having to struggle for their existence in areas

A
tradition

The Marava
Country

where there was very little scope for agriculture because of scarcity of water. Even today Ramnad continues to remind us of the *Palai Nilam* of the classical literature; but the passage of time has brought with it some improvement so that more people live in the modern Ramnad than in the Ramnad of the Sangam times.

The Marava country was not really a totally deserted area. Though poor in agriculture, with nothing growing except low useless shrubbery, the area had a strategic importance in history. Being the gateway to Ceylon, possibly the much disputed 'Kavatam' of the Ramayana, this area had to be taken particular care of by the ruling kings⁵. The history of India has sufficient evidence to show that the Marava country very often came to the forefront during the Pallava, Chola and Pandyan periods.

Another factor that contributed to the importance of the area was that the Ramnad coast had been a famous centre of great maritime activity for thousands of years. Tondi and Pasi are mentioned among the great sea ports of the Coromandal coast by the foreign travellers and the geographers of the past⁶. The *Silappadikaram* mentions Tondi as a great sea port⁷. Tondi was the port through which exports were made to Ceylon, Malaya and China. Today Tondi is famous only for its good fish which are caught and sold all over the Ramnad district. Two thousand years ago, the sea in Tondi was good enough for the ships of the period to cast anchor, and to take the goods meant for being exported, or unload the goods coming to India.

Maritime
Activity

Though agriculturally backward, the economy of the Marava country had its bright feature in the pearl fisheries and coast line particularly suited to fishing. The Marava country had, perhaps, the monopoly of the pearl trade at one time. The pearls of the Gulf of Mannar were proverbial for their high quality, and they brought plenty of foreign gold into India. Even today, pearl fishing is an important occupation of the people in the area. It is very interesting to watch the operations during the fishing season. Marco Polo refers to the great pearl fisheries off the Ramnad coast, and gives a very interesting description of the operations. He wrote more than six centuries ago; but a person watching the operations today will see a good deal of correspondence between the methods that Marco Polo knew about and those employed today. Here is Marco Polo's description of pearl fishing in the Marava country:⁸

“Leaving the island of Ceylon, and sailing in a westerly direction sixty miles, you reach the great province of Maabar, which is not an island, but a part of the continent of the greater India, as it is termed, being the noblest and richest country in the world. It is governed by four kings(?) of whom the principal is named Sonder Bandi (Sundara Pandyan). Within his dominions is a fishery for pearls, in a gulf of a bay that lies between Maabar and the island of Ceylon, where water is not more than from ten to twelve fathoms in depth. The business of the fishery is conducted in the follow-

ing manner: A number of merchants form themselves into separate companies, and employ many vessels and boats of different sizes, well provided with ground-tackle, by which to ride safely at anchor. They engage and carry with them persons who are skilled in the art of diving for the oysters in which the pearls are enclosed. These they bring up in bags made of netting that are fastened about their bodies, and then repeat the operation, rising to the surface when they can no longer keep their breath, and, after a short interval, diving again. In this operation they persevere during the whole of the day, and by their exertions accumulate (in the course of the season) a quantity of oysters sufficient to supply the demands of all countries. The greater proportion of the pearls obtained from the fisheries in this gulf, are round, and of good lustre. The spot where the oysters are taken in the greatest number is called Batala, on the shore of the mainland, and from thence the fishery extends sixty miles southward.

In consequence of the gulf being infested with a kind of large fish, which often prove destructive to the divers, the merchants take the precaution of being accompanied by certain enchanters belonging to a class of Brahmans, who, by means of their diabolical art, have the power of constraining and stupefying these fish, so as to prevent them from doing mischief; and as the fishing takes place in the day-time only, they discontinue the effect of the charm in the evening in order that dishonest

persons who might be inclined to take the opportunity of diving at night and stealing the oysters may be deterred by the apprehension they feel of the unrestrained ravages of these animals. The enchanters are, likewise, profound adepts in the art of charming all kinds of beasts and birds. The fishery commences in the month of April and lasts till the middle of May. The privilege of engaging in it is farmed of the king, to whom a tenth part only of the produce is allowed; to the magicians they allow a twentieth part and consequently they reserve to themselves a considerable profit. By the time the period above-mentioned is completed, the stock of oysters is exhausted; and the vessels are taken to another place, distant full three hundred miles from this gulf, where they establish themselves in the month of September and continue till the middle of October. Independently of the tenth of the pearls to which the king is entitled, he requires to have the choice of all such as are large and well-shaped; and as he pays liberally for them, the merchants are not disinclined to carry them to him for that purpose."

2. IN EARLY HISTORY

The Marava country was included in the dominions of the Pallavas as evidenced by the Pallava caves in that country and by the large number of inscriptions found in it⁹. The northern part of the Marava country, especially the Pudukkottai area, contains more

relics of the Pallava period than any other single area in South India. Sittannavasal, Kudumianmalai, Nartamalai, Tirugokarnam, Tirumeyyam and Kunrakkudi contain many monuments and epigraphs of the Pallava period. One sometimes wonders why a dynasty, ruling with Kanchipuram in the Tondaimandalam region as the capital city, should have devoted so much attention to the southernmost possessions to the extent of leaving some of the most remarkable monuments in them. The most wonderful caves and temples, and the only remains of the paintings of the Pallava period, are to be found in this area. One explanation is plausible. Because of the strategic importance of this area the Pallavas did not neglect it; and as the passage to Ceylon they guarded it as well as they did the northern coast line. Another factor that contributed to the importance that the Pallavas attached to this area was that the Ramnad coast had been a great centre of maritime activity for thousands of years.

During the period of the Cholas of the Vijayalaya line, the Marava country was part of the Chola dominions for a long period. It must also have been the passage to Ceylon with which the Cholas had political relationship. During the Chola-Pandya wars the Marava country, on many occasions, became the cockpit of Tamilnad. For instance, during Sundara Chola's reign, there was conflict between the Cholas and the Pandyas supported by the Ceylonese. Sundara and his son Aditya met the

Vijayalaya

Cholas

Pandyas in a number of engagements in Sevoor to the south of the Sevali hills¹⁰. The Cholas had the support of the Velirs of Kodumbalur. The Pandyan king had the support of the Ceylonese. The result of the conflict was victory for the Cholas. Under Rajaraja, the Pandyan country came under Cholas. The northern part of Ceylon also became a Chola territory under the name of Mummudi Chola Mandalam¹¹. There is a Siva temple in the old city of Polanarua in Ceylon which stands as an unmistakable monument of the Chola sovereignty over the northern part of the island. The Marava country too must have come under the Chola suzerainty during this period. Under the successors of Rajaraja, until the revival of the Pandyan glory, the Marava country was subject to the authority of the Cholas.

3. THE CEYLONESE OCCUPATION

An interesting chapter in the history of the Marava country is that which relates to the developments in the year 1170 culminating in the Ceylonese invasion of the Marava country. In that year there was a dispute over the Madurai throne between the two rival claimants, Parakrama Pandya and Kulasekhara. Kulasekhara, it would appear, had the initial advantage, and this exasperated Parakrama who appealed to the Ceylonese ruler Parakramabahu for help. Parakramabahu responded to Parakrama Pandya's distress appeal and ordered a Ceylonese regiment to proceed to the Pandyan

The Ceylonese
occupation

country. Before the Ceylonese arrived, Kulasekhara captured Parakrama Pandya and the available members of his family and put them all to death. He assumed the title of Pandyan Emperor. Lankapura Dandanayaka, under whose command the Ceylonese army was to land in India, had information about Parakrama Pandya's fate; but under the orders of Parakramabahu he led the army to the Indian shore. The Ceylonese account refers to his having landed in Talabbilla. This place is identified with Puliadisalai, a few miles east of what is known as Gandamadana Parvatham which is near Rameswaram. This identification by the eminent historian Dr. S. K. Iyengar has not been questioned so far¹². Dr. Iyengar supports his identification by referring to a local tradition about the Ceylonese king Parakramabahu constructing the *sanctum sanctorum* of the Rameswaram temple. The inscriptions in the *sanctum* of the Rameswaram temple with Ceylonese names seem to lend support to this view. The two footprints on the Gandamadana Parvatham popularly considered to be the footprints of Sri Rama are likely to be the footprints meant for a Buddhist shrine designed by Lankapura Dandanayaka.

Now to the Ceylonese invasion: On his landing in India, the General attacked Rameswaram and took possession of the island. He moved to Pamban and seized a place called Kundugala identified with Kundugal. Lankapura had to face the opposition of the Pandyan troops as he took every inch of the ground near Rameswaram.

After he established himself at Vedalai, a few miles from Mandapam, Kulasekhara took over the command personally. Kulasekhara looked upon the presence of the Ceylonese as a great calamity because, there was no knowing if the motive of Lankapura was to avenge the murder of Parakrama Pandya or to make use of it as a pretext for extending the Ceylonese rule over the Pandyan country. Kulasekhara's army included soldiers from the Kongu country. In the engagement between Kulasekhara's troops and the Ceylonese troops, the Ceylonese got the better of the Pandyan troops, and from Vedalai the Ceylonese marched, evidently, without much opposition, to Devipattinam. After a halt in this place, the Ceylonese moved to Siruvayal. From there they marched by the Kalaiyarkoil-Paramakudi route, and took possession of Anivalakkottai, and Nettur a few miles from Ilayangudi. These two places became more or less the centres of operation for the Ceylonese army.

While in Nettur, the Ceylonese General made enquiries about the family of Parakrama Pandya to espouse whose cause he had come to India. He learnt that a son of the deceased Pandya by name Vira Pandya was in hiding somewhere in the country¹³. Lankapura sent messengers in search of Vira Pandya with instructions that the Pandya might join him in the Marava country. Vira Pandya must have joined him very soon after this, because, from now on, it would appear that Lankapura

carried out the orders of the Pandya as his "superior". Manamadurai was the next place taken, and from there the march was to Anjukkottai near Tiruvadanaï¹⁴. After this he took the ports of Tondi and Pasipattinam. He did not halt anywhere but pressed forward, first to Kuruntankudi, and thence, to Tiruveganpattu. Semponmari in the Tiruppattur taluk was the next destination of the Ceylonese.

Thus, for a time, the Marava country, from Rameswaram to Tiruppattur, came under the sway of the Ceylonese leader. From the Ceylonese accounts it would appear that Lankapura really ruled over the Marava country during the period of his occupation of it. One Malava Chakravarti, the former chieftain of Semponmari who had fled at the approach of Lankapura first, accepted Lankapura's authority, and the Ceylonese General restored him to his position. During the period of the occupation, Lankapura repaired all the damages suffered by the Rajasinga-mangalam and Valugrama tanks.

Kulasekhara did not remain quiet. Having assessed and even felt the strength of the Ceylonese force, he collected a very vast army and appeared again in the Marava country with the determination to oust the Ceylonese from Ramnad. By this time Parakramabahu had sent reinforcements under another General Jagadvijaya Dandanayaka, who established himself in Anivalakkottai. Lankapura was in Nettur. When Kulasekhara started the offensive, Lankapura advanced and fought a battle in Mangalam which is the same as

The Chola
intervention

Valudival Mangalam eight or nine miles from Kalaiyarkoil on the road from Tiruppattur to Paramakkudi. From there he pushed forward to Siruvayal, and after winning fresher victories, returned to Kalaiyarkoil.

Jagadvijaya Dandanayaka was also active. He made sure that none of the places under Ceylonese occupation would give a foothold to Kulasekhara.

The two Ceylonese armies, one under Jagadvijaya Dandanayaka and the other under Lankapura Dhandanayaka, moved to Tiruppalur or Tiruppali and met
 Vira Pandya
 Crowned
 Kulasekhara in a place not very far from here. Kulasekhara was defeated; and for sometime we do not hear of Kulasekhara at all. The Ceylonese General had no difficulty in placing Vira Pandya on the Pandyan throne. Leaving Vira Pandya in Madurai, the Ceylonese went in pursuit of Kulasekhara Pandya who was believed to be hiding in Tiruppattur. The Ceylonese moved to Tiruppattur and drove away the supporters of Kulasekhara to Ponnamaravati. At Ponnamaravati the Ceylonese burnt down all the buildings of the supporters of Kulasekhara. After making sure that Kulasekhara would not return, the Ceylonese General returned to Madurai to celebrate the victories. Lankapura issued a proclamation to all the chieftains to come and participate in the formal coronation celebrations and revelries in Madurai. For a few days Madurai was in ecstasies.

Where was Kulasekhara and what was he doing? When Lankapura was in pursuit of him he was hiding in the mountain fastnesses in his own dominion.

After the General returned to Madurai to celebrate his successes, Kulasekhara secured the help of some of the chieftains, including the feudatory ruler of Arantangi, and took Mangalam, possibly the Mangalam in Sattur taluk. Then he took possession of Srivilliputtur. The Ceylonese Generals now stopped their merry-making and made a joint attack on Kulasekhara and defeated him in a great battle. This time also Kulasekhara's efforts bore no fruit, and he had to seek asylum in the Chola country.

The Chola king Rajadhiraja II was all sympathy for Kulasekhara. He sent a regiment commanded by one Pallava Rayar by sea to Tondi and Pasi. Lankapura had intelligence of this, and from Kalaiyarkoil where he was camping, he rushed to Kilanilai in the Tirumeyyam taluk. The Chola force met the Ceylonese somewhere near this place; and according to Ceylonese accounts, this time also Lankapura was successful. After a few more victories over Kulasekhara, Lankapura with the rest of the Ceylonese forces, returned to Ceylon, assured that Vira Pandya's position could not be shaken and that Kulasekhara had been rendered inoperative. He ordered Vira Pandya to use the Ceylonese coin called 'Kahapana' with the superscription of Parakramabahu in the Pandyan country.

One does not know under what circumstances the Ceylonese forces retreated. The account we have given above is mainly from Ceylonese sources and is likely to be coloured and one-sided. From

that account one gets the impression that Lankapura was invincible. The version of the story in the Chola inscriptions is different. According to it, it was the Chola intervention under the General Pallava Rayar that turned the table against the Ceylonese and forced their return to Ceylon¹⁵. But there can be no doubt that until the Chola intervention the Ceylonese had the upper hand. The dispute over the throne of Madurai continued even after the return of the Ceylonese; but as our interest in the history of the Pandyas is restricted to its bearing on the Marava country, we do not pursue the narrative.

The Ceylonese occupation of the Marava country lasted for at least seven or eight years. The author of the *Ramnad Manual*, without referring to the succession dispute, mentions the conquests of Parakramabahu in the Pandya country; and there is no warrant, it is very obvious, for his statement that "the Pandyan confessed himself vanquished, and the Chola and the Pandya kingdoms were annexed to the Lanka Government."

The occupation, be it noted, was for a few years only. There are signs, even today, of the Ceylonese occupation of the Marava country all over the Ramnad district¹⁶. Lankapura Dandanayaka was not a mere soldier, and his interest in works of peace is reflected in his repairs to temples, construction of roads and repairs to many irrigation tanks in the Marava country.

With the fall of the Chola empire and the emergence of the last Pandyan empire the Marava country came under the Pandyas. Marco Polo refers to the authority of the Pandyas over the Ramnad area. His description of the society and government under the Pandyas is most fascinating¹⁷.

The Pandyan empire began to decline about the end of the thirteenth century when there was the feud between Vira Pandya and Sundara Pandya. About this time a foreigner came into the picture, **Malik Kafur** for the first time, of the South Indian politics. It was Malik Kafur the General of Alauddin Khilji who came to the South on a plundering campaign. According to some accounts, Malik Kafur marched across the Marava country and plundered the Rameswaram temple, reputed at that time for its fabulous wealth¹⁸. However, there are scholars who do not believe that Malik Kafur's plundering raids were extended into the Ramnad country.

Whatever be the truth or otherwise in the story of Malik Kafur's Rameswaram raids, within two decades of Malik Kafur's southern campaigns, a Muslim kingdom was set up in the Tamil country with Madurai as the capital. The Pandyan rule had come to an end by this time, and the Muslim Sultanate of Madurai was set up close upon the end of the Pandyan rule. This was an 'imitation' Sultanate set up by a few adventurers from Delhi and later developed by certain members of the Bahmini House of the Deccan¹⁹. This Sultanate lasted

for less than half a century; but its rule at one time spread into a good part of the Tanjore district

The Madurai
Sultanato

and the whole of the Tiruchirapalli, Ramnad, and Madurai districts²⁰.

The Marava country was placed under a Muslim governor who, I imagine, must have had his headquarters somewhere near Devakkottai where there is one of the two Muslim inscriptions of the Marava country dated in the Hijra era, the other one being found in Tirukkolakkudi²¹. During the Muslim Sultanate the Ramnad country suffered the worst ordeals, as one may be able to gather from the writings of Ibn Batuta, the Moorish traveller, who was a guest of one of the Sultans of Madurai and who had to witness some of the cruelties and atrocities perpetrated by the Madurai Sultans²². It was only when Kampana destroyed the Madurai Sultanate (A. D. 1371) that the Ramnad country was relieved from the sufferings to which it had been subject for over forty years.

Under the Vijayanagar rulers the Marava country must have been included as part of the southernmost dominions administered through the governors. We do not have many Vijayanagar inscriptions in the Marava country though we have a large number belonging to the Nayaks of Madurai. The surmise is not farfetched that the hold that Vijayanagar had on Ramnad must have been loose and the local chieftains enjoyed plenty of authority.

II. THE FIRST PERIOD AS NAYAK FEUDATORIES

1. SADAIKA DEVAR

It is only in 1604 that we hear of a Setupati ruler actually ruling over the Ramnad country though as a subordinate of the Madurai Nayak²³. Udayan Raghunatha Setupati, *alias Sadaika Devar*, the first known Setupati, assumed royal titles and ruled for a period of seventeen years. The circumstances under which he assumed power are shrouded in mystery. As usual with the origin of many dynasties of Indian history, the origin of the Setupatis of the regular ruling line is lost in legend and incredible stories. According to one of these, Sadaika Devar was discovered by some pilgrims on their way to Rameswaram, under a tamarind tree, sleeping heedless of the cobra that had spread its hood over his head, protecting him, as it were, from the hot sun. The pilgrims thought that it was an indication that the sleeping person was destined to become the ruler of the country. The legend goes further to imply that the belief of the pilgrims was not belied, and not long after this experience of theirs, Sadaika was declared the ruler of the Ramnad country. Another story refers to the insecure condition of the roads leading to Rameswaram and the constant

The first
historical
Setupati

petitioning by the pilgrims before the Nayak rulers of Madurai for making suitable arrangements for the safety and protection of the pilgrims. The Nayak ruler of Madurai, it is said, appointed Sadaika Devar as the chief of Ramnad and its coast. Sadaika Devar had already shown his loyalty to the Madurai Nayak by conducting his Guru to and back from Rameswaram.²⁴

It is not possible to sift history from such accounts; and all that we could say with the material available is, that until 1600, some kind of a flexible arrangement had been made for the protection of the Ramnad country by the overlord of the country, whether it was a Chola, Pandya, Nayak, or any of the members of the Muslim dynasty who ruled for a short period over Madurai. It is not improbable that some Marava chieftain or other was in charge of the Ramnad country from early times; but we are not aware of any kind of a hereditary succession of chieftains having exercised any real political authority over the country before Sadaika Devar. Even in regard to Sadaika Devar, in spite of his assuming independent titles and issuing decrees under those titles, he was a vassal under Muthukrishnappa Nayak of Madurai. There is an inscription of Muthukrishnappa Nayak dated A. D. 1608 referring to the construction of a shrine in Rameswaram in that year. This shows that the Nayak was the overlord of a sizable part of the old Pandyan country. Therefore, let it not appear intriguing that there is

Foundatory of
the Nayak

an inscription of the Setupati dated 1606 mentioning a gift by him to the Rameswaram temple.²⁵ The history of the Tamil country is full of instances in which the overlord and the vassal issued orders independently in a territory. Sadaika Devar was undoubtedly the first Setupati whose inscriptions have been discovered; and on the basis of the available epigraphical evidence, it is safe to assume that the Setupati rule commenced under Sadaika Devar with a position of subordination to the Madurai Nayak for a period of over half a century.

Sadaika Devar appears to have played his part as a ruler nobly. He won the regard and appreciation of the Nayak by his loyalty demonstrated through the regular payment of the stipulated tributes and through his acts, at the instance of the Nayak, calculated to restore peace and order in an area that had evidently been the asylum of highway robbers and murderers. Sadaika developed agriculture in the area; and this must have been an invitation to many people to settle permanently in what had once been the 'desert passage' of the Pandyan country. Though the town of Ramnad existed during his time, and probably long before it, it had not yet become the main capital of the Setupatis.²⁶ Bogalur was the primary capital and Sadaika Devar fortified it.²⁷ Bogalur is located north-west of Ramanathapuram at a distance of about ten miles, and there are no signs of the glory that it is reputed to have attained once.

A loyal
vassal

We cannot be definite as regards the territories that were under the rule of Sadaika Devar. But one could put forth a guess that the territories south and south-east of Sivagangai upto Rameswaram must have been under his control. Territories Kalaiyarkoil and Pattamangalam are mentioned among Sadaika Devar's territorial annexations. The fact that he endowed properties to Tiruvadanaï temple may indicate his hold, also on the area now going by the name of Tiruvadanaï taluk.²⁸

Sadaika Devar died in 1621 leaving four sons and a daughter. There is no agreement among historians as regards the names of the children of Sadaika Devar; but according to one of the family pedigrees of the Setupatis, Sadaika Devar's sons were Koothan Raghunatha Setupati, Dalavai Raghunatha Setupati, Kaliyanapuli Devar, Peddanna Nayaka Devar, and his daughter was Kathalai Nachiar.

2. DALAVAI SETUPATI

Koothan Setupati, the eldest son of Sadaika Devar succeeded to the throne on the death of his father. He ruled for fourteen years and won popular esteem by his acts of piety. He made further endowments to the Tiruvadanaï temple and added more buildings to the Rameswaram temple. One of the inscriptions in the Rameswaram temple describes him as the 'Thalaivan' and another inscription describes him as the 'Setupati'. He was a god-fearing ruler and his reign was peaceful.²⁹

Koothan Setupati, having died childless, his brother Dalavai Raghunatha Setupati assumed the title of Sadaikan II and established his rule over the

Ramnad country. He was a person with an independent spirit, and unlike his brother, whose throne he inherited, he had strong likes and dislikes. Whatever was his motive, he announced early in his reign that he was appointing his sister's son Raghunatha Devar as the heir-apparent. This enraged Peddanna Nayaka Devar, who, incidentally, was an illegitimate son of Sadaika Devar. Peddanna, more famous as Thambi Devar, was in charge of the Kalaiyarkoil territory at that time. He had a scheming head and wanted to do Dalavai in the eye. The Nayak ruler of Madurai at that time was Tirumala. Tirumala looked upon the Setupati as the veritable Frankenstein and dreaded that the Marava ruler might one day destroy the Madurai supremacy. It was just then that Thambi Devar was thinking of revenge against Dalavai Setupati. It was, therefore, not difficult for Thambi to ingratiate himself into the favour of Tirumalai Nayak, and before long, disputed the claim of Dalavai Setupati himself, possibly, at the instigation of Tirumalai Nayak. When the dispute assumed some proportion, Tirumala, as the overlord, stepped in and decided in favour of Thambi Devar, and declared Dalavai Setupati an usurper. By then Dalavai had stabilised his position, and the Nayak's decision could be enforced only at the point of the sword. Dalavai refused to vacate the throne, and Tirumala sent a contingent of his army with the necessary supplies

Dalavai
Raghunatha
Setupati

for seizing the throne from Dalavai and handing it over to Thambi. Two famous Generals of the Nayak army, Ramappiah and Ranganna Nayakan, were in command of the operation. Ramnad was besieged, but the Setupati moved over to Pamban with his followers. While in Pamban, he had the help of European soldiers who came from Ceylon and Cochin to his assistance.³⁰ The Madurai army, however, was determined to remove every opposition to Thambi Devar; and though Ramappiah died on account of illness during the progress of the civil war, the Madurai army succeeded in taking Dalavai prisoner. Dalavai was taken to Madurai and incarcerated.³¹

Thambi Devar was not left in peace. Dalavai's nephews were in arms against him. They were very popular, and Thambi could do nothing to stop the growing opposition against him under their leadership. He, therefore, fled to Madurai where the Nayak ruler did not give him the expected reception. The inability of Thambi to keep the throne given to him after so much of hard fighting lowered him in the esteem of the Nayak.

