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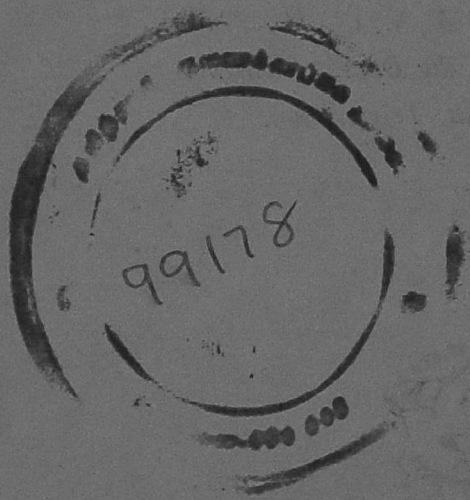


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The Role of Temples in Kerala Society (A. D. 1100—1500)

BY
VELUTHAT KESAVAN

1.1. The present study is an attempt at assessing the role of temples in the society of Kerala between the disintegration of the Cēra kingdom early in the twelfth century and the advent of the Europeans towards the close of the fifteenth century. This period marked a definite stage in the history of Kerala in so far as the economic and social institutions, which had already come into existence or which were taking shape under the centralised administration of the Cēra kingdom of Mahodayapuram either underwent basic changes or got solidified during this period. In the absence of a central authority, and under the less powerful chieftains, it was the temple-centred Brahman settlements, which had almost a pan-Kerala stamp and were the only institutions with an all-Kerala appeal, that dictated the economic, social and cultural pattern of Kerala. A study of this problem can, therefore, bring to light how such institutions like feudal land-tenure, sacred prostitution, matrilineal kinship etc. developed. It also provides us with a background to the study of the various institutions of Kerala in the succeeding centuries.

1.2. Unfortunately, much work has not been done on this aspect of the problem—perhaps on the whole of Kerala history during this period. Logan¹ and K. P. Padmanabha Menon², writing in the last and first quarters of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries respectively, had little awareness of, and less access to, the manifold inscriptions and literary works which remained largely unnoticed and unpublished. Prof. P. K. S. Raja's monograph on *Medieval Kerala* (reprint, Calicut, 1966) deals mostly with political history; and what little he has said about society in the form of speculation is not supported by evidence. Prof. Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai, who, incidentally, turned literally

1 William Logan, *Malabar*, reprint, (Madras, 1951).

2 K. P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala*, (Ernakulam, 1928-34,) 4 Vols.

a new leaf in the historiography of Kerala, was engaged in preparing the groundwork for the study of Kerala history in the Sangam and later Cēra periods. Still, his works like *Janmisampradāyam Kēraḷathil*, (Kottayam, 1959) have some bearing upon the economic history of Kerala in the post-Cēra period. Similarly, his commentaries on the various mediæval *Maṇipravāḷam* (a mixture of Malayalam and Sanskrit works and some essays based on them are much useful to the student, and so are some of his essays based on these works. M. G. S. Narayanan's doctorate dissertation on the *Political and Social Conditions of Kerala under the Kulasekhara Empire*, (Unpublished, University of Kerala, 1972) and other research articles also are helpful though not directly; for, they provide an indispensable background for the study of the present problem in its correct historical setting. The present writer's Master's Dissertation, *Āryan Brahman Settlements of Ancient Kerala* (Unpublished, University of Calicut, 1974) seeks to pin down the early Brahman settlements of Kerala to points in space and time and is a preparation for the study of the temple-centred Brahman settlements in the later centuries.

1.3. The sources of information reliable for a study of the present problem are two-fold: epigraphic and literary. The inscriptions can be divided into two chief categories: (a) those recording the consecration of new temples and the establishment of new Brahman settlements around them and (b) those registering the transactions of the temple-committees, especially in matters of land-tenure, donations, daily and seasonal affairs of the temple etc. These inscriptions throw, both directly and indirectly, a flood of light on the various aspects of society, especially on the nature of the mutual relations between the temples and society. Literary works are found both in Sanskrit and *Maṇipravāḷam*. There are *Campūs*, *Sandēśās* etc. and also a treatise on grammar. This one, the *Lilātilakam*, in many verses employed to illustrate the grammarian's arguments, gives some clues to understand certain aspects of society. But these two forms of evidences are not perfect in themselves. While one has to wade through the details in inscriptions to get an incidental reference to the influence of the temple on society here, or to that of society on the temple there, most of the literary works exhibit a terribly Brahmanical bias, being composed either by Nampūtiri scholars or people belonging to such high castes as are highly Sanskritised. Therefore, the student has to be very careful and judicious in selecting information as also in checking each reference with all available information. Informations available from archaeological monuments and accounts of foreign travellers like Marco

Polo (13th century), Barbosa (early 16th century) etc. are also used. Tradition embodied in the chronicles like the *Kēraḷōlpatti* also has been made use of; but it is to be borne in mind that it is by no means historical; and only those informations, which can supplement, modify or corroborate references from other and more reliable sources are used.

1.4. A study of the social significance of temples in Kerala must start invariably from the study of Brahman settlements in Kerala. For, the temple formed the pivot round which revolved the Brahman settlements in Kerala. Ecological factors have rendered the rural settlements in Kerala very much dispersed as contrasted with the nucleated villages in other parts of the country.³ Actually there is no "core of the village" or it is "not a village."⁴ But during the period under review, although the pattern of the settlements does not seem to have been any different, the temple formed the core of the village, so far as the Brahman settlements are concerned. Each settlement had its *grāma-kṣētra* or village temple, and the name of the village was often derived from that of the temple.⁵ It is interesting that even to this day, Brahmans all over Kerala claim to belong to one of the original thirty-two settlements, paying homage to the *grāmakṣētra* of that village.

1.5. The influx of Brahman settlers to Kerala between the fourth and eighth centuries of the Christian era brought about a change, *inter alia*, in the religion of Kerala. The settlement around the temple and the temple itself became an important institution in the social life of Kerala. Apart from the original thirty-two ones of tradition there had arisen many other settlements around temples, a fact which is borne out by the many Cēra inscriptions. The small and big Brahman settlements around these temples were influencing the society in such a way that the socio-economic life of Kerala was totally reoriented under the Cēra kingdom of Mahodayapuram.

3 For an anthropological study of the problem, see V. K. J. Menon, "Geographical basis for the distribution and pattern of rural settlements in Kerala", *Journal of the M. S. University of Baroda*, II, pp. 41-54; Joan P. Mencher, Kerala and Madras: a comparative study of ecology and social structure", *Ethnology*, (University of Pittsburg), V, ii, pp. 135-171.

4 Mencher, op. cit., p 141.

5 The Brahmans in Kerala are said to have been established originally in thirty-two settlements. All these have been identified. See Veluthat Kesavan, *Aryan Brahman Settlements of Ancient Kerala*, pp. 41-67.

1.6. At the same time and almost parallel to this influx was the growth of the *Bhakti* movement in Kerala. We have the names of at least two Cēra kings, viz., Cēramān Perumāḷ Nāyanār (Rāma Rājaśēkhara—c. A. D. 800–844) and Kulaśēkhara Āḷvār (Sthāṇu Ravi Kulaśēkhara—844–883) in the Tamil hagiologies who were Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava saints respectively.⁶ The close association of other saints like Sundaramūrti Nāyanār, Nammayāḷvār, Tirumaṅgai Āḷvār etc. with Kerala also testifies to the fact that *Bhakti* movement, as spread by the Śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite saints had reached Kerala at least by the 8th century.⁷ This also must have had, by virtue of the royal patronage it had, a tremendous influence in causing the chieftains to take to brisk temple-building activities. As a result of these twin forces, the temple became an integral part of the social and religious life of Kerala by the time of the revival of the Cēra kingdom and certainly by the close of the ninth century, A. D.

1.7. Under the Cēra kingdom of Makōtai, the temple and the surrounding Brahman settlement had developed as a semi-autonomous unit of administration. The Brahman settlement being essentially temple-centred, the administration of the settlement meant, for all practical purposes, the administration of the affairs of the temple like the regulation of the temple's properties, the conduct of the ceremonies and festivals and so forth.⁸ The village assembly was constituted by the Brahman inhabitants of the village, qualified by ownership of property, educational standards, *varṇa* restrictions etc. Membership of the assembly also, like the property owned by the Brāhmins, passed on hereditarily according to the rule of primogeniture. All these show that the temple-committees were, in fact, oligarchic caste corporations of a class of non-cultivating land-owners placed over a cultivating peasantry. So also, the procedure of the assemblies, in which decisions were made unanimously, following some rules of conduct like the *Mūlikkaḷa kaccam* and under pressure from above point to the same character of the assemblies. Thus, the temple-centred Brahman settlements, with

6 For the identity and date of these saints as given above, see M.G.S. Narayanan, *Political and Social Conditions of Kerala under the Kulaśēkhara Empire*, Chapter XIII, "Art, Architecture, Literature".

7 M. Radhava Aiyangar, ed., *Cēravēndar Ceyyūḷkōvai*, (Trivandrum, 1951) contains all the references to the above saints in relation to temples in Kerala.

8 For a detailed study, see Veluthat Kesavan "Community organisation and village administration in the Brahman settlements of Kerala in the later Cēra period", Indian History Congress, Jadavpur, 1974.

their well-knit fabric of administration and command over a large extent of land, a number of tenants and the entailing feudal privileges had already started to exert its influence even under the Cēra kingdom.

2.1. The process of the growth of a typical Brahman settlement in Kerala could be studied at length in the case of Tiruvalla, thanks to the lengthy Tiruvalla copper plates.⁹ It could be seen how the temple grew gradually by consecrating more subordinate deities, instituting new festivals etc. More functionaries came to be dependant on the temple. More and more wealth came in the hands of the temple committee. *Upagrāmas* (subsidiary settlements) began to be incorporated into the system. Arts and literature were encouraged in the form of sculpture, wall-painting, *dēvadāsi* dance, *kūttu* (another form of dance performed by male dancers called *cākkaimār* etc. Education was promoted through the organisation of the *śālai*. Even public utility services like hospitals and banking were attended to by the temple. It is even seen that the temple committee was placed almost above the "wrath of kings and feudatories". The case of this settlement, studied in detail, explains how a temple centred settlement grew and exerted its influence in the social and political life of Kerala. It is not isolated either; it serves as a case study.

2.2. Some records give details of how Brahman settlements were established around new temples. For example, in the case registered in a Tiruvadūr inscription, twenty-four Brahmans from five different settlements of established tradition—five from Vaikkam, two from Paraiyūr, six from Āvaṭṭipputhūr, four from Iruṅgāṭikkūṭal and seven from Perumanam—all in central Kerala—are brought and settled down around a newly consecrated temple in North Kerala.¹⁰ It is given that the successors of these families, according to the rule of primogeniture were to enjoy the property and that only in the event of failure of issues could other relatives have any claim on it. It is not, however, clear from the fragmentary record why people from central Kerala should have been chosen in spite of the more proximate and prosperous settlements in North Kerala.

2.3. More detailed information is available from a Kiḷimānūr record.¹¹ In this document, dated A. D. 1169, ten Brahmans from

9 T. A. S., II, iii, pp. 131–207. The present writer has undertaken a detailed study of the growth of the Tiruvalla settlement. See *Aryan Brahman Settlements of Ancient Kerala*, Chapter IV, pp. 67–82.

10 Nos. 477 and 478 of 1926.

11 T. A. S., V, i, pp. 63–85.

eight settlements are brought and established around a newly consecrated Tiruppālkkākkadal temple. Each is given, as private property, six *kalams* of cultivable paddy-fields, some garden land and a pair of serfs to work on them. The temple also was endowed with large extent of land. Detailed arrangements are made for the administration of the affairs of the temple. For instance, two of the ten every year by rotation, who are named, were to officiate the executive of the temple-committees. In the event of the death of anybody, his eldest son was to follow. Default in one's duty would result in the forfeiture of all the rights one had not only in the temple-committee but even in the private property he was given. The emergence of new sub-castes like those of the garland-makers, dancing girls etc. are also discernible from the document.

2.4. Another case, in which a new Brahman settlement is created around a newly consecrated temple is recorded in the Kollūr Maṭham Plates.¹² This lengthy inscription, dated A. D. 1189, purports to be the reissue of a charter issued by the Queen mother while Śrīvallavam Nōtai was the governor of Veāḍu (c. A. D. 10th century). Arrangements are made herein for the day-to-day expenses of the temple, for the conduct of the festivals, for feeding Brahmans, for the performance of *Kūttu* etc. in the temple. For meeting the expenses of all these, land is assigned. Besides, land is given on service-tenure for the various temple functionaries. Around the temple was consecrated a Brahman settlement consisting of twenty-three families and each is given some land as *brahmasvam*. This alone comprised an extent of land which could be sown with 1325 *paraī* of paddy seeds.¹³

2.5 The above cases show how Brahman settlements were being created around newly consecrated temples. This process of the consecration of new temples and growth of Brahman settlements, possessing landed property and commanding tenants and other privileges was on the march throughout the mediaeval period in Kerala. This is testified to by many other inscriptions and also some literary works. *Sandēśakāvyas* like the anonymous *Kōkasandēśa*¹⁴ and *Unṇunilīsandēśa*¹⁵ in *Maṇipravāḷam* and Lakshmidāsa's *Sūkasandēśa* and

12 *Id.*, IV, i, pp. 22-65.

13 The editor has tabulated the share each was getting. *Ibid.*, pp. 40-2.

14 Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai, ed., *Kōkasandēśam*, (Kottayam, 1959).

15 P. Damodaran Pillai, ed., *Unṇunilīsandēśam*, (Kottayam, 1973.)

Uddanda's *Kōkilasandēśa*,¹⁶ while describing the way to the messenger give detailed description about the different temples in Kerala. Since all these start from different places and go to different places, all the information from these works put together gives a complete picture of the whole of Kerala. Some *campūs* like *Uṇṇivaccīcaritam*, *Uṇṇiccirutēvicaritam* and *Uṇṇivāṭīcaritam* are also important. They narrate the stories of *dēvadāsis* or "handmaids of gods", of those names, but describe beautifully temples like Tirunelli, Cōkiram and Kaṇḍiyūr respectively, where these courtesans lived. All these temples figure prominently in inscriptions, too.¹⁷ These evidences are further corroborated by some of the travellers like Marco Polo who came to Kerala in thirteenth century and Barbosa, early in the sixteenth century.¹⁸ All these forms of evidences give the unanimous picture of the continued prosperity of the temple in relation to newly emerging social classes.

3.1. The most important class that arose around the temple was invariably that of the non-cultivating land-owners, who were Brahmans. In fact, a temple was synonymous with a Brahman settlement.¹⁹ Under the Cēra kingdom of Mahodayapuram the Brahman settlements were largely agrarian caste corporations of a non-cultivating land-owners placed over a cultivating peasantry. This character they retained during the post-Cēra period, too, but they lost their corporate character. Individual idiosyncracies and selfish interests began to creep in and power and control of the affairs of the temple's properties came to the hands of a few. This was facilitated by many factors. The common codes of conduct like the *Mūlikkaḷa kakkam*, which ruled the procedure in the temple committees all over Kerala and the exercise of royal power from above (see *supra*, 1.7) are strikingly absent in the records of the post-Cēra period. In the absence of these centralising forces,

16 Both these are edited in single volume with the Malayalam translation of Kōdungalur Kunjukuttan Tampuran. See K. Achyutha Menon, *et. al.* ed. *Raṇṇu Sandēśaṇṇal*, (Trichur, 1900).

17 For two Tirunelli records in copper, see *I. A.*, XX, pp. 285-90; *E. I.*, XVI, pp. 339-349. Four Cōkiram lithic epigraphs are noticed as Nos. 208, 209, 210 and 211 of 1895 which were later published in *S. I. I.*, V, pp. 334-5. Two Kaṇḍiyūr inscriptions, one of which even alludes to a *dēvadāsi* could be found in *T. A. S.*, I, xvi, pp. 287-94.

18 Manuel Komroff, trans. and ed., *The Travels of Marco Polo*, (New York, 1953); M. L. Dames, Trans. and ed., *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, reprint, (Liechtenstein, 1967), Vol. II.

19 For details, see Kesavan, *Aryan Brahman Settlements of Ancient Kerala*, passim; "Community organisation " *op. cit.*

the temple-committees were becoming a law unto themselves. The extinction of families, due to failure of issues also contributed to the concentration of power in the hands of the few members. This was further added to by the fact that only the eldest son in a family was to marry from his own caste. This resulted in the extinction of even several settlements.²⁰ However, this did not effect the general pattern of growth in the Brahman settlements at large; and resulted in the concentration of powers in the hands of a few. This growth of Brahman power explains, incidentally, how a particular group of Brahmans called the *cāttiras* or *cattas* who began as pioneers of orthodox Brahmanism in South India became virtually *goondas* and were looked down upon by the rest of the community.²¹ Besides, this led to higher specialisation in the field of learning and scholarship. It was during this period that most of the important contributions to learning was made in Kerala and a large number of their authors was either Brahmans or members of other temple-serving castes. On the one hand the temple facilitated a loose life and on the other, to sublime intellectual developments and contributions in the field of letters. Thus, the temple provided the institutional base for Brahmans to assert their escandancy in post-Cēra society.

3.2. Another important development with regard to the Brahman settlement was the growing concord between the temple and the local chieftains. This was already there even as early as the Cēras of Mahodayapuram, and the King's council called *Nālu Taḷi* was the institutional expression of the influence of the temple-central Brahman settlements on the Cēra monarchy. After the disintegration of that kingdom, several petty principalities arose on its ruins. These local chieftains also seem to have realised the potentialities of the temple as the institutional base for royalty to reach below, through the other owning classes. The emergence of such temples as Tiruvananthapuram (modern Trivandrum) at the new capital of Vēṇād, Kaṇḍiyūr at the capital of Ōḍanāḍu, Kaṇḍathuruthi, at the capital of Vatakkumkūr, Kozhikode, Tali at the Capital of the Zamorins etc. took place during this period. These temples developed, not as centres of Brahman settlements, but as organs of royal power. The patronage which the Guruvāyūr temple got from the Zamorin of Calicut also is another example for this. As the Zamorin advanced to the South, he made that

20 Kesavan, *Aryan Brahman Settlements of Ancient Kerala*, pp. 64-65.

21 For details, see Veluthat Kesavan, "The Cattas and Bhattas: A New Interpretation", Indian History Congress, Aligarh, 1975.

place as a military base, and patronised that temple liberally in order to win over the people in favour of attacking Koduññallūr. This "system-maintaining mechanism of a weakly organised polity"²² could be explained as an attempt on the part of these rulers to come to terms with the relatively autonomous character of the major group and institutions of society. To begin with, these temples drew their appeal more from their size and endowment than from the richness of their spiritual heritage, which was the result of the conscious attempt of the rulers. The religious merit that some of these temples commanded in the years to come was not an accident, either. Thus, the local chieftains had appreciated the place of temples in society and the Brahmans, who were virtually the custodians of the temple acted in a positive way in reciprocating by extending their support to the ruling class. Thus, the ruler-priest concord got strengthened, and the change in the type of relationship between the two upper classes was another notable feature of this period. This could further be supported by fact that in the feuds between the two leading Brahman settlements of Panniyūr and Cōkiram which acquired all Kerala dimensions in the medieval period,²³ rulers in Kerala espoused the cause of either of them and got aligned into two rival camps.

3.3. The proliferation of temples brought about some changes in the religion of the people. Hinduism, which was more or higher philosophy of the few got popularised as its result. More social contacts were possible on the occasion of the numerous temple festivals which are described in inscriptions to have been conducted on a grand scale. The Tiruvalla copper plates, Kollur Matham Plates etc. bear testimony to the munificent scale on which endowments were made for the conduct of these festivals and the twelve-yearly festival of Mamakam conducted at the Tirunavey temple used to attract people from all over south India. This helped the popularisation of Hinduism which was transformed into the active faith of more sections of society and which involved the participation of large number of tenants, sub-tenants, skilled artisans and other professional classes. In other words, it meant a qualitative change in the character of the Hindu faith

22 The author is indebted to David Kaplan for this Phrase. See Kaplan, "Men, Monuments and Political Systems", quoted in George W. Spencer, "Religious networks and royal influence in eleventh century South India", *JESHO*, XII, i, p. 42.

23 This is being discussed in detail in the author's M. Phil Dissertation, *Brahman Settlements in Kerala* (Jawaharlal Nehru University) Chapter III.

which came to be the religion of the masses gradually displacing or absorbing elements of Jainism, Buddhism and other tribal superstitions. The force of the movement was such that the small pockets of Jainism and Buddhism were liquidated. The Jain monastery at Kuṇavāyilkkōṭṭam was transformed into a Śiva Temple where the Brahmans had a strange custom of worshipping.²⁴ Similarly the Jain temples of Kallil and Chitral were transformed into Bhagavati temples.²⁵ The same type of metamorphosis has overtaken tribal cult-spots and temples all over Kerala. This change in religion brought about changes at every level of social organisation, by which the Hindu way of life permeated into entire sections of society. The development of the various *ambalavāsi* (temple dwelling) castes is an important result of this phenomenon. The increase in the number of temples and the occupations pertaining to temples meant more and more functionaries. Thus groups of garland makers, drummers, dancers *Cākkaiyār* of the inscriptions) etc. began to emerge. As elsewhere, here also payment was made in the form of land on service tenure. The right to this land was hereditary and so was the occupation. Thus, each group was identified as an endogamous kinship group, which later became rigid as a sub-caste. Other important temple-servants like the washerman, watchman, sweeper etc. are also met with in the records; but one does not come across the emergence of sub-castes with this profession. It is significant that none of these servants was given land on service tenure and that they were paid regularly in paddy or cash. However, among the more important social class that was developing as a result of the proliferation of the temples was that of the *dēvadāsis*, which requires analysis at greater length.

3.4. The earliest epigraphic reference to the institutions of *dēvadāsis* in Kerala dates from the 15th regnal year of Kōta Ravi (A. D. 898)²⁶, which records that a certain Cittarayil Naṅgaiyār who was the *dēvadāsi* of the Cokkūr temple is donating some land to the temple. This shows the economic and social status of that woman as early as ninth century, A. D. Records from Nedumpuram Taḷi also go to show the position of the class of dancing girls in society.²⁷ One of them shows that Śrīdhara Naṅgacci, a dancing girl, had a second name, Tribhuvana

24 *Kōkasandēśam*, v. 48, p. 55.

25 *T. A. S.*, II ii.

26 *S. I. I.*, VII, p. 2.

27 *T. A. S.* VII. pp. 40-4. There are three inscriptions of different dates.

Mahādēvi. The adoption of titles like this was an aristocratic privilege.²⁸ Immediate post-Cēra records like the Tiruvalla copper plates,²⁹ the Kiḷimānūr record,³⁰ the Kandiur stone inscription³¹ etc. also show that the institution of *dēvadāsis* was widespread all over Kerala. Sculptured panels of the Cēra and immediate post-Cēra periods depict *dēvadāsis* in several dancing postures described in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and this also points to the existence and prosperity of this system in Kerala.³² The Dravidian form of *Dēvadāsi* is *tēvaḍicci* and they were referred as *Kūttaccis* (dancing girls).

3.5. In course of time the terms *tēvaḍicci* and *Kūttacci* became synonyms of prostitute in Malayalam language. This took place, probably, when Kerala got completely feudalised under the powerful Brahman settlements following the disintegration of the Cera kingdom early in the twelfth century³³. In this fallen conditions, too, they seem to have been influential in society, although they were no longer the handmaids of gods but became courtesans attending to chieftains, Brahmans, merchants etc. All the literary works mentioned above (2.5.) are in fact, written about these courtesans. Besides, a number of major and minor poems produced in the 14th and 15th centuries like "Ceṇiyacci", "Iḷayacci", "Mallīnilāvu" "Uttarācandrikā", "Kaṇṇōttara"³⁴ *Vaiśikatantram*,³⁵ *Candrōtsavam*,³⁶ etc. are all in praise of these aristocratic prostitutes. They are shown to be vivacious damsels, expert in the art of both dancing and prostitution. Among these works, the *Candrōtsavam* and *Vaiśikatantram* deserve special mention. The former describes a "moon festival" conducted by a courtesan called Medinīcandrikā under the patronage of the Raja of Maṇakkulam. Beautiful dancing girls from all over Kerala are described to have assembled to participate in the festival. The satirical nature of the work, however, does not prevent us from

28 M. G. S. Narayanan, *Aspects of Aryanisation in Kerala*, (Trivandrum, 1973), p. 46.

29 T. A. S., II, iii, pp. 131-207.

30 *Id.*, V, i, p. 63-85.

31 *Id.*, F, pp. 289-91.