After Thambi's flight there was an interregnum of anarchy during which the pilgrims coming to Rameswaram experienced great hardships. The Nayak of Madurai had no other alternative except to restore the throne to Dalavai Setupati and ask Thambi to keep the peace. Dalavai returned to Ramnad and restored order and good government. He remained on the throne for five years without any opposition; and during this period endeared himself to

Return of
Dalavai

his subjects by his acts of piety and charity.³² He granted several villages as gifts for the support of the Brahmins. He made very large endowments to the Rameswaram temple. He built the Chokkanathaswami temple in Rameswaram.

Thambi Devar, the wounded snake that he was, was biding his time to show both to the Nayak, who had let him down, and to Dalavai that he was not the one who would pocket an insult calmly. We do not know how Thambi managed it; but the grim fact of history is that he succeeded in his plot to kill Dalavai.³³ In 1646 Thambi ascended the throne again.

The Maravar leaders refused to accept the regicide as their ruler. Tirumala promptly intervened and prevented a civil war in Ramnad by dividing the Ramnad kingdom into three portions, one of which, with Ramnad as the capital, was given to Raghunatha Devar, the nephew of Dalavai, another comprising the Sivagangai territory was given to Thambi Devar, and the third comprising the Tiruvadanai area, to Thanakka Devar and Narayana Devar, the two younger brothers of Raghunatha Devar, who were to rule the territory conjointly.

3. TIRUMALAI SETUPATI

Raghunatha Setupati also known as Tirumalai Setupati became the ruler of the shrunken kingdom of Ramnad in 1647. Fortune favoured him. Thanakka Devar the ruler of Tiruvadanai died, and Raghunatha Setupati had no difficulty in annexing the Tiruvadanai territory. Of course, Thambi

was the thorn on Raghunatha's side; but he too died suddenly; and thus the old Ramnad kingdom united again.

During Raghunatha Setupati's rule the Ramnad kingdom was further enlarged by new territorial acquisitions. Mannarkudi, Pattukkottai, Devakkottai, Arantangi and Tiruvarur, which were under Expansion the Tanjore ruler, were taken by the Setupati, and thus the Ramnad kingdom included parts of the modern Tanjore district also.⁵⁴ The Setupati now became a rival to Madurai in point of territory and influence.

The Madurai Nayak was having a bad time just then. The Mysore army invaded Madurai, and Tirumalai Nayak was in danger of losing his life and kingdom. Raghunatha Setupati hurried Defeat of the Mysorians to Madurai at the head of 25,000 Marava soldiers to the succour of Tirumala. The Mysorians were ousted by the Setupati and Madurai was saved. Tirumalai Nayak showed his gratitude to Raghunatha Setupati by giving him the titles of 'Tirumalai Setupati' and 'protector of the queen's Thali'.⁵⁵ He also permitted Raghunatha all the paraphernalia of royalty like the lion-faced palanquin used by the Nayaks. He exempted him from paying any tribute. He also gave him the territories of Tirupuvanam, Tiruchuli and Pallimadam.

Thus, in a sense, Raghunatha Setupati became an independent ruler though he was still under the nominal overlordship of the Nayak ruler. But Raghunatha was content to be loyal to Tirumala; and in spite of his vast territories and unlimited

resources, he never missed any opportunity to prove his loyalty to the Nayak. In fact, he even went to the extent of making Telugu, the Nayak's mother tongue, the alternate state language in the Ramnad kingdom. Some of the documents of Raghunatha were in Telugu.

Raghunatha is remembered as the Setupati who introduced the Navaratri celebrations into this part of the country. The Nayaks made a very great occasion of the Navaratri, and Madurai ^{Navaratri} used to put on festive appearance during the nine days. It is said that Tirumalai Nayak presented Raghunatha with an image of Durga and enjoined on his worshipping the image.³⁶ The temple of Rajarajeswari Amman in Ramnad became the scene of the Navaratri festivities, and the Navaratri became the annual festival of Ramnad, and later of Sivagangai and Pudukkottai.

Raghunatha also repelled a rising of Muslims headed by one Kutb Khan. More serious than the Muslim rising was the opposition presented by a confederation of the Palayakkarars, headed by the Ettayapuram chief, to the Madurai ruler. The Setupati, ^{Kutb Khan} as the chief of the Palayakkarars, took prompt action and put the Ettayapuram chief and other rebels to death. The Nayak king, in recognition of this service, gave the Setupati some territories in the neighbourhood of Mannarkoil in the Tirunelveli country. He also made him the protector of the pearl fishery in the Gulf of Mannar which was a great source of income to the Nayaks.³⁷

For many years the Setupatis and the Nayak overlord got on very well, and there was absolutely nothing to mar the cordial relationship between the two. But there was the psychological factor, viz., that Raghunatha, the vassal, was more influential than the Nayak overlord. After the quelling of the Muslim rising, the Nayak ruler began to imagine that the Setupati was overbearing and irreverential for which there was absolutely no basis. When the Nayak was faced with an opposition from the Muslims again, the Setupati did not go to his help. This made the Nayak more suspicious about Raghunatha. He surprised Raghunatha by suddenly seizing Tirupattur, Pudukkottai and Manamadurai and the fort of Kalaiyarkoil. The Marava ruler, evidently, was puzzled for some time at the sudden change in the Nayak's attitude, but did not hesitate to defend his position. It was not long before he put a check on the advancing Nayak soldiers. The Nayak ruler at last realised that the whole campaign should not have been undertaken. He called it off and was content to keep the fortresses taken from the Marava.

The above campaign was, no doubt, the cause of a serious set-back to the Ramnad kingdom which had for many years grown steadily. But the Marava king was undaunted, and the few years that he lived after the war with his overlord, he spent quietly and peacefully in Ramnad. He is credited with having built a village near Rameswaram which was easily accessible by the causeway constructed by

Ramappiah during the war with Dalavai Setupati.³⁸

Piety Raghunatha made frequent visits to Rameswaram, and on one occasion performed the Hiranyagarbha sacrifice and took the title 'Hiranyagarbhayaji' which all the Setupatis assumed afterwards. Raghunatha endowed the Kothandaraman choultry in Rameswaram and the temples in Anaiyur, Melachiruppottu, Velimuthy, Vadathakkulam and Tiruchuli. He also made grants to the Tiruvavaturai Mutt in the Tanjore district. He built the Vanasankari Amman temple in Ramnad. He also constructed a Mariamman temple in Ramnad after an attack of and recovery from small-pox. Having ruled gloriously for quarter of a century, Raghunatha died in the Tamil month of Ani in 1672 leaving the the Marava throne to his nephew, Rajasoorya Devar, the son of Narayana Devar.

Raghunatha's titles are mentioned in an inscription found in Tiruppattur dated Saka 1589, Pilavanga, i. e.,

Titles A. D 1667-68. They are: Tevai Nagaradipan (தேவை நகராதிபன்), Setumularakshaka Durandaran (சேது மூலரக்ஷக துரந்தரன்), Ramanathaswami Karya Durandaran (ராமநாதஸ்வாமி கார்ய துரந்தரன்), Vaigai Vala Nadan (வைகை வளநாடான்), Bharatha Nataka Praveenan (பரத நாடக பிரவீணன்) and Tondian Turai Kavalan (தொண்டியன் துரைக் காவலன்).³⁹

Rajasoorya's rule lasted for a few months only. When there was war between Madurai and Tanjore Rajasoorya became victim to treachery and conspiracy and was decoyed to Tiruchirapalli where he was put to death under the orders of the Maduai General.⁴⁰

Rajasoorya was succeeded by Athana Raghunatha Setupati whose reign was also shortlived. We do not know under what circumstances he died. But his death, within three months of his accession, created the problem of succession. The Maravas, after a great deal of deliberation, selected one Raghunatha Devar, better known as Kilavan Setupati, as the ruler of Ramnad.⁴¹

THE SETUPATIS OF THE FIRST PERIOD

(1604—1674)

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Sadaika Devar | A. D. 1604—1621 |
| 2. Koothan Setupati | „ 1621—1635 |
| 3. Dalavai Setupati | „ 1635—1646 |
| 4. The Thambi Interregnum | „ 1646—1647 |
| 5. Tirumalai Setupati | „ 1647—1672 |
| 6. Rajasoorya Setupati | „ 1672 |
| 7. Athana Raghunatha Setupati | „ 1672-1673(?) |

III. THE SECOND PERIOD AS INDEPENDENT KINGS

1. KILAVAN SETUPATI

Kilavan Setupati assumed power in A. D. 1674, two years after Athana Raghunatha Setupati, according to the *Ramnad Manual*. The *Ramnad Manual Chronology* has fixed the chronology of the Setupatis with a semblance of reliability and authority. But one has to account for a number of chronological discrepancies arising out of a comparison of epigraphical evidence, the dates arrived at by Sewell and the dated documents of the Setupatis.⁴² According to the *Manual* an interregnum of two years from A. D. 1672 is suggested between Tirumalai Setupati and Kilavan Setupati. It mentions A. D. 1647 as the year of the accession of Tirumalai Setupati and A. D. 1672 as the year of his death. It states that Tirumalai Setupati died in the month of Ani of the Paritapi year i. e., A. D. 1672, and was immediately succeeded by Rajasoorya Setupati who, after a shortlived rule of six months 'from Adi to Margali of the Paritapi year' (1672), died as the result of a conspiracy at the hands of the Tanjore ruler in Tiruchirapalli. He was immediately succeeded by his brother Athana Raghunatha Setupati in 1672. Kilavan Setupati was chosen king in 1674, i. e., after an interval of two years.

Sewell has a different scheme of chronology. According to him Tirumalai Setupati died in 1670. He was succeeded by one Soorya Devar, possibly the same as Rajasoorya. He is mentioned as the king "put to death by the Dalavai of Madurai after six months' rule".⁴³ Sewell's list provides no place for Athana Raghunatha Setupati but states that there was anarchy for three years after which Raghunatha Devar the Second, an illegitimate offspring of Soorya Devar ascended the Ramnad throne.

We have examined all the available data, and have come to the conclusion that it is not possible to vouch for the accuracy of any of the accounts. Moreover, the chronological discrepancy, luckily, does not in any way affect the historicity of the details of Ramnad history. I have, for the sake of convenience, accepted the chronology given by the *Manual* for the period of Kilavan Setupati.

Whatever might have been the year of the death of Tirumalai Setupati, there was an interregnum of confusion which was no good either for the Marava kingdom or even the Nayak overlord. It was perhaps this realisation that prompted the acceptance of an illegitimate descendent as the ruler of the Ramnad kingdom. The Madurai overlord had to accept the nomination as it reflected the popular sentiment in the Marava country

The reign of Kilavan Setupati was singular in many respects. It witnessed a number of memorable

happenings in South India. It was during Kilavan's regime that Ramnad shook off the Madurai yoke and started on its career as an independent principality. It was during Kilavan Setupati's regime that the martyrdom of De Britto took place. Of all the Setupatis, Kilavan Setupati is undoubtedly the most important in point of the number of events that occurred in the Ramnad kingdom.

There is no doubt that Kilavan manoeuvred to get himself elected as the Setupati. From many of the events of his period, one could conclude that he was clever, intelligent and highly independent. He allowed no quarter to any one, and when he died in 1710, he had made the Ramnad kingdom a name to reckon in the politics of the South. That Ramnad figured a great deal in the manoeuvres and schemes of the British in the South to stabilise themselves must be attributed to the esteem to which the Ramnad kingdom had risen under Kilavan Setupati.⁴⁴

The very first act of the Setupati was to destroy his own king-makers to make sure that a rival claimant would not be set up during his life-time. This way of rewarding king-makers was nothing uncommon in the history of India.

When Kilavan Setupati assumed the rule of the Ramnad kingdom, Madurai was subject to the blackmail of the Muslims under the leadership of Rustum Khan. Though the Setupati gave valuable assistance to the Madurai ruler in the removal of the Muslim menace, the Nayak was unable to reconcile

An independent
Kingdom

A great
period

Risings
quelled

himself to the growing power and influence of his vassal, the Setupati. Very soon, this feeling of jealousy manifested itself in open hostility; and the troops of the Setupati and those of the Nayak clashed near Ramnad. The Tanjore ruler Ekoji sided the Ramnad ruler and sent reinforcements from Tanjore under the command of General Varaboji Panditan. It was a very difficult situation for the Nayak king to handle. Kilavan Setupati won all the victories. The Nayak had, therefore, to withdraw his troops.

Unfortunately, the friendly gesture of the Tanjore king towards the Setupati did not last long. Disputes arose as regards the territories which the Tanjore ruler had promised to cede to the Setupati as per a ^{The Tanjore} _{opposition} treaty concluded in 1686. Raghunatha Setupati, it was noted earlier, had extended the sphere of his influence into certain areas of the Tanjore country. It must be remembered that such hold as he had was loose, and therefore, not lasting. The 1686 treaty referred to above sought to regularise many of the Tanjore possessions of the Setupati; but the Tanjore king having disregarded the treaty, the Setupati had to have recourse to the use of force, and he invaded the Tanjore country and took the fortresses of Arantangi, Tirumeyyam, Piranmalai and all the areas south of the Ambari river.

The Nayak of Madurai looked upon the enmity between Tanjore and Ramnad as the opportunity to humble the Setupati. The Regent Rani ^{Rani} _{Mangammal} Mangammal immediately made common cause with the king of Tanjore, and in 1702, despatched

a large force to subdue the Setupati. This force contained Tanjore soldiers also, and was under the command of one Dalavai Narasappiah. Kilavan Setupati defeated the combined army in a battle in which Narasappiah lost his life. The Tanjore army withdrew and the Rani of Madurai had to suffer great humiliation.

The Rani was certainly ill-advised in her scheme to humble the Setupati's pride with the alliance of Tanjore. Kilavan was so much puffed up with his success in the war that he declared his independence. Ramnad which had been subordinate to Madurai, possibly, for many centuries, became an independent kingdom. This was no small blow on the prestige and power of the great Nayaks of Madurai.

The Tanjore ruler was smarting under the defeat and disgrace at the hands of the Setupati. He played a waiting game for seven years, and in 1709, when the Ramnad country was subject to a severe famine, he invaded the country. But Kilavan was more than a match for the Tanjore Maratta. He drove the Tanjore soldiers back and forced the ruler of Tanjore to accept a treaty of peace.

A very important event of the period was the advent of the Pudukkottai royal House as one subordinate to the Ramnad kingdom. One does not know the exact circumstances under which the Tondaiman rule over Pudukkottai was inaugurated, but from the accounts available it should be considered an accident. Kilavan married a girl named Kathalai, a daughter of one of his dependents. She had a

Beginnings of
Pudukkottai
principality

brother by name Raghunatha. Kilavan appointed him the Governor or the Chief of the Pudukkottai country and gave him the title of Tondaiman. Not very long after the creation of this new chieftaincy, Pudukkottai became independent, and at the time when the Pudukkottai State was merged with the Indian Union a few years ago, it was the only native state of the Tamil country, while Ramnad, Sivagangai and all the Palayakkarar chieftaincies had become reduced to the status of large zamindaris.

The Dutch were trying to get the maximum out of the pearl fisheries near the Ramnad coast. The Setupati looked upon the pearl fisheries in his domain as a fruitful source of income. The Dutch Kilavan, therefore, dealt with the Dutch firmly, and made them accept to give him sixty moorish stones and one full day's catch as fee for the right to fish in the Gulf.

2. THE DE BRITTO EPISODE

One of the aspects of Kilavan's reign that have come in for a good deal of discussion and severe criticism is his treatment of the famous missionary, De Britto. It is easy to be prejudiced in favour of one party in such matters as religion; and a dispassionate account of the De Britto episode is not to be had. It is no doubt possible to piece together the details, but the inferences always appear to be one-sided. I shall therefore present the picture as I have it from different sources; and if evidence seems to be overweighted in favour of one point of

view it should be attributed to the lack of fuller details.

Let us begin the story from the beginning. When Kilavan Setupati was the ruler of Ramnad, John De Britto was undoubtedly the greatest Christian missionary in the South. He had a great reputation not only as a spiritual leader among the Christians but as one who could work miracles. Not only Christians, but even non-Christians got cured of ailments with the help of De Britto. There was one Tiriya Devar, a member of the Ramnad royal House who ran the race for the Setupatiship along with Kilavan and got bowled out. He had no doubt a grouse against Kilavan which he dare not exhibit openly. He came under the influence of De Britto who cured him of a terrible disease, and it is said that he embraced Christianity. As member of a royal family, he had, naturally, a number of wives. The new faith which he had accepted did not permit polygamy; and he was therefore compelled to tell all but one of his wives that they should be mere sisters to him. The ladies of Tiriya Devar's harem were taken aback and implored him not to desert them. But Tiriya Devar would not listen to their pleadings. The women blamed this attitude of Tiriya Devar on John De Britto on whom they decided to wreak vengeance for infecting their husband with poisonous ideas. One of Tiriya Devar's wives by name Kathalai was a niece of Kilavan. She proceeded to Ramnad and gave the Setupati an account of what

had happened to her husband and to themselves, his wives. She represented De Britto as a vile magician who disgraced the ancient gods of India with a view to converting the land into a land of Parangis. The Setupati was naturally infuriated and ordered Tiriya Devar to arrest John De Britto and burn down the Catholic churches. Kathalai did not stop with her representation to the Setupati. She knew that the Brahmins were against John De Britto, particularly, one Pampavanam, and she arranged a deputation of Brahmins to wait upon the Setupati and to point out how the safety of the kingdom itself was imperilled by the progress of Christianity. The Brahmins represented that by the spread of Parangism, reverence for Hindu gods was disappearing, temples were falling into decay, and what had been dear and near to the Hindus was in danger of complete extinction. They pointed out, further, that the ulterior motive of the Christians was to install a Christian monarchy under Tiriya Devar.

Kilavan was completely unnerved by both the representations. He sent for Tiriya Devar and questioned him about the allegations made against De Britto's Britto and himself. Tiriya Devar answered ^{trials} without hesitation that it was a fact that De Britto had been preaching Christianity in the Marava country, had built four churches and had made many converts. As for himself, he was not ashamed of his new religion; on the other hand he was proud of being a disciple of De Britto. If it had been any other person giving the above answer he would have been instantly put to death for the insolence and arrogance which the

answer conveyed. But Tiriya Devar was a member of the royal family and was more closely related to that family than the illegitimate Kilavan. Kilavan knew that his titles were very shaky, and it was because of the people that he got the throne. Therefore, he received Tiriya Devar's answer without any exhibition of anger, but at the same time, ordered the arrest of De Britto. In fact, the anger that Kilavan had for Tiriya Devar was transferred to De Britto for no fault of his. At that time De Britto was residing in the village of Muni. The Setupati's men arrested him along with a Brahmin supporter of his, and two catechists. The four prisoners were chained and attached by long ropes to the saddles of four horses ridden by the Setupati's soldiers and were dragged along. De Britto was comforted by the groups of Christians who had collected all along the route. Hanumanthakudi was the destination. And as soon as it was reached, De Britto was led to an open space and ordered to call out the name of Siva. As he would not do it, he was subjected to no small humiliation and ill-treatment. De Britto spoke not a word during his trials and tribulation. Night came and the four offenders of the Setupati were left in peace. Later they were taken to Ramnad and thrown into prison. Tiriya Devar was also in Ramnad at that time and wanted to save his friends. The enemies of the Christians were pressing for vengeance, and the Setupati would have no peace if De Britto wielded the influence which he did. However, the Setupati could do no harm to De Britto in Ramnad because, Tiriya Devar was nearby, and there was also the fear which

the Setupati shared that De Britto, being a magician, might bring on the country great calamity if he was harmed in any way.

The Setupati was in a fix for many days. At last he resolved on a line of action. He issued a proclamation that De Britto was banished from his realm. He then sent De Britto with an ^{The} ~~Martyrdom~~ escort to his brother who was Governor of Oriyur. The *Manual* refers to a secret despatch which the Setupati sent to his brother in which he had asked his brother to destroy the foreign Sanyasi. The Governor's wife was a Christian and she implored her husband to save the life of De Britto. This could delay the terrible fate awaiting De Britto only for three days. The Governor's minister was an enemy of Christianity and De Britto. He wielded much influence with the Governor, and he prevailed upon him to destroy the foreign Sanyasi without further delay. The irresolute Governor ordered the execution of De Britto. On the fourth day of February 1693, De Britto was taken to an eminence overlooking the fortress of Oriyur and beheaded. His last remains were exposed as a warning to the other Christians. De Britto's body was not given a burial for a long time; and only after repeated petitioning did the followers of De Britto get the permission to collect the saint's remains and bury them.

The above version of the De Britto episode cannot be testified to as an accurate one. It raises certain issues which cannot be answered satisfactorily. How were the Setupati's soldiers interested in forcing

De Britto to utter the name of Siva? That was not what they were asked to do. There was absolutely no question of converting a foreign Roman Catholic into a Saivite. While there is evidence of Kilavan having banished De Britto from his dominion, there is nothing to warrant the belief that he might have sent a secret note to his brother to kill the Sanyasi. If a guess were permitted, the Oriyur Governor might have ordered the execution of De Britto because of the fear that the circumstance of his wife being a Christian might make the Setupati think that he, too, was abetting the political intriguing in which Tiriya Devar might have had De Britto's help, if he did not destroy the source of the trouble. Therefore, it would be well to suspend judgment as to the real circumstance leading to the execution of De Britto. If Kilavan did not do any harm while De Britto was in Ramnad for fear that De Britto might possess magical powers, would the same Setupati have plotted a secret execution of the 'magician'?

Kilavan was certainly no fanatic, and that there were thousands of Christians in his dominion, as testified to by the *Manual*, shows that members of all religions were treated alike in the Ramnad kingdom.⁴⁵ The De Britto episode, sad as it is, should be taken not as an evidence of any religious intolerance practised by the Setupati; but as an evidence of the intriguing that was going on against Kilavan, every opportunity to calumniate Kilavan being unscrupulously used by his opponents.

3. DE BRITTO: A SKETCH

Jean Hector De Britto was born at Lisbon on the first day of March 1647. His father, Don Salvador De Britto Pereyra, held high office under the Duke of Bragance, and having contributed not a little by his faithful and energetic efforts towards the elevation of that prince to the throne of Portugal, obtained as a reward, the important post of Governor of Rio-Janeiro, and died after holding it for two years. His widow Dona Beatrix Pereyra was a woman of lively intellect and of a deeply religious nature, and controlled the education of her young children with equal intelligence and assiduity. And the lessons which she inculcated into the pliable and generous mind of the future martyr, inspired him with the noblest sentiments and shielded him from the thousand temptations, which could not but assail one of his birth and brilliant qualities in a gay and luxurious court. When he arrived at early boyhood De Britto was admitted to the honour of forming one of that band of young nobles whom Pedro IV trained up under his own eye with a view to their becoming, in due time, ministers and councillors of uncommon ability and attachment to the throne; and in this position, he became at once distinguished on account of the high-bred simplicity of his manners, the beauty of his disposition, and more than all, by the striking elevation of thought which he constantly displayed. He was taught by Jesuit masters, and proved the ablest of pupils. Nothing delighted him more than

the study of the works of the greatest Greek and Roman authors, unless perhaps it was the study of the lives of great missionaries, and more particularly, that of Francis Xavier. So devoted indeed was he to this latter kind of literature that his gayer companions gave him the soubriquet, *the Martyr*.

As he grew up, young De Britto withdrew himself more and more from the society of his fellows and became engrossed in the idea of becoming a Jesuit and above all a missionary. His A life of resignation views were at first greatly discouraged by his mother, but her tenderness of heart yielded gradually to her strong good sense, and she ceased at last to dissuade her son from obeying what he felt to be a special call. The members of the royal family were equally opposed to De Britto adopting a religious life. He had especially endeared himself to every one in the capacity of a page and companion in the palace. The Queen was unwilling that her son should lose a friend and adviser of so rare a talent and disposition. But at last all obstacles were overcome, and on the 17th of December 1662, De Britto entered the house of noviciate.

He commenced his new life with the greatest ardour and devotion, and quickly earned the reputation of being one of the most orderly, pious and charitable Madurai Mission of the self-denying fraternity amongst whom he lived. At the same time, he prosecuted his studies with enthusiasm and quickly made himself an accomplished scholar. But his mind was never, for one moment, diverted from his one great aim; and in 1673,

in spite of the tears of his mother and the interference of the king, he sailed for India as a missionary. He reached Goa in the same year and there completed his theological studies and passed the *ad gradum* examination. The next year saw him enter upon his career as a missionary attached to the Madurai Mission. For several years he worked with the greatest industry and success, enduring with calm equanimity, persecution, hunger and thirst, ill-health and the manifold ills incidental, in those days, to the profession which he had adopted; and in 1683, he rose to be the Superior of the Madurai Mission. His administration was attended by peculiarly happy results; and his zeal and ability did not escape the notice of his superiors who, in 1688, appointed him *procurer de la mission*. He was therefore compelled to quit India. On his return to Europe, he received the most flattering marks of consideration and esteem at the hands of his sovereign and of the highest dignitaries of the church; he would indeed seem to have met with an almost triumphant reception. Universities vied with one another to obtain the honour of conferring professorships on him; illustrious students clamorously demanded to be instructed by him; the king himself almost implored him to be tutor to the royal family. But honours of all kinds were firmly but respectfully declined, and De Britto never lost sight of his intention of returning to India whenever an opportunity presented itself. At last he was permitted to return, and was offered the Archbishopric of Cranganore. This was declined on the ground that missionary labour was that in which alone he could engage with

delight and profit, and accordingly in 1691, he was once more at work as a missionary, this time in the Marava country.

His life during this period appears to have been passed in hourly danger of attacks by fanatics, by robbers and by wild beasts. It was passed by him in wandering through dreary jungles, A hard life exposed to pitiless storms and inundations, to pestilent malaria and every form of disease, the day being spent in painful concealment, whilst the night was devoted to preaching and itinerating. To these incidents must be added a wretched diet of rice and bitter herbs, utterly insufficient for requirements of health, the want, often, of even a hovel in which to take rest, complete isolation in the midst of a hostile population, and last, not the least, the daily spectacle of the hopeless misery to which the country was reduced by wars and famine. Such was De Britto's life, and surely it was aptly crowned by the martyrdom to which he had, from his earliest youth, aspired.

Though sufficiently qualified by his talents and by his education to be an author, De Britto did not imitate the example of Robert De Nobilibus; and if he was the author of any works they have perished, and nothing is known of them.⁴⁶ It seems probable, however, that his purely missionary labours Works occupied his whole time and attention, and left him no leisure for composition. Perhaps, too, he was wanting both in breadth and subtlety of intellect, and his mind was in no degree

characterised by that anxious love of enquiry, and that argumentative combativeness which distinguished his compeer Robert. And the varying circumstances in which these two great Jesuits worked tended to separate their paths. The one found it necessary to devote himself principally to the vehement attack of an elaborate and imposing system of religion and to the establishment of an enduring basis of another system diametrically opposed thereto, and totally unknown; whilst the other found Christianity well understood and even appreciated in some quarters in South India, and made it his business to enlarge, adorn and strengthen the existing edifice. The one had to destroy and build up, the other only to preserve and improve. Consequently whilst Robert has left behind him voluminous and able contributions to polemical literature, John has left nothing but a series of letters, admirable as memorials of the life and labours of a truly pious man, but of no great literary value.

4. KILAVAN'S REFORMS

Kilavan transferred the capital of the Ramnad kingdom from Bogalur to Ramnad. Ramnad had been an important town before its becoming the capital, and had been, on many occasions, the alternate capital. But Kilavan shifted all the departments of the government permanently to Ramnad and extended the town. He pulled down the mud walls of the Ramnad fort and constructed stone walls 27 feet high and

5 feet thick, surrounded by a deep ditch. The palace was constructed in the centre of the fort. The Ramalinga Vilasam palace, as it was called, is even now in a good state of repair, and used by the members of the Setupati family. Outside the palace, a reservoir, even now called the Mugavai Oorani, was constructed on the orders of Kilavan. This reservoir collected the rain water during periods of rain and proved a great blessing to the people of Ramnad who were happy to refer to Kilavan as the 'Mugavai Oorani Aiya'.

Kilavan Setupati was a great donor and richly endowed the Pudumadam and Thoniturai choultries, the latter of which were constructed at his instance. The temples at Tirupullani, Madukulattur, Tiruchuli and Rameswaram received large endowments from Kilavan. Kilavan gave very good support to a large number of Brahmin families which settled in the Ramnad kingdom. He presented forty villages for the maintenance of those families.

Kilavan got on exceedingly well with the Muslim community also. It is said that one Syed Kadir Marakkayar of Kilakkarai gave financial assistance to the Setupati when the Setupati was constructing the Ramnad fort and the Ramalinga Vilasam palace.

The last days of the Setupati were unhappy because of a famine brought about by a terrible cyclone the like of which the people of Ramnad had not witnessed before.

Kilavan died in 1710 leaving 47 wives to mourn his death. There is no evidence of his having left any

male offspring to succeed him. His successor was his sister's son Tiru-udaya Devar *alias* Vijaya Raghunatha Devar, son of Kadamba Devar. We have no evidence to conclude that Kilavan adopted his nephew even during his life time.

All the 47 wives of Kilavan performed *Sati* on his death, and there is in Ramnad a spot which is, even today, pointed at as the place where the *Sati* 47 women, including the Pudukkottai Tondaiman's sister Kathalai, entered fire to show their devotion for their husband.

5. THE SUCCESSORS OF KILAVAN

Tiru-udaya Devar was crowned on Vijayadasami and this might account for the 'Vijaya' prefix in his *alias*. His reign lasted for 15 years, and he did his very best to help the people to tide over the famine. He repaired and improved the irrigation works and reorganised the administration. He brought efficient accountants of the Vellala caste from Madurai and overhauled the revenue administration. He divided the Ramnad kingdom into eight revenue districts and 72 military divisions. He appointed feudal chieftains over the military divisions. He constructed strong forts in Rajasingamangalam, Oriyur, Arantangi, Tiruppattur, Kamuthi and Pamban.

His acts of piety and charity too were many. He endowed the Kothandaramaswami temple in Ramnad liberally. He added to the buildings in the Rameswaram temple. He was a great devotee of

the Lord of Rameswaram, and everyday worshipped at the Rameswaram shrine. For covering the distance from Ramnad to Rameswaram quickly he set up a system of horse relays.

He did everything to ensure safety to the pilgrims proceeding to Rameswaram. He appointed his son-in-law as the officer in charge of pilgrim welfare. The son-in-law levied an unauthorised pilgrim tax and constructed a good road between Pamban and Rameswaram after removing the sand hills that had grown between the two places. The Setupati was enraged when he learnt of the unauthorised levy. He sent for his son-in-law, and in spite of the entreaties of his two daughters, put the son-in-law to cruel death. The two daughters performed *Sati*, and their memory is today preserved in the two choultries the 'Akkal Matam' and the 'Thangachi Matam' constructed many years later over their ashes, between Pamban and Rameswaram.

It is said that god Ramanatha appeared in his dream and praised him for his devotion saying that it would not be necessary for him to make a daily visit to Rameswaram because, the same merit that accrued to him by his worship in Rameswaram would be his if he would offer worship near a well in Lakshmipuram, a suburb of Ramnad. The Setupati found the well and constructed a temple dedicated to Muthuramalingaswami near it.

Vijaya Raghunatha's reign witnessed the coming into prominence of the Nalukottai family. The

Nalukottai Udaya Devar got the daughter of the
 The beginnings of the Sivagangai Samastanam
 Setupati married to his son Sasivarna Devar. This was the beginning of what later on developed into the Sivagangai Samastanam.⁴⁷

We have earlier referred to the creation by Kilavan Setupati of the Pudukkottai chieftainship with his brother-in-law as the Chief. Since then Pudukkottai and Tanjore Pudukkottai was growing in importance on account of its proximity to Tanjore, and during Vijaya Raghunatha's reign Pudukkottai was definitely on the side of the Raja of Tanjore. When Vijaya Raghunatha learnt that the forces of Pudukkottai and Tanjore had combined against Ramnad he proceeded to meet them in Arantangi. An epidemic broke out in the Setupati's camp to which the Setupati himself became victim. The Ramnad forces withdrew under the shadow of this great calamity aggravated by the passing away of many of the wives and all the legitimate children of the Setupati. Vijaya Raghunatha was succeeded by his surviving son-in-law Sundareswara Raghunatha Setupati in 1726.

Sewell mentions 1720 as the last regnal year of Vijaya Raghunatha Devar while the *Manual* makes 1725 the last year of the Setupati. One is at a loss to determine the accurate chronology because of lack of data. According to Sewell, Vijaya Raghunatha was succeeded by Thanda Devar II who ruled for four years from 1720 to 1724. Thanda Devar was killed by Bavanisankara in 1724 in which

year Bavanisankara assumed the title of Setupati. But the *Manual* while making 1726 the year of the accession of Sundareswara, makes 1725 the last year of Vijaya Raghunatha. It is better to leave the question open.

Sundareswara Raghunatha Setupati was the same as Thanda Devar. Even at his accession, his claim was questioned by Bavanisankara Devar, an illegitimate son of Kilavan Setupati. Sundareswara Raghunatha Setupati sought the help of the Tondaiman, who was then in charge of Tirumeyyam and Pudukkottai, in the defence of his own title. Evidently the new Tondaiman was favourably disposed towards Sundareswara Raghunatha Setupati. Bavanisankara Devar sought the help and alliance of the Tanjore ruler promising to restore to Tanjore all the territories taken from him by Kilavan Setupati. The Tanjore Raja gave Bavanisankara Setupati the help that he needed. Bavanisankara took Sundareswara Raghunatha prisoner and put him to death.

Bavanisankara Setupati ruled for three years according to the *Manual*, and for five years according to Sewell. He was not quite popular both with his subjects and with the Palayakkarars. He deprived Sasivarna Periya Udaya Devar of the control of one of the eight revenue divisions already referred to. Sasivarna Devar went to Tanjore and allied himself with the ruler of Tanjore. The Tanjore ruler helped the disgruntled elements of the Ramnad kingdom with men and money. Sasivarna had the support of the Setupati's brother Kattaiah Devar; and with the assistance from the Raja of Tanjore they

deposed the Setupati after a battle in Oriyur. Kattaiah Devar was proclaimed the Setupati.

Kattaiah Devar's rule lasted for six years, i. e., between 1729 and 1735. His dominion was shrunken because he had to cede the territories north of the Pambar to the king of Tanjore for his help. Out of the remaining territories some were taken by Sasivarna

Kattaiah Devar Devar who became the first ruler of the Sivagangai Samastanam. After all this partitioning the Ramnad kingdom comprised only the territories south of Sivagangai, practically that which was included in the Ramnad Zamindari until recent times. With Kattaiah Devar ceases the history of the united Marava kingdom which had its palmiest days under Kilavan Setupati.

Kattaiah Devar, like his ancestors, was very liberal in his charities and religious endowments. It was he who constructed the Thangachi Matam choultry. He also constructed the Theertandathanam choultry near **Endowments** Tiruvadanai. The Balasubramaniaswami temple in Rameswaram owes its origin to his munificence. The Rameswaram, Kilakkarai, and Tiruppullani temples also received liberal grants of lands. Twenty villages were presented by the Setupati for the maintenance of Brahmin families.

Kattaiah Devar was succeeded by his son Sivakumaramuthuvijaya Ragonatha Devar in 1735. He was called 'Saiva durai' because he abstained from **Saiva durai** eating animal food. Nothing of importance took place during the thirteen years he ruled over Ramnad. He distinguished himself by his acts of

piety and charity. The Akkal Matam was his gift to the pilgrims.

Sivakumaramuthuvijaya Raghunatha Setupati died childless in 1748, and a cousin of Kattaiah Devar by name Rakka Devar was nominated ruler of Ramnad.

Setupati Rakka Devar ruled for only one year, but within that very brief period distinguished himself as a great fighter. He repulsed an invasion by the Raja of Tanjore and also brought several recalcitrant Palayakkarars to their senses. The Setupati's rule was brought to an end by his own Dalavai who proved false to him. The Dalavai got the Setupati deposed and helped Chella Devar *alias* Vijaya Raghunatha Devar, a grandson of the aunt of Sivakumaramuthuvijaya Raghunatha Setupati to assume power.

Chella Devar ruled for more than thirteen years from 1749. The first major event of his period was an invasion of the Ramnad kingdom by the Tanjore ruler which was repulsed by the powerful Dalavai. In 1752, the Dalavai, in alliance with one Thandavaraya Pillai, the minister of Sivagangai, defeated Captain Cope who invaded Madurai on behalf of the Raja of Mysore. The European capitulated and withdrew. The Dalavai established the adopted son of Rani Meenakshi as the ruler of Madurai. But as fate would have it, he was deposed by the Muslims. The Ramnad Dalavai subdued them and permitted them to have a hold on Madurai on the condition that they would remain vassals of Ramnad. It was the period when Chanda Saheb and Muhammad Ali were contest-

ing the Carnatic Nawabship. The Setupati, on the advice of the Dalavai, at first supported the claim of Chanda Saheb, but later upheld that of Muhammad Ali. The Madurai events detailed above brought the Setupati into contact with the English. The Setupati, besides pledging his support for Muhammad Ali, offered the East India Company two settlements on the Ramnad coast. Col. Heron, the English Commander fell in with the offer, and even without the formal approval of his superiors, entered into an alliance with the Setupati. The Setupati's idea was to subdue the troublesome Palayakkarars of Tirunelveli with English help. But when Tanjore and Pudukkottai protested to the Company against the English support to Ramnad, the Company ordered Col. Heron to have nothing to do with the Setupati. The Tirunelveli campaign had therefore an abrupt end.

In 1757 the Dutch requested the Setupati permission to erect a factory in Kilakkarai. The Setupati granted the permission under certain terms.

6. THE END OF THE INDEPENDENCE

Chella Devar died in 1762 and his sister's son Muthuramalinga Devar, barely two months old, was proclaimed the Setupati. The Dalavai Vellaiyan Servaikarar was no more, and he was succeeded by one Damodaram Pillai as Dalavai. The young Raja was under the guardianship of Muthu Thiruvayee, his mother who acted as the regent during his minority. Damodaram Pillai was a very able general and minister. The

Dalavai
Damodaram Pillai

Dalavai, besides strengthening the Ramnad fort, constructed a small fort in Tiruppullani and made the defence of the capital stronger. By this time the Nayaks had ceased to rule in Madurai and the Nawab of the Carnatic became the ruler of Madurai as well. The Nawab sent an army to Ramnad to force the Setupati to accept the new regime and pay tribute. The Dalavai defeated the Nawab's army and defied his order. He entered into an alliance with the Dutch East India Company in 1767 on behalf of the Setupati by which the Dutch agreed to give the Setupati a certain portion of the pearls obtained every year. The Setupati granted to the Dutch the possession of the Pamban canal retaining to himself the right of free passage at all times.

In 1770, the traditional enemy of the Setupatis, the Raja of Tanjore, invaded the Ramnad country after claiming the district of Hanumanthakudi as a possession of Tanjore. He was defeated by the Dalavai.

Unfortunately for the Ramnad kingdom, Damodaram Pillai was murdered by one of his enemies and the kingdom suddenly found itself deprived of its strong man. The Dalavai's murder would have been considered a godsend by Tanjore but for a strange development. Muhammad Ali, the Nawab of the Carnatic was an enemy of the Raja of Tanjore and was waiting for a chance to reduce the power of the Raja. When the Raja of Tanjore invaded Ramnad, Muhammad Ali complained to the Madras Government (under the East India Company) that the invasion of Ramnad by the Raja of Tanjore was an

invasion of his own territory because Ramnad was under his "overlordship". With the support of the East India Company the Nawab attacked Tanjore and forced the Raja to accept humiliating terms. During this period, Ramnad and Sivagangai remained indifferent because the Setupati had never accepted the overlordship of the Nawab. This indifference infuriated the Nawab who wanted it to be known that his Tanjore campaign was for the sake of and on behalf of the Setupati. The Nawab urged the English to attack Ramnad and Sivagangai. In 1773 an English army under General Joseph Smith invaded the Ramnad kingdom on behalf of the Nawab and defeated the Setupati's troops. The young Setupati, his mother Muthu Thiruvayee Nachiar and his sister Mangaleswari Nachiar were removed to Tiruchirapalli where they were kept under surveillance. The Ramnad kingdom came under the direct rule of the Nawab for a period of eight years i. e., until 1780.

The Muslim rule
 The Muslim rule

The Muslim rule over Ramnad was not popular. The chieftaincies under the Setupati would not accept the Nawab's rule and registered their protest every now and then. The Nawab thought it prudent to restore the Raja to his possessions; and the Raja, on his return to Ramnad, paid a tribute of Rs. 1,75,000 to the Nawab on the basis of his annual revenues being five lakhs of rupees. Thus Ramnad lost its independence and became a tributary of the Nawab first, and a Zamindari under the English later which status it had until recently.

In 1791 the amount payable by the Raja of Ramnad was increased to Rs. 2,20,000. In 1792 Ramnad was ceded by the Nawab to the British who sent Col. Martinz with a force to occupy the country. Martinz had his residence in the Ramnad town in the building which is the same as the Sankara Vilas of to-day and which until a few years ago was known as the 'Colonel Bungalow.'

The Company's rule

Three years after the British had taken possession of Ramnad they framed a number of charges against the Setupati and deposed him. They also started their favourite game of playing one member of the Setupati family against another. It serves no purpose, at the present time, to enquire both into the propriety of the British usurpation and the circumstances culminating in it. With the usual semblance of a just enquiry and objectivity, the British took over the direct management of the Ramnad kingdom. A Collector was appointed to administer Ramnad on behalf of the East India Company. Muthuramalinga Setupati was sent to Madras where he died in 1801.

THE SETUPATIS OF THE SECOND PERIOD
(1674 - 1795)

1. Kilavan Setupati	A. D.	1674-1710
2. Vijaya Raghunatha	„	1710-1725(?)
3. Sundareswara Raghunatha	„	1726-1729
4. Kattaiah Devar	„	1729-1735
5. Sivakumara Muthuvijaya Devar	„	1735-1748
6. Rakka Devar	„	1748-1749
7. Chella Devar	„	1749-1762
8. Muthuramalinga Devar	„	1762-1795

(Regency of Muthu Thiruvayee)

IV. THE THIRD PERIOD UNDER THE BRITISH RULE

1. THE COMPANY'S MANAGEMENT

Mangaleswari Nachiar, a sister of Muthuramalinga Setupati, put in her claims to succeed to her brother's possessions. In 1795 the Company recognised her title but it took eight years for her to be installed as the Rani. During this period a representative of the Company administered the country.

One does not understand why the rule of Muthuramalinga Setupati was terminated within three years of the British assuming the suzerainty over the Ramnad area after the Nawab of Muthuramalinga's deposition: reasons the Carnatic. There is nothing in the accounts relating to the period to warrant this high-handed action except a statement that "the Setupati showed a disposition to rebel against the government" and that the Company rebuked the Collector in strong terms for not reporting the rebellious conduct of the Zamindar.⁴⁸ We do not also know the immediate circumstances under which the Setupati was deposed. In his letter dated 18th February 1795, to the Collector, E. Sanders, President of the Revenue Board, has referred to a letter of the former and states: "You state the difficulties

you had experienced in obtaining any accurate information conformably to our orders, on account of the influence of the Ramnad Raja, relative to the hereditary right in that province and whether by usage the succession should devolve or not on the female line. As Raja Ramalingam is now removed from all authority, and as you will be enabled to effect your enquiries without being liable to the same influence, we desire you will take the necessary measures for the purpose and report to us the result."

The above letter does not refer to any charge levelled against the Setupati. In a sense it is revealing. Evidently the British did not like the Crossing of the swords independent spirit of the Setupati and the influence that he wielded. We must note that by this time the crossing of the swords between the French and the English for supremacy in India had taken place. The battles of Plassey and Buxar had been won by the English, and in Bengal the supremacy of the English had been established. In the South, too, the English successfully played their game of playing one rival claimant against another both in the race for the Subadarship of the Deccan and in the race for the Nawabship of the Carnatic. In both the disputes the English gained enormously. The Subadar of the Deccan and the Nawab of the Carnatic were now the faithful allies of the English. No doubt the French had some hold on South India but the English had certainly outdone the French. The English naturally wanted to consolidate their position in the South. They realised that it

was not enough if they had the Subadar of the Deccan and the Nawab of the Carnatic to obey their behests. Both the Subadar and the Nawab had only a loose hold on the different parts of their dominions. In fact, there was nothing like a definite territorial demarcation for the Subadar's dominions as also for the Carnatic Nawab's. The Subadar was a rebel against the Mogul authority, and whatever area remained under his control was itself a windfall to him. The two new Lords of South India were ruling over their dominions within a curious political set up—with a number of hereditary dynasties in charge of small territories, some accepting the new overlordship for fear of annihilation, and others ignoring the new set-up. In fact the Setupati was hesitant to accept the Nawab as his overlord for many years.

Therefore, the consolidation of the British position in the South meant either the winning of the support of the many feudatory chiefs or the destruction of those that were hostile. After the disappearance of the Vijayanagar rule in the South there was no single kingdom as big as the Pandyan kingdom or the Chola kingdom dominating the politics of the Tamil country. There were the Nayak and the Maratta kingdoms, and a very large number of Palayakkarar chieftaincies round about the Tirunelveli country. The Setupatis were perhaps the one important political factor to reckon from the period of Kilavan Setupati which was also the beginning of the decline of the Nayak power in Madurai. Within a period of half a century the

The unruly
Palayakkarars

Setupatis had proved themselves able administrators and fighters as evidenced by their ability to expand their kingdom and successfully ward off invasions of the Tanjore king and even the Madurai overlord. The Setupati was the chief of all the Palayakkarars, and though there were occasions when some of the Palayakkarars proved hostile to the Setupatis, on the whole, the Palayakkarars never succeeded in overthrowing the position of superiority which the Setupatis assumed over them. A powerful, unfriendly Setupati was therefore not good for the British expansionist schemes in the South. Evidently the British felt that the subjugation of the Palayakkarars could be achieved only by their assuming control over Ramnad. When the British deposed Muthuramalinga Setupati there was ferment in the Palayakkarar country, and while we cannot be definite as regards the attitude of many of the Palayakkarars towards the British, we have evidence of the strong anti-British feelings that some of the powerful Palayakkarars exhibited. The temporary direct rule over Ramnad might have been to create the psychological climate in the land of the Maravas favourable to the British, so that after the British interregnum, the successors of Muthuramalinga, with their wings clipped, might give their loyal co-operation to the British in their work of consolidating their position in the South.

It was during the Company's rule in Ramnad that the famous Palayakkarar risings of 1798 and 1801 took place, and it will not be out of place to give a brief account of them.

2. THE PALAYAKKARAR RISINGS

On the 17th day of October 1799, was witnessed the hanging of the first powerful rebel against the English authority in the southern part of India. On that day the English made a demonstration of their vindictiveness by making an example of Vira Pandya Kattabommu Nayak who had had the cheek to oppose and defy the Honourable East India Company's orders and even tease the Company's soldiers by involving them in a game of hide and seek in which he would certainly have won (with whatever implications such a winning might have had in regard to the fortunes of the British not only in the South, but in the whole of India) but for the loyal and sincere assistance given by some of his fellow rulers who curried the favour of the British for gaining their own private ends. There is no doubt that the Palayakkarar risings of 1798 and 1801 were more than local affairs; and from what we know of some of their details, had potentialities even to the extent of spreading the wild fire of anti-British feeling that had begun to develop everywhere in India but kept under check by the cunning and questionable tactics of the English rulers. The territories involved in these risings were the Tirunelveli, Madurai, Ramnad, and Tanjore districts and also the area comprising the former Pudukkottai State.

Vira Pandya Kattabomma Nayak, also known as Karuthiah, was lord of the fortified town of Panchalamkurichi about 15 miles south of Ettayapuram. He had two brothers, Kumarasami Nayak and Subbu Nayak.

We have it on the authority of the chronicles of the Vira Pandya Kattabomma 19th century that all the three brothers were very intelligent, god-fearing, brave and very considerate to the weak and the helpless. Vira Pandya Kattabomma Nayak has, however, been pictured by some British writers as a ruthless desperado, which opinion is hard to sustain in the light of his popularity and the position of leadership that he occupied with the most intimate support and co-operation of the Palayakkarars of Nagalapuram, Elayirampennai, Golavarpatti, Kulattur and Kadalkudi. Perhaps it was this popularity that woke the British up from their complacency and indifference and made them realise that here was an enemy who was capable of setting up a series of chain reactions calculated towards the ruination of the British prestige and authority over Southern India. The first step the English took was to ask the Palayakkarar chief to recognise the Company's competence and right to settle the boundary disputes that had arisen as a result of the Palayakkarar's trespasses into some of the Zamin villages outside of his own legitimate bounds.