32 Narayanan, *Aspects of Aryanisation in Kerala*, p. 47.

33 See also Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai, *Keraḷacaritṭattile Iruḷatañña Eḍukaḷ*, (Kottayam, 1969), p. 89.

34 All these minor poems are edited together in a single volume by the University of Kerala. *Padyaratnam*, (Trivandrum, 1966).

35 K. Ramachandran Nair, ed., *Vaiśikatantram* (Trivandrum, 1969).

36 Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai, ed. *Candrōtsavam* (Kottayam, 1962).

delineating the high social status, wealth and refinement of these prostitutes. *Vaiśikatantram* is a text-book of the art of prostitution, which is in the form of advice given by a veteran prostitute to her daughter. A verse in the work is of special significance because it equates both dancing and prostitution on the basis of the identity of the functions of both.³⁷ Accounts of travellers like Marco Polo,³⁸ Barbosa,³⁹ etc. also testify to the prosperity of this class. However, this class is described to have incredibly disappeared in our own times.⁴⁰ But there are reasons to believe that the present day female caste suffix, Nangyar, may be a relic of this old caste. This can be supported by the accurance of Nangaiyar as suffixes to the names of *dēvadāsis* in Cēra and post-Cēra records, the dependence of this caste on the temples and their association with Cākkyar, the professional temple dancers even to this day.

3.6. Simultaneous with the emergence of the land-owning class was that of the intermediaries. This class neither owned the land nor cultivated it; but it was to them that the land was leased out by the temple. They exacted heavy rent from the peasants and paid a portion of it to the "proprietors" of the *dēvasvam* and *brahmasvam*. This included largely the caste of Nayars, and the emergence of this caste as a powerful element in society was a special feature of this period. Their economic position as the intermediary peasants provided the material base for their emergence as the second upper class of society and this, coupled with their being the relatives of the local chieftains and their position as the military men consolidated their position in society. They, however, remained loyal and subservient to the owners of the *dēvasvam* and *brahmasvam* and even the *sāmanta* chieftains took their coronation oath to "protect cows and brahmins".⁴¹ This entailed several feudal privileges to the owning class. The liaison called *sambandham*, which was "an arrangement for sleeping in the night" (so

37 "Tuḷlavēṇḍum kiḍannaññu.

Koḷlavēṇḍum atin vila

Bhavam naṭikkayum vēṇḍum.

Kēvalam Kūttu vaiśikam", Ramachandran Nair, ed.,

Op. cit., v. 266, p. 80.

38 Komroff, *op. cit.*, pp. 288-9.

39 Dames, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-22; 53-4.

40 Narayanan, *Aspects of Aryanisation in Kerala*, p. 51.

41 Joan P. Mencher and Helen Goldberg, "Kinship and marriage regulations among the Namboodiri Brahmins of Kerala", *Man*, New Series, Vol. II, (1967) pp. 89-90; Joan P. Mencher, "Namboodiri Brahmins: an analysis of a traditional elite in Kerala", *Journal of Asian-African Studies*, I, pp. 7-20.

the Namputiris used to describe it) so far as the Namputiri was concerned, but a virtual marriage for the lady, was among the more important privilege they enjoyed. Some inscriptions of the Cēra period⁴², in a zeal to safeguard the common interests of the Brahman settlement and the corporate character of the temple-committees had strictly prohibited this sort of a relationship for a member of the committee with women of the tenant's family. But in the period that followed, which witnessed the break-up of the corporate character as seen above (3.1.), there was no check on the loose life of the Brahmans. This, incidently, must have been instrumental in the growth and perpetuation of the matrilineal kinship among the Nayars and other *ambalavāsi* castes in Kerala.

3.7. Some inscriptions of the post-Cēra period show the character of serfs owned by the temples and temple-committees. For instance, the Kilimānūr record mentioned above (2.3.) shows that each of the ten Brahmans who manned the temple-committee was given a pair of serfs. Another copper plate from Peruñcellūr (the present day Taliparāmba), datable to A. D. 1150 on the basis of Kali chronogram given in the margin of the record speaks of certain serf, along with landed properties, being mortgaged by a certain Brahman to the temple-committee of Peruñcellūr.⁴³ This record not only demonstrates the power of the temple-committee but also shows that serfs had become so much a private property as could be mortgaged under the Brahman settlements and temples.

4.1. The above survey reveals the influence exerted by the temples and the surrounding Brahman settlements in the social life of Kerala in the post-Cēra period. The temple, which began as a centre of worship and as the nucleus of the Brahman colony, began to grow in space and in the range of economic, social and even political activities. With this, it was able to influence, to a very great extent, the pattern of economic, social, religious and political evolution in Kerala. The Brahmandom in Kerala, with the spiritual power at their disposal and with the control of land and a large number of tenants, commanded all sorts of feudal privileges. In the absence of a central authority, they could control the ordinary business of life in Kerala. Thus, even as

42 Nos. 208-11 of 1875. See also M.G.S. Narayanan, *Kēraḷacaritāttinge Aṣṭhānaśilakaḷ*, (Calicut, 1972) pp. 53-5.

43 The original of this unpublished record is kept in the Department of History, University of Calicut, 11 13-4. The present writer is grateful to Mr. Raghava Varier, epigraphist, University of Calicut for his kind assistance in deciphering it.

the Catholic church did in mediaeval Europe following the disintegration of the Roman Empire, the temple-centred Brahman settlements in Kerala were able to force the course of history in Kerala between the disintegration of the Cēra kingdom early in the twelfth century and the advent of the Europeans late in the fifteenth century of the Christian era. In the same way as the Catholic church famed and sublimated the ruthless barbarians in mediaeval Europe, through the code of chivalry and each of allegiance to the church, the Brahmanical establishment in Kerala succeeded in bringing under their control the warlike *Samanta* chieftains and their Nayar militia. This resulted in the exaltation and sublimation of the feudal nobility in Kerala. Thus, the temple worked as the feudalising agency in Kerala.

The Ethnical Dichromatism* of the Jewery in Kerala—A New Interpretation

BY

P. M. RAJAN GURUKKAL

1.1. The social stratification of the Jews in Kerala is often interpreted as one which is based on the dichromatism into Blacks and Whites.¹ This is not born out by an examination of early records.² The present writer attempts an analysis of the Jewish records so as to ascertain when the institutionalised practice of dividing Jews into Blacks and Whites began. The present view of the scholars is that this system of social stratification is as old as Jewish settlement in Kerala.³ The author of this paper feels that instead of simplifying this social division as merely an old custom based on colour, a penetrative study has to be made into the social structure of the Jews with due consideration to economic factors.

1.2. Let us first examine the version of White Jews about their history. According to the present belief among the White Jews there was always this social dichotomy into Blacks and Whites in their history. They think that their ancestors were the early settlers on the Malabar coast and the Black Jews were native converts. The White Jews believe that the Blacks were the descendants of numerous slaves who were purchased and converted to Judaism, set free and carefully instructed by a rich White Jew some centuries ago. 'At his cost, they believe were all their old Synagogues erected'.⁴ During the wake of

* The term is taken in a liberal sence to indicate the phenomena of two colours of the skin.

1 Walter J. Fischel—The Exploration of the Jewish antiquity of Cochin on the Malabar Coast. *Cochin Synagogue 400th anniversary Souvenir* 1968.

2 Travellers or writers prior to the Portuguese period do not make any mention about White coloured Jews on Malabar Coast but for the native like Israelites.

3 S.S. Koder—*History of the Jews of Kerala*-1974.

4 Thurston—*Castes and Tribes of Southern India* Vol. IV p. 482. See discussions of one Jew Rabbi David D' Beth Hithel, who visited Cochin, about 1832 A.D.

Moorish attack and Portuguese persecution they migrated from Cranganore to Cochin. Joseph Rebban was their leader to whom the Copper Plate Charter was granted by the then ruler. "The White Jews claim, says Adler, " that they and they alone, are the true descendants of the aboriginal Jews of Cranganore, retain the Copper Plates in their possession and boast that about the beginning of the 17th century, the Raja of Cochin invested the head of the 'Hallegua' family with the hereditary title of the Mudaliar or Noble, with powers of punishing certain crimes. The males of that family still bear the title but their feudal rights have been abrogated." ⁵

1.3. The above mentioned concept of White Jews is not supported by historical facts. Firstly, the White Jews in Cochin are seen addressed to in the Royal writs (Tīṭṭūram) and official records as Paradēśi (Foreigners). The term 'Paradēśi' could be used against a person outside Kerala in olden times.⁶ But here it is clearly used against those branches of Jewish diaspora which came from Spain, Portugal, Germany, Constantinople, Aleppo, etc. during the Portuguese period. Secondly, as the term White is not seen applied to in the case of Jews before the Portuguese period, the present writer feels that it might be a parallel term to Paradēśi. Thirdly, the White Jews therefore do not have any antiquity to be explored beyond the Portuguese period. Fourthly, it is not possible to state that the Whites were the early Jewish settlers of the Malabar Coast. The Cranganore Jewes were not called White Jews by any of the travellers or writers of the early medieval period. Moreover the Jewish colonies of Cēnnaṁgalam, Paṛavūr, Pālayūr, Māḷa, etc. had no families of White Jews.⁷ The early Jews on the Malabar Coast looked much like the natives of India that it is difficult at first sight to distinguish them from the Hindus and it is only by a little closer observation, that the Jewish contour of their countenances could be identified.⁸ Fifthly, the Copper Plates were given to the Cranganore Jews and its preservation in the Paradēśi Synagogue alone does not prove that the White Jews of Cochin are their progeny. Sixthly, the Mudaliyāk title was not hereditary and it was not first conferred upon the 'Hallegua' family but the family of

5 Elkan N. Adler—*Jewish Chronicle* June 29, 1906.

6 Dr. M.G.S. Narayanan—*The Political and Social History of the Kula-sekharas*—Glossary.

7 These Jewish colonies were formed by Cranganore Jews following the Moorish attack and Portuguese persecution.

8 Rev. C. Buchanan—*History of Christianity in India*—Vol. I, p. 470-71 (1838).

Barukha Joseph Levi.⁹ The title came to 'Hallegua' in late 17th century prior to which the Castiel family had enjoyed it.¹⁰

1.4. Apart from this the following facts can be supplemented to elicit a clear history of the modern White Jews. It is evident from their use of Spanish language as mother tongue and from their titles or surnames like Kindel, Ashkenazi, Mizrahi, Koder, Rabi, Seasson etc.,¹¹ that they are the progeny of Spanish and Portuguese Jews. Dr. Wilson says that the White Jews are probably of those driven out during the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella and of German and Egyptian Jews on the basis of surnames.¹² This White Jews of Cochin have only the modern version of Pentateuchs written on parchment.¹³ Moreover the present White Jews do not have any customs which can be traced as the relics of early life in Cranganore. The Black Jews on the other hand follow certain customs which resemble those provided for in the Copper Plates.¹⁴ The Black Jews have older manuscripts written on parchment and Copper Plates.¹⁵ Referring to Jan Linschoten's 'Itinerary' Adler observes that the Jews described by the former were rich merchants and the king of Cochin's nearest Counsellors, who are most white of colour like men of Europe, and have many fair women. There are many of them that came of the country Palestine and Jerusalem thither and spoke over all the exchange very perfect and good Spanish. This directly confirms the view that the White Jews were newcomers from foreign countries.

1.5. Now let us take the version of the present Black Jews. They believe themselves to be the descendants of the first captivity, who came to Indian coasts instead of returning to Palestine along with their brethren who built the second temple of Jerusalem. The tradition says that the Black Jews were descendants of the Jews who were driven out of the land of Israel 13 years before the destruction of the first temple built by Solomon. Here, though the exact date of Jewish occupation is

9 The Report of Moses de Paiva, edited by S.S. Koder—*Cochin Synagogue 400th Anniversary Souvenir 1968*.

10 *Ibid.*

11 Elkan N. Adler—*Jewish Chronicle*—June 29, 1906.

12 Quoted by Thurston—*Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. IV, pp. 488-489.

13 This parchment written in modern Hebrew character is preserved in the Paradesi Synagogue.

14 J.H. Lord—*The Jews in India and the Far East*—1907.

15 Rev. C. Buchanan—*Christian Researches in India*—1840.

hitherto unknown, the antiquity of the Black Jews can be traced back to a period much anterior to that of the whites.¹⁶

2. 1. Having said elsewhere that the concept of white and Black in the social sense came since the Portuguese period, we do not mean that the early Jews had accomplished an endogamous group in itself. The early travellers and writers have referred to Jewish settlement of Cranganore, a trading centre where the leader, big businessmen, business agents, ship builders, labourers, slaves, etc. of the Jewish community moved about.¹⁷ It is probable that the Jews of such various professions might have a relative social status determined by economic factors.¹⁸ The accounts of Stavorines help us to believe that the Jews in Kerala had taken local men slaves and as soon as a new recruitment was made, he was circumcised to be treated as a fellow Israelite and freed from slavery.¹⁹ It has to be assumed that the term 'slave' had a different connotation when the Jews in Kerala used it. To them it meant only a menial worker or a native convert. The menial workers and the native converts in the bulk of the Jewish Community must have grown into an endogamous group of inferior social status, in course of time. What the European writers²⁰ exaggerated as emancipation riots of slaves against their masters may have been the outbreaks of these slaves.

2. 2. Now the rationale, if any, in the dichromatic division of Jews can be examined. It is from the report of Moses De Paiva²¹ that we get a formal classification of Jews into White coloured and Black coloured – the Brancoo and the Non-Brancoo. He provides a list of the heads of 23 families belonging to the congregation of the Paradēsi Synagogue, with their countries of origin. Of the total 23 families 13 are shown as Brancoo or the White by origin. His classification is not seen logically right. For example, he says that David Levi Mudaliar's grandfather came from Germany and was thereby a Brancoo. But he holds that David Ashkenazin whose grandfather came

16 See the discussions under 1-3 and 1-4.

17 Benjamin Tudela (1167), Rajwini (1280), Oderic of Pordenone (1281), Marco Polo (1293) etc.

18 The Structure of the Contemporary Hindu Society of Kerala must have influenced the Jews. See the Jewish Copper Plates—First Plate, Second side—lines 16, 17, 18.

19 J. Splinter Stavorines—*Voyage to the East Indies*—1774-78.

20 See Fischel—the Exploration—400th 1968. (*loc. cit.*)

21 The head of a delegation from Amsterdam to Cochin whose report 'Notisias Dos Judeos De Cochin' was published in 1687—edited by S.S. Koder.

from Germany was a Non-Brancco.²² Here his references are found to be contradictory. He further says that the Paradēsi Synagogue was built by people like Belilia, Ephraim Sala, Barukh Joseph Levy, etc. in 1568. At the same time he also maintains that the grandfather of Joseph Levy and David Belilia came from Jerusalem and Germany respectively in 1596 !

2. 3. Paiva classification is obviously overlapping. Moreover it has proved that classification of Jews on the basis of colour or complexion is not very easy. Jacob Saphir,²⁴ a Jewish traveller who visited Cochin about a hundred years ago, remarked that he found only a group of Jews with brown complexion or of copper colour and another group with western complexion. He found no black coloured group at all in Cochin. But according to Adler there were Black Jews in Cochin who were themselves divided into two classes; the Black Jews proper who were darker in colour and had no surnames and the Noble who have family names and legitimate descent, and claimed to be the true descendants of the Cranganore or Singli Jews.²⁵ This dichotomy put forward by Adler proves the continuity of the tradition of Cranganore Jewery in Cochin too.²⁶ It further confirms the point that the White Jews came later and the stratification of the Jews on the basis of a dichromatism into White and Black began since their arrival.

3.1. Now some of the problems hitherto unsettled can be examined in the light of the interpretations given in the preceding paragraphs. One of the main problems is with regard to the antiquity of the white and Black Jewish settlements. This problem has been discussed under 1-3, and 1-5, showing the antiquity of Black Jewish settlement much anterior to that of the Whites. Another problem is with regard to the ownership of Copper Plates which are now in the Paradēsi Synagogue under the custody of the White Jews. The Copper Plate Charter was granted to the Cranganore Jews in the 38th regnal year (999 A. D.) of the king Bhaskara Ravi when there were no White Jews at all in Kerala²⁷. Thus the claim of the White Jews to the

22 See Paiva's report—edited by S. S. Koder—*Cochin Synagogue 400th Anniversary*, 1968.

23 See the discussion under 2-2.

24 Rev. J. H. Lord—*The Jews in India and the Far East*, 1907.

25 Elkan N. Adler—*Jewish Chronicle*—June 29, 1906.

26 See discussions under 2-1 mentioning the probability of social division of Black Jews with a relative social status.

27 See discussions under 1-3 and 1-4—For the date of the Copper Plates—See Prof. Elamkulam—*Studies in Kerala History* (1970)—pp. 379-380,

ownership of the Copper Plates is seen not borne out by historical reasons. Now the problem is how did the Paradēsi (Whites) get it and when did it come to be preserved in their Synagogue? This requires an analysis of its historical background.

3.2. It is said that during the days of onslaught and persecution Joseph Azar, the last leader of the Añcuvaṇṇam, migrated to Cochin.²⁸ He must have brought the Copper Plate with him and kept under his secret custody. The writers, travellers or officials of the Portuguese period do not make any mention about the Copper Plates. The earliest known documentary evidence referring to the Copper Plates in Cochin is a Hebrew letter of 1676.²⁹ At that time it was under the ownership of the White Jews as noted in the letter³⁰ In the context it is necessary to examine the relation between Paradēsi Jews and the descendants of the Cranganore Jewery in Cochin. The records of Paradēsi Synagogue show that there was cordial relation between the Whites and Blacks in religious matters during the early years. It is reasonable to believe that the Copper Plates came to the Paradēsi Jews from one of the Black Jew leaders. Because Mudaliyar, the Jewish leader in Cochin might have held the Copper Plates in his possession.³¹ When the Mudaliyar title was conferred upon the Paradēsi the ownership of Copper Plates also might have gone to them.

3.3. Next problem to be examined is when the rigid ethnical dichromatism got institutionalised in the Jewery of Kerala. The earliest reliable reference to the disputes between the Blacks and Whites is in 'The Jews Black and White' which is a special chapter in the 'Letters from Malabar' by Canter Vischer (1717-1723).³² The White Jews were rich merchants and the leading group where as a majority of the Black

28 Añcuvaṇṇam was the organisation of Jewish merchants in Cranganore. For the details of Joseph Azar see Walter Fischel—The Exploration. *Cochin Synagogue 400th Anniversary Souvenir 1968*.

29 The Hebrew letter of 1676 and the accounts of Anquetil Du Perron testify this practice.

30 *Ibid*.

31 Anquetil Du Perron is reported to have been permitted by Ezekhiel Rabbi (Mudaliar) to carry the Copper Plates to his residence in Cochin for studies and investigation. As noted by Perron the Copper Plates were kept in the house of Mudaliar at that time.

32 Canter Vischer—*Letters from Malabar*—Letter VIII (Edited by Major Heber Drury 1862.)

Jews remained poor.³³ So often economic factors must have gone ahead causing factions among the Jews, rather than ethnical. The rigidity of the stratification increased corresponding to the economic degradation of the Blacks.³⁴ During the British period most of the Blacks were poor and had an inferior social status. The dichromatic ethnical division had gone to such an extent that an official delegate, Rabbi Ascher Levy (an Austrian Jew) was sent by the Jewish ecclesiastical authorities of Israel, to investigate the conditions of the depressed Black Jews in Cochin.³⁵ Ascher Levy's letter dated 24th April 1882 to the British Resident of Cochin refers to the wealthy dominant White minority and the non-privileged Black majority. This later rift of Jews into Blacks and Whites is often traced back into early years of their peaceful co-existence.

33 All business records and other documents show the affluence of the whites whereas the Blacks are shown as labourers or local retailers.

34 See Jewish records since 1795. (Cochin Archives).

35 See Rabbi Ascher Levy's letter—Jewish Records—Cochin Archives.

The Ādima Mahājana Sabha — Its Mission and Message

BY

A. THULASIBAI

By the dawn of the 20th century, the socially depressed classes of Kerala on account of their social contact with the educationally progressing communities, gradually came forward in the public life of the state breaking the shackles of ignorance and negligence. The spectacular rise and progress of the Īlava — Nāyar communities as a result of organised effort on the part of organizations like the SNDP Yōgam (Śri Nārāyaṇa Dharma Paripālana Yōgam) and the NSS (Nāyar Service Society) was a powerful stimulus to the other communities. The socially backward communities became conscious of the necessity of their own caste — organizations for the purpose of collective bargaining which alone, they knew, would bring them equality in civil rights and privileges till then denied to them. The lot of communities like the Pulaya, Paṛaya, Kuṛava etc., was deplorable. Denied of educational facilities, they remained illiterate. For ages past they were barred from owning land and this economic disability kept them entirely at the mercy of caste Hindu landlords. All channels of drive and initiative were closed to them by the age-old customs and conventions. The struggle of the Civic Rights League — an organization formed by the Christians, Īlavas and Muslims during 1917-1922 — and the conspicuous gains made by the agitators were an encouraging example to these communities.¹ They became unusually conscious of their power and potentialities and the necessity of fighting for their legitimate rights in the social set-up of the state. The formation of Ādima Mahājana Sabha, consisting of the four socially-depressed communities of Kerala, viz., Pulaya, Paṛaya, Kuṛava and Vēṭṭuva was an important step in the realisation of such rights.

1 It was the agitation of the Civic Rights League which compelled the government to biurcate Dēvaswoms from the Revenue Department, thereby enabling the agitators' communities to get access to the Revenue Department.

According to Kāppil G. Gopalakrishna Panikkar, the Secretary of the Sabha, the term Ādimā meant the original inhabitants of Kerala — a term which they liked to be known better than their present caste names like Pulaya, Paṛaya etc. It was with pride that they claimed to be the original settlers and inhabitants of the land. According to Panikkar the term carried the same meaning as denoted by caste names like Nāyar and Īḷava.² In short, the promoters wanted to coin a novel caste name that would instil pride and confidence among the communities concerned and make a start for a social revolution. The Sabha got registered on 30 March, 1981 under Section 26 of the Travancore Companies Regulation I of 1092 M. E., its headquarters being Trivandrum.

The organizers of the Sabha had started their activities even earlier. They tried to educate their brethren and awaken them from the bondage and degradation of centuries. They toured the places of Ādimar settlements and virtually involved in activating them to move in the line of change and reform. For instance, on 29 September, 1929, there was a meeting of the Ādimar at Veṅkuḷam English Middle School Varkala, under the Chairmanship of one N. A. Yūsuf. On the very same day about thirtyfive children of the Ādimar were sent to school.³ The event generated much stir and sensation among them. The Ādimar were drawing their line in the social map of Kerala as a matter of right.

The Ādimar themselves analysed the basic issues of their degradation. They unmistakably came to the conclusion that it was the educational and economic backwardness that brought on them the shackles of servitude. The rigidity of caste rules and customs of Kerala was another stumbling block that precluded these communities from coming up. According to the Secretary of the Sabha, they themselves were to a certain extent, acting in such a way as to retain casteism and the consequent injustice and inequalities in the society. "Even if casteism was abolished", he opined, "by a royal proclamation, the inequalities brought about by it cannot go, provided there is no basic change in the social perspective."⁴ In short, even if the government were prepared to act in favour of these aggrieved communities the communities themselves were indifferent and lethargic to work for

² *Samadarsi*, 1 April, 1930.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ English Records, Government of Kerala, R. Dis. 903/31/Judl.

the creation of a social outlook, which alone would enable them to embrace reforms without opposition from the privileged classes. As a first step towards their social uplift Gopalakrishna Panikkar exhorted these communities to assert themselves and remain vigilant of the socio-economic and political changes of the period so that they could move in accordance with the call of particular occasions.⁵ Expression of innate powers and formation of a strong organization was the need of the hour. The Ādima Mahājana Sabha, therefore, was the natural outcome of the need of the hour, and it could impart virility as well as a sense of duty to the communities concerned.

A peep into the sordid economic condition of the Ādimas in this context, will not be irrelevant. Being landless tenants, as aforesaid, they were at the mercy of landlords. Even for the cremation of the dead, the permission and co-operation of the landlord was indispensable. If they did not work the inevitable result would be starvation. They had no savings. This could not have been otherwise, for their wages were not commensurate with their hard work. However they did not consider it as desideratum; they remained contented and tried to find solace and comfort in liquor, which only aggravated their degeneration. Thus those who were engaged in their uplift had to start the work from grass-root level.