Vira Pandya Kattabomma Nayak asserted his independence by first ignoring Col. Maxwell's summons to meet him for an explanation of his conduct. This led to Jackson, Collector of Ramnad, ordering the chief to appear before him without fail on the 9th of September 1798. The chief did make his appearance before Jackson on the appointed day, but only to leave the Englishman awestruck, dumbfounded and confounded. As

the Collector was reading out some letters as a prelude to framing charges, the chief rushed out, and in the *melee* that followed, Lt. Clark who was nearby, lost his life. Neither Jackson nor Lushington, his successor, could bring the independent Palayakkaras to his knees; and the Mysore wars added to the difficulties of the English in the South. In fact, the historic defiance of Kattabomma left such a deep imprint in the minds of the other chiefs who had so long considered it a privilege to obey even the most improper behests of the English, that they openly asserted their independence and defied the orders of the English. An instance of this new courage could be seen in the chief of Kombai sending a bag of stones in response to the English Collector's demand for the payment of his dues. For a period of six or seven months after the Ramnad defiance the English played a game of waiting out of sheer inability to do anything. In June 1799, after the fall of Srirangapatnam, the soldiers released from the Mysore war were available for being diverted to Tirunelveli; and in August, Major Bannerman launched an attack on the fortress of Panchalankurichi. Kattabomma Nayak evacuated his fortress, and after a period of halt in Sivagangai, 'went underground' somewhere near the borders of Pudukkottai. It is neither fair nor true to suggest that Kattabomma Nayak had fled his territory out of fear and sought asylum in the territory of the Pudukkottai Tondaiman. Kattabomma Nayak was not alone. His two brothers and the chief of Nagalapuram were also with him. The siege of

Panchalamkurichi under Bannerman was a failure. On the 8th of September 1799 Lushington asked the ruler of Pudukkottai not to entertain the chief of Panchalamkurichi or his allies in his territories; and if they were caught they should be sent over to him. Lushington must have appealed to the loyalty of the Tondaiman for co-operating in the capture of the rebels; and may be, there was an implied threat also in his communication to the Tondaiman suggesting dire consequences if the Tondaiman should give any quarter to the enemies of the English. The Tondaiman, not being able to ignore the orders of the Collector, organised a very wide search for the capture of Kattabomma Nayak and his party. Every hill and every jungle was combed, and after ten days of vigorous search, Kattabomma Nayak, his brothers along with some others were located in Kaliapoor, west of Thirukkalambur. The Tondaiman's troops encircled the party; and on account of the superiority of the numbers in the Tondaiman's party the Panchalamkurichi chief could not hold out for long. Kattabomma Nayak was unperturbed; and rather than meet Lushington as a prisoner he thought it would be better to end his life. But the Tondaiman's men led them, bound hand and foot, to an enclosed place pending the orders of both the Tondaiman and Lushington. The Tondaiman promptly informed Lushington of the capture of the rebel and his party; and Lushington, after complementing the Tondaiman, ordered that the prisoners should be handed over to Captain Smith, commanding Madurai "with their hands and feet

chained." On the 6th day of October, 1799, the prisoners were taken into custody by Capt. Smith in Madurai; and immediately Kattabomma Nayak was taken to Kayattar in the Tirunelveli District where a Court Martial was held. The court found him guilty of open rebellion against the British authority. On the 17th day of October, in the presence of a large number of fellow-Palayakkarars and thousands of people, the chief of Panchalamkurichi was hanged. The others were imprisoned in Palayamkottai. Those that had taken sides with Kattabomma Nayak were dispossessed, disarmed and rendered harmless. Lushington commended in a letter, the services of the Tondaiman, to the authorities of the East India Company. In that letter he made particular mention of the fact that "the beneficial consequences of the event would not be confined to Panchalamkurichi alone, but the other Poligars, seeing that there was no safety for them even in flight, would be the more inclined to a due obedience." At that time Clive was the Governor of Madras, and he sent a robe of honour and a thorough-bred horse in appreciation of the Tondaiman's services. He also sent 2000 Kali Chakrams (gold coins).

Kumarasami Nayak and his brother who were in the Palayamkottai prison escaped on 2nd February 1801, after more than a year's incarceration, by overpowering the guard. Kumarasami's personality was dumb and was sometimes called 'Oomaiyan'. He was no inferior to his elder brother Kattabomma in courage; and if

anything, he struck even his British adversaries as a most remarkable person. Gen James Welsh wrote about him in his *Military Reminiscences*, 1830, as follows:

“He is one of the most extraordinary mortals I ever knew, a near relation of Catabom Naig—designated by the English officers as the ‘cat’—who was both deaf and dumb and was well-known to the English by the name of Dumby or the Dumb Brother, by the Musalmans as the Mukha, and by the Hindus as Oomeen; all having the like signification. He was a tall, slender lad of a very sickly appearance, yet possessing that energy of mind, which in troublous times, always gains pre-eminence; whilst in his case, the very defect, which would have impeded another, proved a great auxiliary in the minds of the ignorant and superstitious idolators. The Oomee was adored; his slightest sign was an oracle and every man flew to execute what he had commanded. No Council assembled at which he did not preside; no daring adventure was undertaken which he did not lead.”

Kumarasami Nayak and his brother Subbu Nayak had the help of one Sivathaiya in their escape. The brothers could very soon collect 5000 men, and in less than a month, Panchalamkurichi was restored to its former splendour. The fortress which had been demolished two years before was rebuilt and the threat that the two brothers held out to the British was even more exasperating than that of Kattabomma Nayak.

Major Macaulay, commanding Tirunelveli, had a hard time of it subduing the new upheaval consequent on the revival of Panchalamkurichi. Lt. Col. Agnew was commissioned to destroy Panchalamkurichi with a large army. The Panchalamkurichi Brothers shifted their venue to Sivagangai where the two Marudu Brothers, Periya Marudu and Chinna Marudu, had already made common cause with the Panchalamkurichi Brothers. The Panchalamkurichi Brothers were received by the Marudus with all pomp and taken in procession to Aranmanai Siruvayal which was the headquarters of the Marudus. Lt Col. Agnew, commanded the Marudus to hand over the Panchalamkurichi Brothers but the Marudus refused. The English had now to contend against the army of the Marudus consisting of 20,000 men with muskets, matchlocks, and other dangerous weapons. Therefore Agnew's troops were further augmented by the men in the Dindigul Command under Lt Col. Innes who arrived at Natham in June 1801, and suffered a series of reverses. Even after this increased massing of troops, the British felt inadequate to cope with the tremendous opposition of the Panchalamkurichi Brothers and the Marudus, and asked the Tondaiman for help. The Tondaiman was now in a fix. About two years before this he had handed over the Panchalamkurichi Brothers to the English, and only the eldest of them had been destroyed. The other two had survived and escaped and they had now the willing co-operation and collaboration of the Marudus, very much dreaded for their influence, wrath and almost incredible strength.

The Tondaiman hesitated before promising help to the British. Capt. Blackburn met the Tondaiman in person, removed from his mind all fears of a possible vengeful action on the part of the Marudus, and promised great honours to the Tondaiman. The Tondaiman had just then an excuse which he could use to postpone making any promise to co-operate with the English. His own marriage was to come off within a few days, and the Tondaiman requested that he might be permitted to give his answer after his marriage. Capt. Blackburn would not accept the Tondaiman's request, but insisted, that without prejudice to the marriage arrangements, the Tondaiman should place his troops at the disposal of the English. The Tondaiman having no other alternative, despatched more than 3500 of his men under one Muthukumara Pillai to assist Col. Innes at Natham. Very soon another force of 2000 men was sent from Pudukkottai under the command of Kannavier and Raghunatha Rao to join the English in Sivagangai. The Tondaiman had also to permit the use of the Tirumeyyam fort as a military depot for the use of Agnew's army.

In spite of all these it looked as if the Marudus could not be shaken; and the only course left to the English was to create a rift between the Sivagangai Zamindar and the Marudus. After the rise to prominence of the Marudus, the Sivagangai Zamindar had sunk into obscurity, and the Marudus dominated the entire Sivagangai area. Gowrivallabha Periya Udaya Devar, the Zamindar was now boosted up, and promised higher status and

safety if he would dissociate himself from the Marudus. The Tondaiman also showed the highest regard to the Zamindar of Sivagangai and helped him with an escort of 500 men when he went to Col. Agnew's camp. Thus by means of a 'divide and win' method, -the English succeeded in weaning many of the followers of the Marudus and the Panchalamkurichi Brothers from their loyalty to them. This was however only the first step. The Tondaiman had unfortunately to bear the brunt of the entire task. He had to be arranging the escort of the supplies sent to the Tirumeyyam depot from Tanjore and Tiruchirapalli. He had also to be constantly sending messages about developments on the borders. In fact, he had to be on his nerves, and Lord Clive paid glowing tributes to the Tondaiman's unceasing loyalty, in the letters addressed to him, possibly to keep up his morale.

With very great difficulty the combined armies of Agnew and Innes reached Siruvayal on the 30th of July 1801; but for one month they could not make any headway to the fort at Kalaiyarkoil where, now, the rebels were taking their position. It was only 5 miles from Siruvayal, and it required the The March to Kalaiyarkoil labours of thousands of wood cutters brought from Dindigul and Pudukkottai to clear the jungle between Siruvayal and Kalaiyarkoil in order to come to grips with the rebels. The whole clearing operation was supervised by 200 Europeans. About the end of August the English decided to abandon the march to Kalaiyarkoil from the Siruvayal side, and Gen. Welsh records: 'The rejoicing was unanimous at

the prospect of leaving a place which had been the grave of so many of our comrades'. On 1st September hundreds of men were sent to destroy all the work of clearance so far done so that the rebels in Kalaiyarkoil would not have the benefit of the English labours. After a fortnight, Col. Agnew, with the help of the Tondaiman's men, occupied the temple of Piranmalai which was as good as a fort, and after fifteen days, the march to Kalaiyarkoil started. The rebels were not easily to be subdued. For one month and more Kalaiyarkoil held out, and it was a period of tense suspense and anxiety for the English because they had never expected to encounter such disciplined opposition and dauntless spirit as were presented by the Panchalamkurichi Brothers and the Marudus.

At the end Kalaiyarkoil had to yield to the English who had secured a large number of native soldiers on their side. Their supplies were also on the increase. With very great difficulty the English captured the Panchalamkurichi Brothers and the Marudus and executed them. The story of the resistance of Kalaiyarkoil, however, is a most thrilling and breathtaking one, and is fit to take a significant place in the history of heroism. On the last day of 1801, the people in the districts of Dindigul, Ramnad, Tirunelveli and Madurai were deprived of arms, and the forts in the area were all demolished. The Tirumeyyam fort which had been the British depot, however, stands conspicuously as 'the sad historian of the pensive plain'.

3. MANGALESWARI AND HER SUCCESSORS

In 1803 Rani Mangaleswari Nachiar was put in possession of what had degenerated from an independent state to an 'estate' or a Zamindari on her agreeing to pay an annual peshkush of Rs. 3,24,404—3—10. Her contemporary in Madras was the notorious British empire builder, Lord Clive. As a Zamindarini the Rani had no political powers or diplomatic relationship with other rulers, and she was content to be an example of loyalty to the British who had cleverly manoeuvred her elevation.⁴⁹ She lived for four years after her assuming the possession of the estate and endeared herself to the people by her piety and liberal charity. She presented 90 villages to the Brahmins, endowed the Chockkanathaswami temple and the Perumalkoil at Agastiyar Theertham near Tiruppullani. The Sambandar Matam in Madurai was also the recipient of her benefactions. The Rani died in 1807, and her adopted son Annasami Setupati succeeded to the estate as Vijaya Raghunatha Setupati.

The Setupati being a minor, the affairs of the Samastanam were looked after by Pradani Thyagaraja Pillai. The Raja was not left in peace by the descendents of the deposed Muthuramalinga Setupati; and Sivakami Nachiar, his daughter, filed a suit in the East India Company's court questioning the legitimacy of Annasami Setupati's claim. The erratic British that once deposed Muthuramalinga accepted the

claim of Sivakami and even restored her to her father's estate. But as she allowed the peshkush to fall into arrears, the estate was taken over by the Sadar Adalat. In 1820 Muthuvijaya Raghunatha died leaving an adopted son by name Ramasami Devar.

The suit that had been filed by Sivakami and won by her in the lower courts was taken to the appellate court after the death of Annasami by Parvathavardani his widow, and the appellate court Nachiar upheld the claim of Annasami and his successors. This was in 1829, and in that year the Sadar Court handed the estate over to Ramasami. But Ramasami died within a few months leaving a widow and two daughters. After his death his mother Muthuveerayee Nachiar and his brother Muthuchella Devar managed the estate on behalf of the minor daughter. Unfortunately the girl died in her tenth year leaving her younger sister to succeed to the estate. Her uncle Muthuchella Devar who was the manager of the estate was charged with mismanagement, and the estate was placed under the Court of Wards which made Ramasami's widow Parvathavardani the guardian of young Rani. This girl, too, was shortlived, and she died in 1845; but she had been married to one Muthu Vijaya Raghunatha Devar. As she left no child, the Court of Wards continued to govern the estate pending the recognition of Parvathavardani as successor to her daughter. In 1846 she was recognised as the lawful successor to the estate of her husband and daughter.

Parvathavardani Nachiar was assisted by her brother Kottaisamy Devar in the management of the estate. In 1847 she adopted her sister's son Muthuramalinga Devar. She died in 1871. Her adopted son Muthuramalinga had to survive a good deal of litigation instituted, challenging his claim. The protracted litigation arising out of his succession involved the estate in heavy debts. He had succeeded to the estate in 1862, i. e., even during the lifetime of his mother, and had allowed a large amount of unpaid peshkush to accumulate. By now India had come under the British Crown and the British Government took the estate under Government supervision.

Muthuramalinga died in 1873 leaving two minor sons, Bhaskaraswami Setupati and Dinakaraswami. Bhaskaraswami was only four years old and the estate was placed under the Court of Wards in Prosperity
again 1873 with Lee Warner in charge as the Manager. The expensive litigation that became the order of the day after the deposed Muthuramalinga, combined with the draught that the country was subject to for many years, put the finances of the estate in chaotic order, and in 1879, it was realised that the Zamin was indebted to the extent of more than 14 lakhs. Luckily as a result of the prudent management of the Indian managers who succeeded Lee Warner, the debt was repaid by 1890. In 1889 Bhaskaraswami Setupati attained majority, and when he took charge of the estate, there was a cash balance of $3\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs which had accrued

during the period of the Court of Wards besides Devastanam funds amounting to more than 2½ lakhs.

4. BHASKARASWAMI SETUPATI

Bhaskaraswami Setupati lived only for fourteen years after his formal installation; but within this short period, won for himself a permanent place in India's cultural history. From the time Col. Martinz took over the administration about the beginning of the nineteenth century, until the installation of Bhaskaraswami, the Ramnad kingdom was more or less in a condition of political stagnation consequent on its becoming a Zamindari with no independent diplomatic relationship with the other native rulers and with all the other privileges of an independent kingdom withdrawn. In fact, what had been a sovereign state had become an estate. No doubt, the Rajas and Ranis who ruled during this period distinguished themselves by their wise reforms, patronage of worthwhile causes and their acts of piety and charity; but they were subject to the control and supervision of the British Government which assumed the right to dictate to them as to what they should and should not do.

When Bhaskaraswami ascended the *gadi* the status of the Setupati was that of a Zamindar because of the role of subservience to the British which the predecessors of Bhaskaraswami had played. Moreover, a distinction was sought to be made between the so-called native rulers or the Maharajas, and the Samastanadipatis and Zamindars like the

Setupati. The native rulers were practically independent in internal affairs and were honoured with salutes of guns, the number of salutes being determined with reference to the size and importance of the state. Pudukkottai was the only state in the Tamil country that had all the privileges of a native state. It may be remembered that Pudukkottai was a new-comer, in fact, an offshoot of Ramnad.

However, some distinction was implied between the ordinary Zamindari of the type created by the British to implement their Permanent Revenue Settlement and the Ramnad Samastanam in the judgment in the case in which, Raja Dinakara the younger brother of the Setupati had asked for a half share of the assets handed over by the Court of Wards to Bhaskaraswami after his attaining majority. The judgment in the case did not favour any partition on the ground that it was unprecedented in Ramnad history. The judgment is the only declaration, in any official manner, of this special status of the Ramnad Samastanam and its Raja. No doubt the government treated the Raja of Ramnad on a special footing, showing him greater regard and respect than it did to the large number of the Zamindars who had been created to be tax collectors for the government under the Permanent Revenue Settlement⁵⁰. Within a few years of Bhaskara's assuming charge of the Samastanam the hereditary title of Raja was conferred upon him by the British Government. But the glory that was the Ramnad kingdom under Kilavan was gone for ever.

Bhaskaraswami Setupati, it must be said, was an exception among the Setupatis of the third period. He tried to play the king and succeeded in that in an abundant measure, though he was subject to the authority of the Madras government. It looked as if he had revived the old glory of Ramnad during his life-time. The Navaratri once again became famous for their splendour and gaiety. The fine arts that had suffered lack of adequate patronage during the nineteenth century in the Ramnad kingdom were given a new fillip. The Ramalinga Vilasam palace once again reverberated with the music of the top-notch musicians of South India. Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer, Patnam Subramania Iyer and Poochi Iyengar owed not a little to the Setupati for the eminence which they attained. The Ramnad Court became the destination of Tamil and Sanskrit scholars from different parts of South India. Charity once again lifted its head. More chatrams started feeding hundreds of additional hungry stomachs every day; rest houses accommodated thousands of pilgrims wending their weary way from great distances to Rameswaram. The Setupati became a byword for benevolence, charity and phenomenal generosity.

The Setupati had the able assistance of Rajaram Rao, the Diwan. From all accounts it appears that Rajaram Rao was a very able administrator. His service started even before the rendition, and there was not one good reform initiated by the Setupati that had not been inspired by this able Diwan. Unfortunately as a result

of the conspiracy of many circumstances, needless to relate, the Diwan had to suffer adversity and loss of reputation in his last days. The Setupati reposed the greatest confidence in him throughout, and one of the letters he wrote to him when he was living down his bad period, reveals not only the Setupati's regard for him but also his great culture. The letter runs as follows:

“I regret circumstances have led to the government of India withdrawing the honours it granted you. It is very difficult to serve under a native chief, and if one does serve, he should, to a certain extent please him. However, what is past is past and I am sorry for it. I have this moment ordered Ramaswami Chettiar to pay up the balance due to you in his possessions, as my heart does not allow me to agree to a suit. May you prosper with your children.

I write this from Dharma Setu. I should like to see you sometime. When and where may that be? I pity you heartily. Dharma Setu knows how far I am guilty in your case”.

Bhaskaraswami Setupati died in 1903 having put Ramnad once again at least on the cultural map of India. Before we close this section it would be worthwhile to give a brief sketch of his character and personality.

He was the first English educated Setupati who had the benefit of instruction from an able English tutor. He wrote and spoke English like an Englishman, and his writings in English were characterised by a depth of understanding and a keen

sense of humour, the type that always pleases and never offends. He was also a scholar in Tamil like his predecessors. He was widely travelled in India, He had also planned a tour of Europe; but the tour did not materialise because of his preoccupation with Samastanam affairs. He made very good friends while in Madras both among Europeans and natives, and was held in the highest esteem by the citizens of the city. He was generous to a fault; and there was not a single good cause which did not receive his patronage and willing assistance. While in Madras he had the friendship of such eminent men as Sir V. Bhashyam Iyengar and Sir S. Subramania Iyer who were always happy to be of help to the Raja.

One cannot do better than Diwan Bahadur T. Venkasami Rao, who was also Diwan for sometime, in an appraisal of the Raja's qualities. He once said: 'The Raja was a man of great natural ability and he possessed great natural shrewdness. He had passed the F. A. examination. He wrote and spoke English with remarkable facility. He was also a good Tamil scholar. He was altogether an accomplished man. He was a man of great liberality. He was a patron of literary men, artists and musicians. He used to give such people only large presents. He was a man fond of show and pomp. He spent large sums as *danams*. He gave rich presents to Pandits and musicians. In these matters the Raja had a will of his own and spent from borrowed funds. Except in the matter of granting leases and of giving money to his favourites, he accepted the Diwan's advice in other matters. In my discussion

with him, I found he was a man of ready grasp and showed his knowledge of men and things; and he showed himself to be a very shrewd man."

The Setupati was a deeply religious and god-fearing man. He always invoked the blessings and grace of the Lord of Rameswaram. His religious fervour and devotion to god are further evidenced by his renovation of a number of old shrines and the grant of rich endowments to them. The following letter ^{Religious} _{fervour} which he wrote to his brother Raja Dinakar after the partition suit, is revealing: "Believe in the great power of my Divine mother, Sri Parvathavardani who is steering the life boat through rocks and shoals. She will never give me up."

The Setupati was deeply read in religious literature to the extent of his being able to deliver thought-provoking and instructive discourses on religious themes. Even as a youth, barely in his twenties, he could bring sobriety and a great deal of mature thinking to bear upon his discourses. The following letter of his, dated 2nd April 1894, addressed to his brother Raja Dinakar is very interesting:

"Yesterday I had an audience of 4000 (?) men who escorted me to the residence, and as to the effect of the two lectures on the people—the graduates assembled, and the district Munsif especially, and the number of disciples I have here—I leave to the papers and others here to inform you. Perhaps, you will also receive the printed poems composed in commemoration of the lectures. The first one was on 'Nataraja Tatvam', and I had physiological models and maps to assist me.

Yesterday I lectured for over two hours on 'Sandeswara Nayanar Charitram'."

It should be of special interest to know what one of India's greatest modern saints, Swami Vivekananda, said about the Setupati. On one occasion the Swamiji said, "Here you have a man than whom there is no more zealous Hindu throughout the length and breadth of this land; here you have a prince than whom there is no prince in this land, better informed in all affairs, oriental or occidental. Here he is harmonised, taking from every nation whatever he can that is good". Summing up the character of the Setupati, the Swamiji stated, "the secret of your Raja's character is that he has subordinated his knowledge of European sciences and European learning, he has subordinated his wealth and his position, and his name, to that one principal theme which is inborn in every Hindu child - the spirituality and purity of the race."

Raja Bhaskara Setupati had one fault. He was unable to resist the temptation to be lavish. He would not mind borrowing enormous sums of money, not for spending on himself always, but for making presents to musicians and scholars, and also to the needy.

5. SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S VISIT

Perhaps the most memorable event of the period of Bhaskaraswami Setupati was the visit of Swami Vivekananda to the Ramnad country. The visit had a profound significance with reference to South Indian culture and religion which were certainly revitalised by the presence of

Its significance

the great saint, and with reference to the Swamiji's own life and the progress of his work. South India had cherished and developed Vedantism for many centuries; but during the period of the political confusion in South India by its becoming the venue of intrigues, battles and political machinations of the European adventurers, cultural and religious activities were practically in a state of suspended animation. The few Mutts, including the Kamakoti-peatam located in the Tamil country, were perhaps the redeeming feature in an otherwise confused situation. It was these ancient institutions, be it said to their credit, that conserved the Hindu religion and prevented it from complete decay. But these institutions were following old methods in their work. New times require new approaches; and the application of this truth was exemplified by the Christian missionary institutions functioning in all parts of the country for two or three centuries. It was at such a time that the Swamiji came to the South with his great message of Vedanta, which many centuries earlier, had been given from South India to the rest of the world by Adi Sankara. Like Adi Sankara, the Swamiji brought his own inspiring personality to bear upon the message. His sojourn in South India was responsible for a new religious consciousness and a new vigour put into the religious activities of the South. From now on the old Hindu books came to be presented in a new form, in the language of the masses, stripped of their metaphysical and intricate philosophical

technicalities and making sense even to the common man. The setting up of the Ramakrishna Mission in the Tamil country with its various branches, in the wake of the Swamiji's visit, not only added to the number of Hindu religious institutions functioning in the South. but by its organisation, methods, and programmes of activities, furnished the new techniques necessary for the propagation and conservation of our spiritual heritage.