Though the organizers of the Sabha were fully aware of the economic degradation of the Ādimar, they do not seem to have had any programme of action, perhaps due more to lack of resources than apathy. But in the educational front the situation was different. We have already seen their effort in this line by taking some Ādimar children to school. Likewise, at a meeting of the Ādimar held on 17 January, 1930 at Ārriññal, under the Presidentship of P. A. Krishna Pillai, Advocate, it was decided to start a Night School at Ārriññal. They canvassed about forty-five illiterate elders and the latter were taught to read and write. The progress in this line was proudly commented by the Secretary of the Sabha.⁶ Moreover, they seem to have worked for the opening of a model village of the Ādimar at Śrīnivāsapuram, Varkala, but it is not known whether the scheme ever materialised.

A characteristic feature of the Sabha was that while organizations of this kind were formed and guided by leaders and members of

5 *Ibid.*

6 *Loc. cit.*

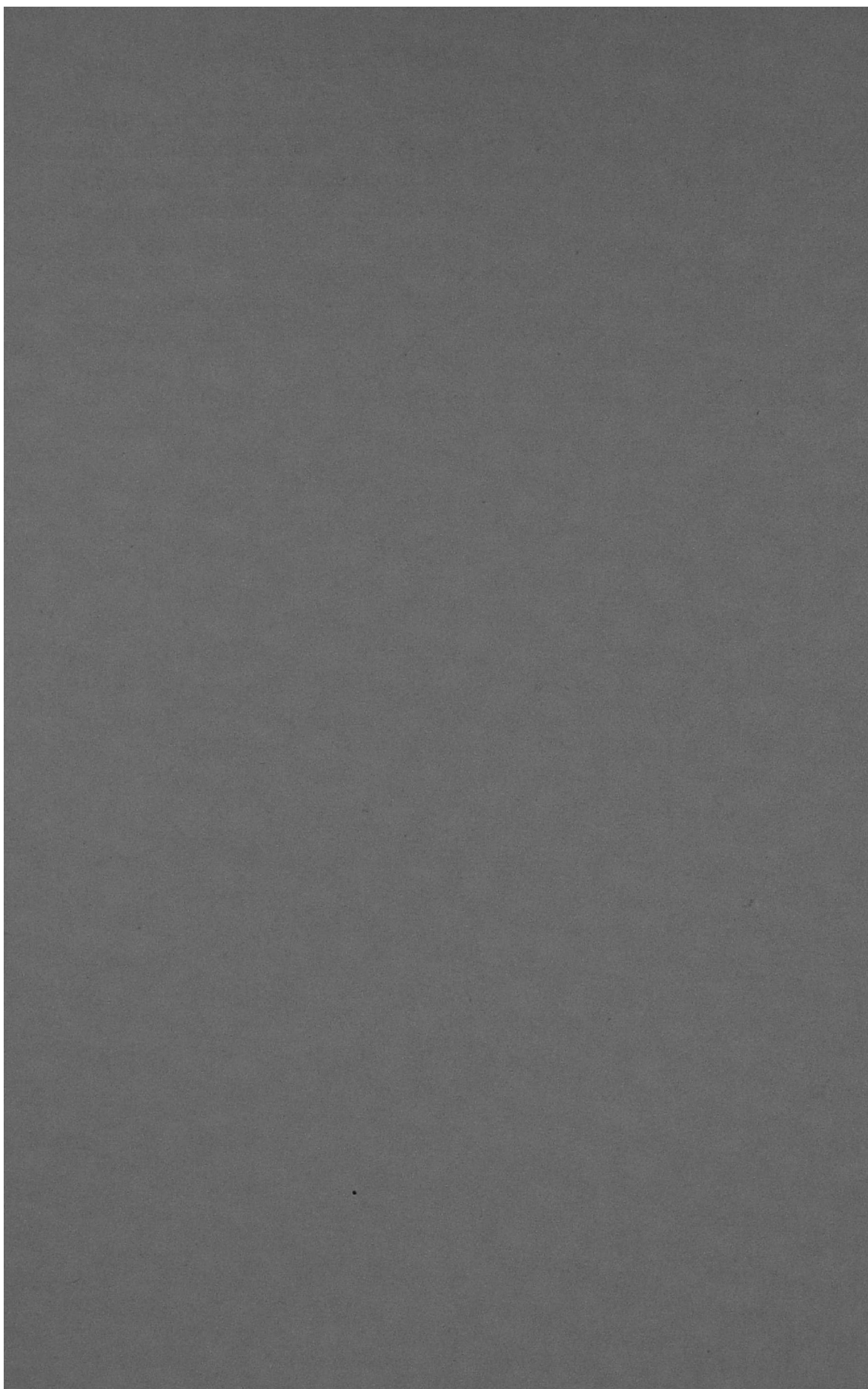
respective communities, the Sabha selected an 'outsider' viz., Caṇṇanāśṣeri Parameswaran Pillai, as its permanent President. The first general body meeting of the Sabha that met at Venkuḷam English Middle school on October, 1929 was Presided over by the great Malayalam poet. Uḷḷūr S. Parameswara Aiyar. Moreover, among the members of the Managing Committee and the promoters of the Sabha we find a galaxy of veterans like Paṭṭom A. Tāṇu Piḷḷai, Dr. K. P. Paṇikkar, M. D., M. L. C., Alleppey, Kaṇṇāra Gōpāla Paṇikkar, Advocate, Ceṇṇannūr, N. Kumāran Judge, Kōṭṭayam, Mūlūr S. Padmanabha Panikkar, Dr. N. Kunjan Pillai, Director of Agriculture, Trivandrum, Dr. A. Ravivarma, Trivandrum, C. V. Kuṇṇūrāman, Sir P. Habib Muhammed, M. A., B. L., V. Varadarajayyanagar, Ag. District Munsiff, Trivandrum, etc. Of course there were also members of the Ādima in this long list like Ayyankāḷi, S.M.P. Member, Kaṇḍan Kumāran, S.M.P. Member, Daivattan Kunjan, Kelambi Narayanan etc. The patting hands of well-known social reformers and enlightened men like Caṇṇanāśṣeri Parameswaran Pillai and C.V. Kuṇṇūrāman must have served as an impetus to the activities of the Sabha. The inclusion of non-Ādima in the affairs of the Sabha was, no doubt in conformity with the qualification of members prescribed in its constitution. Apart from all adult citizens of the Ādima, others who were interested in the improvement of the lot of the Ādima, irrespective of caste or creed, could become members of the Sabha.

The preamble of the constitution of the Sabha was, infact, a blue print for the uplift of the Ādima. It sought to improve the ethical and social life of the Ādima from the vile and wretched condition to which they were till then accustomed. To realise this ambitious programme they had a comprehensive scheme—formation of co-operative societies, establishment of schools, prayer halls, shops, gardens, orphanages, model villages etc.

But achievements fell far short of aspirations. This may be partly due to the political climate obtaining in the state immediately, following the formation of the Sabha. That climate was not conducive to its unhampered progress. Such communities of the state as the Christians, Īlavas and Muslims from whom the Ādimar could expect much assistance, were infact engaged in a political struggle of a profound nature—the Abstention Movement. These communities were fighting with the privileged caste Hindus in the socio-political fronts for the establishment of justice and equality in the public service as well as the legis-

lature of the state. In the political turmoil of Travancore, from 1931 to 1938, when all major communities were involved in a confrontation for power and privileges, the voice and aspirations of the infant Sabha, were lost in wilderness. On the whole, however, the Ādimas sympathised with the absentationists, who were pleading for proportional representation, reservation etc.. in the civil service and legislature of the state.

- Such a programme was in broad agreement with the larger and ultimate object of the Sabha. In spite of the fact that it is impossible to identify or distinguish their activities in the subsequent period, they do not seem to have succeeded in fulfilling the historic mission to which they were drawn.



The Church of South India and the Modernization of Kerala

BY

P. JOHN JOHN

I

The formation of the Church of South India in 1947 was a significant step in the history of the Church since Reformation. As Bishop Bell, then Bishop of Chichester and Chairman of the Joint Committee on relations with Church of South India said: "The Unity achieved in the Church of South India is significant in many ways...it is a great event in Christian history...the union of Churches achieved in the Church of South India is also a challenge to the parent churches. That Church may have its faults, and its growing pains, but it is a brave blow struck at the scandal of disunion. It is for us to see now how much further we can get in ending disunion at home."¹ Thus, the history of twenty eight years of negotiations reached its climax in the dramatic movement of inauguration.

Modernism in the Church arose during the last decade of the nineteenth Century. Originally, it applied to a Roman Catholic Movement. "Modernism is the name given by the papal encyclical which condemned it to a complex of movements within the Roman Communion, all alike inspired by a desire to bring the tradition of Christian belief and practice into closer relation with the intellectual habits and social aspirations of our time."² But Modernism.....in Protestantism is to describe liberal movements and tendencies..... Modernists agree that their doctrines are open to revision in the light of changing times and of advances in knowledge, but consider this to be a source of strength, not of weakness."³

However, modernization can be defined in different terms. "Total modernization requires the examination of the entire social

1 Quoted in Rajaiah D. Paul, *The First Decade—An Account of the Church of South India*, The Christian Literature Society, Madras, 1958, pp. 199–200.

2 *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 1964, p. 763.

3 *Encyclopedia Americana* (International Edition), Vol. 19, 1966.

system.”⁴ Some scholars have argued that political factors determine the nature of modernization.⁵ C. E. Black defines modernization as “the process by which historically evolved institutions are adapted to the rapidly changing functions that reflect the unprecedented increase in man’s knowledge, permitting control over his environment, that accompanied the scientific revolution.”⁶ Modernization is a total transformation of society, a movement in a consciously chosen direction. The Church of South India has admitted extensive adaptation and change the impact of which is visible in all human relationships.

The relationship between political structure and institutional or religious culture seems to be one of the significant aspects of modernisation. Some went so far as to say that “modernization is always a moral and religious problem. It is both an exhilarating challenge to create new values and meaning and a threat to an existing pattern of values and meanings.”⁷ The Church of South India as a religious institution has much to contribute to the modernization of the state, as it is quite natural that as the old social order is disrupted, people go through a profound psychological adjustment. The people attempt to bring about a sense of identity with the changing environment. Thus Church played an important role to bring about renaissance in Kerala.

While the Church was in favour of the emergence of renaissance in Kerala, the Church in Europe stood as a hindrance to the socio-economic and political changes. To quote the well-known historian, H. G. Wells, “Though it is certain that the Catholic Church through its propaganda, its popular appeals, its schools and universities, opened up the prospect of the modern educational state in Europe, it is equally certain that the Catholic Church never intended to do anything of the sort. It did not send out knowledge with its blessing.”⁸ The

4 Charles F. Andrain, *Political Life and Social Change*, (California, Wadsworth,) 1970, pp. 237–244.

5 Rajni Kothari, *Politics in India*, (Boston, Little, Brown, and Co.,) 1970, p. 1.

6 C.E. Black, *The Dynamics of Modernization: A study in Comparative History*, (New York, Harper and Row), 1966, p. 7.

7 Quoted in Charles A. Ryerson, “Meaning and Modernization in Tamil Nadu: Tamil Nationalism and Religious Culture,” *Religion and Society*, Vol. XVII, No. 4, December 1970, pp. 6–7.

8 H. G. Wells, *The Outline of History*, (Cassel and Company Ltd.,) London, 9163, p. 733,

Church which was dominant during Middle Ages began to split into denominations with the emergence of Renaissance, when the clergy began to lose the monopoly of literature. That dominance came to an end when the clergy lost the superiority of knowledge and had to share their influence with profane laymen, trained in the classics, and more familiar with pagan than with Christian writers.⁹

While this was the situation in Europe, in Travancore renaissance began to set in during Munro's time. The role of the Church was sufficient here to create entirely a new middle-class men whose role later on created major change in the socio-economic and political pattern of Kerala. As C. Kesavan comments with special reference to a dramatic event and change: while the churches in Russia become theatres, theatres in our state become churches.¹⁰ Several major changes took place in the state one of which was political in nature. Three major communities—Illavas Muslims and Christians joined together to make decisions in political representation. The L. M. S. Hall in Trivandrum witnessed two important conferences of the three communities one on December 18, 1932, and the other in January 1933 to make great decisions regarding representation of these communities in the then existing political machinery.

In this paper, not only a short history of the Church of South India is pictured, but also its pre-history during which the Church Missionary Society played a major role in the modernization of the society in the state. Since the new form of the Church, i.e., the Church of South India, came to be formed only in 1947, a long period is left as the past history of the Church,¹¹ since the Anglican missionaries first came into the state to preach the Christian Gospel.

Since the title of the paper is "The Church of South India and the Modernization of Kerala," the areas other than Madhya Kerala

9 Lord Action, *Lectures on Modern History*, (Mac Millan and Co. Ltd.,) London, 1960, p. 76.

10 C. Kesavan, *Jeevitha Samaram* (M) Part II, (National Book Stall,) Kottayam, 1971, p. 49.

11 The Anglican Methodist, Congregational and Presbyterian denominations constitute the Church of South India. The Diocese of the CSI is spread through Rayalaseema, Dornakal, Jaffna, North Kerala, Krishna Godavari, Mathurai, Ramanad, Medak, Mysore North, Mysore South, Mysore Central, Tirunelveli, Madhya Kerala, South Kerala, Tiruchirapalli-Tanjore, Coimbatore, Kanyakumari, and Madras.

North Kerala, and South Kerala Dioceses are unimportant. In these areas the Anglican missionaries began their work as early as 1816. Therefore, stress is given to those activities which were carried on since then to the present time by the Church Missionary Society and the London Missionary Society in which areas which is now known as the Kerala State. Thus, the survey of the history of the present Church of South India in Kerala goes as far back as 1879 when the Diocese of Travancore and Cochin was formed in 1879 and the first Bishop was appointed in 1880.¹²

II

The Church Missionary Society

In 1806 Claudius Buchanan, (a member on the staff of Chaplains maintained by the East India Company to the spiritual needs of its European servants) visited Travancore with the assistance of the Resident Colonel Macaulay. Buchanan had an interview with the Metropolitan, Mar Dionysius I, and discussed with him the possibility of a Union between the Syrian Church and the Church of England. However, the Syrian Christians were brought to the attention of the British people for the first time by Claudius Buchanan by his publication 'Christian Researches in Asia' in 1811.

Under this circumstance, Colonel, Munro, the British Resident in Travancore appealed to the Church of England to send clergymen to work among the Christians who were found sadly debased by ignorance and by oppression. They "did not enjoy the advantages possessed either by the caste Hindus or by the Roman Catholics.....The political conditions.....was extremely low at the beginning of the nineteenth century."¹³ As a result the Church Missionary Society sent Messrs Bailey, Baker and Fenn in 1816.¹⁴ Those missionaries began their work among the Syrians and Rev. Thomas Norton settled in Alleppey.

12 John Martinadle Speechly who died in England on January 20, 1896, was the first Bishop of the Diocese.

13 P. Cherian, *The Malabar Syrians and the Church Missionary Society 1816-1840*, The Church Missionary Society's Press, 1935, Kottayam, p. 85.

14 In 1813 the Resident Colonel Munro inquired about the constitution of the Syrian Church. It was because of his interest that missionaries came to work among the Syrian Christians in Travancore. This was the way the work of the Church Missionary Society began. Thus, in 1816 the first missionaries arrived in Travancore.

Mr. Bailey settled in Kottayam, where the Rāṇi of Travancore had patronised a Christian College built through the influence of Colonel Munro for the education of the Syrian clergy. Mr. Fenn became the Principal of the College.¹⁵

The principal aim of Col. Munro in establishing a College was the enlightenment of the Protestants in the hope of eradicating what he considered to be the errors of their Church and its leaning towards Roman and pagan superstitions. The Rāṇi's Government welcomed the proposed college as a place for general education, from where the demands of the state for officers to fill all departments of public service would be met.

Until the year 1830, the relation of the Syrians and the C. M. S. Missionaries was smooth. At the beginning of 1836 the Anglican missionaries in Kottayam were still, as in 1817, a kind of advisory committee to the Syrian Church and Metran.¹⁶ However, when Mar Philexenos died, Mar Dionysius IV who succeeded him became hostile to the missionaries. This attitude continued until 1837 when Mar Dionysius IV severed all connections with the Anglican missionaries and declared that he was in communion with the Patriarch of Antioch.¹⁷

The attitude of the Metropolitan necessitated complete separation and it resulted in the formation of an independent Church. It necessitated a new beginning. While writing to his son on 6th April 1836, Rev. H. Baker mentioned: "The Syrians as a body, have determined against reform in their church and declared their determination to have no connection with us."¹⁸ Gradually, the foundation was laid on March 9, 1836, of the Mallappally Church which became the first Syro-Anglican out-station of the C. M. S. in Travancore.¹⁹

15 G. T. Mackenzie, *Christianity in Travancore* (The Travancore Government Press), Trivandrum, 1901, pp. 43-44.

16 W. S. Hunt, *The Anglican Church in Travancore and Cochin 1816-1916*. Vol. II, (Church Missionary Society), Kottayam, 1933, p. 29.

17 G. T. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, p. 38. A Synod was held by the Metrān at Māvālikara on January 16, 1836, and a document was signed by which the Church was separated.

18 Quoted in W. S. Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

19 Gradually a series of churches began to come up in various centres. The Church in Alleppey was complete in 1839. In May 1839, a Church came up in Māvālikara. In 1839 a Church at Talavāḍy was erected. The Kollāḍ Church was dedicated in 1840. In Trichur sanction was received to erect a church in 1841.

All this was possible owing to peaceful administration of Col. Munro. As Ulloor S. Parameswara Iyer wrote: Munro brought peace and prosperity to the country and put her on the road to progressive government.²⁰ The author of the Cochin State Manual, C. Achutha Menon, says that by his strenuous and untiring labours for two long years and his wholehearted devotion to his self-imposed duty, Travancore and Cochin, there is no doubt, have long ago ceased to be feudatory states.²¹

The members of the C. M. S. and their activities were well received by the state government and the Christians had considerable help from the government particularly during Munro's time.²² "The land on which the Mission bungalows and Churches at Alleppey, Kottayam and Nagercoil stand were gifts from the sirkar and building materials also were granted in aid of the construction of the Church at Alleppey and perhaps also for the Church at Nagercoil. A sum of five thousand rupees was given to the London Missionary Society for the purchase of paddy lands in support of their educational institutions. The Rajah of Cochin placed at the disposal of Col. Munro a sum of Rs. 5000/- for the benefit of the Protestant Christians."²³ Rama Varma, a Cochin Prince, who was converted to Christianity at the age of 21, was ordained Paster, at the Basel Mission Church, Cannanore in the year 1858 after proper theological training. His service was so devoted that he died of small pox at the age of 43 at Cannanore, while activity involved in serving the victims of small pox.²⁴ These show the keen interest taken by some members of the royal family towards Christianity.

In 1842 the Church at Kottayam was opened. At Pallom, with the permission of the government, a church was erected in 1843. The church at Oḷaṣa was built and opened on July 13, 1845. In addition to this, schools were also set up in Pallom, Kollāḍ, Muṭṭom, Aymanam, Añcēri, Kiḷirur, Vākatānam and Rāmamaññālam.

20 *Kerala Society Papers* II, Series 7, p. 62.

21 *Cochin State Manual*, p. 154.

22 There is a critical view on Col. Munro's interest on the group of Christians in Travancore and Cochin. The critics view that all that the royal authority did for the Christians during those days were because of Col. Munro.

23 *Missionary Register for 1819* p. 428.

24 E.P. Vijayan, "Contributions of the Basel Mission," *Souvenir* 1975—The Kerala United Theological Seminary, p. 63.

The Church contributed much to the modernization of the state by uplifting the downtrodden and the outcastes. Schools and educational scholarships, rural and industrial settlements, especially intended to give new opportunities to the backward class Christians and their children, were started by the C. M. S.²⁵ Mr. Peet wrote from Māvelikara to Mr. Chapman in London: "...after more than twenty years' struggling during which I obtained a tacit admission of some of my people's rights, I have, through the aid of the present Resident and Madhava Rau, the Diwan, lately obtained a legal status for my people similar to that of the Muhammadans — that is, as fellow-subjects, they have now the equal public right of walking in the public road, of appearing in a court of justice, of deliverance from the infamous system of a compulsory labour and can hold property in their Christian names."²⁶

People found relief in the church. It was so common that the converts were beaten and abused owing to the fact that they secured a better status in society as members of church. On such occasions the people united themselves. In 1852 Mr. Peet wrote that when the converts had been abused, beaten etc., in the teeth of opposition, they united to become stronger. During this time there was a flow of Iḷava conversion to Christianity.²⁷ By being Christians, they could make use of the public roads and had access to the courts.

The case of converted slaves was far worse. When a slave became a member of the Church, he was deemed superior in social status; this was not generally recognised by the slave-owner. When this occurred, "a great landlord even threatened to eject some members of the Tiruvalla congregation for attending the Church polluted by contact with slaves."²⁸ In spite of these problems and difficulties, the Church continued to accept the slaves.

It was a real problem for the Church members and leaders to create a sort of equality, since the members of the church consisted of Syrians, Śūdra, Iḷava, Pulaya, and Paṛaya converts. This created a grave problem to the Church. Some missionaries even refused to give Lord's Supper to persons who could not renounce caste. They

25 C.P. Mathew and M.M. Thomas, *The Indian Churches of Saint Thomas*, I.S.P.C.K., Delhi, 1967, p. 143.

26 Quoted in W.S. Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

27 *Ibid* p. 98.

28 *Ibid*, p. 102.

dismissed some who shrugged at Pulaya converts and others to come near them, or treat other lower-caste men as inferiors.²⁹ Even the Church Conference passed a resolution as follows:— “Resolved—that we are and have been unanimously agreed that converts from the slave castes are to be introduced into our churches and partake of the ordinances of religion and stand on the same footing as other members of the church.”³⁰ This was passed in 1857, though slavery was abolished in 1850s in which the church took a leading role. Gradually,* the slave converts themselves played a major role in purifying their own community. Since the gospel mission was established among the people, drunkenness, adultery, thieving and other such habits were almost banished from among the slaves. “The rapid progress of Christianity,” says Hunt, “among the slaves in so short a time is in great measure attributable to the pious efforts of the slave converts themselves under God’s blessing.”³¹

The spirit of modernization got impetus in 1821 when the Grammar School was opened at Kottayam and the long-awaited printing press from England was installed. “Our printing press with English types etc. together with school books, a lending library etc., arrived here yesterday to our unspeakable joy. Mr. Bailey’s establishment of the first Malayalam press, his valuable dictionaries and other blessings brought untold good to multitudes of the Malayalam people, His translation of the Word of God into the vernacular tongue,³² stands as the outstanding contribution to the modernization of the state.

The press helped in publishing religious materials. The credit of first publications goes to the Basel Mission³³ and the C. M. S. The Basel Mission published the *Rājyasamācārom* and the *Paschimodayam* in 1847, the former publishing religious news and the latter secular news. The third publication was *Jñānanikṣēpam* from Kottayam by the C. M. S. in November 1848.³⁴ The *Jñānanikṣēpam* still continues to be the Church monthly for the C. S. I. in Madhya Kerala Diocese.

29 *Ibid.*, p. 104.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 102

31 *Ibid.*, p. 107.

32 W. S. Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

33 The Basel missionaries began their Christian activities over the Malabar area in 1834. The pioneer missionaries among them were Rev. Samuel Hebic, Dr. H. Gundert, and Rev. H. Moegling. The co-operation with which the Basel Mission and C. M. S. began their Christian work in that year is the foundation on which the present North Kerala Diocese is built.

34 K. M. George, “Vijñāna Pracāranattil Missionaṁīmār Vahicca Paṇku,” (M), *Jñānanikṣēpam*—*Bailey Jubilee Souvenir*, 1973, p. 5.

The spirit of the community reawakened because the lower and the depressed classes began to develop their thinking in terms of equality and fraternity. The printing press at Kottayam had been the means of awakening in the minds of the people a spirit of inquiry and a tendency to analyse everything for themselves. The Travancore Government depended on the C. M. S. press for printing until it had set up one of its own in 1829.³⁵ These activities of the missionaries aroused the spirit of nationalism which later on culminated in independence and the modernization.

Its role in Education

Most of the C. M. S. missionaries made education as part of their activity. Though the major task of the church is to preach the word of God, education was adopted as a secondary means by which mission schools sought to civilize and develop the culture of the various communities in the state. The earliest work of the mission in fact was entirely educational.³⁶

Education progressed rapidly. In 1820, there were ten schools scattered about at Kottayam, Munro Island, Muñanturutti, Nirañam, Ceṅgannur, Tumpamōṇ, Kaṇṇanaḍ, Maṇarkād Mavēlikara and Puthupally. These schools served society irrespective of caste and community. "Nayar schools were opened in two places at the request of members of that community."³⁷ The foundation of the modern elementary education was thus laid by the C. M. S. missionaries in Travancore and Cochin. The Grammar School built by Rev. Henry Baker in 1821 at Kottayam was with the aim of enabling promising boys from the parochial school to climb a little higher up the educational ladder and to make teachers of the best of them.³⁸ The taught learned English, Malayalam and Sanskrit.

The school for slave children was an exception. It was a great venture with much of opposition from the slave-owners. The owners greatly opposed the slaves being taught in schools. With all the difficulties the missionaries continued to educate them which bore fruitful results later on. This contribution of the missionaries resulted in the emancipation of slaves.

35 *Ibid.*

36 W.S. Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

37 W.S. Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 73.

Women's education came to the forefront when the Church Missionary Society started its first Girls' School at Kottayam at the instance of Mrs. Fenn and Mrs. Baker in 1825, though some parish schools had started giving education to women as early as 1821. Probably, this was the first educational institution of this type in India. The Buchanan Institution was the first training school for women teachers in the state. Girls were taught needlework and English. Another school was started by Mrs. Bailey and Mrs. Norton at Alleppey in 1828 where needlework, knitting and spinning and threadmaking, etc. were taught. About the same time Mrs. Ridsdale opened a girls school at Cochin. No wonder that Kerala tops the list in female literacy. Thus, the educational institutions established by the Church Missionary Society became the torch-bearers of modernization of Kerala.

Another notable effort was that made towards education of the Hindu girls. This created concern among the Hindus and the Muslims. "Far more dreadful in the eyes of the Hindus was the opening of western education for girls, which was regarded as an instrument by which the missionaries could invade their zenana, the natural citadel of their orthodoxy."³⁹ However, Miss August Blandford began her activities in 1864 and she succeeded in founding the Fort School at Trivandrum in 1864. H. H. Rama Varma was pleased to help her in her great venture. In 1900 there were about 245 Hindu girls enrolled in the school. It is noteworthy that Miss Blandford's efforts were assisted by the Dewan Sir T. Madhava Rao by providing facilities of accommodation within the Fort for this purpose.

Though these Church schools were run by missionaries they did not grudge having in service even non-Christians. According to the twentieth report of the Church Missionary Society, out of about sixty persons whom they had to engage as teachers in the parish schools in Travancore and Cochin, quite half were Nairs. Persons appointed as inspectors of these elementary schools were also Nairs. To teach Sanskrit in the Seminary they had to engage a Warriar and a Nair. The Missionaries also engaged Brahmins and Nairs to help them in the translation of the Bible.⁴⁰

39 R.C. Manjumdar (Ed.), *The History and Culture of the Indian People British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance* Part I, (Bharariya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1970), p. 418.

40 Quoted in P. Cheriyan, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

The publication of Dr. Mitchell's Education Code in 1910 must be considered a land mark in the history of the outcastes, Christians and non-Christians. It laid down that no boy or girl shall ever be refused admission to any recognised school by reason of his or her caste or religion. It provided for good education to the low-caste children. The challenge was taken up by the Church. In two or three years new buildings and qualified teachers were provided, and outcaste children came to take their seats in all schools side by side with the children of other castes. This resulted in formal protests and even in local riots and serious persecution of the outcastes. But the government was sympathetic to their cause. The Dewan who was in touch with the C. M. S. in the North and the L. M. S. in the South, decided to allot seats in the new Sri Moolam Popular Assembly to representatives of depressed classes and selected, as their first member, a man belonging to Pallom Congregation.⁴¹ These events, led to some advancement in the social progress of the people and their gradual admittance to the public activities.

The London Missionary Society

This article on modernization would be incomplete if the role of the London Missionary Society, and the formation of the Church of South India is omitted. The first missionary to come to the South Travancore in the early nineteenth century was the Rev. William Tobias Ringeltaube under the guidance of the Board of Directors of the London Missionary Society. Rev. Ringeltaube came from Tranquebar in 1806 and built a Church at Mylady in 1809 with the consent of H. H. Lekṣmi Rāṇi. The L. M. S. too in its beginning received considerable help and financial aid from the Travancore rulers. It shows that the mission was whole-heartedly received and encouraged. "The benevolent Rani endowed the church with hundred acres of paddy land, of which the revenue is now devoted to the support of the Nagercoil Mission College."⁴²

It seems that the greatest contribution in the modernization of Kerala was made by Ringeltaube through his efforts in reforming the society. Ringeltaube took initiative for the introduction of western culture and education among the people in South Travancore through the schools established by him. He taught especially the poor irrespective

41 W.S. Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

42 S. Ramanath Aiyar, *Progressive Travancore* (The Anantha Rama Varma Press), Trivandrum, (n. d.), p. 80.

of their caste. He attacked the existing caste system and strove to secure equality. He was the missionary who laboured to give shelter to the depressed and the unprivileged. The activities started by him in the state touched off a revolution in all aspects of life the ultimate goal of which was social justice, liberty, and equality. "The seeds of reformation sown by him germinated and in course of time grew in bulk to give shade and shelter to the unprivileged."⁴³

In 1816 Mr. Mead succeeded Ringeltaube. He continued to educate the community. Government's help to the Church continued even during his time. "H. H. the Rani was pleased to place at his disposal a Sircar building with extensive premises and to make a grant of Rs. 5,000/- to enable him to buy more lands for mission purpose."⁴⁴ The support and the encouragement to the missionary from the royal family were noteworthy. In a short period in various stations in South Travancore gospel work was begun.⁴⁵ The missionaries concentrated not only in the spreading of the Gospel, but they took a leading part in establishing various types of educational institutions and in uplifting the backward communities. Moral training, education, teaching of various trades, and other charitable services of the missionaries made a major contribution in modernizing the people especially in the rural areas. Medical service to the community has been a lasting contribution of the missionaries. The medical institution at Neyyoor stands as a monument to the missionary work.

While the C. M. S. was contributing to the uplift of the social status of the people mainly in central and northern Travancore and Cochin, the L. M. S. was trying to place the South Travancoreans on a similar social footing. It was not easy for the Church to release the lower caste from the clutches of the dominant classes, as the society consisted of a number of slaves. Movements among the Nāḍārs and other backward classes started with the education provided by the L. M. S. missionaries against the rigid social customs. Among them the most important revolt was by the Nāḍārs for the right of women to cover

43 R. N. Yesudas, *A People's Revolt in Travancore A Backward Class Movement for Social Freedom*, (Kerala Historical Society), Trivandrum, 1975, p. 2.

44 S. Ramanatha Iyer, op. cit., p. 80.

45 In 1818 mission work began at Nagercoil; in 1827 at Neyyoor; in 1845 at Parassala; in 1837 at Trivandrum and in 1821 at Quilon.

their bosom. In 1862 a great mass movement of the slaves began in South Travancore. Armed mobs frequently attacked and burned chapels and houses and terrorised peaceful communities. These cases were brought forward by the missionaries to the political authorities and redress secured.

Socially, politically and religiously people began to think of their status in society. Christianity taught them equality in religious worship; socially, class superiority was questioned; and politically, people secured political consciousness through the education they received from the missionaries. In 1847, the L. M. S. missionaries in South Travancore memorialised to the Government praying that (i) traffic in slaves should be prohibited, (ii) it should be made a penal offence, (iii) slaves should be allowed to acquire and possess property like people of other classes and (iv) the perpetuation of slavery should be done away with.⁴⁶ But slavery was abolished only after the year 1855. These demands were met in subsequent years through the efforts of missionaries.

III

The Formation of the Church of South India (⁴⁷)

The formation of the Church of South India is the outcome of strong faith in the unity of Christian leaders for over a century. Though the Christian missionaries started as members of different denominations, the first missionaries sent by the C. M. S. and L. M. S. carried on their work with a view to uniting the Syrians and the Church Missionary Society. However, unity came with the setting up of a separate Church. This effort at unity was revived "from time to time during the last hundred years, and several attempts were made to bring together the different demoninations."⁴⁸ It was as the result of such a feeling of unity that the Edinburgh Conference of 1910 was convened.

46 W.S. Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

47 The Church of South India is an indigenous and autonomous church formed on 27th September, 1947, by the union of three churches in South India. The churches that entered this union were the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon (Anglican), the British Methodist Church and the South India United Church (Congregational and Presbyterian.)

48 Rajaiah D. Paul, *Ecumenism in Action: Church of South India An Assessment*, (The Christian Literature Society), Madras, 1972, p. 4.

In October 1901 a Federal Union took place between the Presbyterian Missions in South India, the United Free Church of Scotland Mission and the American Arcot Mission of the American Dutch Reformed Church. In 1904, the Congregational Churches of the American Missions in Madura and Jaffna, and the Congregational Churches of the London Mission in South Travancore came into a similar Federal Union. In 1908, these two bodies of the Presbyterian and congregational forms of Church came together and formed the South India United Church. In 1919 an informal meeting of Indian pastors of the Lutheran, Methodist, Anglican and South India United Churches, was convened by Bishop M. S. Azariah and Rev. V. Santiago, at Tranquebar. This Conference issued a declaration to work towards union. Thus the formation of the Church of South India is the result of the hard work of South Indian Church-leaders during the past several years.

The inauguration of the Church of South India on 27th of September 1947 in St. George's Cathedral, Madras, made history because of its great ecumenical significance. Though the idea of 'ecuminism' originated from the Edinburgh Conference of 1910, ecumenism has not been able to open an experimental laboratory towards unity. It was the C. S. I. which has organised and united the churches in South India towards opening a laboratory for the experiment of church unity. This is a major contribution to modernization. It has created an opportunity to iron out the differences separating the churches. The new experiment inspired the churches in North India that the Church of North India was inaugurated on the 28th, 29th and 30th of November, 1970.⁴⁹

A representative Central Body (with twelve members) for the selection of Bishops recommended names of prospective bishops, and their recommendations were confirmed by the Joint Committee at its twentieth session in June 1947. History was made as Bishop Jacob uttered the solemn declaration. "Dearly beloved brethren . . . I do hereby declare that these three churches, namely, the Madras, Travancore and Cochin, Tinnevely and Cornakal Dioceses of the Church of South India, Burma and Ceylon: the Madras, Madura, Malabar, Jaffna,

49 The Church of North India was formed by six churches, namely, the Council of the Baptist Churches in North India, the Church of the Brethren, the Disciples of Christ, the Church of India (part of the former C.I.P.B.C., the Methodist Church under the British and Australian Conferences and the United Church of North India).

Kannada, Telugu and Travancore Church Councils of the South India United Church; and the Methodist Church in South India comprising the Madras, Trichinopoly, Hyderabad and Mysore Districts; are become one CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA, and that those Bishops, Presbyters, Deacons and probationers who have assented to the Basis of Union and accepted the constitution of the Church of South India whose names are laid upon this Holy Table, are Bishops Presbyters and Deacons of this Church; in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.'⁵⁰

In speaking of the church, Bishop Lesslie Newbigin, one of the architects of the CSI, says that "we are making a double emphasis. On the one hand we are emphasising the universality of the church, its character as the true home for every human being whom God has created in his own image; on the other hand we are emphasising the unity of the church, its character as a closely knit society, a coherent structure which has its own distinctive character and is not easily disintegrated."⁵¹ There were fourteen Bishops chosen to head the respective regions.⁵²

One of the most striking features of Kerala people is that they have an initiative to invent new methods. It is no exaggeration that the Keralites have already made a number of experiments in the political laboratory of Kerala. More interesting than that is its peoples' initiative in making new experiments in church matters. The formation of the new United Church in South India is one of the most remarkable attempts associated with this modernization of Kerala.

50 Bengt Sundkler, *Church of South India: The Movement towards Union 1900-1947*, United Society for Christian Literature, (Lutterworth Press,) London, 1965, p. 342.

51 Lesslie Newbigin, "The Church of South India as the Household of God," *The South Indian Churchman Silver Jubilee Number 1972*, p. 34.

52 A. H. Legg, (ex-Congregationalist) to South Travancore; C. K. Jacob, (ex-Anglican) in Central Travancore; T. G. Stuart Smith (ex-Anglican) to North Travancore Cochin and Malabar Diocese of North Kerala; G. T. Gelwyn (ex-Anglican) in Tinnevely; J. E. L. Newbigin (ex-Presbyterian) to Madura and Ramanad; S. Kulandran (ex-Congregationalist) to Jaffna; E. B. Thorp (ex-Methodist) to Trichinopoly; A. M. Hollis (ex-Anglican) in Madras; P. Gurushanta (ex-Methodist) to Mysore; F. Whittaker (ex-Methodist) to Hyderabad (Medak); A. B. Elliott (ex-Anglican) in Dornakal; P. Mutyalu (ex-Anglican) in Kistna and Godavari; Bunyan Joseph (ex-Anglican) to Kurnool and Anantapur; H. Sumitra (ex-Congregationalist) to Cuddapah and Chittoor).

C. S. I. and Socio-economic equality

As the constitution of India looks forward to aiming at socio-economic equality, the C. S. I. too co-operates with the government to establish socio-economic equality among its church members irrespective of groups and factions. Since the missionaries started their activities in the state, people from various castes and classes came into the fold of the Church. One of the problems that the new Church faces is that it has to contribute considerably to bridge the gulf between the backward Christians and Syrian Christians.

The Church of South India has, however, done its utmost to uplift the backward communities. In the report to the 1950 Synod, Rev. Priestly said: "Through centres like Katpadi, it shows the way to economic uplift and at the annual Fair, attended by fifteen thousand people shows what can be accomplished in the improvement of cattle, poultry, goats, fruit, vegetables and food. Through citizenship conferences, such as that in Palamcottah, it points out the Christian way to build a nation. Through medical and evangelistic camps, such as that held in Mysore Diocese at a great pilgrim centre, it exercises its ministry of healing. Through Ashrams, such as those conducted by the Bethel sisters, it blesses little children and shows what womanhood can be." 53

Among the Women's Organizations and Associations, the Women's Fellowship is the most important. The members organised in groups hold weekly, fortnightly or monthly meetings, — some with the aim of religious programmes and others with social service and welfare programmes. Teaching illiterate women is one of the most widespread efforts of the Church. Considerable work has been done in this field to enable illiterate women to read and write. They are also helped to remove ignorance and superstition and indifference to right and healthy living. Lessons are also given in child care, elementary hygiene and the home treatment of common ailments. The common forms of service are visiting and helping the sick in their homes or in hospitals, making clothes for poor, taking part in adult literacy and night schools.

To render such service, they live in small groups, sharing the common life of an ashram or they may be stationed in a village area.

The C. S. I. has found ways and means to serve the community through Ashrams.⁵⁴ One such Ashram established in Tiruvalla has celebrated its fifty-first anniversary recently. Similar Ashrams are functioning at Trichur, Parakal, Kallada, Trivandrum and Mēlukāvu. They serve and modernise the community through Gospel work, women's work, education, small scale industries and caring of the destitute. Similarly, the deaf and dumb school which is functioning at Tiruvalla accommodate a number of Deaf and Dumb School trainees as inmates in various occupations. The institution prepares the infirm to earn their livelihood by the training that they receive in the school. Such services have greatly enriched the life of the Kerala society.

The Madhya Kerala Diocese has been attempting a few explorations in this direction that it has formed a medical society registered under charitable societies Act bringing most of the C. S. I. hospitals under the guidance of the Church. The Diocese has also created a new cadre of workers known as Medical sisters who are to serve as a link between the community, the church and the hospitals. It should be borne in mind that the introduction of allopathy is the contribution of the Christian missionaries. It began rendering its service through medical institutions. The medical services reach the community through their charitable institutions.

Thus, the C. S. I. plays a major role in the modernization of the community to meet the growing challenge of the time. These corporate activities of the C. S. I. as a whole paved the way for spiritualisation and modernization. While Mahathma Gandhi tried to spiritualise political life by his weapons like non-violence etc., the C. S. I. has tried their best to spiritualise the community through the Gospel work, socio-economic activities and medical services.

C. S. I. and Education

Higher education and English language have had a powerful impact on all aspects of human life and thought. A high idealism, critical thinking and a progressive outlook characterised the early graduates of the C. S. I. schools and colleges. An awareness of certain social evils and a desire for reform and social service were also fostered in these institutions, and these have contributed considerably to the progress of modern Kerala.

⁵⁴ The aims of Bethel Ashrams are simplicity, sincerity, and sacrifice. The Ashrams transcend customs, petty creeds, communities and communalism.

These C. S. I. educational institutions have made lasting and permanent contributions that a number of persons have distinguished themselves in the services of the state. At present several of the Metropolitans, who hold political responsibility in the state as well as in the international field are persons who at one time or other received their education in the C. S. I. institutions.

C. S. I. and Democracy

As the Church generally upholds democratic ideals, the C. S. I. too has adopted democratic principles in its administrative set up. The members including men and women play a major role in its administration. The Synod which is the pivot of the C. S. I. administration and the diocesan Councils in the local level have a large majority of its laymen and women membership. The moderator, the Deputy Moderator, the General Secretary and Treasurer both laymen, the bishops, all vote as one house which tend to lessen the chance of forming diocesan pressure groups. In short, the C. S. I. holds that full democratic rights ought to be preserved. Its committees at every level are manned largely by laymen. The C. S. I. Bishops are elected by diocesan councils and owe their appointment to the popular will. The Church has decentralised further its administration that one more step has been taken towards democratization. Rt. Rev. I.R.H. Gñānadāsan says: "Decentralisation without disintegration should be our aim. Evaluation and self-study of each congregation and institution will pave the way for a broad-based pattern of development and growth. The life and witness of the local unit will demonstrate the Christian counterpart of Panchayat Raj and Community Development.⁵⁵ Though the principle of democracy has been the ideal adopted to run the Church machinery, it has not been able to develop fully well. It has been pointed out that "if the churches' administration is concentrated in the hands of the few upper class men in the church, the others would continue to be the depressed classes."⁵⁶

The simple spiritual worship of the church unaccompanied by any elaborate ritual, its regular ministry of the word, its Sunday Schools, the work it carries among the female members of the Church, both for their own spiritual advancement and for enlisting their co-operation in

55 Rt. Rev. I.R.H. Gnanadasan, "Between the Silver and Golden Jubilees," *The Church of South India Silver Jubilee 1972*.

56 K.K. Chandy, The Syrian Problem in the Central Kerala Diocese, *The Guardian*, Vol. XLIV, No. 17, April 28, 1966, p. 3.

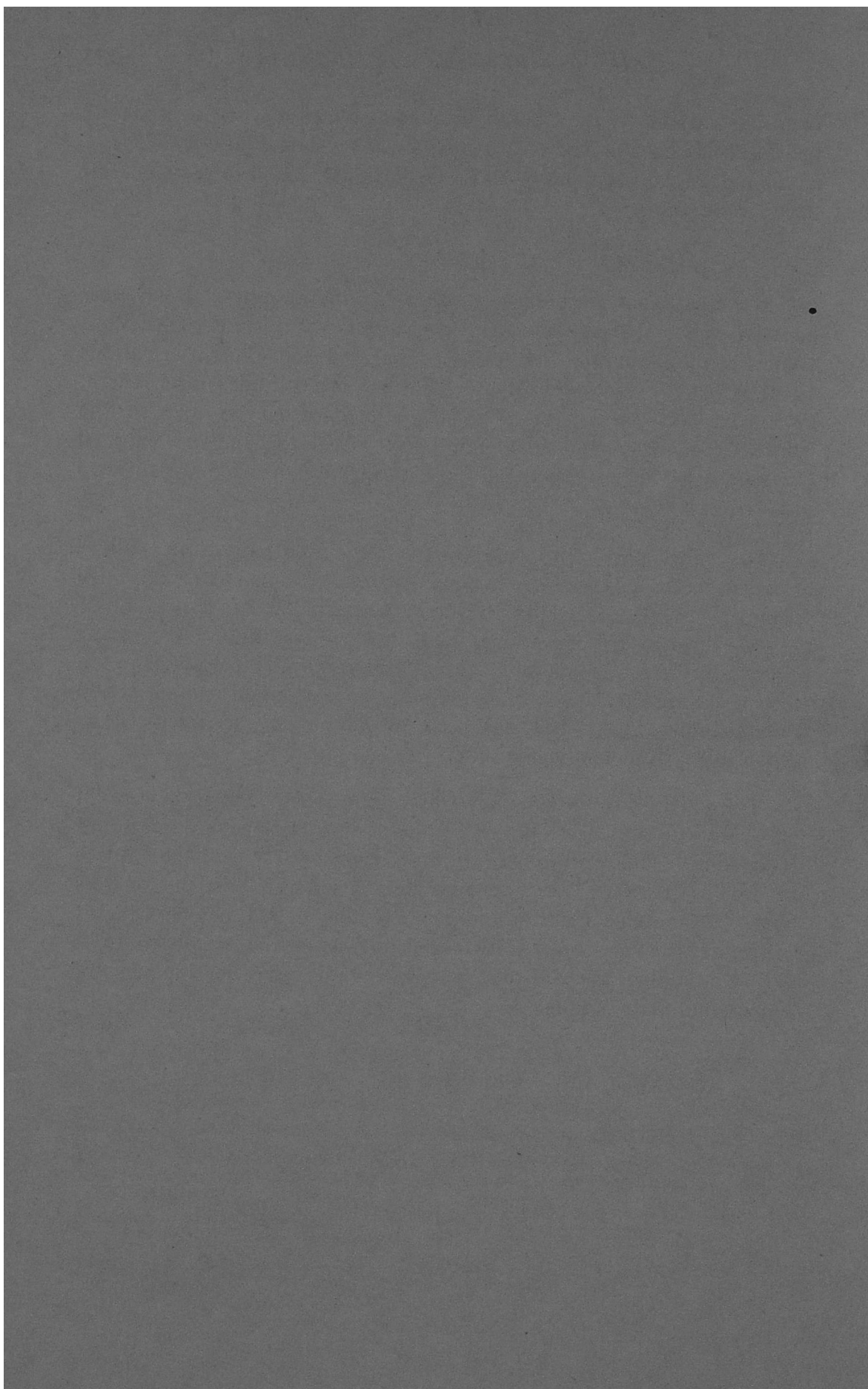
the usual activities of the Church, its evangelistic efforts, its work among the untouchables and degraded castes and the democratic tendency of its administrative machinery—all these have contributed to the modernization process.

C. S. I. and State Politics

• The church has not been very active in state politics. It has only been able to co-operate with the then rulers in the state. On several occasions, the Maharājas and Rāṇīs encouraged the Church in various ways, particularly with regard to finance. The attitude of the church, in the past has been a sort of grateful attachment to the rulers for the help received from the royal families. When the Indian National Congress grew up as a political force, the Church decided not to keep aloof from it.

No effort has been made by the C. S. I. to enter into politics as it has been indicated by its non-representation in the Legislative Chamber. While the church has been active in the modernization of the state through its educational and medical institutions, it has no proper political representation. Though the political machineries in the state have been strictly built on the basis of various communities and denominations, the C. S. I. has been nowhere since the emergence of responsible government in the state.

The activities in the state towards responsible government were in full swing with the development of the Indian National Congress and its activities. The relation between the Congress Party and the Church was so close that the Party was once nick-named as Christian Congress Party. The notable contribution made by the C. S. I. has been that it co-operated with the other Christian denominations in Kerala to do its part in attaining the self-rule and afterwards the development of democratic rule in Kerala.



SUCĪNDRAM SATYĀGRAHA

BY

P. RAMACHANDRAN

From the earliest times the temples in Travancore and other parts of Kēraḷa and their precincts were treated as sankātam grounds and were not open to the non-caste Hindus. Like all other temples the Śiva temple at Śucīndram was not accessible to all classes of Hindu society. Down to a very recent date, the agamic prescriptions and time-honoured customs were most meticulously observed in this temple. Even among the caste Hindus there were restrictions; some sects could not go to all parts of the temple. There were graded limits. The Vēḷḷaḷas, Nāirs, Ceṭṭis etc., were permitted to go into the Ardhamāṇḍapa and the Tirucurra Maṇḍapa and not into the Garbhagrha, the *sanctum sanctorum*.¹ The Vairāvis, Cāliyās, Potters and Oil-mongers were allowed to go up to the Dhvajastambha, but not beyond.² A Nambūdiri with the customary caste-mark and wearing clean clothes alone could go into the Garbhagrha and offer worship.³ The degraded classes namely Valaṅgai and Idaṅgai were strictly prohibited from directly making gifts to the temple.⁴ The avarṇas like the Iḷavās, Nādārs, Paṛiahs, Pulayās, and the Kuḷuvans who longed to worship in this temple had to stand even a furlong away from the outer wall limits.⁵ Any person who disobeyed these provisions was liable to be punished.⁶

1 Pillai, K. K. *The Śucindram Temple*, p. 265.

2 *Ibid.*

3 *The Regulations and Proclamations of Travancore*, Vol. IX, p. 4.