With reference to the life of the Swamiji the visit had profound significance. No doubt, even before he came to the South, he was a famous spiritual leader, and it was that reputation that brought him to the South. But one may say without any exaggeration that the international recognition that he won was not a little due to the almost phenomenal support that the leaders of the Tamil country gave to the selfless and humanitarian activities of the Bengali saint. In a sense the Tamil country discovered the great saint in Swami Vivekananda and presented him to the whole world.

Bhaskaraswami Setupati must be put on the top of all those who were responsible for making the Swamiji widen his sphere of activities. The Swamiji himself has paid a great tribute to the vision, cultured outlook and the creative imagination of the Setupati. Most every body has at least heard of the Swamiji's epoch-making Chicago speech. But not many may know that the Swamiji's visit to the United States was made possible only by the Setupati, who, in the words of the Swamiji, "conceived the idea of my going to Chicago. It was

he that put that idea into my head and persistently urged on me to accomplish it. I wish there were half a dozen more such Rajas to take interest in our dear motherland and work for her amelioration in the spiritual line."

When the Swamiji returned after his visit to the United States, Ramnad was the first place he visited in India. The Setupati gave the Swamiji a royal welcome in Pamban. The Raja who had evinced great interest in the Swamiji's carrying the mission across the seas was the happiest person on the day of the Swamiji's return to India. The following words of the Setupati contained in the address presented to the Swamiji deserve to be remembered :

"We truly rejoice to see that your Holiness' efforts in sowing the seeds of Hindu philosophy on the cultured minds of the great Western nation, are being crowned with so much success that all round, we already see the bright and cheerful aspect of the bearing of excellent fruits in great abundance, and most humbly pray that Your Holiness will, during your sojourn in Aryavarttha, be graciously pleased to exert even a little more than what you did in the West, to awaken the minds of your brethren in this our motherland, from the dreary life-long slumber, and make them recall to their minds the long forgotten gospel of truth".

The quintessence of the teaching of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa as expounded by his rare and worthy disciple, the Swamiji, is contained in

From Colombo to Almora the soul-elevating speeches which the Swamiji delivered in Pamban, Ramanathapuram, Paramakkudi, Madurai, Tiruchirapalli and other places in South India. In fact the speeches of the Swamiji in the Tamil country are among his best speeches, and the nation should be grateful to the Ramakrishna Mission for saving them for posterity. Even before the Mission undertook to collect them and publish them, a Madrasi publisher presented them in a handy volume entitled *From Colombo to Almora*, possibly at the instance of the Setupati.

The Swamiji's itinerary of the Ramnad country lasted for many days. During this period, thanks to the excellent arrangements made by the Setupati, the visit of the saint was made most fruitful. Today there is a monument with an inscription in Rameswaram commemorating the visit. The inscription reads: "Satyameva Jayathi. This monument erected by Bhaskara Setupati, the Raja of Ramnad marks the sacred spot where His Holiness Swami Vivekananda's blessed feet trod on Indian soil together with the English disciples of His Holiness, after his return from the Western Hemisphere where glorious and unprecedented success attended His Holiness' philanthropic labours to spread the religion of Vedanta".

In the Sankara Vilas within the Ramnad palace there is a portrait of the Swamiji commemorating his residence in that building during his stay in Ramnad.

6. THE SUCCESSORS OF BHASKARA

Bhaskara Setupati was succeeded by Raja Rajeswara Setupati *alias* Muthuramalinga Setupati in 1903; but as he was a minor then, the administration of the Samastanam was carried on by the Diwan on his behalf. It may be mentioned here that even during the life-time of Bhaskara, the estate had been leased out to different parties on the condition of the lessees paying the stipulated amounts for the different purposes of the Samastanam every year. After the death of Bhaskara Setupati the young Raja received a monthly allowance of Rs. 1000 until 1908, and Rs. 1400 thereafter.

In 1908 the Raja completed his English education and commenced his training in administration under the Diwan. Like his father he was very shrewd, able and resourceful. Within two years he became fully ^{Training} conversant with all the details of administration; and in 1910 when he attained the age for taking over the administration, he was ready to shoulder the heavy responsibilities. The formal installation ceremony had to be postponed by a few days on account of the passing away of King Edward VII. The ceremony itself was simple, and there was no elaborate celebration of the event.

Within a few months of his taking over, the Setupati realised that his position was no better than that of an allowance holder. The Samastanam had been leased out already, and the lease was to last for ^{Surrender of} nine more years. Under the terms of the _{the lease} lease the Setupati got only Rs 11,000 per month which included his own allowances, the

allowances of the other members of the family, the salary of the Diwan, the establishment charges and the other expenses. The Setupati found it very difficult to run the administration with this paltry sum. Therefore he wrote a strongly-worded letter to the Government pointing out the difficulties. Luckily, certain developments were in favour of the Setupati. The lessees were themselves anxious to surrender the lease, because the sub-lessees proved to be troublesome. The lessees, therefore, requested the Setupati to accept surrender of the lease. On the 25th of October, 1911, the lessees surrendered possession of the estate. The Raja received nearly 5.5 lakhs of rupees in partial settlement of the lease arrears. This helped the Raja to meet his most urgent commitments.

By 1913 the Samastanam was once again put on sound financial basis. On the occasion of the Navaratri in 1913, the Raja announced a number of concessions, promotions and benefits to his officers and servants.

The rest of the period of Muthuramalinga Setupati was smooth-sailing, and was marked by the absence of any serious difficulty to the Samastanam.

The first world war was an occasion for the Setupati's expression of loyalty to the British, and he was not slow in furnishing ample evidence of his sympathy with the British. He assisted in the recruitment campaign; and though only a few Maravars and Kallars responded to the Setupati's appeal for joining the army, it was a good number compared with the response in other areas. He also contributed a good sum to the war fund.

War-effort

Muthuramalinga Setupati was also a great connoisseur and promoter of fine arts. He followed the worthy example of his predecessors in the promotion of Tamil learning, music and dance. He distinguished himself as a very great patron of Tamil scholarship.

Muthuramalinga Setupati died in 1928 leaving the Samastanam to Sri Shanmukha Rajeswara Naganatha Setupati, the present Raja. Shanmukha Rajeswara Setupati is a well-known national figure, and his services to the country during the last 30 years are too well known to be recounted. He has inherited, in an abundant measure, the culture, generosity and public spirit of his predecessors. His appointment as a minister of the Madras state during the Rajaji Ministry was a recognition of his extraordinary ability as an administrator and affable nature. Though interested in the promotion of every worthwhile cause, sports are his first affection. Thanks to his interest, the Madras state has been able to produce first-rate players in every field. As minister he paid special attention to the development of sports and the sportsman-like spirit in our state. His services to the cause of education at all levels in the Madras state are well-known.

THE SETUPATIS OF THE THIRD PERIOD

(1795 —)

1.	British Management	A. D.	1795-1803
2.	Rani Mangaleswari Nachiar	,,	1803-1807
3.	Annasami Setupati	,,	1807-1820
4.	Vijaya Raghunatha Setupati	,,	1820 1829
5.	Rani Muthuveerayee Nachiar	,,	1829-1830
6.	Mangaleswari Nachiar, } Durai raja Nachiar }	,,	1830-1845
7.	Rani Parvatavardani Nachiar	,,	1846-1862
8.	Muthuramalinga Setupati	,,	1862-1873
9.	Court of Wards (Bhaskara's minority)	,,	1873-1888
10.	Bhaskaraswami Setupati	,,	1889-1903
11.	Lessees (Muthuramalinga Setupati's minority)	,,	1903-1909
12.	Muthuramalinga Setupati	,,	1910-1928
13.	Sri Shanmukha Rajeswara Naganatha Setupati	,,	1928-



Raja Muthuramalinga Setupati
(Rajarajeswara Setupati)



Diwan Ponnuswami Devar

V. CULTURE UNDER THE SETUPATIS

1. THE PEOPLE

Though predominantly a barren area with very little of agriculture to attract large-scale settlement by people from outside, the Marava country has always been the centre of notable cultural activity.

A meeting place of people Being the meeting point of people from foreign lands like Ceylon, Malaya, Burma and China in the past, and also the passage through which a good part of the maritime trade of South India took place, the country has always had a good floating population, characteristic of the *Palai* land; and the impact of the different cultures that the foreigners represented, on the native people was, therefore, not inconsiderable. The *Ramnad* country may be regarded as a cosmopolitan part of South India where narrownesses born of race, caste and other considerations are not so great as may be found in certain other parts. The social harmony that characterised the area from the earliest times was the product of the mingling of the people from different quarters halting in and passing through the country for trade and other reasons.

The population of the old Marava country may have consisted mainly of the hardy Maravas and the fisherfolk in places close to the coast. The *Ramnad*

Manual refers to seven divisions among the Maravas, but until a scientific, sociological survey is undertaken, it will be wise not to make any enumeration of the sub-divisions. I have made enquiries in different places and realise that there may be many more divisions; and as the points of difference between one division and another are not many, it would be better to consider the Marava community as a whole and leave the analysis of the differences among the different sub divisions to the specialist in sociology. At this point, I wish to say that the accounts given in Thurston and other books relating to the marriage, funerary and other ceremonies, and the feasts and festivals of the Maravas, are anything but accurate and dependable. It would be worth the while of social studies teachers in the Ramnad area to make an accurate study of the customs of the Maravas.

The Nattukkottai Chettiar element in the population of the Marava country must have been an addition after the destruction of Kaviripoompattinam by the city being engulfed by sea. It is not possible to fix the date of this migration. It could be during the early Chola period itself when the Marava country was under the ^{Nagarathars} Chola domination as suggested by Mahavidwan Raghava Iyengar. The migration must have taken place at one time; and this belief is prompted by the concentration of a whole community in one area which is rather a unique sociological phenomenon in South India. Probably as immigrants from the city of *Puhar*, they were distinguished in

the new area of their settlement by the name of Nagarathar, 'the city folk,' as distinct from the Nattars, 'the local folk'.

The Nattukkottai Chettiars, too, have contributed greatly to the promotion of the cosmopolitan outlook in the Marava country by their association with far-off lands like China, Burma, Malaya and Indochina. The Maravas, the Nattukkottai Chettiars and Nattars have been living in a spirit of live and let-live, cordiality and co-operation, and each community has played its notable role in the advancement of the country.

2 RELIGIONS

Today the Marava country is no different from the rest of the Tamil country in respect of diversity of religious groups. Members of every religion flourishing in South India, live in the Marava country. There are the Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and Jains inhabiting the country. But if we examine the religious history of the country, certain features unique to it, will show themselves up. In the centuries before Christ, after the so-called Aryanisation of the South, the Marava country should have followed Hinduism, like the rest of the Tamil country. The association of Sri Rama with the country is itself an evidence of this fact. I am tempted to believe that the Agastya cult too must have been in vogue in this part of the country from very early times. Agastya is said to have crossed the sea over to Ceylon in time to whip up the drooping spirits

of those on Sri Rama's side, and Sri Rama himself, who was exhausted by the great fight, with the *Adityahrudayam*. A few years ago I found an Agastya image within a short distance from the sea-shore in Tiruppullani. The image is not of any metal or even the usual kind of stone used for the making of images. I have a hunch it is marble. It is in an excellent condition, and is worshipped in an improvised temple, the Pooja being performed by a member of the non-Brahmin community. This image has strengthened my belief in the antiquity of the Agastya cult in the Marava country.

The Hinduism of the Tamil country must certainly have absorbed the religion that existed in the Tamil country before its Aryanisation; and it is the product of the mingling of the native and exotic forms that is described in early literature. Lord Muruga was a Tamil god akin to the Mars of the Roman tradition. The Maravas should have been worshippers of Subramania, the god of war, from the earliest times. The Subramania cult is among the most popular cults in this area.

Saivism has also a long history in the Marava country. At least during the period of the Pallavas, Saivism had got planted firmly on the Marava soil as evidenced by the number of Saivite temples that had been constructed before that time and the fact that quite a good number of the Tevaram hymns relate to the gods in some of these temples. The shrines in Tiruvadanaï, Rames-

waram and Kalaiyarkoil (Kanapper) are among those celebrated in the Tevaram hymns, and this is an unmistakable evidence of their antiquity. The temple in Tiru Uttarakosamangai is celebrated in the hymns of Saint Manikkavachagar. The Saivite Nayanmar, Ilayankudi Maranayanar was a native of Ilayankudi in the heart of the Marava country. There are many Saivite temples belonging to the Chola and Pandyan periods located in the Marava country and its neighbourhood; and the Setupatis vied with one another in making rich endowments to these, and either renovating these or adding to their buildings.

Vaishnavism, too, flourished in the Marava country, and Vaishnavite temples received very great support from the ruling kings from time to time. At least, three temples in the Marava country have been celebrated by the Alwars, and Vaishnavism they are the Tirumeyyam, Tirugoshtiyur and the Tiruppullani temples, which even today attract thousands of pious devotees all through the year. The Marava country has the unique distinction of having been blessed by the presence of Sri Ramanuja when the great Srivaishnavite leader received his spiritual training under Nambi in Tirugoshtiyur. The country witnessed the great revolution in Hinduism brought about by Sri Ramanuja by which the so called lower castes began to share the right with the privileged class to get initiated into the secret *mantras*. The eminence from which Sri Ramanuja preached the forbidden *mantra* to the bewildered masses is, even today, a place of special note in the

Tirugoshtiyur temple. The memory of this great event in our religious history is preserved in the fine pieces of sculpture on the rather unusual Gopuram of the Tirugoshtiyur temple.

Jainism too had its period of glory and prosperity in the Marava country. Though I have no evidence at the moment to assert that it was popular south of Sivagangai, it is not far-fetched to presume that the Jainism religion had, at one time, spread into the whole of the Marava country. There is the only Jaina temple in this part of Tamilnad, in Hanumanthakudi, situated in the Tiruvadanaï taluk. At present the 'temple' is located in some shed within a furlong of the original temple which is in a dilapidated condition. From enquiries made at this temple I learnt that it is related in its practices and customs to the Mysore type of Jainism.

All over the neighbourhood of the northern Marava country we have the old Jain caves and *Pallis* (or beds). I may mention those in Sittannavasal, Nartamalai, Kudumianmalai and Kunrakkudi as instances. The caves in Tirumalirumsolai, too, are not outside the scope of our survey. The Sittannavasal caves contain Jaina paintings, and have fortunately been included among the protected monuments.

Jainism must have ceased to have any influence after the 7th century A. D. with the rise of the Bhakti movement in Hinduism under the lead of the early Nayanmars for Saivism and the Alvars for Vaishnavism. But the relics of Jainism in which the country abounds are an unmistakable evidence of the great

heights of glory to which Jainism had attained during the first three or four centuries of the Christian era.

As regards Buddhism in the Marava country, all we can say is, that during the period represented by the *Silappadikaram*, that religion might have had some currency in the Marava country. However, nothing can be asserted about the extent of the popularity enjoyed by Buddhism in this part of the country.

As regards the religion of the Setupatis, they were all followers of Saivism. Worshipers of Siva, Muruga and Durga (Sakti), the Setupatis were equally staunch in their devotion to Vishnu. The Tiruppullani shrine owes as much to the Setupatis as the Rameswaram shrine.

3. LITERATURE

The Marava country has a literary tradition almost as long as the history of Tamil literature itself. Madurai, the seat of the three Tamil Sangams, was not far off, and in fact, was the capital of the power that assumed overlordship of the Marava country for a very long period. Naturally, the Marava country could not, and did not, remain in any attitude of splendid isolation in cultural spheres, but as part of the Pandyan country, contributed its own quota to their enrichment.

Even among the poets of the Sangam age there were some from the Marava country distinguished for their genius. At least in regard to three, including a woman, there is no doubt that they were born and raised in this part of the

Pandyan country. They were Masattiyar, the poetess from Okkur, Masattanar, the poet from the same place, and Bootapandyan, the poet from Ollaiyur. That these Sangam celebrities were among the top-ranking poets of the age is evident from their verses being chosen for inclusion in the *Anthologies*.

Among the Saivite religious hymnists of the later period, Ilayankudi Maranayanar was a native of Ilayankudi. Among the Vaishnavite hymnists, Peria Alwar and Andal belonged to Srivilliputtur.

There is the tradition that Poet Kamban spent the evening of his life in the Marava country; and today there is a spot in Nattarasankottai which perpetuates the memory of the great Ramayana poet of the Tamil country. The association of Ottakuttar, another celebrity of the later Chola period, with the Marava country is also sought to be established by Pandit Mahavidwan Raghava Iyengar, the last great poet laureate of the Setupatis. According to him Kuttan was born in a place called Malari near Rajasingamangalam. We shall accept the learned Pandit's interesting surmise, as the place of birth of many poets of the Tamil country of the early period is anybody's guess.

Among the other celebrities may be mentioned Pariperumal, an able commentator, not to be confused with Parimel Alagar, the famous commentator of the *Kural*. Pariperumal is said to hail from Kaviperumal Thenseluvai in Setunad and is also reputed to have written a commentary to the *Kural*. The superior

beauty of Parimel Alagar's commentary over that of Pariperumal might have won for the former the title of Parimel Alagar assuming that Pari was a shortened form of Pariperumal. This surmise of Pandit Raghava Iyengar is interesting and would make Pariperumal earlier in point of time than Parimel Alagar. Pariperumal is also referred to in some sources as Kaviperumal, one of the ten commentators of the *Kural*.

There is the tradition of one Sevvaisuduvar of Vembarrur having composed a *Bhagavata Purana* in Tamil. Alavandar, the author of *Vasittam* in Tamil, Perumberra Puliyur Nambi, the author of *Tirualavai-udaiyar Tiruvilayadal*, Kaviraja Pandita Perumberra Puliyur Nambi who rendered the *Soundaryalahari* and the *Anandalahari* into Tamil, Perumalier who composed the *Nellaiḱovai*, Samikavi Kalarudra the author of *Alagar Pillaittam* and Kavikunjara Bharati the author of *Alagar Kalam-bakam* are also mentioned in the galaxy of literary celebrities who had their intimate association with the Marava country.

Now, coming to the period between the Pandyas and the Setupatis, we have quite an imposing array of poetic talent, encouraged and rewarded by different patrons. Of them Kaviraja Pandita belonged to Viracholan and he and his son, whose name we do not know, enriched Tamil poetic literature by their works, mostly of the devotional type. Veerai Asukavi Rayar Pagalikuttar belonging to Sannasigramam in the Marava country was the celebrated author of the

Jivakachintamani Surukkam and *Tiruchendil Pillaittamil*, Veerai Asukavirayar who hailed from Nallurveerai, composed the *Arichandra Purana Viruttam* which was released before a distinguished gathering in the Tiruppullani shrine. In a verse in the preface to the work the poet mentions the date of the publication as Saka 1446 which would be A. D. 1524.

Saint Thayumanavar appears to have spent his last days in Ramnad. Local tradition has it that the saint lived a lonely life in the jungles adjoining Ramnad and meditated on god. He used to go into a trance every now and then; and on one occasion he was lost in

Saint
Thayumanavar contemplation for many days. The Setupati discovered the saint in the jungle as he was out hunting, and mistaking the saint in contemplation for a dead body, ordered his cremation. The saint came back to consciousness as the fire started consuming his body bit by bit. The Setupati realised his horrible mistake and was overwhelmed with grief and a sense of guilt. The saint, in his bodily agony, pronounced a curse on the Setupati that he and his successors would not live the full span of life.

We need not attach much credence to this story because there is nothing in any of the written biographies of the saint to corroborate the story. But, that the saint spent his last days in Ramnad is borne out by all accounts. In Lakshmipuram there is a small shrine in the traditional architectural style containing a good stone-image of the saint. On the wall to the left of the entrance there is an inscription containing the following words :

“ சாலிவாஹன சகாப்தம் 1581 க்கு
சுபகிருது (வடு) தைமீ விசாக
நகைத்திரத்தில் ஸ்ரீ தாயுமான
சுவாமி அவர்கள் பரிபூரணம்.”

If we should go by this inscription, the saint becomes a contemporary of Tirumalai Setupati.

There is the reference in the literary history of this period to one Javvadu Pulavar who, from the data available, should be placed in the period of Tirumalai Setupati. He was a Muslim; and when the Setupati had an attack of of small-pox, composed a poem in praise of Rajarajeswari called *Rajarajeswari Pancharatnam* and quickened the recovery of the Setupati. He also composed the *Mohideen Andavar Pillaittamil*. Tradition makes him a native of Emaneswaram.

Alagiya Chitrambala Kavirayar, another poet of the period was born in Mithilaipatti in the Marava country and became famous by his *Talasinga Malai* sung in praise of Tirumalai Setupati. The work throws much needed light on the personality of the Setupati.

Another poet by name Amuda Kavirayar also composed a *Kovai* in praise of Tirumalai, and this work too describes the qualities of the head and heart of the Setupati.

Poet Padikkasan, a luminary of the late 17th century, was possibly a contemporary of Kilavan Setupati. He won the appreciation of Padikkasan Periatambi Marakkayar *alias* Sidakkadi, a nobleman living in Kilakkarai.⁵¹ The poet composed

two poetical works the *Tandalaiyar Satakam* and the *Tondaimandala Satakam*. One of his verses in praise of the Setupati is really very interesting:⁵²

The three Crowned Heads are gone, also the
Sangam;
Twenty one kings have become a memory;
charity does not exist;
When poets are tossed about like the soft cotton
Raghunatha Jayatunga, thou art verily the divine
tree.

About the same time as Padikkasan's lived Umaru Pulavar in Kilakkarai and composed the *Sirappuranam* in 5000 beautiful Tamil stanzas.⁵³ It relates to the life of the Prophet and has attained classical importance. It is the first great work in Tamil by a Muslim writer. Umaru Pulavar won the recognition of the Setupati and had the sustained patronage of Sayyad Kadir Marakkayar.

Among the other poets patronised by the Setupati and Sayyad Kadir Marakkayar special mention may be made of Kandasami Pulavar. The poet has a number of miscellaneous poems to his credit. It was he who composed the *Tiruppuvana Ula* and *Appanur Puranam*. Kandasami Pulavar enjoyed the patronage of the Sivagangai ruler also. The *Ula* has been published by Mahamahopadyaya Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Iyer.

One of the greatest poets of the period was the famous Palapattatai Chokkanatha Pulavar. His *Tevai Ula* has been ably edited by Mahamahopadyaya Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Iyer. His other work the *Vinjai kovai*

Palapattatai
Chokkanatha
Pulavar

is on one Deivakanni who was in the position of an adviser to Raghunatha Setupati. There is the story that Deivakanni, after listening to the *Kovai* for eight days, died of over-ecstasy, and that his rival Supradeepa Kavirayar made a good deal of the incident to rob Chokkanatha of his peace of mind.⁵⁴

Sarukkarai Pulavar who was a contemporary of the Dalavai Damodaram Pillai was a versatile scholar, and he was granted a number of villages as gift in recognition of his service to Tamil and religion. His important work was the *Tiruchendur Kovai*. He was also a good commentator. The family of Sarukkarai Pulavar produced such eminent poets as Seeni Pulavar and Sarukkarai Muthukumarappa Pulavar.

Among the poets of the third period may be mentioned Mambala Kavirayar, who composed a poem in praise of the Setupati, Kalpottu Pichu Pope's English Iyer' who composed the *Tiruvadana* *Kural Andadi*, Somasundaraguru who composed the *Tirukkaluk্কundrattu Kovai*, and Ramanuja Kavirayar. Ramanuja Kavirayar may be considered a pioneer in the field of editing and publishing classical Tamil works, and one who, in a sense, anticipated Mahamahopadyaya Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Iyer in this regard. Among the works published by him was the *Tiruk্কural* with the commentary of Parimel Alagar and with an elaborate annotation by himself. He had the distinction of being tutor in Tamil to such distinguished European scholars as Thomson Clark, G. U. Pope and Winslow.

The famous *Winslow Dictionary* was the product of Ramanuja Kavirayar's collaboration with the European. Ramanuja Kavirayar must also have helped G. U. Pope in his translation of the *Tirukkural*. Pope acknowledges the help he received from Ramanuja, and also pays a glowing tribute to the Pandit's bedazzling scholarship. He has also referred to an interesting, though incredible, incident in the life of Ramanuja. Ramanuja was, in his early days, a dullard and was looked upon as a good for nothing person by the community. Ramanuja realised that he was not wanted by anyone and decided to put an end to his life. He repaired to the temple of the Goddess of Learning and was about to cut his throat when, lo! the Goddess appeared and blessed him with the genius reflected in all his works. Pope avers that he has seen the scar on the neck of Ramanuja.