4 Raṅgacārya, V., *Inscriptions of the Madras Presidency*, Vol. III, p. 1705. See also *Epigraphy Reports—1921*, p. 104. . . . Very little is known about the origin of the Valaṅgai and Idaṅgai classes. According to Mr. Crole Kōmaṭi, toddy-drawer and Paṛiah etc., belong to the Valaṅgai classes and Kammāḷan, Chuckler etc., belong to the Idaṅgai classes. (*Chingleput District Manual*, pp. 33-34). The Idaṅgai classes consisted of ninety-eight sub-sects. Their duty was to carry the slippers and umbrellas of the sages of the temple. (*G. O. No. 961, Public*, dated 2-8-1913.)

5 *Report of the Temple Entry Committee*, p. 8.

6 Cover File, No. 1631 (English Records, Kēraḷa Government Secretariat, Trivandrum).

The depressed classes were not only prohibited to enter the Śucīndram temple but also to use the roads round it.⁷ They were debarred from walking through streets where the caste Hindus lived. Bamboo screens (Teru-maraccān) were put up at the entrance to all the main streets, proclaiming the prohibition of entry to the forbidden classes.⁸ They were not allowed to go in procession or drive a carriage or go with open umbrellas in streets.⁹ The road leading from the eastern side of the Śucīndram village to Kakkāḍ¹⁰ covering a distance of about a furlong and a half was maintained out of public funds for public benefit. Even then it was not accessible to the Paṛiahs of Kakkāḍ on account of the proximity to the temple.¹¹ The Paṛiahs of Kakkāḍ were not even permitted to drive their bullock-carts through this road. If they wanted to do so, they had to leave their carts in the hands of the caste Hindu drivers for driving on a payment of four cash.¹² Notwithstanding this, they were subjected to various petty annoyance such as throwing of stones and insulting remarks by the Śūdras. One Yēśu Ratnam, a salvationist was assaulted at Śucīndram by the Śūdras for having passed along a path intended only for caste Hindu.¹³ An English man and his wife who were going along the Kakkāḍ road were seriously assaulted by the inhabitants of Śucīndram.¹⁴ Another incident¹⁵ like

7 *Travancore Legislative Council Proceedings*, Vol. X, p. 249.

8 Sivan Piḷḷai, S. "Kumarimavattatil Dēsiya Elucci", *S.T. Hindu College Magazine*, Vol. XXI, p. 34.

9 Speech of Paul Dānīel, *Travancore Legislative Council Proceedings*, Vol. VIII, p. 726.

10 Nṛipaṣēkharavaṇanallūr was the early name of Kakkāḍ. (Piḷḷai, K. K., *op. cit.*, p. 292).

11 Speech of Sivathāṇu Piḷḷai, *Travancore Legislative Council Proceedings*, Vol. VIII, p. 679.

12 *Ibid.*

13 Cover File, No. 1627, dated 3-1-1893 (English Records, Kēraḷa Government Secretariat, Trivandrum).

14 Speech of M. Subramoniya Piḷḷai, *Travancore Legislative Council Proceedings*, Vol. VIII, p. 677.

15 "The prosecutor, an adjutant in the Salvation Army, who was going on horse-back followed by a number of Paṛiahs on foot at 10 O' clock on the night of 27th August last from one Paracheri (Kanden Kulicheri) to another (Elippayadicheri), entered on his way into a street in Cheramadam village inhabited wholly by Vellalars. Just, then, one of the villagers of that street came forward said to him, 'You should not go by this way'. The complainant, without minding the objection, passed through the street, when seven or eight more of the Vellalar of the street protested against him doing so. He proceeded further and, on coming to the end of the street, rode into the paddy fields when a crowd of people ran up to him, and, it is alleged, assaulted him by stopping his horse and threatening to beat him and his horse with a stick." (*Ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 628.)

this took place in Cīramadam, a village very near to Śucīndram. There were instances when untouchables like the Paṛiahs were persuaded to transgress the pollution limits deliberately so that pseudonamous cases could be filed against them.¹⁶ Cases of pollution of pagodas were decided by the Huzur and if the avarṇas were unable to pay the sum required for *śudhikalaśham* (purification ceremony), some other punishments followed.¹⁷

It was certainly an anomaly and a negation of civil liberty to deny the avarṇas the right to walk along the streets used by the caste Hindus who were held responsible for the existence of these evil customs such as untouchability and unapproachability among the Hindus.¹⁸ The liberal-minded reformers felt that the total exclusion of avarṇas from the temple was a blot on Hinduism, and its early removal was indispensable.¹⁹ Also they tried to convince the people in general that the denial of elementary rights of citizenship to them amounted to a great social injustice. They advocated temple entry as one of the means of removing untouchability.²⁰ It was brought up before the Assembly at its twelfth Session by Kumāran Āśān who drew the attention of the government to this evil and referred to roads in Śucīndram and demanded the removal of the prohibition boards (*tīṇḍal palakās*) placed near this temple.²¹ As early as 1916, when some members of the Assembly brought in a resolution asking for all temples being thrown open to all classes, they were not permitted to open the issue of temple entry and allied topics. Kumaran Āśān animadverted on the existence of notice boards near certain temples prohibiting the entry of non-caste Hindus beyond certain limits in the approach roads leading to these temples and he criticised the government on that score. He said "There were certain public roads and streets to which they were not admitted. Certain places were inaccessible to them on account of proximity of temples. But there was no uniform principle adopted in those cases.

16 Cover File, No. 1627, Letter dated 27-12-1892 (English Records, Kēraja Secretariat, Trivandrum.)

17 Cover File, No. 15855, Letter dated 21-12-1849 (English Records, Kēraja Secretariat, Trivandrum.)

18 Speech of K. N. Kēsavan Nambūdrīpāḍ, *Proceedings of the Śrī Chitra State Council*, Vol. IX, p. 30.

19 S. R., Venkatarāman, "The All-India Harijan Sēvak Sang" *The Indian Review*, July-1937, p. 426. See also B. Natesan, "Mahatma Gandhi and Untouchability," *The Indian Review*, Vol. XXXIV, p. 182).

20 Agarwal, C. B., *The Harijans in Rebellion*, pp. 56-57

21 *Proceedings of the Śrī Mūlam Popular Assembly*, Travancore 11th to the 15th Sessions, 1916, p. 120.

The Īlavās could not go up to the outer wall of the Śucīndram temple during the Utsavam period, though they could do so at other times. During certain festive occasions whole villages were closed against the low caste people in Nanjinad. The prohibition would seem all the more serious when it was known that even scavengers were excluded and that sanitation was not attended to during those periods.²² The inhabitants of Nāncinād had been for a long time petitioning the government and reiterating the same prayer in various ways for the opening the streets of Śucīndram irrespective of caste or creed.²³ The government ignored their supplications.

The people of this locality were looking up to the government and the caste Hindus for a long time to remove the nefarious custom and liberate them from the tyranny of orthodox opinion, but it was all in vain.²⁴ It is on account of this intolerable situation that the Nādārs, Īlavās and other depressed classes resorted to satyāgraha at Śucīndram roads. Their leaders found that any amount of representation, appeals etc., would not move the government and a few caste Hindus and they began to assert their birth-right by offering a satyāgraha.

During this time the satyāgraha at Vaikkam created a stir all over the state. One of the highlights of this satyāgraha was the Savarṇa Hindu Jātha from Vaikkam to Trivaṇḍrum under the supreme command of Mannath Padmanābha Piḷḷai. A similar procession of about eighty caste Hindus including Brāhmins, Vellālas, and Nāirs marched in military order from Kōṭṭiār to Trivandrum under the leadership of Dr. M. E. Nāiḍu.²⁵ Both met at Trivandrum and a memorial was submitted to the Regent Sētu Lakṣmi Bāi on 12 November 1924.²⁶ It was announced later by the Mahārāṇi that the approach roads adjacent to the Vaikkam temple were formally opened to all Hindus, irrespective of caste. But this concession was not extended to the avarṇās in the case of other temples in Travancore. Hence movements for getting the approach roads opened to the avarṇās were organised in such centres as Ambalapūḷa, Tiruvārpu and Śucīndram.

22 *Ibid.*, for details see, Prof. T. K. Ravindran *Vaikkam Satyagraha and Gandhi* pp. 41-42.

23 *Travancore Legislative Council Proceedings*, Vol. VIII, p. 670.

24 Cover File, No. 3679, Letter dated 25-11-1887 from T. Rāma Rao, Dewān of Travancore to Periyavinayagom Mārkaṇḍen of Aḷakiapāṇḍipuram Piḍagai (English Records, Kēraja Government Secretariat, Trivandrum).

25 Prof. T. K. Ravindran, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

26 Note File of the Vaikkam Satyāgraha No. 605, Vol. 1, p. 4. (English Records, Kēraja Government Secretariat, Trivandrum).

At a special meeting held at M. E. Nāiḍu's residence at Kōṭṭār on 19-1-1926, it was resolved to begin the temple-road entry satyāgraha at Śucīndram 19-2-1926.²⁷ A working committee with M. Subramoniya Piḷḷai as president was formed for this purpose. M. E. Nāiḍu, H. Perumāḷ Paṇikar, P. C. Thānumalaya Perumāḷ and Gandhidās were elected secretary, treasurer, publicity officer and captain respectively. With the display of huge posters, distribution of leaflets and holding of meetings, M. E. Nāiḍu forced the urgency of the reform on the attention of every individual.

In accordance with the programme already chalked out, the satyāgraha started at day-break on 19-2-1926. The volunteers went in procession in large numbers with flags, singing song from their Āśramam (Camp) at Kōṭṭār to Śucīndram and posted five volunteers there under the leadership of their captain C. Muthuswamy alias Gāndhidās.²⁸ The five volunteers consisted of two Paṇiahās, one Brāhmin, one Iḷavā and Vēḷḷāla. They were stopped by Anti-satyāgrahis i.e., some youngsters of the place headed by one S. K. Vēlayudhan Piḷḷai, a merchant of Śucīndram saying that avarṇas should not enter the streets surrounding the temple.²⁹ The Satyāgrahis sat on the road where they were obstructed, while the anti-satyāgrahis also did so. At twelve noon another party of five volunteers was posted there relieving the first party. They were also at the spot till five P.M. M. E. Nāiḍu visited the spot to encourage the satyāgrahis at noon. It was announced by the satyāgraha captain C. Muthuswamy that the Satyāgraha would be started in the Sannadhī street i.e., on the eastern road of the temple on the following days.

Immediately after the announcement of the captain, the anti-satyāgrahis took all precautions to foil the attempt of the satyāgrahis. Barricades were put up on the roads leading to the temple by the temple authorities and the villagers. Prohibitory orders had been served on the leaders by the District Magistrate. Even then an enthusiastic band of volunteers led by captain Muthuswamy marched from the camp towards the temple precincts on 30-1-1926.³⁰ E. V. Ramaswamy

27 No. D. Dis. 1475 (Judicial) Letter dated 8-6-1101 M.E/21-1-1926 from M. E. Nāiḍu to the Dewān of Travancore.

28 *Ibid.*, Letter dated 16-6-1101 M.E/19-2-1926 from the Inspector of police, Edalākkudi to the Commissioner of Police.

29 *Ibid.*

30 *Ibid.*, Letter dated 30-1-1926 from the Inspector of Police, Edalākkudi to the Commissioner of Police.

Nāicker, the renowned social reformer of Tamil Nāḍu also participated in the satyāgraha.³¹ It was an awe-inspiring and touching scene when the procession reached the Sannadhi street. As soon as the satyāgrahis approached the barricades, a large number of anti-satyāgrahis stopped them. When captain Muthuswamy advanced further in the company of another volunteer, they were stopped by the anti-satyāgrahis. Before night fall, they closed the satyāgraha for the day and there was a meeting of volunteers in which M. Śivathāṇu Piḷḷai presided. M. E. Nāidu, E. V. Ramaswamy Nāicker and Perumāḷ Paṇikar of Kōṭṭār spoke on temple entry and satyāgraha campaign in Travancore. It was announced in the meeting that next day being Sunday there would not be regular satyāgraha, but a procession of the volunteers would be held.

The agitation gradually enlisted the sympathy of a few caste Hindus also, but the majority of the latter continued to be hostile to the movement. Even then the agitation gathered momentum. On 11 February 1926 a party of fifteen volunteers headed by Gōvindarāja Nāidu, brother of M. E. Nāidu arrived at Śucīndram.³² He went to the northern road with a flag and said to the anti-satyāgrahis that his party came prepared to enter the streets by force and requested them to intimate the matter to their leaders too. Hence the caste Hindus, at Śucīndram rang the bell of Pērambalam and gave warning to the villagers.³³ At twelve noon the satyāgraha captain Muthuswamy and Cinnatampi Sāmbān of Kakkāḍ pushed their way up against anti-satyāgrahis. In the tussle that followed their clothes were torn. Captain Muthuswamy and Cinnatampi Sāmbān removed their khadhar coats and caps and were ready to fight. The police stood opposite to them and prevented their further progress. There was thus a dead-lock for sometime. This created a great stir in the village. The news spread like wild fire and there was large influx of volunteers from Kākkumūr, Kuṛicci, Parakkai, Maruṅgūr, Tamarakuḷam, Osraviḷai, Eraviputūr and Tērūr.³⁴ They took their position behind the satyāgrahis. The anti-satyāgrahis were on their alert to oppose satyāgrahis from forcible entry into the streets. Captain Muthuswamy tried to go forward with Cinnatampi Sāmbān

31 *Ibid.*

32 *Ibid.*, Letter dated 11-2-1926 from the Inspector of Police, Edalākkūḍi to the Commissioner of Police.

33 *Ibid.*, Copy of report dated 11-2-1926 received from the Inspector of Police, Edalākkūḍi.

34 *Ibid.*, Letter dated 11-2-1926 from T. Kumāran Tampi, Inspector of Police, Edalākkūḍi Station to the Commissioner of Police.

through the bamboo, barricade with the pillar of the prohibition board, towards the open ground left on both sides of the said road, where also they were attacked by the caste Hindus. Then Muthuswamy went towards one Cēllam Piḷḷai, who was an anti-satyāgrahi and knocked him on the belly with his head. Cēllam Piḷḷai and Paṟakkai P. Ārumugam Piḷḷai and others pushed Muthuswamy and Cinnatampi Sāmbān away and struck them on their back. The parties were warned by the police against unlawful action. At 6 p. m. the parties left the place and the crowd also dispersed.

The situation at Śucīndram was fast deteriorating day by day. There was some trouble for a few days caused by the satyāgrahis who tried to advance through the roads and this naturally led to assaults and counter-assaults. There were intermittent clashes and wanton assaults in and around Śucīndram. Both men and women belonging to the untouchables were insulted and beaten by the caste Hindus. Many were injured and some were arrested by police on the ground of causing breach of peace. It is on record that the caste Hindus assaulted thirteen boys belonging to the depreseed classes as they were returning to their village of Kakkāḍ after enjoying a celebration in the Mission School, Nāgerkoil.³⁵ This was purposely done at the instigation of one Kaḍukkarai Kumaraswamy Piḷḷai and Śucīndram Thāṇumālaya Perumaḷ Piḷḷai. G. Dēvasahāyam, a native of Kakkāḍ complained about this matter to the police. Infuriated at this, Thāṇumalayaperumaḷ threatened the destruction of the viliage of Kakkāḍ.³⁶ The ring leaders who were primarily responsible for this occurence were warned by the police. The government took action prohibiting M. E. Nāiḍu from making public speeches or taking part in public meetings or entering specified areas.³⁷

The din and the noise of the Śucīndram satyāgraha reached the ears of Mahātma Gāndhi. He carried on "anxious negotiations" with the government authorities in Travancore regarding the roads at Śucīndram.³⁸ It was pointed out to Gāndhi that the Travancore Dēvasvam Commissioner, had, in consultation with the Diwan, Mr. Watts, really contemplated the possibility of opening the roads near Śucīndram

35 *Travancore Legislative Council Proceedings*, Vol. IX, p. 681.

36 No. D. Dis. 1475 (Judicial) Telegram dated 13-2-1926 from G. Dēvasahāyam to the Dewan of Travancore.

37 *Travancore Legislative Council Proceedings*, Vol. VII, pp. 314-315.

38 Mēnon, P. K. K., *Freedom Movement in Kēraḷa*, Vol. II, p. 300.

temple to untouchables.³⁹ As requested by Gāndhi, on 27 February 1929 at 10. a.m., a party of satyāgraha volunteers, twenty-four in number visited the two places of Satyāgraha in Śucīndram and said that they were not prepared to go into the streets until the obstructionists withdraw their objection. They also decided to stop satyāgraha in response to a communication from C. K. Paramēswaram Piḷḷai, President of the Kēraḷa Harijan Sēvak Sangh who wrote that the police had come to an agreement with the anti-satyāgrahis and roads would be thrown open.⁴⁰

As a result of the Vaikkam Settlement in 1926, the government agreed to open the roads at Śucīndram to untouchables within a month after stopping the satyāgraha. But the promise was not kept on account of the opposition from the orthodox Hindus. The sympathy of the government was on the side of the anti-satyāgrahis. Though the satyāgraha was stopped, the roads continued to remain closed and the appeals made at various public meetings fell on deaf ears. It was therefore decided on 12 May 1936 to resume the satyāgraha movement at Śucīndram.⁴¹ Among the participants there were some enlightened caste Hindus. Mr. Gāndhi Rāman Piḷḷai of Eraviputūr, who already participated in the first satyāgraha was the leader of this campaign. He was arrested along with other satyāgrahis while he tried to cross the streets at Śucīndram. He was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for a year.⁴² On appeal, the High Court acquitted the accused and directed that the streets of Śucīndram should be accessible to all irrespective of caste or creed, as a matter of right. After the release of satyāgrahis, they walked along the streets concerned without obstruction for nearly a week. But Mr. Pitchu Iyengār, District Superintendent of Police, brought down a force of Reserve Police to prevent the untouchables from entering the streets during the festival period.⁴³ Besides, the satyāgrahis were not allowed to hold public meetings. The meeting conducted under the leadership of Messers. M. E. Nāidu, M. Śivathānu Piḷḷai, and Sheik Tampi Pāvalar on the front of the Municipal Office, Nāgerkōvil, was dispersed by the Reserve Police brought from Trivandrum.⁴⁴ Alarm and terror spread in every direction. The outbreak

39 *Ibid.*, p. 299.

40 Mahādēv Dēsai, *The Epic of Travancore*, pp. 22-23.

41 Mēnon, P. K. K., *op. cit.*, p. 301.

42 *Ibid.*

43 *Ibid.*

44 *Travancore Popular Assembly Proceedings*, Vol. XX, pp. 739-40.

was too serious at Eraccakuḷam,⁴⁵ Narikkuḷamcēri and Eḷaṅgadai. At Narikkuḷam cēri near Cape Comorin the depressed classes were not allowed to draw water from the well and some of them were seriously assaulted.⁴⁶ A *bhajan* party of Eḷaṅgadai within Nāgerkōvil town was obstructed by Christians.⁴⁷ The agitation lasted for a number of days and then it fizzled out.⁴⁸

The government of Travancore soon realised that sustained efforts should be taken to bring about the desired changes in the status of depressed classes in Hindu society. On 8 November 1932 the government appointed a commission composed of caste Hindus and Harijan leaders to enquire into and report on the question of temple entry.⁴⁹ For about fourteen months this commission carried on its work and collected evidence. On 11 January 1934 it published a report. The report stated that from the oral evidence secured by the commissioners, there was a strong feeling among caste Hindus in favour of temple entry rights being given to the Harijans but there was also some opposition.

After the report was published the Travancore government did not take immediate action on account of the conflicting viewpoints expressed in it and the necessity for a rapprochement to be effected among them. But the reformers did not remain quiet. As a next step they arranged for a referendum to be taken in the state. The result of it showed that the majority of the upper class Hindus had no objection to the Harijans being allowed into the temples. The thorny question was finally settled by the historic Temple Entry Proclamation issued by Śrī Chitra Tirunāl Mahārāja on 12 November 1936⁵⁰ and thus a great injustice was at last set right.

45 *Report of the Kēraḷa Provincial Harijan Sēvak Sangh.*, Letter dated 25-12-1934 from M. E. Nāidu to C. K. Paramēswaran Piḷḷai.

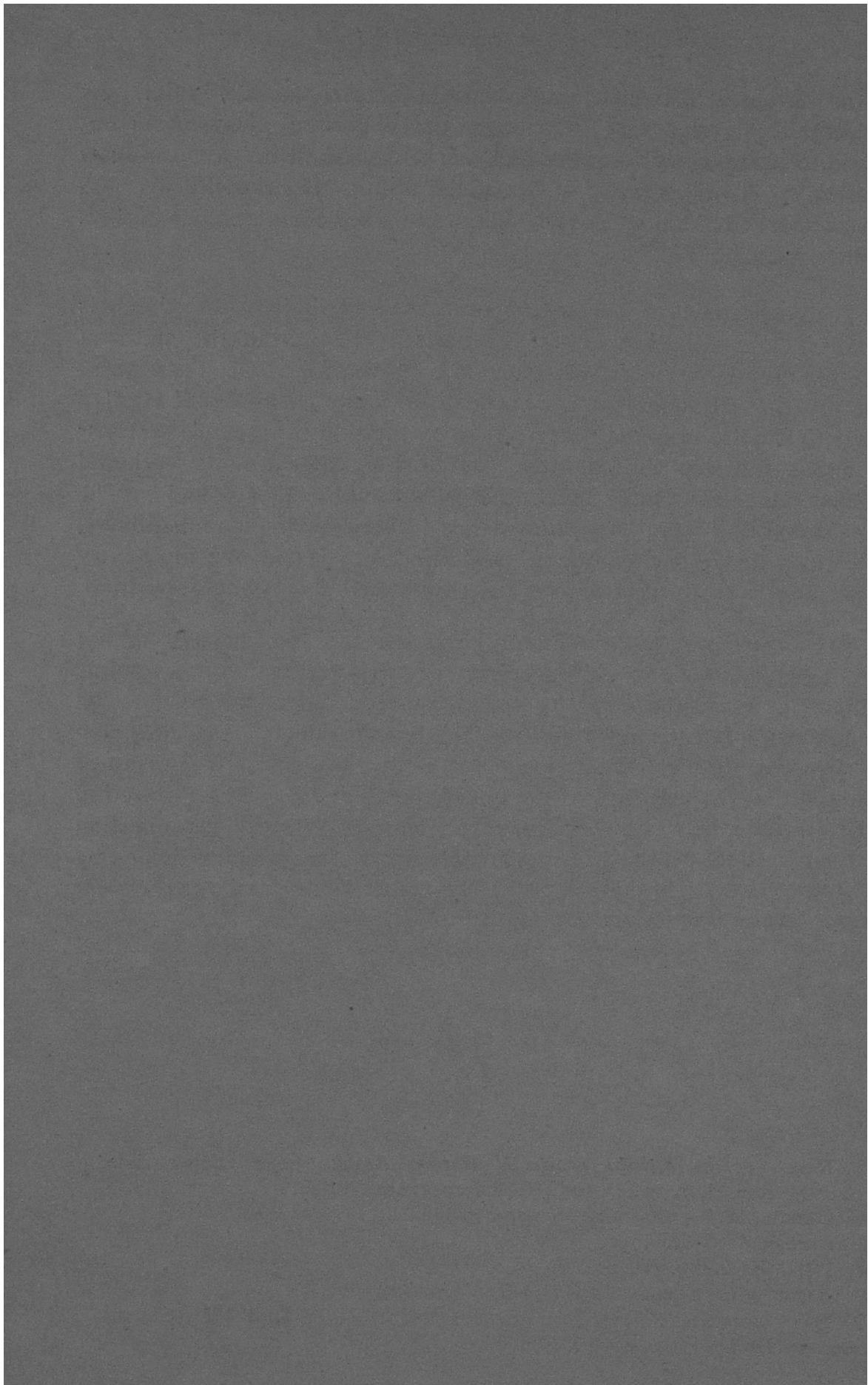
46 Gāndhi, M. K., *Christian Missions*, p. 118.

47 *Harijan*, 15-5-1937.

48 Piḷḷai, K. K., *op. cit.*, p. 266.

49 *Report of the Temple Entry Enquiry Committee*, p. 1.

50 *The Travancore Government Gazette*, dated 24-11-1936, p. 335. See also *Travancore Administration Report*, 1936-37, p. 7.