Another celebrated poet of the period was Peria Saravana Kavirayar of Mudukulattur. He was a favourite of Muthirulappa Pillai whom he celebrated in a work with sensual flavour. His other work the *Panavidu Thoothu* is better known. His son Arunachala Kavirayar and grandson Sิริya Saravana Kavirayar were also scholars of no mean repute.

In the last group of the literary giants of the period, the name of Krishna Iyengar stands foremost. He was a scholar in Tamil and Sanskrit. He was held in very great esteem by both Muthuramalinga Setupati and his minister Ponnusamy Devar.

Muthuswami Iyengar was another great scholar and poet. He established a great name for himself not only in the Tamil country but also in Mysore where he was honoured by His Highness Muthuswami Iyengar Sri Krishnaraja Odayar with the gift of a palanquin, parasol, a pearl garland and a bag of gold. Among his works are *Chandralokam*, *Manavala Mamuni Noottrandadi*, *Nootrettu Tiruppati Padiṅṅal* and *Kurukai Kalambakam*. Among his students were Panditurai Devar, the founder of the Madurai Tamil Sāṅgam Sri Tirunarayana Iyengar whose service to the cause of Tamil cannot be easily overestimated and Mahavidwan R. Raghava Iyengar who was his nephew. Sri M. Raghava Iyengar who is happily with us, enjoying well-earned rest in his old age in his village is the worthy son of the great Muthuswami Iyengar. One does not need to be told about the inestimable services rendered by Sri M. Raghava Iyengar in the cause of Tamil during the last 50 years and more. Each one of his works is a masterpiece of research, and provides an excellent lead to the junior scholars of our days in the matter of an objective and scientific approach to the study of the literary sources as evidence of history.

An account of the literary figures of the last period cannot be complete without, at least, a brief reference to Mahavidwan R. Raghava Iyengar who passed away a few years ago. A descendant of the great Krishna Iyengar and a cousin of Sri M Raghava Iyengar, he kept alive the Tamil literary tradition which had survived in this

part of the Tamil country, uninterrupted, from the days of the old Sangam. Mahavidwan R. Raghava Iyengar, like his cousin and namesake, was a modern scholar in every sense; and though many of his themes, like the *Parikathai*, relate to olden times, there is the reflection of the modern spirit in each one of his stanzas and a plea for the conservation of the old-world values and virtues which, if lost, would make man crawl morally, instead of stand upright.

Some of the Setupatis and members of the Setupati family were themselves finished scholars in Tamil and Sanskrit. Muthuramalinga Setupati (d. 1873) was a writer of high class poetry. Among his works are *Vallimanamalai*, *Sarasasallabamalai*, *Muruḡaranubuti*, *Nitibhodavenba* and *Prabhakaramalai*.

Besides maintaining scholars and poets in their own courts as Asthana Vidwans, the Setupatis patronised Tamil scholarship wherever it was found in the Tamil country. One may say without fear of contradiction that during the last 200 years there was not a single scholar or poet who was not the recipient of the Setupati's liberal patronage. Scholars and poets considered it a special privilege to have an opportunity to exhibit their talent before the Setupati and win their approbation. In those days when the railways did not exist, when the highway to Ramnad was not paved with good intentions, Tamil bards from such far off regions like Tondaimandalam, Nanjil Nad and Kongu, trekked weary distances across the Ramnad

Patronage
of scholarship

country and secured a rousing reception and overwhelming encouragement from the rulers of Ramnad. Among those of the more recent times who received the support and patronage of the Setupati were Mahavidwan Meenakshisundaram Pillai, Jaffna Arumuga Navalar, Jaffna Kumarasami Pulavar, Vidwan Thyagaraja Chettiar, Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Iyer, Vidwan Tirunarayana Iyenger, Vidwan V.M. Sada-goparamanujachariar and Pandit Suryanarayana Sastri.

The Setupatis were, no doubt, great lovers of Tamil, but they were no linguistic fanatics. Their support of Sanskrit scholars is also proverbial. In fact, each one of the Setupatis took a special delight in planting Sanskrit scholars on the Marava soil. I have not been able to discover any high class Sanskrit work written during the 300 years of the Setupati regime. But one could be certain that many of the classics in Sanskrit like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharatha* were preserved jealously by the scholars whose encouragement by the Setupatis was with a view to the conservation of our Sanskritic heritage.

It is interesting to know that even Telugu did not escape the notice of the Setupatis. Possibly on account of the Telugu overlordship in Madurai, the Setupatis, especially those who were vassals of the Madurai Nayaks, had the influence of the Madurai court; and one of the Setupatis even went to the extent of adopting Telugu as the official language of the state. As we have mentioned earlier, Tirumalai Setupati had many of the state documents written in Telugu.

Before we close the section, a brief account of the Madurai Tamil Sangam may not be out of place. From the beginning, this institution has been the recipient of the liberal patronage and active support of the Setupatis. Founded about the beginning of this century through the efforts of the Setupati and Panditurai Devar, this institution, has, during the last sixty years, rendered incalculable service to Tamil by making a large number of unpublished works available to scholars and by giving a lead in scientific Tamil research. *Sentamil*, the official organ of the Sangam is a first-rate research journal in Tamil, and carries the writings of the most eminent Tamil scholars. Mahavidwan R. Raghava Iyengar and Sri Tirunarayana Iyengar who were editors of the journal for many years, set very high the standards for it even at its start.

4. FINE ARTS

In their patronage of Carnatic music the Setupatis were as zealous as the Maratta rulers of Tanjore. It may be at once said that Carnatic music would not have developed to the extent it has developed today but for the great encouragement it received at the hands of the Setupatis. The period of the Setupati rule was a period of great singers and musicologists in the Tamil country. There was not a single eminent musician who had not exhibited his talent in the court of the Setupatis and received presents from the Setupatis in recognition of his superior talents.

Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer, Patnam Subramania Iyer, Tirukkodika Krishna Iyer, Tanjai Narayanasami Appa are only a few of the persons out of the hundreds that were under the constant care, support and patronage of the Ramnad rulers. The introduction of the Navaratri celebration during Tirumalai Setupati's regime created many opportunities for the musicians to come to Ramnad and participate in the *sadas* which the Setupati convened every day during the Navaratri.

The great saint-musician Sadasiva Brahmendra was not a *vidwan* sitting permanently in the court of any of the Setupatis, but was certainly a *Sadasiva Brahmendra* product of the cultural renaissance in the Marava country resulting from the phenomenal encouragement and support that the Setupatis, and later, the Pudukkottai rulers, extended to the arts of peace. Sadasiva lived in Pudukkottai in the middle of the eighteenth century and made his significant contribution to the development of devotional music. His songs sung even today are in simple mellifluous Sanskrit.

Among the other noted musicologists was Vidwan Srinivasa Iyengar, popularly known as Poochi Iyengar, probably from a mannerism of his. He was a great scholar in Tamil, Sanskrit and Telugu, and his compositions in Telugu and Sanskrit are very famous and are sung even today. Though an "all-rounder" in music, *javali* was his *forte*.

Poochi Iyengar was also a sweet singer. I have heard from his neighbour and contemporary, the

late Mahavidwan Raghava Iyengar, that the Setupati used to be literally in raptures whenever he listened to the golden-voiced musician. We have in Ariyakkudi Sri Ramanuja Iyengar, his disciple, an able and worthy successor who preserves much of the grandeur of the classical Carnatic music more or less in the same way as his master.

There were also eminent Tamil composers during the Setupati's regime. Of them Madurakavi was very famous. He was a contemporary of Muthirulappa Pillai and the Marudu Brothers, and enjoyed their liberal patronage. His Kirtanams are in beautiful Tamil. Many of his songs are on goddess Meenakshi. He was specially gifted as a composer of *Padams*. Among his disciples was Kavikunjara Iyer, the author of the *Alaṅgar Kuravanji*. He also composed a bunch of songs with the title *Kandapurana Kirtanaigal*.

Another composer of eminence was Subramania Kavirayar who has celebrated Kottaisami Devar in his *Tirumana Kuravanji*. His disciple was Malavarayanendal Chinnasami Iyer the celebrated composer of the *Periapurana Kirtanai*.

Muthuramalinga Setupati whom we have already referred to as a Tamil poet, was also a connoisseur of Carnatic music. Besides being an able exponent of that form of music, he was a musicologist and a theoretician. Among his notable musical works are the *Gayaka Priya* and the *Rasika Ranjanam*. That the Setupati was an expert in Hindustani music

also may be gathered from the number of Hindustani songs included in these works.

Bharata Natya received a great impetus during the Setupati regime. Some of the Setupatis themselves were eminent students of that art. Tirumalai Setupati, for instance, was given the title of Bharata Nataka Praveena. In the murals within the Ramalinga Vilasam palace there are a few paintings depicting Bharata Natyam poses which are an evidence of the excellence which this art attained under the patronage of the Setupatis. That quite a number of *Kuravanjis* and musical compositions of the Javali and the Padam varieties were composed by many of the musicians patronised by the Setupatis is additional proof of this.

The Setupatis were greatly interested in painting also. It is much more than a coincidence that the best paintings of ancient Tamil Nad are found only is Sittannavasal, part of the Marava country. The Setupatis decorated the walls of their palaces with high class murals by eminent painters. Quite a large number of murals are found even today in the Ramalinga Vilasam palace. It is interesting to note that some of the paintings depict the important events of the history of the Setupati rule.

The first panel to the left in the interior of the Ramalinga Vilasam palace, as one enters, contains a beautiful picture of a Tanjore war. It is not easy to say which of the Tanjore wars it represents, though one may not be far off the mark by assigning this painting and most other paintings to a period later than 1803.

The painting showing the meeting of Colonel Martinz and the 'rebel' Muthuramalinga is also of great historical value. In the central Darbar Hall to the left of the throne on which the Setupati sat during the Navaratri Darbar, there is a fine painting on the roof showing pearl-fishing in the Gulf of Mannar. To the left of the throne there is another painting on the roof showing the skill of the Marava soldiers in the use of the boomerang.

Quite a large number of paintings represent in colour stories from the epics and the Puranas.

Apart from the murals, there are quite a number of high class portraits in the possession of the family, and some of them are really masterpieces in colour.

The Ramalinga Vilasam palace built by Kilavan Setupati, and added to by his successors, is a magnificent building with a majestic entrance and commodious halls inside. The old fort of Ramnad that surrounded the palace has almost disappeared; but the palace, be it said to the credit of the aesthetic-minded Setupatis, is in an excellent state of repair.

Secular Architecture The open spaces within the palace that should once have been sites of beautiful lawns and gardens, and the family temple close by, with access both direct from the palace and from outside, and the cluster of buildings that provided residence to the ministers and other superior officers of the kingdom are reminiscent of the glory that was once Ramnad.

5. EDUCATION AND PUBLIC CHARITY

The Setupatis of the first two periods promoted traditional education imparted through the Vedapata-

salas. The Setupatis of the third period promoted both traditional and modern education. Traditional education In the old Vedic schools the Vedas, excepting the Atharvana Veda, were memorised and instruction was imparted in Vyakarana, Mimamsa and Sahitya. Tarka, or the Science of Disputation, was also taught as part of the course. In some schools Tiruvaimoli was included in the course of studies.

Most of the patasalas were residential. Free boarding and lodging were provided to all the students. Three meals were provided to each student. The teachers were scholars of great repute and they were provided accommodation and grants of land for their maintenance.

We do not have exact information about the number of such schools maintained by the Setupatis. But from the very large number of villages granted by the Setupatis for the maintenance of Brahmin scholars one may guess that a large number of Veda patasalas must have been receiving the support of the Setupatis.

The Ramnad country was the first among the areas in South India to receive the impact of the new western education popularised in India after Western education Macaulay's Minute. Quite a large number of Anglo-vernacular schools were started in the country, and some of these were founded and supported by the Setupatis, while the others owed their start to missionary effort.

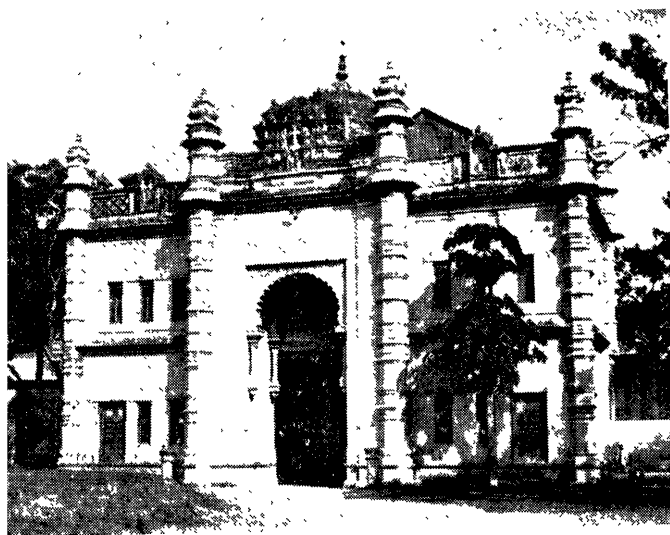
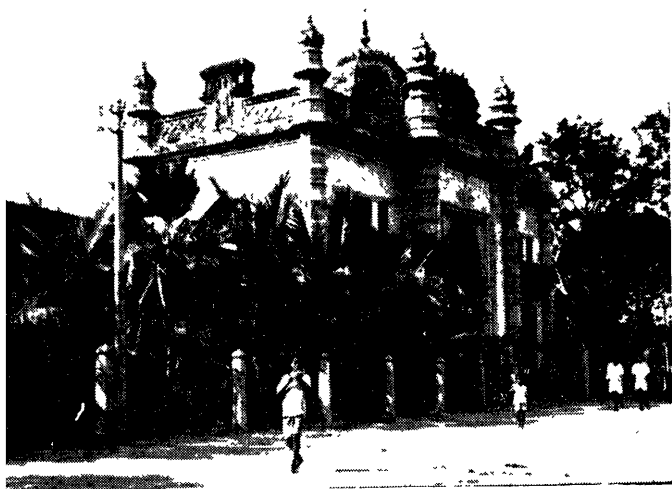
The first high school started in the Ramnad

country was the S. P. G High School located in Ramnad. Its beginnings can be traced to the efforts made, even so early as 1784 by Mr. Sullivan, the Resident of the Tanjore Court and C. F. Schwartz, a missionary, who had, for many years, laboured in Tranquebar and Tiruchirapalli before collaborating with Mr. Sullivan in the founding of what developed into the S. P. G. High School, now going by the name of Schwartz High School. The school had very famous headmasters like Mr. Graham and Mr. Allen. The school which had functioned for many years as an Anglo-vernacular school was upgraded in 1874 into a full-fledged high school preparing students for the Matriculation examination.

Under the same Mission a number of schools were opened in Pamban, Mudukulattur, Uttarakosamangai and Rajasingamangalam. The efforts of the Mission mentioned here had no doubt, the warm support and help of the Setupatis.

The Setupatis maintained a large number of schools for which funds were set apart in the various charity schemes. The Setupati High School, Ramnad, and the Setupati High School, Madurai, are standing monuments of the deep interest which the Setupati family had in the promotion of modern education. The Oriental School run under the auspices of the Tamil Sangam owes much to the munificence of the family and serves the cause of Tamil education and research.

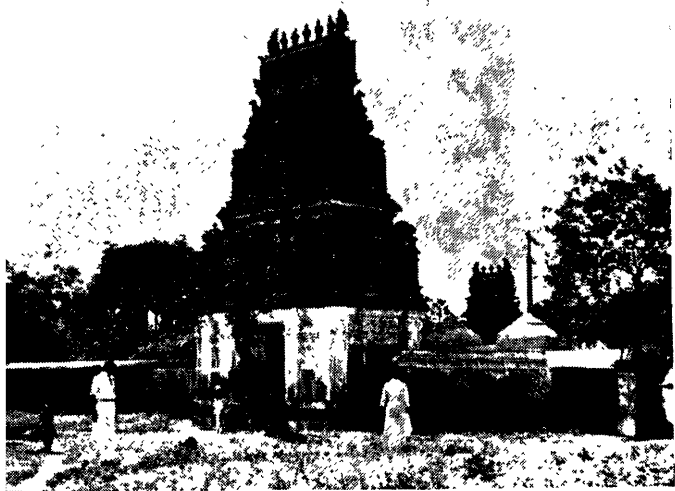
The Dharmamagamai funds which the Setupatis built up were used for many kinds of charities.



Ramalinga Vilasam palace entrance (Two views)



Saint Thayumanavar
(image found in the *samadhi* in Lakshmipuram)



Muthuramalingaswami temple, Lakshmiapuram



Mural-Ramalinga Vilasam
depicting, possibly, a Dasara procession



Mural - Ramalinga Vilasam
(Darbar scene)

Among them was the maintenance of a very large number of chatrams or rest-houses for pilgrims. At the close of the 19th century there were nearly **Chatrams** 44 chatrams receiving the support of the Setupatis. Some of these were founded by private persons, but all of them were supported by the Setupatis. Thirty of these were under the direct management of the Setupatis. The pilgrims coming to Rameswaram from different parts of India were given free food and lodging. It should have been a great boon, indeed, in those days, when travel was by no means a pleasant experience, and our country had not then begun to think in terms of restaurants and hotels.

Another kind of charitable endowment called Jarimagamai was also built up by a regular deduction from certain sources of revenue, and this was used for the support and maintenance of temples and certain persons of eminence. Though the Setupati had no immediate control over the expenditure from this endowment, his advice was always sought as to the best manner of helping really deserving causes.

We have already referred to the practice of each Setupati making gifts of land for the maintenance of families of poets and other eminent persons. Even **Land gifts** today, there are quite a large number of the descendants of the recipients of land-gifts who remember with gratitude, the donors, not only for their generosity, but also for the noble idea that inspired the gifts.

APPENDICES

1. GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

BOGALUR. Boḡalur (spelt variously as Poḡalur, Baḡalur and Boḡanur) was the capital of the Setupatis ever since they set up their rule over the Marava country as Nayak feudatories. It is situated about ten miles north-west of Ramnad. Today it is practically a deserted village and there is nothing to show that it was a capital city once. After the removal of the capital from Boḡalur during Kilavan Setupati's reign, the Setupatis, it appears, performed a part of the coronation ceremonies in Boḡalur in order not to lose contact with the first capital of the kingdom. Boḡalur is said to have contained a big fort, a palace and buildings for the different divisions of the army; but the village, as it stands today, makes it difficult for us to believe that it might have attained the splendour that history gives it.

HANUMANTHAKUDI: It is situated about five miles east of Devakkottai, and there is nothing in it to remind us of its former splendour and importance. There is a Jain temple which is still functioning, though in a building different from the original one which has fallen off on the banks of the river nearby. It was once the headquarters of a taluk, and was very prosperous. A Siva temple dedicated to Malavanathaswami, once famous as a place of worship, is now more or less in a neglected condition. The Jain temple deserves to be preserved as one of the very few links with a religion that has today only a few followers in our country.

KALAIYARKOIL: Kalaiyarkoil is ten or twelve miles east of Sivaḡanḡai. It is the same as the 'Kanapper' of classical Tamil literature and the Ceylonese chronicles.

One Venṅaimarban is stated to have constructed an impregnable fortress in this place. The place which had remained unimportant for centuries after the classical period attained a new importance after the construction, possibly by the Pandyas, of a huge Siva temple to which additions were made by Chinna Marudu. During the period of the Marudus, Kalaiyarkoil was more or less the secondary capital of the Sivaṅgai chieftaincy.

The alternate name 'Kanapper' must have been given to it on account of its location amidst jungles which, it is stated, once contained cheetahs. During the period of the Muslim Sultanate, it had probably another name, viz., Jyotishkudi, made up of 'Jyoti' and 'Kudi'. Possibly the place was surrounded by *Jyotishmati* trees. The Vaishnavites of Sriraṅgam who were harassed during the Muslim occupation of Sriraṅgam made this their *Anjinan Pukalidam* or asylum, until Gopana, the General of Kumara Kampana II, destroyed the Muslim occupation of Sriraṅgam and reinstalled Lord Raṅganatha in the temple.

Even today Kalaiyarkoil, though small, retains some of its beauty as a well laid out ancient town. The Teppakkulam, with the Mandapam in the centre, reminds one of the Madurai Mariamman Teppakkulam. There is a Matam, possibly of recent origin, that is doing very good work in the cause of Saiva Siddhanta.

The mounds in the town occupying an area of roughly one square mile are pointed out as the site of the palaces occupied by the Marudus. An excavation of the site may be fruitful.

KILAKKARAI: This place is situated on the Gulf of Mannar, about ten miles south of Ramnad. This must have been an important centre of Muslim population for many centuries. Even today there are quite a number of mosques some of which appear to be at least two or three centuries

old. The sea is not very deep here; but during the nineteenth century and the period earlier than that, the Kilakkarai port must have been among the busiest ports of the South, judged from the number of Muslim families that claim to have sprung from well-known ancient merchants from Kilakkarai, who had a very good volume of the oversea trade.

During the eighteenth century it was an important Dutch settlement, and a large number of Europeans from Holland appear to have lived in it. One is not able to identify any relic of Dutch association with this place; and from what the very old inhabitants of this place say, the remains of the old Dutch buildings were to be seen even thirty or forty years ago.

ORIYUR: Oriyur is about eleven miles north of Tiruvadanaï. We do not know the origin of the name. During the period of the Setupatis it was the seat of a governor of the Setupati. It was a fortified city with a complement of Marava forces. It was here that De Britto was executed under the orders of the governor of Oriyur. The association of the place with Ori, one of the Seven Donors would appear far-fetched in the present state of our knowledge, though the temptation to make the association is hard to resist.

RAJASINGAMANGALAM: It is located about twenty miles north of Ramnad and was once the headquarters of a taluk. It was also a very prosperous town. It was among the places occupied by Lankapura Dandanayaka. There are two temples, one dedicated to Kailasanathaswami, and the other to Kariamanikkaperumal. The Rajasingamanjalum lake is one of the largest in the Ramnad district and provides irrigation facilities to a very large area.

RAMNAD: Ramnad is an important town in the district of that name, though not its headquarters. Its association with the name of Rama and its proximity to the Setu would justify our considering it an ancient

city. It is also known as Muḡavai Naḡaram. Muḡavai may mean mouth or entrance. Possibly its being the gateway to India for those coming from Ceylon, or gateway to Ceylon for those going to Ceylon from India is implied in the Tamil name. One is bound to be reminded of Kavatam or the gateway (to Ceylon) which the Ramayana mentions, as situated on the sea-shore with golden gates; and this has, for many years, been the bone of contention among scholars. Even before it became the capital it had a mud fort. It was Kilavan Setupati who extended the city and constructed a stone fort in the place of the old mud fort. The fort contained 32 bastions, and one big gate on the eastern side. What now goes by the name of Moolai Kothalam is the only remnant of that fort today. The British appear to have converted the town into a cantonment during their occupation.

The palace inside the town was first constructed by Kilavan and subsequently added to or renovated by his successors. There is a Darbar Hall in the centre that used to be the venue of the Navaratri festivities. On the walls of this hall are excellent paintings most of which are still in excellent condition. To the left of the hall is the entrance to the private residence of the Setupati's family, and the family shrine dedicated to Sri Rajarajeswari is contiguous to the palace. At the back of the palace, accessible by a lane to the right of what must have once been the granary, is the Sankara Vilas, the official residence of the Diwans. The Sankara Vilas is in an excellent location. It is on one of the banks of the Muḡavai Oorani, and a flight of steps from the inside of the compound of the Sankara Vilas leads to the Oorani. There are a large number of temples in Ramnad like the Chokkanathaswami temple, Vanasankariamman temple, and the Kothandaramswami temple.

Lakshmipuram is the suburb of Ramnad. In it are located the Samadhi of Thayumanavar and the temple of Muthuramalingaswami constructed by Muthurmalinga Setupati.

TIRUCHULI: Tiruchuli is about ten miles north-east of Aruppukkottai, and is important on account of the temple dedicated to Sri Dhananadar or Tirumeni Nathar. The name of Arjuna, the Mahabharatha hero, who is stated to have visited this place during his southern sojourn is perpetuated by a well called *Gandipa theertham*.

TIRUGOSHTIYUR: It is five miles south-west of Tiruppattur on the Tiruppattur-Sivaṅgai road. It is one of the most ancient places in this part of Tamil Nad. The temple in this place is one of the finest pieces of architecture. The *Vimanam* is unusual in the sense that there are four storeys, each containing an image of god in a specific pose. All the three poses, standing, sitting and lying (நின்றான், இருந்தான், கிடந்தான்) are pictured in this temple, which also contains the shrines for Vishnu and Siva. The story is that Brahma, Vishnu and Siva held a Summit Conference in this place to decide the measures for putting an end to the atrocities of Hiranyakasipu. May be the Narasimha *Avatara* was conceived only in this place.

This place is very important as the residence of Sri Ramanuja during his studies under Nambi. Ramanuja was born in Sriperumbudur, near Madras. He came to Sriraṅgam both to write his works and to hold an important position in the Sriraṅgam temple. While in Sriraṅgam, he heard of the scholarship of Tiruḡoshtiyur Nambi, a member of *Poorva Sikal* Vaishnavite community. He wanted to study under him, and made many visits to Tiruḡoshtiyur to secure his acceptance by Nambi as a disciple. Nambi put him to a severe test, and ultimately, accepted him as his disciple. Ramanuja expounded the meaning of the *Tirumantra* to the masses of the people, standing on top of the *ḡopuram*, though strictly enjoined by his ḡuru not to share the meaning of the *Mantra* with the rank and file of the people. The spot from which he expounded the meaning of the *Mantra* is marked today with an image of Ramanuja.

Tiruḡoshtiyur was known to, at least, four Alwars: Peria Alwar, Tirumanḡai Alwar, Pei Alwar and Tirumalisai

Alwar. There are 39 *pasurams* in the *Nalayiram* in celebration of this ancient temple and its gods. Peria Alwar makes Tiruḡoshtiyur the birth place of Lord Krishna. The *Nalayiram* anthology, as codified, begins with the praise of the god of Tiruḡoshtiyur. It is interesting that of all the deities, Lord Krishna appealed to Peria Alwar more than any other in this temple.

Tiruḡoshtiyur retains much of its ancient appearance, and the town is one of the few in South India that have not yet been spoilt by the inroad of the soul-killing aspect of modern civilisation. To the student of sociology it is an excellent laboratory because there is the compact community of the Solias or the *Poorva Sikals* unspoilt by modern civilisation and pursuing their life more or less in the same way as their ancestors did.

TIRUPPULLANI: The correct form is *Tiruppulanai* (திருப்புவலினை). The Sanskrit form of this name is Dharba Saynam. This place is situated within a distance of six or seven miles south of Ramnad. The name of the place is derived from a legend according to which Rama accepted for himself a bed of kusa grass during his penance invoking Varuna's aid in the crossing of the sea. There is another legend according to which an ascetic by name Pul Aranya got the grace of Vishnu in this place. There is a temple in this place which is a remarkable piece of architecture, and is dedicated to gods Sri Rama and Jaḡannatha, and goddess Kalyanavalli. The temple existed during the time of Tirumanḡai Alwar who composed twenty one *pasurams* in praise of the deities in this temple.

TIRUVADANAI: At present the headquarters of the taluk of that name, the place derives its name from the two words Adu (ஆடு) and Anai (யானை) (sheep and elephant) in which forms saint Durvasa attained salvation at the end of a curse to which he was subject. The temple in this place is a very ancient one, famous from the days of Sambandar at least. Sambandar has left a

few verses celebrating the deity of the temple. It must have had the support of all the rulers of South India from the days of the Pallavas, though today, because of the complete renovation of the temple, there is no sign of its ancient splendour. The modern structure, no doubt, is excellent; but except in regard to the *sanctum* which may be old, the rest of the structure is completely new, and none of the old sculptures or embellishments has been preserved. Even the old inscriptions have disappeared. One hopes all of them have been copied already.

TONDI: The Tondi of the Ramnad coast is also called Cholan Tondi in order to distinguish it from another Tondi on the west coast known in ancient times as Cheran Tondi. Even today, Tondi retains a wee bit of its old reputation as a centre of ship-building. I had occasion to watch the construction of a few boats for use by fishermen, and I learnt that the boat builders belong to the family of the hereditary ship-builders of the Tamil country. In the early centuries of the Christian era, Tondi was an international port. In the *Ur Kan Kathai* of the *Silappadikaram* there is reference to the huge ships carrying different kinds of incense, silk, sandal, scent and camphor, about to cast anchor in the Tondi port and unload these for being presented to the Pandyan king.

Tondi seems to have enjoyed more or less the same importance through the different periods until the end of the Pandyan period. That it was internationally famous can be inferred from the fact that Ptolemy has mentioned it in his geography. The Tyndis of Ptolemy cannot be different from the Tondi of early literature, if one were to carefully study the location implied in Ptolemy's work. The Thanda of Dimishqi and the Thandiyur of Abul Fida refer only to the Chola port of Tondi. Dimishqi says that Tondi was one of the places of the big Ma'bar. Abul Fida locates Thandiyur at the extremity of Manibar to the east of Ra's Hayli. The mention of Manibar may suggest Cheran Tondi instead of Cholan Tondi, Manibar being

close to Malabar. But one cannot assume hundred percent perfection in the copying of ancient manuscripts and Ma'bar and Manibar could easily be mixed up in transcription. There is also the temptation of the student of history to read what he wants to read, and Ma'bar can easily become Manibar. I have equated Thandiur with Cholan Tondi because I pay special attention to Abul Fida's words 'extremity of Manibar'. Cholan Tondi is nearer the end of the peninsula than Chera Tondi.

Tondi was among the places held by Lankapura Dandanayaka during the brief Ceylonese occupation of the Ramnad country. Tondi has been, from the earliest known times, the exit to Ceylon on the Ramnad coast, and it is likely that Lankapura used it as a dock for the servicing of his ships. Very old people of the Chettinad area have told me that until four or five decades ago, Burma timber used to arrive from Burma in the Tondi port on big boats. Throughout the Chettinad area the best quality Burma timber has been used in the construction of houses.

Today Tondi supplies a good portion of the fish needs of coastal Ramnad. Hundreds of vendors go on their bicycles with unusually huge baskets tied up to the carriers of the cycles from a distance of even sixty or seventy miles, and bring these baskets back full of fish for being sold in their places many miles away. Of course, there are the bigger sellers who get the stuff in lorries. One suggestion that may be given is that there is plenty of scope for developing Tondi as a big fishing port of the Tamil country. It will help the consumers of fish enormously if facilities for storing fish, refrigeration and transport facilities could be provided. North of Tondi there is Pasipattinam within a few miles. Pasipattinam is the Pasa of ancient writers. It also enjoyed considerable popularity as a port. Today it is almost a forgotten place.

UTTARAKOSAMANGAI: This is located at a distance of about seven miles south-west of Ramnad. It has a beautiful Siva temple. The presiding deity is Mangales-

waraswami. There is the legend that Siva resolved the doubts of Parvathi with His answer or 'Uttaram'. The place and the temple must be very ancient from the fact that among those who have sung the praise of the temple is saint Manikkavachagar.

VATTANAM: Normally I would not have included this insignificant place in this section. There used to be a salt factory in this place giving it some importance. But my reason for picking it out for notice is different. I want to discuss the identification of the Fattan, and Fattan of the foreign travellers at length, because scholars in the past, really got into a maze on this question,

Ibn Batuta refers to a place called Fattan among the places on the Ramnad coast. It may be mentioned that this Moorish traveller actually stayed in the Madurai country as a guest of the Sultan of Madurai, and has left behind an excellent description of the Madurai country. A good deal of what he has to say refers to the Ramnad district which he speaks of as the jungle country. It is in connection with his accounts of this country that he mentions Fattan. The word appears very close to the Tamil word Pattanam. Dimishqi also mentions a city of big Ma'bar called Fatni. Dr. S. Krishnaswami Iyengar has in his identification of Fattan, really left the question more confusing than it really is. He has examined the claims of Melappattinam, Kayalpattinam, Devipattinam, Rameswarapattinam and Marakkayarapattinam, all of them on the coast of Ramnad to be identified with the Fattan of Ibn Batuta. He has nothing conclusive. He even pauses to examine the claim of Kaveripattinam. Dr. Mohammad Husain Nainar gets involved in a similar elaborate investigation. My own understanding is that Fatni and Fattan mentioned by Ibn Batuta and Dimishqi may be identified with Vattanam, and my reasons are as follows:

1. All the writers have mentioned only a simple name with a sound closest to Pattanam. The addition

of *pattanam* to Devi, Kayal, Marakkayar, Kaveri, and Rameswara, and the conversion of the name into a compound name in order to arrive at a plausible identification are to import wishful thinking into the solution.

2. Marco Polo and Ibn Batuta appear to refer to this place as located on the Ramnad coast, and the place must be sought for only on the Ramnad coast.

3. Dimishqi associates Fatni with Tondi and calls it as the *qasba* of Tondi. He also says that it has fallen into complete ruins (*vide* Dr. M. H. Nainar, *Arabs' Knowledge of Southern India*). None of the *pattinams* mentioned by Dr. S. K. Iyengar is in ruins. In fact each one of them is still populated and well known.

4. The only place that will fit in with the descriptions given by the different writers and travellers is Vattanam. It is on the Ramnad coast. It is within a distance of a few miles of Tondi, near enough to be the *qasba* of Tondi. The place is today very insignificant and is not so well known as Devipattinam or Kilakkarai. The surmise is that it must have fallen into ruins even so early as the period of Dimishqi. Marakkayarpattinam which Dr. S. K. Iyengar would equate with the Fattan of Ibn Batuta is very far from Tondi, as also Rameswarapattinam which, incidentally, is an unwarranted verbal extension of Rameswaram.

VEDALAI: It is a haven on the southern side of the Mandapam peninsula. Lankapura Dandanayaka is stated to have captured this place soon after his landing in India. This place must have been important for many centuries because of the pearl fisheries near-by. Probably this was used as a camp by the fishers, and also a depot for the pearls collected. Marco Polo mentions Battelar as the place near the gulf in which the fishers collected before starting the diving operations. Bettelar is very close to Vedalai in sound and it is probable that the reference by Marco Polo is to Vedalai.

2. THE SETUPATIS BEFORE 1600 A. D.

Nelson seems to think that Sadaika did not commence a new Setupati dynasty in Ramnad; but was just a link in a long chain of Setupatis who had already assumed the title of Setupatis and ruled over the Marava country. The implication would be that Sadaika was not appointed ruler of the Ramnad country, but was restored to his ancestral possessions. We are unable to contradict Nelson, because what he explicitly says and implies is not improbable; but at the same time we are unable to find adequate sustenance for Nelson's theory. As regards Sadaika, let it be an appointment or restoration; but there is nothing available on record about any *regular* succession of Setupatis having ruled over the Ramnad country before him. A few stray names of Setupatis, allegedly prior to Sadaika, are available from sources which appear spurious. On the basis of unconfirmed sources, it is not correct to build up a theory such as the one Nelson has attempted, and even Sewell appears to have built further upon. Sewell quotes the authority of Bruges to prove that there was a Udayan Setupati who was ruling over the Marava country in A. D. 1414, and he made a large number of additions to the Rameswaram temple. He also mentions a Chinniah Udayan Setupati and a Tirumalai Setupati for filling up the period between 1489 and 1501, and a Raghunatha Tirumala for some length of time ending with 1540. While we should be grateful to these eminent scholars for their interesting information, we are unable to accept it as history for the following reasons:

1. Was the name Setupati assumed by any king or chief in the Ramnad country before Sadaika

Devar who, we are told by a number of very good authorities, was appointed by the Nayak on his getting representations from pilgrims that they were exposed to a number of dangers and hardships consequent on there being no one to keep order in that distant corner of the Nayak territory?

2. If there had been a succession of Setupatis, as suggested by the two scholars, they would have issued records, while making donations to temples. We are not aware of any genuine record issued by any Setupati before Sadaika.

3. If a line of Setupatis had really ruled even as feudatories of the Pandyas and of the earlier Nayaks, they would have been mentioned in the documents of their overlords by the title of 'Setupati.' It was a very common practice to mention the title of feudatories in the records. For instance, whenever called for, the Cholas referred to their feudatories with their titles *Kadavarayars*, *Sambhuvarayars*, *Pallavarayars*, *Yadavarayars* etc. The Setupati title is not mentioned in any of the earlier records known so far.

The writer of the *Ramnad Manual* scores one point over Nelson and Sewell when he mentions one Venrarasukonda Devar, who not only ruled over the Marava country but parts of Ceylon also. He bases his information on a copper plate grant, a copy of which, he says, was found by him. This is just the kind of information which must be taken, not with a pinch of salt, but with an ounce of it.

4. There is no literary work of any standing mentioning a Setupati anterior to Sadaika.

5. The *Mahavamsa*, while mentioning insignificant names like Malava Chakravarti and others, has not

anywhere mentioned a Setupati while writing about the campaigns of Lankapura. From this, at least one thing is certain, i. e., the title Setupati was not assumed before the twelfth century.

There is another point that cannot be accepted without mental reservation, i. e., Nelson's statement that Veeravanallur or Nallur near the Ramnad coast was the first capital of the Setupatis.

The Birudus of the Setupatis may yield some information, but not always the correct information, because in olden times, Birudus were composed by poets both with the real titles given to kings and with new titles coined by themselves. The following pieces of information in the Birudus of the Setupatis are beyond question :

- 1 'The guardian of the Tondian shore'.
- 2 'He who had Hanuman and Garuda on his banner'.
- 3 'The performer of the Hiranyagarbha sacrifice'.
- 4 'The protector of the Setu'.
- 5 'The ruler of Thevai city' or Thevai country'.
- 6 'One who is a zealous adept at business concerning Ramanathaswami'.

As regards the following items one has to suppose that they were more ornamental than sustainable with reference to unassailable facts of history :

- 1 'The establisher of the Pandyamandalam.'
- 2 'The establisher of the Cholamandalam.'

As regards the suggestion that the Setupatis exercised authority over parts of Ceylon, no definite assertion can be made. May be that certain areas in

the northern and western parts of Ceylon were under their authority for brief periods; or it may be, because of the Setupatis' ownership of a number of tiny islands near Ceylon, the pompous title of 'conqueror of Ceylon' might have been given to them.

Having expressed ourselves against accepting unconfirmed information, we may now list the 'Setupatis' believed to have been the predecessors of Sadaika for the further consideration of scholars. 1. Adi Raghunatha. 2. Jayatunga Raghunatha. 3. Adivira Raghunatha. 4. Varaguna Raghunatha. 5. Kulot-tunga. 6. Samara Kolahala. 7. Martanda Bairava. 8. Sundara Pandya. 9. Gangeya Raghunatha. 10. Vijaya Muthuramalinga.

3. A BRIEF HISTORY OF SIVAGANGAI

It is an irony that precious little is known of the recent history of many of the parts of Tamil Nad. There are three divisions of the Tamil country which had an important part to play during the formative period of the English power in South India. These are Ramnad, Pudukkottai and Sivagangai. Except the Pudukkottai division which has luckily some material for the reconstruction of its history, the other two divisions have practically very little of help to the student of history.

The case of Sivagangai is even more difficult than Ramnad. The few points given below are based on disjointed accounts and on the Sivagangai *Blue Book* which today is unfit to be handled for the reason that its leaves, brittle with the passage of time, have come off.

Nalukottai is a small place a few miles north of Sivagangai and a few miles south-west of Okkur. It

was under the Ramnad ruler for a long time, and the guess that, even during the rule of the Setupati, there was a chieftain in Nalukottai that looked after the area round about Sivagangai and Kalaiyarkoil, on behalf of the Setupati, is not fantastic. The first time we hear of the Nalukottai family is during the period of Vijaya Raghunatha, the successor of Kilavan. We come across one Nalukottai Udaya Devar who, from his name, must have occupied an important post under the Setupati. He had a son by name Sasivarna Devar. Vijaya Raghunatha Setupati gave his daughter Akiland-
eswari Nachiar in marriage to Sasivarna Devar. In spite of Nalukottai Udaya Devar being a prominent person, it is not known if he ever had the status of a chieftain. It was only on the occasion of the marriage of Sasivarna Devar that this status was conferred upon the son-in-law by Vijaya Raghunatha Setupati who gave plenty of lands free of tax, as dowry. According to the *Blue Book* the lands were enough for the maintenance of three thousand fighters, while according to the *Ramnad Manual* they could maintain one thousand men. According to the former source, the fortresses of Piranmalai, Tiruppattur, Cholakapuram and Tiruppuvanam were placed under the charge of Sasivarna Devar by the Setupati.

Sasivarna Devar appears to have had great qualities of leadership and a scheming head. He took advantage of the confusion in the Ramnad politics on account of the succession dispute between Bavanisankara and Thanda Devar; and his open hostility to the Setupati's interests made him *persona non grata* in the eyes of the Setupati. The successor to Thanda Devar, Bavanisankara, disliked Sasivarna very much, and therefore, Sasivarna made common cause with Kattaiah Devar who had secured the help

of the Tanjore Raja. In a sense Sasivarna played the king-maker, and successfully got Bavanisankara ousted and Kattaiah installed as the Setupati.

Sasivarna was at the height of his glory and power during Kattaiah's rule in Ramnad. Kattaiah, probably to show his gratitude to his allies in the war against Bavanisankara, gave a good bit of the Ramnad kingdom to Sasivarna with the rights of an independent chieftain conferred upon him. He also conferred upon Sasivarna the title of Raja Muthuvijaya Raghunatha Peria Udaya Devar.

Nothing more is known of Sasivarna Devar except that he had the advice and guidance of one Gnani Sathappa Iyer in whose name Sasivarna erected and endowed a Mutt. The town of Sivagangai must have been developed into the capital of the chieftaincy only about this time.

Sasivarna Devar died in 1750 and was succeeded by his son Muthuvaduganatha Peria Udaya Devar. He must have had a peaceful and prosperous period until the coming into the picture of the Nawab of the Carnatic. We know nothing about the activities of Muthuvaduganatha, though he was on the *gadi* for thirty years. All we know is that he and the Nawab of the Carnatic were at loggerhead, and in an engagement in Kalaiyarkoil in 1780, he was shot dead by the Nawab's men.

Muthuvaduganatha had no male issue, and his widow Velu Nachiar and their daughter Vellachi, fled Sivagangai probably for fear of the Nawab. They are stated to have sought asylum somewhere.

It is about this time that the Marudu Brothers come into prominence. They had been betel-nut

bearers (Adappaikkarans) of Muthuvaduganatha. They appear to have secured Hyder Ali's help to drive the Carnatic Nawab out of the Sivagangai territory. Afterwards they took possession of it. The Nawab had to approve of their restoring the widow of Muthuvaduganatha to her husband's position in Sivagangai. The Marudu Brothers became her ministers and Generals.

The story of Velu Nachiar's regime becomes complicated with her adopting one Padamattur Gowrivallabha as her son. This lad was, no doubt, related to Muthuvaduganatha in some way. The Marudu Brothers were not in favour of this move on the part of Velu Nachiar. They planned to put obstacles in the way of Gowrivallabha's succession. They got Vellachi Nachiar, the daughter of Velu Nachiar married to one Vengan Periya Udaya Devar of Nalukottai. This would put the daughter of Muthuvaduganatha as a rival to Gowrivallabha. But this was only the beginning of their plan. They wanted to destroy Gowrivallabha at any cost. Gowrivallabha, being the legitimate successor, did not seem to attach much importance to the marriage. But when the Marudus made his position very hot and difficult, he along with his brother, fled to Pudukkottai. Velu Nachiar too died about 1790. The Marudus proclaimed Vellachi as the successor to the estate under the title of Velu Nachiar (the Second?). The Brothers continued to be the *de facto* rulers for a few years. Vellachi died in 1793. Vellai Marudu got his daughter married to Vengan Periya Udaya Devar, the widower. This was to keep the power in their own hands after Vellachi's death.

The name of the Marudu Brothers would have been forgotten if they had merely lived and died as

the ministers of Sivagangai. But when they showed their rebellious spirit against the English, the story of their life took a new turn and made them the heroes that they have been ever since. They consistently disobeyed the Carnatic Nawab's orders, attacked their soldiers, and later, after the Nawab had ceded the Marava country to the British, refused payment of the *peshkush* to the British. They became the marked enemies of the British. The rest of the story is found elsewhere.

After the Marudus had been destroyed, Gowri-vallabha Periya Udaya Devar was installed as the Zamindar of Sivagangai in 1801 by the East India Company. Since then Sivagangai continued as a prosperous Zamindari patronising all worthwhile causes and promoting the arts of peace.

4. FOOTNOTES

[N. B. The following are notes on items marked on the different pages with numbers:]

1. For instance, in the *Purananuru*, there are quite a number of poems referring to the Maravas. Stanzas 43, 68, 177, 258 and 270 may be referred to. (*vide Purananuru*, Mahamahopadyaya U. V. Swaminatha Iyer's edition). In the *Silappadikaram* we have quite a fund of interesting information on the Maravas that can be pieced together. See pages 139, 297, 303, 309 311, 317, 394-26, 328, 367, 489, 533 and 545 of the *Silappadikaram*, Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Iyer's latest edition.

2, Even in the *Ramnad Manual* this misunderstanding is exhibited. The writer, referring to the Maravas, says: "In olden times they were a fierce and turbulent race and the terror of their neighbours.

But their habits have much changed in the last sixty years". Page 30, para 18

3. A good part of the Tirunelveli district and the eastern part of the Madurai district also used to be included in the Maravar Nadu. In both these districts there are quite a large number of Maravas even today. It may be remembered that both these areas were at one time under the influence of the Setupatis.

4. Classical Tamil literature refers to five regions, Kurinji, Marudam, Mullai, Neidal and Palai. Kurinji was the hill country; Mullai was the wooded region; Neidal was the coast; Marudam was the agricultural plain; and Palai the waste. People did not live in the Palai region in any large numbers, but the Palai always formed the passage to other regions. The divinity of the region was Kotravai or the goddess of victory and Her devotees were the Maravas. Lord Muruga too must have been given special importance, being the god of war, from very early times.

5. The reference to Kavatham is contained in the following Sloka of Valmiki: (Kishkinda Kanda)

Tato hemamayam divyam mukthamani vibushitam

ததோ ஹேமமயம் திவ்யம் முக்தாமணி விபூஷிதம்

Yuktam kavatham pandyanam gathadraksyata vanarah

யுக்தம் கவாடம் பாண்ட்யானாம் கதாத்ரக்ஷயத வானரா :

Though this is not the place to get involved in a discussion of the 'probable' Kavatham, one cannot be sure if the 'Kavatham' of the *Ramayana* and of early Tamil literature, is the same as Madurai. If it is any other place, Mugavai (or Ramnad) seems as much a probability as any other.

6. Tondi is mentioned by a number of foreigners including Ptolemy, Abul Fida, Ibn Batuta and Marco

Polo. For a fuller account see Appendix I Pasa or Pasipattinam was also an ancient port.

7. See, *Silappadikaram*, Ur Kan Kadai (lines 106-109). Other works, too, mention Tondi.

8. Marco Polo appears to have, at least, cruised along the east coast, particularly, the southern part of it. Many of the details he gives can be supported by other evidences.

9. There are a large number of caves in this part of Tamil Nad, including a few Brahminical caves, and the more ancient among them have Brahmi inscriptions. A systematic study of these caves has not yet been undertaken.

10. This region was under the influence of the Irukku Velirs of Kodumbalur. A substantial evidence of their rule over the Pudukkottai area is the Muvar-koil in Kodumbalur.

11. This name Mummudi means 'the three crowns' and gets sometimes mixed up with the more enigmatic 'Mummadi Chola'. The meaning of even Mummudi can only be guessed as implying the Chola's sovereignty over the territories of the traditional "three crowned Heads" of the South.

12. Puliyadisalai is an intelligent guess, but there is nothing in the name to correspond in any way with Talabbilla.

13. Dr. S. K. Iyengar states that Vira Pandya had sought asylum in the Malayalam country. It is a mistake. Malaya of the *Mahavamsa* must be taken to mean mountain (*Malai*) and not Malayalam.

14. Manamadurai, obviously, is a corruption of Manavira Madurai. Who this Manavira was, one

cannot be sure. It might refer to a Pandya. There was an interregnum of Kakatiya rule over the Tamil country under Prataparudra Deva II of Warangal at the end of the Pandyan rule, when there was anarchy in the Tamil country culminating in the setting up of the Madurai Sultanate. The Kakatiya was represented in Kanchipuram, which was the headquarters of the ruler in the Tamil country, by one 'Manavira'. The area over which Manavira had jurisdiction is not known, but it is not improbable that the territories overrun earlier by Ravivarman Kulasekhara, the Kerala ruler, and retaken by Muppidi Nayaka, the General of Prataparudra II, were under the nominal control of Manavira. Ravivarman is said to have crowned himself at least twice prior to 1314, in the Tamil country.