KULASEKHARA VARMAN

The Royal Dramatist of Kerala

BY
N. P. UNNI

I

THE BACKGROUND

Kerala is traditionally believed to extend from Gokarna in the North to Kanyākumārī (Cape Comorin) in the South. The Western Ghats mark its boundary on the East and the Arabian sea on the West. Mention is made of this region in the South-West of India in ancient Sanskrit and Pali literatures. Kātyāyana and Patañjali,¹ the ancient grammarians refer to the land in their works. Purāṇas like the *Vāyu*, the *Matsya*, the *Mārkaṇḍēya* and the *Brahmāṇḍa* contain references to it and the last mentioned Purāṇa describes how Paraśurāma reclaimed the land from the Western sea. The *Mahābhārata*, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Harivaṃśa* speak of this country and refer to its original inhabitants.

Nothing definite can be said as to when Sanskrit was introduced in Kerala, for the question is naturally bound up with the advent of Āryans in the South. The question of the Āryan movement towards the South is a much debated one. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri holds that the Āryans moved into the South somewhere about 1000 B. C.² William Logan suggests that the Vedic Brahmins must have arrived in Malabar in the early years of the 8th century A. D.³ L. A. Krishna Iyer observes that the Nampūtiris settled in Kerala by

1 *Mahābhāṣya* IV-1-175. B. N. Puri, *India in the time of Patañjali* (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay), p. 85.

2 K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *A History of South India*, (Oxford University Press, Madras, 1958), p. 67.

3 William Logan, *Malabar* Vol. I (Government of Madras, Madras, 1951), p. 275.

about 3rd century A. D.,⁴ while K. P. Padmanabha Menon concludes that the Āryans could not have settled earlier than the 1st century A.D.⁵ Justice Narayanan Marar holds that the ancestors of the present Nampūtiris might have come and settled in Malabar between the 1st and 4th centuries of the Christian Era.⁶ Taking all such views expressed in the matter into account scholars for practical purposes generally assume the position that the Āryans have settled in Kerala in the early centuries of the Christian Era.

The Āryanisation of the land may be seen reflected in the various legends surrounding Paraśurāma. Popular traditions preserved in works like *Kēraḷōtpatti* in Malayalam and *Kēraḷamāhātmya* in Sanskrit credit Paraśurama with the reclamation of the land from the sea as well as its colonisation by importing Brahmins from Abikṣētra. The Mahratta account also attributes the inhabitation of Kerala with Brahmins to Paraśurāma who is supposed to have turned fishermen into Brahmins.⁷ Again the *Sthalamāhātmya* of Banavasi contains the Tuluva tradition regarding the reclamation of the land by Paraśurāma.⁸ Such tradition, however, warrants the conclusion that Paraśurāma might have been the leader of the first batch of Āryan settlers in Kerala.

These Āryan colonisers, though numerically small were very shrewd people. They adopted the wise policy of identifying themselves with the local populace by following many of their customs and manners. Soon they gained a foothold in the land and in course of time these Nampūtiri Brahmins became the ruling class.

Both the natives and the immigrants gained by their mutual contact. While the former saw their own speech and customs enriched by the contact of the Northern culture, the latter learned the language of the people of the South in addition to cultivating their own Sanskrit idiom.⁹ These Āryans made it a point to share the wisdom contained in Sanskrit with the natives rather than forcing it on them. "After

4 L. A. Krishna Iyer, *Kerala and Her People*, (Educational Supplies Depot, Palghat, 1961), p. 70.

5 K. P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala* Vol. I, (Government Press, Ernakulam, 1924), p. 76.

6 Quoted by K. P. Padmanabha Menon, *Ibid.*, p. 70.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 51.

8 M. R. Balakrishna Warriar in 'Kerala and Paraśurāma tradition', *Kerala Studies* (Ed. Dr. P. K. Narayana Pillai, Trivandrum, 1955), p. 18.

Logan, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

9 K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

having introduced Brahminical institutions, laws, and religion, especially along the two long coasts of sea they (the Āryans) did not pretend to impose their language upon the much more numerous inhabitants of the Deccan, but they followed the wiser policy of adopting themselves the language of the aboriginal people and of conveying through its medium their knowledge and instruction to the minds of the uncivilized tribes." ¹⁰ This synthesis of the two cultures had its far reaching effect in all spheres of life including that of language. Sanskrit and Malayalam representing two different linguistic families, the Indo-European and the Dravidian, were fused together, the result being the evolution of the lively medium of expression styled Maṇipravāla. ¹¹

The social conditions also helped the spread of Sanskrit in Kerala to a large extent. The rule was that only the eldest member of a Nampūtiri family should marry from his own caste. The younger members were allowed to enter into matrimonial alliance with the women from among Kṣatriyas, Nairs, Ambalavāsis, etc. This kind of mixing up with the natives helped the Nampūtiris to earn an influential position in society. ¹² Free from the household duties this leisured class of intellectuals diverted their attention to the field of education and set up institutions all over the land. These institutions though primarily intended for the benefit of Nampūtiri children, soon opened their portals to the natives also who evinced keen interest in acquiring a superior wisdom hitherto unknown to them.

The educational system that was evolved was rigorous and it consisted of an intensive instruction spread over a long period. At about the age of 7 or 8 a Nampūtiri boy is initiated and sent to a teacher at his residence. By the time of initiation, the boy has already learned the alphabet and a few lessons consisting of grammar, arithmetic and poetry. At the hands of the teacher he learns one of the Vedas thoroughly and undergoes Samāvarttana. After that he goes to some temple where he reflects on what he has learned. After reflection he takes up the study of Śāstras for about twelve years.

10 Max Muller, quoted by Dr. Caldwell, *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages* (University of Madras, Madras, 1961), p. 111n.

11 *Lilātilakam* I-1 (Ed. Elankulam P.N. Kunjan Pillai, National Book Stall, Kottayam, 1958).

12 Ullūr S. Parameswara Iyer, *KSC*, I, p. 37.

There were 18 universities called Sabhāmaṭhas in ancient Kerala. They were divided into three categories. In the first category called Karmisabhāmaṭha, the Vedas were taught, while in the second called Śāstrasabhāmaṭha instruction was given in various śāstras. Advaita philosophy was propagated in the last category called Sannyāsisabhāmaṭha, which probably took shape only after the emergence of the great philosopher Śaṅkara.

Thus in the distant past Kerala had an educational system of considerable merit. Temples which came under the Āryan sway functioned as centres of educational and cultural activities. Since temples were frequented by the masses, they afforded ideal places to impart instruction. In many of these temples provision was made for the study of the Vedas and the Śāstras. For instance king Karunantaṭakkan of the 9th century A. D., had offered scholarships numbering 95 (45, 36 and 14 respectively for Bhaviṣyacaraṇa, (?) Taittirīya and Talavakāracaraṇa) and land was earmarked for the purpose.¹³ In many of the major temples in Kerala arrangements were made for the exposition of the *Mahābhārata*, the *Rāmayaṇa* and the *Śrīmadbhāgavata*. These temple universities helped communities other than Brahmins also to taste the fruit of Āryan wisdom.

The existence of a number of principalities has also helped the propagation of Sanskrit to a considerable extent. Different royal families like the Sāmūtiri, Kolattiri or the Mūṣakavamśa, Cochin, the Veṇād, etc., lavished patronage on poets.¹⁴ Many a fortunate poet enjoyed the patronage of two or more kings at the same time. Regional differences never prevented a poet from getting his due from his patrons. Kerala kings attracted even scholars from outside Kerala and patronised them. Though there were several royal families ruling the different parts of Kerala, the cultural unity of the land was kept in tact since Sanskrit provided the golden thread binding together the component parts.

Bhavadāsa mentioned in the *Śloka-vārttika* of Kumārilabhaṭṭa was perhaps the earliest known Sanskrit scholar to emerge from Kerala.¹⁵

13 *Ibid.*, p. 43.

14 See Dr. K. Kunjunni Raja, *Contribution of Kerala to Sanskrit Literature*, (University of Madras, Madras, 1958) for details.

15 *Mīmāṃsā in Kerala*, Dr. P. K. Narayana Pillai (Studies in Kerala Sanskrit, No. 1, Trivandrum), p. 5.

Most probably he belonged to the 2nd century A. D. While his view was vehemently criticised by Kumārila it found appreciation and sustenance at the hands of Prabhākara Guru the Mīmāṃsaka from Kerala.

Vararuci, an astrologer who was different from the famous author of *vārttikas* and was supposed to have lived about 4th century A. D., wrote *Āśaucāṣṭakam* and *Vararucikeralam* on Astrology.¹⁶

The next important writer emerging from Kerala was Prabhākara Guru who established a system of his own in the *Pūrvamīmāṃsā*. A disciple of Kumārilaḥṭṭa, Prabhākara inflicted a heavy blow on Buddhism in Kerala. His view was generally known as 'Gurumata' and he lived most probably between 650-700 A. D.

Daṇḍin in his *Avantisundarikathā* has mentioned three reputed scholars from Kerala, viz., Bhavarāta, Māṭṛdatta and Rāmaśarmā. Bhavarāta who commented on the *Kalpasūtra* was the father of Māṭṛdatta an accomplished scholar in Vedic as well as classical literature. Rāmaśarmā must have been a great scholar since he seems to have been quoted by Bhāmaha the famous rhetorician in his *Kāvyaḷaṅkāra*.¹⁷

However it was Śaṅkara the great philosopher who earned a prominent place for Kerala in the intellectual map of India. Born in a Nampūtiri family at Kālaḍy in Kerala, Śaṅkara crossed the Vindhya ranges and met the scholastic teachers of the age who were mostly Mīmāṃsakas and Buddhists. Within the short span of 30 and odd years he travelled throughout India and organised monasteries in the four quarters of India, at Badri in the North, at Puri in the East, at Dvārakā in the West and at Śṛṅgeri in the South. These monasteries not only propagated his views but kept up the orthodoxy of his philosophy. He commented on the Prasthānatraya (the three bases of Vedānta, viz. *Upaniṣads*, *Brahmasūtras* and the *Gītā*) displaying such subtlety and reasoning which have been rarely surpassed. He is also credited with numerous stōtras like *Saundaryalaharī* and *Śivānandalaharī* replete with literary beauty. Padmapādācārya a disciple of Śaṅkara is also held by some to be a Nampūtiri Brahmin of Kerala.

Following Śaṅkara came the first notable literary figure from this region. He was Śaktibhadra probably the first dramatist from Kerala. He has proudly remarked in the prologue of his work that he was the

16 Ulloor S. Parameswara Iyer, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 88.

first to compose a full-fledged drama in South India. His *Āścarya-cūḍāmaṇi* dealt with the *Rāmāyaṇa* story with an agreeable twist in the plot. It was unique in that it was perhaps the only Sanskrit drama delineating wonder as the principal sentiment, a welcome deviation from the traditional line. He also composed *Unmādavāsavadattā* dealing with the famous Udayana episode. Śaktibhadra is believed to be a Brahmin scholar who flourished in Central Travancore.

Though the number of original dramas produced in Kerala was very meagre before the 10th century A. D., the dramatic art flourished well in those days. Besides staging earlier dramas like *Śākuntala* as in other parts of India, Kerala went a step further in the field and formulated a peculiar mode of staging them.¹⁸ Since Sanskrit was appreciated and understood only by a limited class of people belonging to the upper strata of society it was thought desirable to introduce the local language Malayalam in this theatrical form. This innovation made Sanskrit drama interesting to the masses also.

It was against the background set out above that Kulaśekhara Varman made his appearance in the field of Sanskrit in Kerala. He wrote his dramas to suit the flourishing stage and to supply the demand for new dramas. By his time most of the important dramas in Sanskrit had already been presented time and again on the stage and new dramas were in demand. This gave a gifted dramatist like Kulaśekhara Varman an opportunity to enter the field and to win recognition by making a substantial contribution.

18 See K. Rama Pisharoti in *The Theatre of the Hindus* (Susil Gupta & Co., Calcutta, 1955) for details.

II

KULASEKHARA VARMAN: HIS DATE AND IDENTITY

KULASEKHARAS OF MAHODAYAPURAM

Mahodayapuram identified with the modern Tiruvañcikulam near Crangannore at the mouth of Periyār had been the capital of several kings of Kerala who possessed the title 'Kulaśekhara'.¹ Kulaśekhara Ālvār the famous Vaiṣṇava saint is perhaps the first and foremost among the Kulaśekharas. Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa the author of *Laghubhāskariya* refers to two kings with the respective names of Ravi and Rāma possessing the title *Kulaśekhara*.² There is another Kulaśekhara who composed the dramas *Tapatīsamvaraṇa* [TS] and *Subhadrādhanañjaya* [S Dh]⁴ The patron of the yamaka poet Vāsudeva is again a Kulaśekhara. According to tradition the patrons of Prabhākara and Līlāśuka are Kulaśekharas.⁴ Yet another Kulaśekhara is known as the founder of the Kulaśekhara era, and of the temple at Tṛkkulaśekharapuram near Crangannore.⁵

KULASEKHARA ALVAR

According to tradition, Kulaśekhara Ālvār the famous author of *Perumāḷ Tiru Moḷi* is the son of Dṛḍhavrata. His date of birth is given as Kali year 27 (3075 B. C.) known as Parābhava, the month Māgha, Friday the twelfth of the bright fortnight and the nakṣatra Punarvasu.⁶ Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition gives his birth place as Kōḷipattanam in Kerala while Vedānta Deśika refers to the place as Vañcikkalam.⁷ Modern scholars, however, have calculated the date of the Ālvār from the astrological data scattered among his works. Swamikannu Pillai

1 Ullur S. Parameśwara Iyer observes that the Taliyātiris conferred this title upon kings at the time of their coronation. *KSC* I p. 116.

2 *TSS* No. 162 (Ed. Dr. P. K. Narayana Pillai) p. 42.

3 *TSS* No. 11 and 13.

4 K. Rama Pisharoti, 'Kulaśekharas of Kerala', *IHQ* VII pp. 319-330.

5 The Annual Report on Archaeological Researches in Cochin State for the year '100 M.E., cited by K. R. Pisharoti, *Ibid.*, p. 320.

6 M. Krishnamachariar, *HCSL* p. 278 n.

7 *Prabandhasāra* of Vedānta Deśika, cited by T. Ganapati Sastri in his preface to *TSS* No. 11, where he identifies the place with Mahodayapuram.

has calculated the date to be 767 A. D.;⁸ but K. G. Sesha Iyer fixes the date as 527 A. D.⁹ After a glorious career as a ruler the Ālvār is believed to have retired to Srīraṅgam to lead the life of a devotee. At a place called Mannarkoil he breathed his last. There is a temple at Mannarkoil known as Kulasekhara Ālvārkoil, built by one Vāsudevan Keśavan of Mullappalli in Malaimaṇḍalam (Kerala) and dedicated to the memory of the Ālvār.¹⁰

There are scholars who hold that the Ālvār is not a Kerala prince at all. According to M. R. R. Ayyangar "evidence does not warrant his being identified with a Kerala prince and it is quite significant that he has not sung in praise of any Kerala shrine."¹¹ Further "When a poet says that he hailed from the Cera royal family it need not necessarily mean that he was a Malayali."¹² Vaṭakkumkur Rājarājavaṛma Rājā also has expressed the same view.¹³

KULASEKHARA THE ROYAL DRAMATIST

Kulaśekhara Varman of Mahodayapuram, known by the appellations 'Keralakulacūḍāmaṇi' and 'Mahodayapuraparameśvara' is one of the few great rulers who wielded their pen as well as their sceptre.¹⁴ He is remembered not only as a great patron of literature on a par with Bhoja of Dhārā, but also as a dramatist and as a pastmaster in the art of histrionics. His contributions towards enriching the Sanskrit literature of Kerala can never be overlooked.

(i) *Personal details known from his works*

The early history of Kerala being shrouded in obscurity it is impossible to know much about the king with any certainty. From the prologue to his drama *TS* it is known that he was a king of Kerala and that he had his capital at Mahodayapuram. He refers to himself as "the best of the descendants of the Kerala family." He characterises himself as an ardent admirer of the 'Paramahamsas'—ascetics of the highest order. He compares his hands with the sun since they dispel the

8 *The Indian Ephemeris*, p. I, p. 489.

9 *IHQ* VII p. 648.

10 *Ibid.*

11 M. R. R. Ayyangar, cited by K. Rama Pisharoti in *IHQ* VII p. 321.

12 *op. cit.*

13 *KSSC* I p. 134.

14 *TSS* No. 11 p. 6.

darkness of poverty of Brahmins by giving away presents in plenty. Even before writing his dramas he won recognition in the literary field by composing the prose work *Āścaryamañjarīkathā*.¹⁵

He possessed all the auspicious marks of a distinguished personage. "With an elevated nose, a neck that is thick and shoulders that are lofty, ear lobes decked and hence touching the shoulders, hands stretching upto the knees, his tall body with a golden complexion was indeed a solace to his people."¹⁶

The prologue of *SDh* also supplies some information about the author. He claims that the lotus of his heart is purified by the dust from the feet of the ever present Viṣṇu. He acquired the essence of knowledge by churning the ocean of *Mahābhārata* with his brain which resembles the Mandara mountain in the act. His friends are free to share his riches. He has gathered experience by composing TS. He is the suzerain of the whole of Kerala rich in paddy fields. He is sure that the people will welcome his work as their own in spite of the fact that they are familiar with the works of poets like Kālidāsa and others.¹⁷

(ii) Kulaśekhara and *Vyaṅgyavyākhyā*

A Brahmin contemporary of Kulaśekhara has commented upon his dramas with a view to bringing out the suggestions.¹⁸ The commentaries are known as *Samvaraṇadhvani* and *Dhanañjayadhvani*.¹⁹ Generally they are referred to by the term '*Vyaṅgyavyākhyā*'. The fact that the Brahmin commentator was a contemporary of the dramatist is confirmed by Śivarāma, a later commentator, who admits his indebtedness to his predecessor.²⁰ However these commentaries do not disclose the identity of their author.

From the prefatory verses to the *Dhanañjayadhvani* it is known that the commentator was a close friend and confidant of the king. Hence the information given by him is of great importance. Moreover his statements often corroborate those of the king. For instance, in the

15 *Ibid.* pp. 4-5.

16 *Ibid.*

17 TSS No. 13 pp. 4-5.

18 T. 281 p. 125.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 125.

20 TSS No. 11 p. 1.

prologue of *SDh* the king qualifies himself as "one who has acquired the essence of *Mahābhārata*."²¹ This is corroborated by the following statement in the *Vyaṅgyavyākhyā*:-

"*Kulaśekharaṇāmnā keralaviṣayādhipena bahukṛtvah pītabhārata-sudhena dhanañjayo 'nukṣaṇavardhamānamadanadaśo darśitaḥ.*"²²

By way of introduction, the *Dhanañjayadhvani* gives the following information. Sage Bharata learned the art of dramaturgy from Brahman and composed *Nāṭyaśāstra*. He introduced dramatic art in our world. King Kulaśekhara following the rules of *Nāṭyaśāstra* composed two dramas abounding in rhythm, sentiments and suggestive words. The commentary is intended to bring out their suggestive import along with the instructions of their representation on the stage.²³

The commentator narrates the circumstances under which the commentaries were written. It may be summarised as follows in his own words: "Getting up early in the morning I performed the morning rites in the river Cūrṇikā and visited the temple at Parameśvaramaṅgalam, dedicated to Viṣṇu. Returning to my house I washed my hands and legs and warmed myself before a blazing fire. I was meditating and praying, when a Brahmin messenger sent by the king of Kerala presented himself before me. I received him cordially and enquired the purpose of his visit. He informed me that the king wished to meet me. Then I travelled in his company towards Mahodayapuram by the Cūrṇikā river in a canoe provided with cot, bed and other comforts."²⁴

There I met the king seated on a throne. His natural lustre seemed to have increased owing to the radiance of the rich stones adorning his crown. An elevated forehead, a prominent nose, lofty shoulders, long eyes and lengthy shanks contributed much to adorn his person. Surely, the red painted fore-arms and feet betrayed the signs of a king since they possessed auspicious marks of a wheel, conch-shell etc. His face-lotus glittered in the brilliance of the rich stones on his ear-rings. His neck surpassed the conch-shell in sound and shape. His breast was anointed with saffron, camphor and sandal pastes. The blue silken garment worn by him attracted the attention of the onlookers. He was

21 *op. cit.*

22 T—281 p. 111.

23 *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

engaged in conversation the topic being Viṣṇu — the Supreme Spirit. The lotus held in his left hand was being closed by the other. He was loved and admired by one and all. With modesty I entered the assembly room. The king received me with sweet words. Hardly had I stood there for a moment when the king sought the permission of the assembly with a smiling look and retired to his private chamber along with me. Conversing humourously we entered the council chamber inaccessible to others. Once I was seated comfortably, the king spoke to me in a pleasing manner.

‘I have brought you here, Oh! scholar, since you are a postmaster in the art of histrionics. I have decided to assign a certain work to you. I have composed two dramas; *Samvaraṇa* and *Dhanañjaya*. Both these dramas were written using suggestive words. Suggestive poetry has found acceptance at the hands of scholars. Hence in composing both these dramas suggestive words were often used. You are proficient in the art of histrionics. Go through them, judge their merit and tell me whether they are good or not. If they are any good, be a spectator; I shall myself present before you each character in the proper way. Then I shall have them staged by professional actors.’ Thus I was instructed by him and was shown the mode of enactment of his dramas.”²⁵

Again introducing the commentary on *TS* the commentator says— “Now I shall explain the sentiments and mode of enactment of this drama composed by the king of Kerala. The king himself, taking the role of each character and donning the appropriate costume, has shown me the mode of representation. Hence I who am a Brahmin, only repeat his own ideas. This is written by me with a view to revealing the poet’s mind.”²⁶

(iii) *Vāsudeva on Kulasekhara*

From the Kerala version of the last verse of *Mukundamālā* it is gathered that a certain Brahmin, Ravi by name and a Vāriyar called or having the title Lokavīra were confidants of the king.²⁷ Further, it is said that Ravi immortalised in these lines of *Mukundamālā* was the father of the yamaka poet Vāsudeva, the author of the poems *Yudhiṣṭhiravijaya*, *Tripuradahana*, *Śaurikathodaya* and *Nalodaya*.²⁸

25 *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

26 *Ibid.*, p. 125.

27 *Bhāṣāgranthāvali* No. 98. (Kerala University).

28 KSSC I p. 158.

All these works contain verses eulogising the royal patron of the poet. *Yudhiṣṭhiravijaya*²⁹ mentions a king Kulaśekhara while the other two works refer to a king Rāma by name. *Yudhiṣṭhiravijaya* gives the following information about the royal patron of the poet:

“At the time, when there reigned a king named Kulaśekhara of elephant gait, in whose kingdom decrepitude and misery were unknown, whose terrific battle fields were glorified by poets as hovered over by wheeling flights of vultures, the fat soil of whose dominions yielded coveted harvests, while the trees provided the amplest shade (owing to their luxuriance), whose subjects were graceful-mannered and whose land was a fitting receptacle of fame, there lived a preceptor called Bhārataguru, who was well versed in the Vedas.³⁰

*Tripuradahana*³¹ refers to a king Rāma as follows: “There ruled a king who was bowed to by poets, the sight of whose army scattered his enemy kings, who was as steady in punishing the wicked as ready in succouring the righteous, whose conduct was above calumny, who was extolled as the foremost of kings (*rājaśekhara* = Śiva in being wealthy (*bhūtidhara* = a smearer of ashes) in having proboscis-like arms (*vyāla-pati-sphurat-karam* = serpent entwined arms) and in bestowing wealth upon the suppliants at his feet, who was considered as an incarnation of Rāma himself in the sameness of his name, with the hero of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and in (the identity of purpose) *rakṣopāyam* (protection of his subjects: danger to Rākṣasas). In the reign of this king who was pleasing the eyes of his subjects, the *Tripuradahana* was composed by Ravibhū (son of Ravi) in the yamaka style.”³²

In *Śaurikathodaya* also Vāsudeva has eulogised a king named Rāma, who appears to be identical with the Rāma mentioned in the earlier work *Tripuradahana*.³³

Nalodaya is another yamaka poem composed by Vāsudeva.³⁴ But some assign its authorship to Ravi, the father of Vāsudeva.³⁵ Even

29 *Kāvyamālā* No. 60.

30 *Ibid.*, Verses 4, 5 and 6. Translated by A. S. Ramanatha Iyer, *JRAS* (1925) pp. 264–65.

31 *TSS* No. 181.

32 Quoted and translated by A. S. Ramanatha Iyer, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

33 *KSC* I p. 116.