He takes upon himself the credit of having conquered the Chola and Pandyan kingdoms, in an inscription found in Kanchipuram with the date (Saka 1236, A. D. 1314). If this boast of Ravivarman were true, then the probability of Manavira's jurisdiction over the Pandyan country is also greater because Ravivarman was defeated by Muppidi Nayaka within three or four years of his conquest of the Pandyan country. The name Manavira Madurai may well have been given in commemoration of Manavira's control over the Pandyan territories. The 'original Madurai' had been so much associated with the Pandyas that a new 'Manavira Madurai' might have been named to commemorate the very brief Kakatiya association with the Tamil country. But more evidence is necessary to make any assertion on this point.

15: An inscription of the period of Rajadhiraja II found in Arpakkam (Chingleput) gives an interesting account of the Ceylonese invasion. One Edirili Chola Sambuvarayan, the Chola feudatory, when he heard of

the calamity that had befallen the Tamil country, the southern part of which was subject to the aggression of the Ceylonese, was greatly alarmed and perturbed, and immediately sought the help of a holy man by name Swamidevar who undertook to use his spiritual powers to bring calamity on the Ceylonese. The holy man performed the appropriate *pūja*, and not long after this, word came that the Ceylonese had suffered defeat and disaster. (A. R. E., 20 of 1899. S. I. I., vi, No. 456).

An inscription in Pallavarayanpattu (Tanjore) and another inscription in the North Arcot district give details of the Chola participation in the war against the Ceylonese. The name 'Pallavarayanpattu' appears tell-tale. Was it given to the place after Pallavarayar's successful engagements with the Ceylonese in the Ramnad country?

16. The invasion of the two Dandanayakas must have struck terror in the hearts of the people, because even today, many stories are current in the Ramnad area, some of them even fantastic, about the Ceylonese occupation. There were unused stones strewn about the Gandamadana Parvatham until a few years ago. These stones were believed to be the remnants of the material collected under the orders of Parakramabahu for buildings in the island of Rameswaram. Kundugala referred to in the first part, and its vicinity, appear to have been the site of a coastal city built at the command of Parakramabahu, called Parakramapattinam in those days, and Pudupattinam today. Ceylonese coins are picked up every now and then from this site by the people. The original city is not to be seen. It is probably submerged in water.

17. The following extracts from Marco Polo may be of interest :

“The greater part of the idolatrous inhabitants of this kingdom show particular reverence to the ox; and none will, from any consideration, be induced to eat the flesh of oxen. But there is a particular class of men termed *gauri*, who, although they may eat of the flesh, yet dare not to kill the animal; but when they find a carcass, whether it has died a natural death or otherwise, the *gauri* eat of it; and all descriptions of people daub their houses with cow-dung. Their mode of sitting is upon carpets on the ground; and when asked why they sit in this manner, they reply that a seat on the earth is honourable; that as we are sprung from the earth, so we shall again return to it; that none can do it sufficient honour, and much less should any despise the earth. The *gauri* and all their tribe are the descendants of those who slew Saint Thomas the Apostle, and on this account no individual of them can possibly enter the building where the body of the blessed apostle rests, even were the strength of ten men employed to convey him to the spot, being repelled by the supernatural power of the holy corpse.

The country produces no other grain than rice and se-same. The people go to battle with lances and shields, but without clothing, and are a despicable unwarlike race. They do not kill cattle, nor any kind of animals for food; but when desirous of eating the flesh of sheep or other beasts or of birds they procure the Saracens, who are not under the influence of the same laws and customs, to perform the office. Both men and women wash their whole bodies in water twice every day, that is, in the morning and the evening. Until this ablution has taken place they neither eat nor drink; and the person who should neglect this observance, would be regarded as a heretic. It ought to be noticed, that in eating they make use of the right hand only, nor do they ever touch their food with the left.

For every cleanly and delicate work they employ the former, and reserve the latter for the base uses of personal abstersion, and other offices connected with the animal functions. They drink out of a particular kind of vessel, and each individual from his own, never making use of the drinking pot of another person. When they drink they do not apply the vessel to the mouth, but hold it above the head, and pour the liquor into the mouth not suffering the vessel on any account to touch the lips. In giving drink to a stranger, they do not hand their vessel to him, but, if he is not provided with one of his own, pour the wine or other liquor into his hands, from which he drinks it, as from a cup.

Offences in this country are punished with strict and exemplary justice, and with regard to debtors the following customs prevail: If application for payment shall have been repeatedly made by a creditor, and the debtor puts him off from time to time with fallacious promises, the former may attach his person by drawing a circle round him, from whence he dare not depart until he has satisfied his creditor, either by payment, or by giving adequate security. Should he attempt to make his escape, he renders himself liable to the punishment of death, as a violator of the rules of justice. Messer Marco, when he was in this country on his return homeward, happened to be an eye-witness of a remarkable transaction of this nature. The king was indebted to a certain foreign merchant, and although frequently importuned for payment, sent him away for a long time with vain assurances. One day when the king was riding on horseback, the merchant took the opportunity of describing a circle round him and his horse. As soon as the king perceived what had

been done, he immediately ceased to proceed, nor did he move from the spot until the demand of the merchant was fully satisfied. The bystanders beheld, what passed, with admiration, and pronounced that the king to merit the title of most just, himself submitted to the laws of justice.

These people abstain from drinking wine made from grapes; and should a person be detected in the practice, so disreputable would it be held, that his evidence would not be received in court. A similar prejudice exists against persons frequenting the sea, who they observe, can only be people of desperate fortunes, and whose testimony, as such, ought not to be admitted. They do not hold fornication to be a crime. The heat of the country is excessive, and the inhabitants on that account go naked. There is no rain excepting in the months of June, July and August, and if it was not for the coolness imparted to the air during these three months by the rain, it would be impossible to support life.

In this country there are many adepts in the science denominated physiognomy, which teaches the knowledge of the nature and qualities of men, and whether they tend to good or evil. These qualities are immediately discerned upon the appearance of the man or woman. They also know what events are portended by meeting certain beasts or birds. More attention is paid by these people to the flight of birds than by any others in the world, and from thence they predict good or bad fortune. Every day of the week there is one hour which they regard as unlucky, and this they name *choiach*, thus for example on Monday the (canonical) hour of *mi-tierce*, on Tuesday the hour of *tierce*, on Wednesday the hour of *none*, and on these hours they do not make purchases, not transact any kind of

business, being persuaded that it would not be attended with success. In like manner they ascertain the qualities of every day throughout the year, which are described and noted in their books. They judge of the hour of the day by the length of a man's shadow when he stands erect. When an infant is born, be it a boy or a girl, the father or the mother makes a memorandum in writing of the day of the week on which the birth took place; also of the age, of the name of the month, and the hour. This is done because every future act of their lives is regulated by astrology. As soon as a son attains the age of thirteen years, they set him at liberty, and no longer suffer him to be an inmate in his father's house; giving him the amount, in their money, of twenty to twenty-four groats. Thus provided, they consider him as capable of gaining his own livelihood, by engaging in some kind of trade and thence deriving a profit. These boys never cease to run about in all directions during the whole course of the day, buying an article in one place, and selling it in another. At the season when the pearl fishery is going on, they frequent the beach, and make purchases from the fishermen or others, of five, six or more (small) pearls, according to their means, carrying them afterwards to the merchants, who on account of the heat of the sun, remain sitting in their houses, and to whom they say: "These pearls have cost us so much; pray allow such a profit on them as you may judge reasonable". The merchants then give something beyond the price at which they had been obtained. In this way likewise they deal in many other articles, and become excellent and most acute traders. When business is over for the day, they carry to their mothers the provisions necessary for their dinners, which they prepare and dress for them; but these never eat anything at their fathers' expense."

18. Seth Bund Ramaser raided by Malik Kafur is located by some, somewhere on the west coast. This apart, I have a doubt if Malik Kafur ever visited many of the places in the Tamil country mentioned by Muslim chronicles. Except the general reference to the southern regions, many of the places specifically mentioned in the Muslim sources are not to be traced in the Tamil country, though scholars have, in their ingenuity, made their own identification of these places with reference to places that exist today. Thus the Brahmatsputi of Muslim history is identified with Chidambaram by Dr. Krishnaswami Iyengar for no other reason than that that the Ling Mahadeo and Dev Narayan of the Muslim account may correspond to Sri Nataraja and Sri Govindaraja in Chidambaram, and that the golden roof mentioned in the Muslim account may have a reference to the Kanakasabai, Ponnambalam or the *sanctum sanctorum* of the Nataraja temple. At no time had Chidambaram a name having even the slightest resemblance to Brahmatsputi; but no one has thought it necessary to challenge Dr. Iyengar's identification for the reason that it is as good a guess as any other in the absence of any lead from the Muslim accounts. Bhir Dul is another headache of the historian trying to identify it in Tamil Nad. Viradavalappattinam suggested by Dr. Venkataramanayya may be all right so far as the sound goes but there is no evidence to imagine that it might have been an alternate capital or even an important city of the Pandya empire. Most of the places alleged to have been covered by Malik Kafur during his campaigns in the Tamil country can be identified only by bringing in far-fetched and fantastic suggestions in regard to each. The raids of Malik Kafur are very often mixed up with the incursions of the Delhi adventurers who sought and discovered their fortunes in Madurai where they set up

a southern counterpart to Delhi. Somehow Malik Kafur has gained greater currency in the Tamil country than the Sultans of Madurai about whom even history books have not much to say. Nobody can dispute the Malik's invasions in the Deccan, but as regards the Tamil country the position is not so clear as the present history books may lead one to believe. The whole problem is worth a careful and serious study.

19. *Vide*, Professor S. Thiruvengkatachari's *Madhuravijayam* (Annamalai University Historical series No. 13) pp. 35-46.

20 *Vide*, *Madhuravijayam*. There was no doubt that the Muslims had overrun the western part of the Tanjore district and possibly as far west as Karur. The defeat of the Hoysalas at the battle of Kannanur Koppam was the signal for the Muslim occupation of the Tanjore, Tiruchirapalli, Madurai, Ramnad and Tirunelveli districts. Ganga Devi refers to the waters of the Tamraparani flowing red with the blood of the innocents killed during the period of the Sultanate. Srirangam was actually under Muslim occupation until Gopana removed it. The Ramnad District was where the invaders had strengthened themselves. Therefore the Madurai Sultanate had a very wide area of operation.

21. These two inscriptions are in Tamil. The one near Devakkottai (Kandadevi) is dated Hijira 771 i. e., 1393. The other in Tirukkolakkudi is dated A. H. 761 i. e., A. D. 1383. From these two inscriptions it is evident that, even though the Madurai Sultanate had been destroyed in A. D. 1371, the remnants of the Muslim rule lasted for a few decades, more in the Marava country. Kampana and his generals had combined with the political mission,

the purpose of restoring the old Hindu temples to their original splendour and sanctity. Of these the Srirangam and Madurai temples were considered the holiest. After the destruction of the Sultanate in Madurai, and after the clearing of Srirangam of the foreign occupation, Kampana would have considered his mission practically over and the next few decades might have witnessed the final stage in the removal from the South, of the remnants of the Madurai Sultanate.

22. Vide, *Madhuravijyam* (Introduction)

23. See, Appendix 2 for an account of the Setupatis before 1600

24. There is the belief that Sadaika might have been restored to a position which he had enjoyed and from which he had been temporarily removed by the Nayak.

25. Cf. Sewell, *The Historical Inscriptions of Southern India*, p. 269. The inscription of a Nayak in Rameswaram mentions an endowment, proving the subordination of the Setupati to the Nayak. The Nayak must be Muthukrishnappa Nayak and not Muthuveerappa Nayak as wrongly stated by Sewell. Muthukrishnappa ruled until 1609.

26. See, Appendix 1 under Ramnad

27. See, Appendix 1 under Bogalur.

28. It is likely that Sadaika made all the territorial annexations on behalf of his Nayak overlord.

29. There are many inscriptions recording his gifts to temples and public charities.

30. We do not know whether the Europeans were the Dutch, the Portuguese, the French or the English. By this time the Dutch, the Portuguese, the French and the English were on the Indian scene. It is very likely that it was the Dutch who came to the assistance of the Setupati. The Dutch and the Portuguese had already started poking their nose into the affairs of the Indian rulers. Prof. Satyanatha Iyer thinks that the Portuguese might have helped the Nayak, and the Dutch, the Setupati. (*vide, History of the Nayaks of Madurai, p. 123.*)

31. The *Ramappian Ammanai*, the Tamil work, gives a detailed description of the war.

32. There are quite a large number of inscriptions mentioning these.

33. It must have been a coldblooded murder after a *coup d'etat*.

34. It is not clear whether the territories taken from the Raja of Tanjore were ever brought within the administrative set-up of the Ramnad kingdom. We have not been able to trace any inscription in the Tanjore district, belonging to the Setupatis, indicating any exercise of sovereignty in the Tanjore country by the Setupati. One may presume, without being far wrong, that the hold of the Setupatis over regions north of the Pambar river was not always firm, even during the period when the Setupatis' territorial annexations included the Pudukkottai territory and the eastern part of the modern Tanjore district.

35. There is a copper plate record of the Setupati mentioned as Plate No. 12 in the Report

on Annual Epigraphy for 1936. See page 92, para 83 also. It mentions a Tirumalai Raghunatha Devar, son of Dalavai Setupati Katta Devar. It is dated, Saka 1589. It contains all the titles of the Setupati given on page 27 of this book. The copper plate mentions his having been favoured by Tirumalai Nayak as a sign of which he got the title Tirumalai Setupati.

36. It appears that animal sacrifice was offered to the goddess for a long time, and one of the Setupatis, we are not certain who, stopped it. The Navaratri celebration was very famous in Vijayanagar during the heyday of its prosperity. The foreigners who visited Vijayanagar during the Navaratri have portrayed the city as the heaven on earth. The Nayaks brought the festival into the Tamil country. May be, Durga worship had been prevalent in the Tamil country even before the Nayaks. Durga, Kalapidari, Durgaparameswari, Omkarasundari were among the goddesses for whom special festivals were celebrated during the Chola period; and the Mahishasuramardhani cult too was known from the days of the Pallavas. The Navaratri in its present form must have become very popular in Tamil Nad only during the Vijayanagar period. It may be of interest to note that, within the last three hundred or four hundred years, quite a large number of Amman temples (not to be confused with the Amman Sannidhis and the Thayar Sannidhis in the Saiva or Vaishnava temples) sprang up in the Tamil country, especially in this part of the Tamil country. The Vanasankari Amman temple in Ramnad, and the Kannudayanayaki Amman temple in Nattarasankottai are instances in point.

37. Marco Polo refers to this. He has already been quoted *in extenso*.

38. The present Pamban bridge must have been built over the causeway of Ramappiah.

39. These titles are mentioned in the copper plate grant quoted in No. 35.

40. It appears that Rajasoorya, in alliance with Venkatakrisnappa, the Madurai Dalavai, attacked Tanjore. Venkatakrisnappa, for reasons not known to us, proved false to the Setupati whom he probably decoyed to Tiruchirapalli and killed.

41. Tiriya Devar who figures so much in the De Britto episode, had better claims than Kilavan Setupati. One cannot understand how his claims were overlooked. Our surmise is that Kilavan had greater qualities of leadership than Tiriya. Or, was Tiriya's 'hobnobing' with the Christians the cause of his unpopularity?

42. The date is provisional.

43. This is a statement of Sewell. (See '*Historical Inscriptions of Southern India*, page 391.) Sewell gives no authority or reason for his statement.

44. If the independent spirit exhibited by Kilavan had characterised the immediate successors of Kilavan, the Ramnad kingdom would not have been downgraded into a Zamindari, while one of its offshoots Pudukkottai, was upgraded into a Native State.

45. The *Ramnad Manual* states that at the time of its compilation there were nearly thirty five thousand Christians in the Ramnad country. Moreover Ramnad and Madurai had been a fertile field for Christian

missionary activity from 1600 A. D. The Madurai Mission was among the oldest missions in India. It may be stated in passing, that the Setupatis gave the warmest support and help to the Christian missions. Many Christian institutions in the Ramnad country in the past were the recipients of land and other gifts from the Setupatis.

46. The Madurai Mission was established about 1592 by the Jesuit missionaries, and the first missionary in charge of it was the Rev. Fr. G. Fernandez. Fr. Fernandez was a good soul, but his work, from the point of the Mission, bore very little fruit. The sins of the Portuguese administrators in India were visited upon his head, and the disrepute into which the Portuguese administration had fallen affected the Father's work. Robert De Nobili, his successor, was more successful.

De Nobili had a master-plan which he prepared even before leaving Europe. Like St. Paul he declared, "I will make myself Indian to save the Indians". This pregnant statement is the secret of the success of the Christian Missions in India. That today the Christians of, and in, India have been able to be Indians and Christians at the same time, must be traced to the master-plan of De Nobili which must have provided inspiration to the other missions. De Nobili was a great personality. He had a penetrating intellect, and though born in Europe, and most carefully raised amidst orthodox surroundings, he had a wonderful way of accommodating himself. He had heard the sinister import of the name *Parangis* given to the Portuguese, and wanted to remove the odium that was associated with anything savouring of *Parangism*. He was fond of calling himself a Brahmin from Rome. His idea was that the foreign missionary in India must

adapt himself to the life of the people among whom he worked. There was nothing wrong, he said, in the Christians adopting the harmless customs and ceremonies of Hinduism. He emphasised the importance of the knowledge of Sanskrit and other Indian languages on the part of the foreign missionary. He even went to the extent of commending a study of the sacred books of Hinduism as a very necessary part of the training for missionaries. In these three items, viz., adaptation to the new environment, the appropriation of Hindu customs and ceremonies and the study of Indian languages and their literature, he broke with the old methods of proselytism. But this new approach of De Nobili indirectly served the cause of Indian culture because, laudable are the attempts of Christian missionaries to translate and present the classics of every literature into English. The Kural of Pope and the grammar of Beschi would not have been written but for this new *modus operandi* of De Nobili.

De Nobili endeared himself very much to the people in South India. The orthodox sections of the Hindus who had successfully countered the work of Fr. Fernandez could do nothing against this popular Roman Brahmin so that on the 15th of January 1609, De Nobili wrote, "the tempest of the Brahmins has passed". In 1610 De Nobili intensified his activities with the assistance of Antonio Vico. Evidently De Nobili did not go unchallenged by the powerful elements in the native population. Moreover, Fr. Fernandez, whom De Nobili had strongly criticised, made representations to the Mission authorities, the substance of which was, that the religion that De Nobili preached was a monstrous combination of *Paganism* and Christianity. The authorities took action, and a synod was convened, possibly by the Provincial of

Malabar. De Nobili put up a very strong defence of his position. His European superiors did not exonerate him until 1623. During this period of suspense, De Nobili could do no real work. On the last day of January 1623, the Papal Bull of Gregory XV exonerated De Nobili honourably from all charges.

De Nobili continued his work in Tiruchirapalli, Salem and Malabar, though he had to fight against odds. The Nayak of Madurai, and his feudatories in Tiruchirapalli and Salem, would not give De Nobili an easy time.

De Nobili spent his last days in Mylapore. He was a great scholar, and to the last, he was engaged in his literary pursuits. He died in 1660. His stay in India for many years had really made him the Indian that he very much wanted to be when he left Europe.

47. For a fuller account of the origin of the Sivagangai Samastanam see Appendix 3.

48. There is the version that Muthuramalinga helped Kattabommu to escape arrest by the English, after his meeting with Jackson had ended in confusion. It was perhaps Muthuramalinga's soft corner for Kattabommu that made him the 'rebel' which nickname the English gave the Setupati.

49. The following extract from a letter despatched by the British agent, dated 12th March 1803, is a proof of this :

"I particularly desired the Ranee to reflect upon the circumstances which led to her present elevation and that in recollecting the fate of her brother who had forfeited his right to the situation, she was now called upon to fill, she must, at the same time, be conscious that the Governor in Council had been solely

actuated by a sense of the justice of her claims thereto and a full reliance in her good disposition to prove deserving of this distinguished mark of His Lordship's favour".

50. The Permanent Revenue Settlement was introduced only in certain areas of the Madras Presidency. The main system of land tenure was the Ryotwari, unlike in Bengal, where it was the Permanent Revenue Settlement.

51. Sidakkadi or Sayyad Kadir Marakkayar, a son of Tamil Nad, appears to have distinguished himself as an administrator and a person of very high integrity. It is said that Emperor Aurangazeb offered him a very high post in Bengal which he held with distinction for a short period. Illness forced his return to Ramnad even before the expiry of the term of his office and Kilavan offered him the post of chief minister. Sayyad Kadir Marakkayar accepted the post and contributed greatly to the position of pre-eminence which Ramnad attained during that period. Kilavan conferred upon his Muslim prime minister the title of Vijaya Raghunatha Peria Thambi as a token of his respect and appreciation. A large number of interesting stories have accumulated about Sayyad Kadir Marakkayar.

52. " மூவேந்தரும் மற்றும் சங்கமும் போய்ப்
பதின்மூன்றோடெட்டுக்
கோவேந்தருமற்று மற்றொரு வேந்தன்
கொடையுமற்றுப்
பாவேந்தர் காற்றில் இலவம் பஞ்சாகப் பறக்கையிலே
தேவேந்திர தாருவொத்தாய் ரகுநாத செயதுங்கனே "

53. There is the interesting story of Umaru the disciple of Muthu Pulavar, defeating an eminent scholar in a wit-combat even in his eleventh year.

54. *The Abithana Chintamani* contains a different account about Palapattatai Chokkanatha Pulavar. The poet was going somewhere, one day, when he saw the *Kammala* poet Supradeepa Kavirayar, walking with shoes on. Evidently, according to the rules of decorum and notions of courtesy in those days, it was not proper for a *Kammala* to put on shoes. Chokkanatha Pulavar got offended and expressed his disapproval of the audacity of the *Kammala* in the following verse :

“சாணரும் கங்குடியார், பணிக்கர் சாராயமுண்ணார்,
கோணது பாதகுறடு செய்தான் பெருகூலியல்லால்
நாணது வீதிதோறும் போட்டுச் செல்வது ஞாயமில்லை
வீணவடா சுப்ரதீப அஞ்ஞான விளக்கொளியே”.

Supradeepa immediately retorted :

“தேவை முத்துராமலிங்கச் சேதுபதி மீதுவிஞ்சைக்
கோவை என்ற பில்லிவைத்துக் கொன்றாயே, - பாவி நீ
யிட்டகவி தான்வசையாய் ஏன்சொன்னாய், சேர்ந்தபல
பட்டரைசொக் கமுழுவம் பா”.

From this retort, the person who died of over-ecstasy was not Deivakanni, but one Muthuramalinga Setupati. The first Muthuramalinga Setupati began to rule in 1763, and if the reference is to this Muthuramalinga Setupati, then the date of Palapattatai Chokkanatha Pulavar would be about 1750. A scientific study of the dates of the different poets of the period awaits scholars and students of history.

CORRIGENDA

Page	Line	For	Read
27	31	Maduai	Madurai
30	2	Tirumlai	Tirumalai
77	7	delete 'the' before	'his'
82	24	himself	himself
89	1	predominantly	predominantly

THE DISTRICT OF RAMNAD

DISTRICT

MADURAI

JIRUPPUVANAM

SRIVILLIPUTTUR

TIRUCHUL

TIRUNELVELI

DISTRICT

77.5

78

10.5

KAPPALLI DISTRICT

KUNRAKKUDI

TUR

HTIYUR

ATTAMANGALAM

UVAYAL

DEVAKKOTTAI

YARKOIL

VELIMUTHY

ANGAI

TIRUVADANAI

HANUMANTHAKUDI

AI

MANGALAM

TONDI

NGUDI

RAJASINGAMANGALAM

AKKUDI

TIRUPPALAIKUDY

DEVIPATTINAM

BOGALUR

RAMNAD

OKULATTUR

KOSAMANGAI

TIRUPPULLANI

MANDAPAM

RAMESWARAM

KILAKKARAI

VEDALAI

PAMBAN

GULF OF MANNAR

79

9

10

9.5