34 A. S. Ramanatha Iyer, ‘*Authorship of Nalodaya*’, *JRAS* (1925) pp. 263–275.

35 *KSSC* I p. 161.

according to this view the work was written by a contemporary of king Kulaśekhara. Hence the reference to the king contained in the work is important in this connection: "The name of the king of his time was Rāma, who was an adept in the science of polity, whose powerful army clove its way, like a good ship through the river-like armies of his enemies, whose kingdom produced stones, whose forests abounded in elephant herds, who as an overlord collected tribute from his vassals, who though being christened Rājāditya (at the time of his coronation) resembled the heavens resplendent with the sun and moon, who had conquered all his enemies etc." 36

The question naturally arises whether the two royal names mentioned by Vāsudeva, namely, Kulaśekhara and Rāma represent one and the same king or two different successive rulers. But three commentaries on *Yudhiṣṭhiravijaya* are seen to identify Kulaśekhara with Rāma. *Padārthacintana*³⁷ of Rāghava, while explaining the words *kāle Kulaśekharasya* gives the following information:

Kulaśekharasya kulaśekharanāmnaḥ, Kulālaṅkāro'yam bhavati iti vicārya gurubhis tathā kṛtanāmadheyasya; paṭṭabandha ityarthāt bhavati, prāg Rāmavarmanāmatvāt.

*Vijayadarśikā*³⁸ of Acyuta explains the word 'Kulaśekhara' as follows: *Kulaśekhara iti abhiṣekakṛtam nāma, pitrādikṛtam tu Rāmavarmeti.*

The word '*vasudhāmavataḥ*' is explained to mean: *vasūni dhanāni dhāma mahodayākhyam puram ceti dvandvaḥ.*

*Ratnapradīpikā*³⁹ of Śivadāsa explains these words as follows: *Kulaśekharasya kulaśekhara iti nāmavataḥ. Etad abhiṣekakṛtam nāma, pitrādikṛtam tu Rāmavarmeti. Vasudhāmavataḥ—Vasu dhanam dhāma mahodayākhyam puram.*

From these references one may safely conclude that the term 'Rāmavarman' was the personal name of the king who received the title 'Kulaśekhara' on the occasion of his inauguration. According to Viṣṇu, a commentator of *Nalodaya*, the king Rāma of Mahodayapuram also possessed the title *Rājāditya*.⁴⁰

36 A. S. Ramanatha Iyer, *op. cit.*, p. 267.

37 KSC I p. 116.

38 Quoted in KSSC I p. 182.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 183.

40 Quoted in KSC I p. 119.



(iv) *Kulaśekhara and Rājaśekhara*

Śaṅkaravijaya of Vidyāraṇya mentions that one Kerala king Rājaśekhara has composed three dramas and read them out to Śaṅkara, the great philosopher.⁴¹ There is a view that this Rājaśekhara is to be identified with Kulaśekhara since both of them are kings of Kerala as well as dramatists. It is held that the three dramas mentioned here are *Tapatīsamvaraṇa*, *Subhadrādhanañjaya* and *Vicchinnābhīṣeka*⁴² since Vāsudeva in his *Tripuradahana* refers to his patron Rāma as Rājaśekhara.⁴³

It has been pointed out that Rājaśekhara referred to in *Śaṅkaravijaya* and *Tripuradahana* are two different persons.⁴⁴ In *Tripuradahana* the word 'rājaśekhara' having a double entendre is used simply to bring out the similarity of the king with Śiva, for it is explained by the commentator Nīlakaṇṭha as follows:

*Rājaśekharam rājñām kṣatriyāṇām śekharam śikhāmaṇim; rājā candraḥ śekhara yasyeti Śivapakṣe.*⁴⁵

If the word was used as the name of the king also, the commentator would certainly have explained that. Moreover Kulaśekhara (Rāma) Varman the dramatist is much later than Śaṅkara. Hence it is yet to be known as to who was this Kerala king Rājaśekhara mentioned in *Śaṅkaravijaya* and what were the dramas credited to him.

(v) *Kulaśekhara's proteges*

Kulaśekhara has lavished patronage on many a scholar. A Brahmin scholar called Ravi and a Vāriyar called or having the title Lokavīra are known to have adorned his court since the last verse of *Mukundamālā* mentions their name.⁴⁶ Literary celebrities like the yamaka poet Vāsudeva, his preceptor Parameśwara also known as Bhāratappaṭṭeri, the author of the *Vyaṅgyavyākhyā* commentaries, and Tolan may be included among the proteges of the royal dramatist.

41 Ānandāśrama Series No. 22. Canto 14; verses 71-73 and 75.

42 *Vijñānadīpikā* I pp. 17-52.

43 TSS No. 181 p. 9.

44 KSSC I p. 129.

45 *Ibid.*

46 *op. cit.*

Ravi

This Ravi referred to in *Mukundamālā* is the father of the yamaka poet Vāsudeva.⁴⁷ He is to be identified with Ravi who is mentioned as proficient in composing yamaka poem by Śrīkaṇṭha, the author of *Raghūdaya*.⁴⁸ So far his work is not available. But Vaṭakkumkūr attributes the authorship of *Nalodaya* to him.⁴⁹

Parameśvara

Parameśvara a scholar who is supposed to be identical with Bhāratappaṭṭeri, lived at the court of Kulasekhara giving scholarly exposition of the *Mahābhārata*. He is designated as the preceptor of Vāsudeva in *Yudhiṣṭhiravijaya*. Vāsudeva refers to his preceptor as follows:

“At the time, when there reigned a king named Kulasekhara..... there lived a preceptor called Bhārataguru (who may also have had the other name of Parameśvara) who was a *purāṇaparamācārya* or a professional expounder of the *Mahābhārata* stories, who was well versed in the Vedas, who was of a mild disposition, who was brimful of knowledge, who hailed from a Brahmin village (whose modern location is not determinable), who was considered as the forehead-mark of the world, who bestowed largesses and gifts of land to the needy, and who was always intent on pursuing first rate literary works. To such an instructor with this string of attributes Vāsudeva apprenticed himself as a willing śiṣya.”⁵⁰ It is not known whether this scholar has written any work.

Vāsudeva

Vāsudeva the son of Ravi has composed several yamaka poems famous for their diction and elegance. Among his works *Yudhiṣṭhiravijaya*, *Tripuradahana*, *Śaurikāhodaya*, and *Nalodaya* are composed in yamaka style. *Gajendramokṣa* and *Vāsudevavijaya* are his other poems.⁵¹ These latter are not written in yamaka style. There is a view that *Vāsudevavijaya* is the work of a different hand and that it is written by a later Vāsudeva.⁵²

47 KSC I p. 116.

48 Quoted in KSSC I p. 161; KSC I p. 119.

49 KSSC I p. 161.

50 Trans. by A. S. Ramanatha Iyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 264–65.

51 KSC I p. 117; KSSC I p. 175.

52 Kunjunni Raja, ‘*Contribution of Kerala to Sanskrit Literature*’ p. 23.

Vāsudeva has praised Kulaśekhara in each of his four yamaka compositions, thus giving the posterity useful account of his patron.⁵³ Scholars have expressed different views regarding the identity of Vāsudeva's patron. Zachariae⁵⁴ tries to identify his patron with Ravi-varman Kulaśekhara of Quilon, the author of *Pradyumnābhyudaya*.⁵⁵ This view is untenable since the patron of Vāsudeva was Rāmavarman Kulaśekhara who had his capital at Mahodayapuram. According to another view Kulaśekhara Ālvār is credited with the patronage of Vāsudeva.⁵⁶ A third view is that Rāmadeva or Rāmavarman mentioned in the *Laghubhāskarīya* of Śankaranārāyaṇa is the patron of the yamaka poet.⁵⁷

The author of *Vyaṅgyavyākhyā*

The author of the commentaries called *Vyaṅgyavyākhyā* was a contemporary of the royal dramatist. He was a Brahmin—most probably a Nampūtiri. Parameśvaramaṅgalam, on the banks of the river Cūrṇikā might have been his home. Undoubtedly the royal dramatist regarded the commentator in high esteem since the latter was invited to the royal court and was asked to write commentaries upon the dramas. As already mentioned above the commentator in his introduction to the commentary gives a detailed account of his visit.⁵⁸ Nothing more is known definitely regarding the whereabouts of the author. It is suggested that the name of the commentator might be Sumatin.⁵⁹ This suggestion, most probably, is based on the reference of Śivarāma to the earlier commentary where he also gives the information that the earlier commentator was a contemporary of the dramatist.⁶⁰

The contemporaneity of the anonymous commentator with the dramatist has been questioned by some scholars without adducing sufficient reason.⁶¹ Apparently they ignore the reference of Śivarāma

53 A. S. Ramanatha Iyer, *op. cit.*

54 Quoted by K. K. Raja, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

55 TSS No. 8.

56 KSC I p. 116.

57 Elankulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai, *KCIE* p. 116.

58 *op. cit.*

59 K. Sambasiva Sastri in 'A Souvenir of the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of the Department of Oriental Mss.', Trivandrum p. 120.

60 TSS No. 11 p. 1.

61 Elankulam, P. N. Kunjan Pillai 'Cerasāmrājyam', p. 15.

to the *Vyaṅgyavyākhyā* commentary and its author. Some try to identify the author of the *Vyaṅgyavyākhyā* with Tolan.⁶² But there is no conclusive evidence to warrant such a supposition.⁶³

Tolan

Tolan is supposed to have been a contemporary of the royal dramatist. Several interesting stories are handed down traditionally to account for his name which means 'one who has a leather-belt!'⁶⁴ It is observed that the name 'tolan' is the tadbhava of Atulan.⁶⁵ According to another view his name was Nīlakaṇṭha and that he was a native of Cochin and belonged to the Airāṇikkulam village.⁶⁶

Tolan is believed to have written two kinds of works called *Āṭṭaparakāra* and *Krāmadīpikā*, while assisting Kulaśekhara in reforming the Kerala stage.⁶⁷ He has composed many humorous verses to be recited by the Vidūṣaka in staging the dramas of Kulaśekhara and a number of such verses are handed down to us.⁶⁸ A poem called *Mahodayapureśacaritam* is also attributed to him and it is believed that the hero of the poem was Kulaśekhara himself. Only two verses are available from this non-extant work.⁶⁹ According to tradition he has revolutionised the staging of Sanskrit dramas in Kerala by using the Malayalam language also through the character Vidūṣaka.⁷⁰

Lokavīra

Lokavīra belonging to the Pāraśava or Vāriyar community is mentioned in the last verse of *Mukundamālā*.⁷¹ Nothing else is known about him except that he was a close friend of the dramatist.

62 K. K. Raja, *op. cit.*, p. 18; *Keralopaharam* (1955).

63 N. Parameswaran Unni, 'Silver Jubilee Special of the Journal of Oriental Manuscripts Library', Trivandrum, p. 109.

64 P. V. Krishna Warriar, 'Tolamahākavi', p. 3-12; *KSC* I p. 132; *KSSC* I p. 189.

65 Dr. P. K. Narayana Pillai, 'Sanskrit Equivalents of some Malayalam proper Nouns' p. 18.

66 P. V. Krishna Warriar, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

67 *Kūttum Kūṭiyāṭṭavum* pp. 28-29; *KSC* I p. 137.

68 P. V. Krishna Warriar, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-130.

69 Quoted in *KSC* I p. 135; *KSSC* I p. 195.

70 *KSC* I p. 136.

71 *Ibid.*

Kṛṣṇalīlāśuka and Somagiri

According to tradition the names of Kṛṣṇalīlāśuka and Somagiri are to be included among the proteges of the royal dramatist.⁷² It is held that Līlāśuka was the disciple of Vāsudeva. It would mean that the Kulaśekhara who is the patron of Vāsudeva is also the patron of Līlāśuka. Somagiri identified with Īśānadeva is a teacher of Līlāśuka.⁷³ Hence his name is also included among the proteges of Kulaśekhara.

This view is not generally accepted. It stands mainly on the assumption that Vāsudeva was one of the preceptors of Līlāśuka. The second half of the *Kṛṣṇakarmāṃṛta* verse:

*Cintāmaṇir jayati Somagirir gurur me
sikṣāguruśca bhagavān śikhipiñchamauliḥ.*

is interpreted as containing a veiled reference to Vāsudeva from whom Līlāśuka is supposed to have attained his wisdom.⁷⁴ The explanation of the stanza is not at all convincing. Hence the tradition remains unsupported.

The date of Kulaśekhara Varman

The date of Kulaśekhara Varman is a subject of great controversy among scholars. Two schools of thought may be distinguished among them; the older school which represents the traditional view and the later school, which more or less relies upon concrete historical and literary evidences. While P. V. Krishna Warriar and others represent the early school, T. Ganapati Śastri and his followers belong to the latter group.

The view held by the older school may be summarised as follows: Kulaśekhara the dramatist may be identified with the legendary king Ceramān Perumāl. The name of his wife is supposed to be Ceroṭṭi Amma. Tolan was his close friend and court-jester and the former lived next to the palace of the Perumāl. Perumāl's real name was Bhāskararavivarman. There are several stories about Ceroṭṭi Amma and Tolan handed down by tradition.⁷⁵ After examining various views

72 *IHQ* VII pp. 319-330; *HCSL* p. 325.

73 *Kṛṣṇakarmāṃṛta* (Ed. Dr. S. K. De) p. 9.

74 K. Rama Pisharoti, *op. cit.*

75 P. V. Krishna Warriar, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-26; Kappana Krishna Menon, 'Ceramān Perumāl'.

P. V. Krishna Warriar concludes that the date of the Perumāl must be about 4th century A. D.⁷⁶

Dr. Francis Day after examining various traditional sources gives the following account about the reign of the Perumāl.⁷⁷ "At about B.C. 68 the rulers of Kerala resolved to bring from outside Kerala, a Perumāl or Governor who should rule over them for 12 years at a time. At the end of the allotted period, it was also decided, that the Perumāl should retire from public life; the most approved form of doing which was by cutting his own throat. After a great farewell feast the Perumāl should perform the act in the presence of the assembled guests. His body was then burnt and a new Perumāl elected. But Ceramān Perumāl refused to terminate his rule in self-destruction and challenged the authority of the kings. One of them, Rājā Kishen Rao defeated this recusant Perumāl and firmly established himself at Tiruvañcikkulam. The people, especially the Nampūtiris regretted the defeat of their friend Perumāl and decided to fight for him. Some of them entered the court of Kishen Rao and murdered him. Ceramān Perumāl regained the sovereign power and ruled for over 36 years at the end of which he retired. At the time of his retirement he was "induced by the majains (Mahājains = Buddhists) commonly known as Jains in A.D. 378 to proceed to Mecca." According to Dr. Day this might have given rise to the story that the Perumāl embraced Islam.

Regarding the date of this Perumāl, Thomas Cana has certified that he saw the last of the Perumāls alive in the year 345 A.D. It is observed that the Perumāl ascended the throne at about March 24 A.D. 341 and reigned 36 years and four months.⁷⁸

Vaṭakkumkūr Rāja Rāja Varma Rāja⁷⁹ is in favour of accepting the view of Nāgamayya who holds that Kulaśekhara flourished in the first half of the 4th century A. D.⁸⁰

There is a view that the last of the Perumāls embraced Islam and decided to go to Mecca after dividing his empire among the tributaries. While he was engaged in the preparation for his voyage, his wife

76 *op. cit.*

77 Francis Day, *'The Land of the Perumauls'*.

78 *op. cit.*

79 KSSC I p. 135.

80 *Travancore State Manual*.

tried unsuccessfully to persuade his minister Krishna Munjad for adultery. The queen complained to the king that the minister misbehaved towards her. The king tried to hang the minister in public. But the minister who sought the help of the Islamic god mysteriously disappeared. Soon a voice informed the king that the charge was fictitious and in order to escape the sin the king should embrace Islam. Accordingly the king set out to Mecca, where, to his great surprise, he met his minister who disappeared earlier. It was in the year 701 A. D., corresponding to Hijra 82 Makaram 28, that the Perumāl left Koṭuññallūr for Mecca.⁸¹

All these traditional views are rejected by modern scholars as baseless. As far as Kulaśekhara Varman, the dramatist is concerned these theories have no bearing since his own reference to works of Daṇḍin and others is conclusive in this respect.

With reference to the date of the royal dramatist T. Ganapati Sastri in his preface to the edition of *TS* observes that the dramatist flourished later than Dhanañjaya, the author of *Daśarūpaka* [DR] who lived in the latter part of the 10th century A. D.⁸² The author of *Vyaṅgyavyākhyā* commentaries, a contemporary of the dramatist, makes reference to DR in his commentary.⁸³ Further several passages from Kulaśekhara's *Āścaryamañjarī* are quoted by Sarvānanda in his *Ṭikāsarvasva*, a commentary on *Amarakośa*.⁸⁴ The date of composition of the commentary is definitely known to be 1159 AD, since the author himself has stated so.⁸⁵ Hence the date of Kulaśekhara must be somewhere between the latter part of the 10th century and the early part of the 12th century A. D.⁸⁶ This view found acceptance at the hands of eminent scholars like A. B. Keith⁸⁷ and Sten Konow.⁸⁸

This view, it must be admitted, is based on logical conclusions as against the earlier views which are mostly based on traditions. But it was subjected to severe criticism by later scholars who examined this problem.

81 Abdurahiman, 'Cheramān Perumāl' (Āmina Book Stall—Trichur (1958).

82 *TSS* No. 11 p. 4 (preface).

83 T—281 p. 125.

84 *TSS* No. 38 p. 95.

85 *Ibid* p. 91.

86 *TSS* No. 11. (preface p. 5).

87 *BSOS* III p. 296.

88 *Das Indische Drama* (1920) p. 103.

Prof. K. Rama Pisharoti holds that the dramatist Kulaśekhara Varman cannot be later than Śaktibhadra, the renowned author of *Āścaryacūḍāmaṇi*. From the prologue to the *TS* it is evident that poets like Śūdraka, Kālidāsa, Harṣa and Daṇḍin were familiar to the author while Bhāsa, Bhavabhūti and Śaktibhadra were unknown to him. In the wake of the reference to Kālidāsa and others, the absence of any reference to Bhavabhūti shows the latest limit of the date of the dramatist. Śaktibhadra has claimed himself to be the first South Indian to compose a drama. Hence if Kulaśekhara lived after Śaktibhadra he would surely have referred to the first dramatist of Kerala. It therefore means that Kulaśekhara lived before the fame of the author of *Āścaryacūḍāmaṇi* spread. On the other hand Śaktibhadra would hardly have claimed himself to be the first dramatist from the South if the works of the royal dramatist were known to him. It shows that the two dramatists were contemporaries. The fact that Śaktibhadra is regarded as a disciple of Śaṅkara, also suggests his date. Hence the date of Kulaśekhara must be the middle of the 8th century A. D. The reference to *DR* in the *Vyaṅgyavyākhyā* commentaries must be an interpolation.⁸⁹ According to Pisharoti the date suggested by the editor of *TS* is improbable since Kulaśekhara's capital was a deserted ruin in the 12th century. A. D.⁹⁰

Prof. M. Winternitz rejects the above argument and observes that "The Naṭi who asks the Sūtradhāra if he is going to stage a composition of one of the great poets, Śūdraka, Kālidāsa, Harṣa, Daṇḍin and so on is not bound to give a complete catalogue of the poets known at the time. That the names are chosen at random, may be concluded from the mentioning of Daṇḍin, who is not known as a dramatist, while we should expect only authors of dramas to be mentioned"⁹¹ The relative priority of Śaktibhadra to the royal dramatist is evident from the prologue of *Āścaryacūḍāmaṇi*. He is of the view that Kulaśekhara ruled between 935 and 955 A. D.⁹²

The view that Kulaśekhara's capital was a deserted ruin in the 12th century is baseless. Even though the Cola forces gutted many a city they could not destroy Mahodayapuram.⁹³ Moreover there is

89 Rama Pisharoti, 'Kulaśekhara's of Kerala' *IHQ* VII p. 328-329.

90 *BSOS* III p. 112n. 1.

91 M. Winternitz, 'Śaktibhadra's place in the History of Sanskrit Literature', Kuppuswamy Sastri Commemoration Volume (Madras) pp. 4-5.

92 *Ibid.*

93 Elankulam, *Cerasāmrājyam* p. 84.

evidence to show that Mahodayapuram was in all glory in the 14th century. Dāmodara Cākyār, who flourished at this period gives glowing descriptions of this great city in his works *Śivavilāsa*⁹⁴ and *Unniyāṭicarita*.⁹⁵

According to A. S. Ramanatha Iyer the omission of the name of pre-eminent dramatist Bhavabhūti who was a contemporary of Avantivarman (693–729 A. D.) from the list of authors referred to by Kulaśekhara in the preface of *TS* points to the fact that Kulaśekhara lived at a time when Bhavabhūti's fame had not penetrated to the South. He holds that the reference to the *DR* contained in the *Vyaṅgyavyākhyā* is an interpolation.⁹⁶ The fifth Act of *TS* contains a verse where the love-lorn hero is made to request a passing cloud (*Akālajalada*) not to trouble the friendly sun (*Ravimaṇḍalam*) even for a moment.⁹⁷ The verse it seems, conveys a hidden reference to some political event of the time. The word *Akālajalada* can be taken as a synonym of *Akālavarṣa*, which was a title used by three Rashtrakuta kings of the 8th, 9th and 10th century A. D., viz. Krishna I (A. D. 750), Krishna II (A. D. 888–911) and Krishna III (A. D. 937–967). The veiled reference may be to the last mentioned king of the Rashtrakuta line. Hence, he concludes, it is quite possible that Kulaśekhara Varman must have ruled between the years 935–955 A. D.⁹⁸

Ullūr S. Parameswara Iyer has expressed a different view with regard to this problem. Kulaśekhara has composed his dramas after the Dhvani theory was well-established. *Vyaṅgyavyākhyā* refers to the theory by name.⁹⁹ But it is difficult to identify the *DR* mentioned in the commentary since Tirumaṅgalattu Nīlakaṇṭhan Mūssad refers to two *Daśarūpakas* in his *Kāvyaollāsa*.¹⁰⁰ Moreover Abhinavagupta refers to the 18th chapter of *Nāṭyaśāstra* as *DR*.¹⁰¹ However Ullūr concludes that Bhāskararavivarman who ruled between 978–1036 A. D.,

94 TSS No. 177 Canto VII, 31.

95 Bhāṣāgranthāvalī No. 91 (Travancore University) pp. 19–20.

Keralakaṣṇṇaḥāḷālāvṛtam yatra vā

Kerala Kṣmābhṛto dhāma mahodayam

96 TAS V P. II p. 111.

97 TSS No. 11 p. 170.

98 TAS V p. II P. 113.

99 T—281 p. 4.

100 Quoted in KSC II p. 277.

101 Nāṭyaśāstra (G.O.S.) Vol. II p. 460.

must be the royal dramatist. He also holds that Rājaśekhara who praises *Āścaryamañjarī* is not the one who composed the drama *Bālarāmāyaṇa*, but a later poet.¹⁰²

Dr. K. Kunjunni Raja dealing with this problem observes as follows:—Kulaśekhara composed his dramas after the Dhvani theory was well-established. Hence, the dramatist as well as his contemporary must have flourished after Ānandavardhana, who himself was a contemporary of Avantivarman (855–884 A. D.).¹⁰³ The reference to *DR* contained in the *Vyaṅgyavyākhyā* might be to the 18th chapter of *Nāṭyaśāstra*. The reference made by Rājaśekhara to *Āścaryamañjarī* may be traced to his non-extant work *Haravilāsa* and he is to be identified with the author of *Bālarāmāyaṇa* and other works.¹⁰⁴ This Rājaśekhara lived in the beginning of the 10th century.¹⁰⁵ From these dates the royal dramatist's date may be fixed at about 900 A. D. In other words he is to be identified with Rāmavarman Kulaśekhara who must have ruled over Kerala between the years 885 to 913 A. D.¹⁰⁶ Later on Raja has admitted that the problem needs further study.¹⁰⁷

Prof. Elankulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai has examined this problem in detail and has arrived at the following conclusions: From the verse...

*Keralādhipatiḥ śrīmān āsīdrājātīdhārmikāḥ
sa ca sarvagunoḣeto nāmataḥ Kulaśekharaḥ*

contained in the *Padmapādācāryacarita* it is evident that the term Kulaśekhara is used as a proper name.¹⁰⁸ This is further confirmed by Rājaśekhara who refers to the royal dramatist as Kulaśekhara Varman.¹⁰⁹ The term Kulaśekhara is used as a title from the beginning of the Malabar Era (C. 825 A. D.). Hence Kulaśekhara Varman must have lived before that time and it is only in order for his successors to adopt his name as a title. He is to be identified with Kulaśekhara Āḷvār who flourished between 767–834 A. D.¹¹⁰ The

102 KSC I p. 132.

103 HCSL p. 740.

104 Dr. K. Kunjunni Raja, 'Contribution of Kerala to Sanskrit Literature' p. 15.

105 S. K. De, 'History of Sanskrit Poetics' Vol. I. p. 120.

106 K. K. Raja, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

107 *Ibid.*, p. 309.

108 Elankulam, CKCP I p. 49.

109 *op. cit.*

110 CKCP I p. 51.

reference to the Dhvani theory in *Vyaṅgyavyākhyā* need not be taken to mean that the dramatist lived after Dhvanikāra. For Ānandavardhana has hinted that the theory was already there.¹¹¹ Moreover *Laghuvṛtti* of Indurāja contains suggestions to suppose that Udbhaṭa who lived at about 800 A. D., was aware of the Dhvani doctrine.¹¹² The reference to *DR* in the commentary need not be to the 10th century work since the 18th chapter of *Nāṭyaśāstra* is also known by that name.¹¹³ The absence of any reference to Bhavabhūti in the prologue of *TS* warrants an early date to the royal dramatist.¹¹⁴ The introductory words *kālē'tha* occurring in the *Vyaṅgyavyākhyā* might be suggestive of the period of its composition. It suggests the Saka year 731 equivalent to 810 A. D.¹¹⁵ The word *Akālajalada* used in the 5th act of *TS*¹¹⁶ can be a synonym of Krishna I (A. D. 750) of the Rashtrakuta line who had the title *Akālavarṣa*.¹¹⁷ Taking all these points into consideration he concludes that the dramatist flourished between 767–834 A. D.¹¹⁸

Later on he has adopted the position that *Vyaṅgyavyākhyā* is not the work of contemporary of the dramatist since it refers to Bhoja who lived in the early decades of the 12th century.¹¹⁹

The views of several scholars who disagree with the editor of *TS* in dating the dramatist have been noted. The dates suggested by them range from 4th century to 11th century A. D. The most salient feature of the objection is that the objectors are unanimous in questioning the validity of the reference to *DR* of Dhanañjaya, referred to by the editor of *TS* as the basis of his theory. Another feature is that according to one scholar, the dramatist Kulaśekhara Varman is to be identified with the famous Āḷvār of the same name.

Recently M. P. Sankunni Nair¹²⁰ has pointed out that *Vyaṅgyavyākhyā* commentary on *TS* contains quotations from works later than Dhanañjaya's *DR*. Besides *DR*, the commentary of the contemporary

111 Dhvanyāloka (Kāvya-mālā 25, Bombay) p. 2.

112 Elankulam, *Cerasāmarājyam*, p. 15.

113 *op. cit.*

114 *CKCP* I p. 50.

115 *Ibid.*, p. 55n.

116 *TSS* No. 11 p. 170.

117 *Cerasāmrājyam* p. 18.

118 *CKCP* I p. 51.

119 *Cerasāmrājyam*, p. 15.

120 M. P. Sankunni Nair, Mathrubhumi Weekly dt. 10-2-1957.

of the dramatist cites from works like *Jayamaṅgalā* which is a commentary on Vātsyāyana's *Kāmasāstra*, *Vaijayantī*, the famous lexicon of Yādavaprakāśa and from Bhoja. These references definitely establish the fact that Kulaśekhara Varman is posterior to these works.

It was contended that the reference of *DR* made by the commentator can be as well to the 18th chapter of *Nāṭyaśāstra*.¹²¹ But the commentary has referred to *Nāṭyaśāstra* by the same title. Vide—

*Ityasti Nāṭyaśāstre nāyakabhedo darśitaḥ.*¹²²

Hence it follows that the word *DR* in the context refers invariably to the 10th century work. Dhanañjaya flourished at the court of king Muñja, the seventh ruler of the Paramāra dynasty, who came to the throne in 974 A. D., and reigned till 995 A. D.¹²³

From the various references to *Jayamaṅgalā* it is gathered that it is a commentary on Vātsyāyana's *Kāmasāstra*.¹²⁴ But this commentary is different from the commentary of Yaśodhara on *Kāmasāstra* which is also called *Jayamaṅgalā*. The authorship of the commentary is unknown.

In the case of *Vaijayantī* the reference is clear since there is only one lexicographical work bearing the same name. Though the passage cited in the commentary¹²⁵ shows a little variation from the printed text¹²⁶ it can be fairly surmised that it is a quotation from *Vaijayantī* compiled by Yādavaprakāśa, the renowned preceptor of the great philosopher Rāmānuja. Since Rāmānuja was born in the Kali year 4119 (1017 A. D.) the date of his preceptor Yādavaprakāśa must be about 1000 A. D.¹²⁷

One of the works of Bhoja is referred to in the following line of *Vyaṅgyavyākhyā*.....

*Vā śabdaḥ samuccayavikalpanirṇayeṣviti Bhojasūtreṇoktam.*¹²⁸

It is a fair surmise that the Bhoja referred to here is the author of

121 KSC I p. 131.

122 T—281 p. 206.

123 S. K. De, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

124 T—281 p. 170.

125 T. 281 p. 182, *ākhur mūṣikapotriṇoriti Vaijayantī*.

126 *Vaijayantī* (Ed. Gustav Oppert) p. 214, *ākhū sūkaramūṣikau*.

127 HCSL p. 279.

128 T—281 p. 303.

Sarasvatikanthābharana and other literary and grammatical works.¹²⁹ Particularly so since Daśarūpaka of Dhanañjaya (whose patron was Muñja, the uncle of Bhoja) is referred to in the same commentary. Bhoja reigned between 1005–1054 A. D.¹³⁰ He seems to be the latest writer to be quoted in the commentary on Kulaśekhara's dramas.

This reference to Bhoja in the *Vyaṅgyavyākhyā* commentary places the royal dramatist in the 11th century A. D. The earliest dated reference to the works of Kulaśekhara Varman is found in *Ṭikāsarvasva* of Sarvānanda composed in 1159 A. D.¹³¹ Then comes the 13th century reference to *Mukundamālā* in Pagan,¹³²

The only apparent difficulty in assuming the above date is the reference made by one Rājaśekhara to *Āścaryamañjarī*.¹³³ This particular reference is quoted in *Sūktimuktāvalī* of Jalhana composed in 1257 A. D.¹³⁴ This Rājaśekhara cannot be identified with the 9th century dramatist. Among the numerous verses ascribed to Rājaśekhara in the two anthologies of Vallabhadeva and Śārṅgadhara about 24 verses have been identified by Sten Konow in the four plays of Rājaśekhara, but about 10 referring to poets, have not yet been traced in any of his known works. Hence Dr. De concludes that "these untraced verses including most of the verses on poets, probably belong to another and younger Rājaśekhara."¹³⁵

Conclusion

From the above discussion one may arrive at the following conclusion. Since the commentary on Kulaśekhara's dramas composed by a contemporary of the dramatist refers to Bhoja's work, the royal dramatist of Kerala must have flourished after 1000 A. D. Sarvānanda is the first known writer to quote Kulaśekhara Varman in his work which was composed in 1159 A. D. Hence the date of Kulaśekhara Varman must be between the latter part of the 11th century and the early part of the 12th century; i. e. between 1050–1159 A. D.

129 Aruṇagirinātha in his '*Prakāśikā*' to Kumārasambhava TSS No. 32 p. 251. quotes *tad ādau ceti bhojasūtram*.

130 P. V. Kane '*History of Sanskrit Poetics*' p. 261.

131 TSS No. 38 p. 91.

132 KSC I p. 90.

133 *op. cit.*

134 HCSL p. 385.

135 S. K. De, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

III

WORKS OF KULASEKHARA VARMAN

Kulaśekhara is believed to have written five works in all. Three of them have been published while the other two are known only through references and citations. Quotations from the prose work *Āścaryamañjarī*, which is referred to by the author himself in the prologue of his *TS* occur in several commentaries of *Amarakośa*. This may be presumed to be the first work of the author. The second in order is his *TS* for it is mentioned in his later work *SDh*, which is probably the third work of the author. Another drama *Vicchinnābhiṣeka* supposed to have been written by him has not seen the light of day. Finally comes *Mukundamālā*, the devotional lyric, about whose authorship there is some controversy.

All the extant works of the author have been published from the Trivandrum Manuscripts Library.¹ The dramas *TS*² and *SDh*³ have been translated into Malayalam.

ASCARYAMANJARI

Āścaryamañjarī is a prose work written by the royal dramatist. Unfortunately the work has not yet been traced. It is known through several citations and from the direct statement of the author himself in the prologue of his *TS*. He refers to the work in the following lines: *Yasya paramahamsapādapaṅkeruhapāmsupaṭalapavitrikṛtamukutaṭaṭasya vasudhāvibudhadhanāyāndhakāramihirāyamāṇakarakamalasya mukhakamalād agalad Āścāryamañjarīkathāmadhudravaḥ*⁴.

Of the two divisions of Sanskrit Prose i. e., Kathā and Ākhyāyikā, the work belongs to the former as indicated by the name. *Vivaraṇa*, a commentary on *TS* written by Śivarāma explains the above passage as follows:

Yasya mukhakamalād Āścāryamañjarīkathāmadhudravaḥ agalad: Āścāryamañjarīnāmadheyā kathā gadyakāvyabhedaḥ saiva madhudravaḥ.

1 TSS No. 11, TSS No. 13, and *Bhāṣāgranthāvalī* No. 98.

2 Trans. P. K. Panickar (The Mangalodayam Press, Trichur).

3 Trans. by Kaviyur Raman Nambiar.

4 TSS No. 11 p. 5.

*Mukhasya kamalatvāropośeṣatayā kathāyām madhudravatvāropo rasa-pracuratayā.*⁵ Its theme is likely to be an original one since it is referred to as Kathā. The citations show that the author had tried to emulate the ornate style of Subandhu, Bāṇabhaṭṭa and Daṇḍin, the pillars of Sanskrit prose.⁶ He excels in *śleṣa* and *utprekṣā*. The work seems to have been very popular throughout India. One Rājaśekhara pays it a glowing tribute in the following lines :

*Dūrādapi satām citte likhitvāścaryamañjarīm
Kulaśekharavarmākhyāścakārāścaryamañjarīm.*⁷

It is not definitely established that this Rājaśekhara is the famous dramatist.

Vandyaghaṭīya Sarvānanda the author of *Ṭīkāsarvasva* – a commentary on *Amarakośa* – quotes from *Āścaryamañjarī* at least on four occasions. While explaining the word ‘*kuśala*’ he quotes the line :

*Kuraṅgairiva kuśalavādibhir ityāścaryamañjarī ca*⁸

Again in explaining the word ‘*iṣikā*’ he cites the following passage from the prose work. *Śaratsamayamiva rocamāneṣīkam dviradamityā-ścaryamañjarī ca.*⁹ Further to explain the word ‘*kalāśa*’ Sarvānanda quotes the passage : *Sukṣetramiva sakalaśālikam snānāgāram ityāścaryamañjarī ca.*¹⁰

While commenting on the word ‘*jhaṣa*’ yet another passage is cited from the prose work as follows, without mentioning the name of the work. *Pāṇinīya pratyāhāra iva mahāprāṇajhaṣāśliṣṭo jhaṣālamkṛtaśca (samudraḥ)*¹¹

The same passage is quoted by Rāyamukūṭa another commentator attributing it to *Āścaryamañjarī*.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

6 Kulaśekhara mentions Daṇḍin in the prologue of *Tapatīsaṃvaraṇa* along with Śūdraka, Kālidāsa and Harṣa.

7 *Sūktimuktāvalī* IV, 86 (Gaekwad's Oriental Series) 1938.

8 *TSS* No. 38 p. 95.

9 *TSS* No. 51 p. 83.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 177.

11 *TSS* No. 38 p. 186.

Another important writer to quote the prose work is Subhūticandra, the Buddhist writer who composed *Subhūticandrikā* a commentary on *Amarakośa* of which an incomplete manuscript is available.¹²

In *Amaratīkā*, another commentary on *Amarakośa* the following passage is quoted : *Pāṇiniya pratyāhāra iva mahāprāṇasamāśliṣṭo jhaṣāliṅgitaśca samudraḥ*.¹³

Another work which gives information about *Āścaryamañjarī* is *Śivakośavyākhyā* of Śivadattamiśra, where the following passage is seen quoted : *Taruṇījana iva adhigataśobhāñjano vasantasamayaḥ prāduraśīd ityāścaryamañjarī ca*.¹⁴

Yet another commentary on *Amarakośa* by an anonymous writer contains the following passages from the prose work. *Gṛhapatir iva bhadrapadānugataḥ ityāścaryamañjarīśleṣaḥ* and *Iṣikāśarasamayam iva rocamaṇeṣīkam dviradamāruroha*.¹⁵ Nothing more is known at present about this valuable prose work.

TAPATISAMVARANA

It is a drama in six Acts describing the love between Tapatī the daughter of the Sungod and Samvaraṇa the king of Hastinapura. The play owes its name to the hero and the heroine of the piece. The source of the plot is *Tāpatyopākhyāna* contained in the Ādiparvan of the *Mahābhārata*. A detailed study of the work is attempted in Chapter III.

SUBHADRADHANANJAYA

The famous story of Dhanañjaya's abduction of Subhadrā forms the thesis of the drama. The source of the plot is Subhadrāharṇa contained in the Ādiparvan of the *Mahābhārata*. The drama describes in five Acts the story with suitable changes. A detailed study of the drama is attempted in chapter IV.

12 *Journal of Oriental Research*, Madras, Vol. VIII p. 372.

13 KSC I p. 132.

14 *Śivakośavyākhyā*, Ed. R. G. Harshe (Poona 1952) p. 85.

15 *Journal of Oriental Research*, Madras VI pp. 252-53.

VICCHINNABHISHEKA

According to tradition Kulaśekhara has written a third drama called *Vicchinnābhīṣeka*.¹⁶ No manuscript of the work is available. No work containing any clear reference to this drama is known to us. The *Vyaṅgyavyākhyā* commentary repeatedly mentions only two dramas. The commentator says:

Tenāpi rasacittena racitā nāṭakadvayī

and quotes the king as follows :

*Racitādya mayā vidvan kathañcinnāṭakadvayī /
Ekam Samvaraṇam nāma Dhanañjayamitītarat //*

*Dhvanilakṣaṇayuktā sā racitā nāṭakadvayī /
Dhvaniyuk kāvyasaraṇiḥ śasteti procyate budhaiḥ /*

*Etasmād dhvaniyuktā sā racitā nāṭakadvayī*¹⁷

Hence it is quite possible that the dramatist must have composed *Vicchinnābhīṣeka* at a later time so that when the commentator was asked to comment the dramatist had written only two dramas.¹⁸

Some hold that Kulaśekhara Perumāl is the author of *TS* and *SDh* while *Vicchinnābhīṣeka* is the work of a later king Bhāskararavivarman who is identified with Ceramān Perumāl.¹⁹ P. V. Krishna Warriar attributes all the three dramas to one author whom he calls Ceramān Perumāl.²⁰ Dr. Ganapati Sastri rejects these views and holds that *Vicchinnābhīṣeka* is the first act of *Pratimānāṭaka* which is attributed by him to Bhāsa.²¹ But the evidence adduced by these scholars is not sufficient to reject the traditional view that the royal dramatist is the author of all the three dramas.

16 (i) Koṭṭuññallūr Kuññikkuttan Tampurān, 'Keralam' III. 150.

Viravoṭiḥa nāṭakatrāyam
Viracicciṭṭataraññu kettiyum
Paramipprabhunāṭya vidyayil
Paramotkarṣamaṇaccu paṇḍitan.

(ii) *KSC* I p. 127.

17 T—281 p. 4.

18 *CKCP* I p. 55.

19 A. K. Pisharoti & K. R. Pisharoti, *BSOS* III p. 112.

20 P. V. Krishna Warriar, *op. cit.*

21 *BSOS* III p. 635.

MUKUNDAMALA

Mukundamālā [MM] is short devotional lyric composed by king Kulaśekhara as is mentioned in the work itself. Rāghavānanda the commentator explains that the author was a king of Kerala.

Different versions

This simple lyrical poem of devotional fervour has several versions. The number of verses as well as their order of succession varies from one version to another. The Kerala version published in the Malayalam Series of the Kerala University contains 31 verses.²² The Kashmir version published in the *Kāvyamālā* Series contains 34 verses.²³ In these two versions only 16 verses are found common. In other words, there are 18 verses in addition to those in Kerala version making for a total of 49 verses. A third version of the work contains seven additional verses besides containing a verse in praise of King Kulaśekhara.²⁴ A manuscript available at the Trivandrum Palace Library contains an additional verse not found in the printed versions.²⁵ Thus more than 57 verses are known to have been included in the poem. In a work like this the possibility of interpolation cannot be ruled out. It may also be mentioned in this connection that the stanzas show different readings. For instance in the different versions the first two lines of the last verse of the poem are as follows :

Yasya priyau śrutidharau ravidlokavīrau
*Mitre dvijanmavarapāraśavāvabhūtām,*²⁶
Yasya priyau śrutadharau kavilokagītau
*Mitre dvijanmaparivāraśivāvabhūtām,*²⁷
Yasya priyau śrutidharau kavilokavīrau
*Mitre dvijanmavarapadamsarāvabhūtām,*²⁸

The message of *Mukundamālā*

MM proclaims that there is no easier path for the attainment of final emancipation and eternal bliss than devotion to God. Here

22 *Bhāṣāgranthāvali* No. 98.

23 *Kāvyamālā* p. I p. 16.

24 A paper manuscript obtained from K. Mahadeva Sastri, Retd. Lecturer' Skt. College, Trivandrum.

25 TPL No. 1214.

26 *Bhāṣāgranthāvali* No. 98 p. 17.

27 *Kāvyamālā* p. I.

28 KSC I p. 89.

devotion is characterised as the supreme, exclusive and motiveless love for God. There is no material motive for a true devotee. Nor he is tempted by the kingdom of heaven and earth. This lofty ideal is stressed in this lyric.

Thus the poet reveals his mind: 'I worship thy feet not to dispel the sense of duality, neither do I want to avoid the dreadful hell Kumbhīpāka, nor do I wish to enjoy with the beautiful celestial nymphs at the Nandana garden. In every birth I contemplate thee in the shrine of my mind.' The selfless devotion is extolled again as follows: 'I have no yearning for Dharma – the prescribed course of conduct, or for hoarding the riches. Never do I crave for wordly pleasures. This much do I desire for; oh! God, let me have unshakable faith in your lotus-feet in every birth'.

'Be it heaven or earth or let it be hell the place I dwell, I shall always think only of your feet that excel the autumnal lotuses.' It must be noted that the devotee in the author does not crave for emancipation from which there is no return to worldly existence. Hence he stresses the importance of the love of God in every birth. This ocean of worldly life can be crossed, if God Mukunda comes to our assistance. Unshakable devotion to Mukunda forms the canoe by which one can cross this ocean of life. Without true devotion to God everything that is done is imperfect. For, the chanting of Vedic hymns without devotion to God is but a cry in the wilderness, plunging in holy waters is useless as the bath taken by the elephants. 'It is a pity that people show eagerness to serve a man who is the lord of a few villages leaving Puruṣottama the lord of the three worlds, whom one can easily please and who is the bestower of his own status.' The poet wishes to be a devotee of Mukunda even in subsequent births.

Popularity of the work

MM became very popular within a short period. Śrīdharadāsa who composed the *Saduktikarṇāmrta* quotes three verses from this work assigning their authorship to Śrī Kulaśekhara.²⁹ He also cites from the same work two more verses as anonymous. A thirteenth century Tamil inscription, found at Pagan in Burma engraved at the instance of a Malayali who was a resident of Mahodayapuram, begins

with the famous *MM* verse....'Nāsthā dharme....' etc.³⁰ Vedānta Deśika the famous philosopher has explained in detail a verse from *MM*.³¹ In his *Sāhityadarpaṇa*, Viśvanātha has cited a verse from *MM* to illustrate devotion to God.³² The fact that the work has been published from several places and with commentaries in several languages also bears out its great popularity.

• Resemblance with other works

The extreme devotional fervour of the author that is reflected in the lines of *MM* can be traced to some verses of his earlier works. According to his own words 'Lord Viṣṇu is ever present in the lotus of his heart sanctifying it by the dust of His feet'.³³ He declares: 'Let my friends take my wealth as their own and may Pītāmbara rest his feet on my mind in every life of mine'.³⁴ To him the unshakable devotion in Sṛīdhara is the only desirable object and he wishes to increase his devotion day by day.³⁵ He wants to be considered as a devotee of Lord Cakrapāṇi who excels the rain-clouds in beauty even in subsequent births.³⁶ Being a devotee of Viṣṇu, he considers himself to be a fortunate being. The words of Yudhiṣṭhira well apply to the author also; 'oh! God, I am the most fortunate one in all the three worlds since you on whom the beings depend for their birth, existence and destruction, and who being awake all the world is awake, are there to take care of my welfare'.³⁷

Authorship of Mukundamālā

Some scholars assign the authorship of *MM* to Kulaśekhara Āḷvār the famous Vaiṣṇava Saint. The main arguments for the identification of Kulaśekhara the author of *MM* with the Āḷvār are the following. Both were kings of Kerala and Vaiṣṇava devotees and composers of devotional songs. Further it is quite possible that the same poet sang songs both in Sanskrit and Tamil.³⁸

30 *Ibid.*

31 *Ibid.*

32 *Sāhityadarpaṇa* III p. 180. (Calcutta).

33 *Subhadrādhanañjaya* (SDh.) p. 4.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

35 *Tapatīsamvarāṇa* (TS.) p. 214.

36 *SDh.* p. 202.

37 *Ibid.* p. 196.

38 *KSC* I pp. 89-90.

The above view is not convincing. Even orthodox Vaiṣṇava scholars deny that the Āḷvār composed *MM*. Anantācārya of Kāñcī in the introduction of his edition of the *Mukundamālā* holds that the poem has never been regarded among the canonical books of the Srīvaiṣṇavas — an omission inexplicable if Āḷvār was the author. The Vaiṣṇava commentators of the *Nālāyiraprabandham* quote from *Stotraratna*, *Pañcastava* and similar other stotras, but not a verse or line from *MM*. Moreover *Divyasūricarita*, the earliest extant work on Srīvaiṣṇava hierarchy mentions only *Perumāl Tiru Moḷi* as the work of the Āḷvār.³⁹

According to Prof. K. Rama Pisharoti, the author of *MM* is to be identified with Kulaśekhara Perumāl who lavished patronage on Prabhākara and his school of Mimāṃsā. And he is not the royal dramatist.⁴⁰ Prof. Pisharoti does not offer any evidence to prove the case.

Kulaśekhara Varman, the royal dramatist may be identified with the author of the devotional poem. While commenting on the last verse of *MM*, Rāghavānanda explains that a Brahmin Ravi and a Vāriyar called Lokavīra were the intimates of the Kerala king. It is held that Ravi mentioned by Kulaśekhara was the father of the yamaka poet Vāsudeva, who has praised a king called Kulaśekhara in his works. The royal dramatist has been traditionally identified with the patron of Vāsudeva. This suggests that the author of *MM* and the royal dramatist are one and the same person. Rājarājavarma Rājā has also expressed the same view. He admits that the vast difference in the style of the dramas and the lyric warrants different authorship. But then the style adopted in a drama and that adopted in a lyric may show some difference even if the works belong to the same poet. It is probable that Kulaśekhara Varman might have composed the devotional poem also when he attained old age.⁴¹

Many of his devotional verses suggest this fact. They are the products of a mature mind immersed in sublime devotion on the supreme being. The author is no more attracted by the pleasures of the word. Nor is he interested in the happiness promised by the celestial world. To him the heaven and earth are alike. A true devotee, he considers devotion as an end in itself. The following stanza proves this:

39 K. G. Sessa Iyer, 'Kulaśekhara Āḷvār and his date' *IHQ* VII pp. 644-654.

40 *IHQ* VII pp. 319-330.

41 *KSSC* I pp. 146-150.

*Divi vā bhuvi vā mamāstu vāso
narake vā Narakāntaka! prakāmam
avadhīritaśāradāravindau
caraṇau te maraṇepi cintayāmi.*

Commentaries

There are two Sanskrit commentaries on *MM*. Rāghavānanda the great scholar has composed *Tātparyadīpika* giving an Advaitic interpretation to the poem and blends the Advaitic system of metaphysics with Bhakti cult in the course of his commentary.⁴² Tiruvenkiṭasūri also known as Venkaṭeśa has composed another commentary on the poem and it is not yet published.⁴³

There are several commentaries on the work in Malayalam. An old commentary of unknown authorship has been published by the Kerala University.⁴⁴

42 Annamalai University Series No. 1.

43 R—1553 (S-5) Madras Govt. Oriental Manuscripts Library.

44 *Bhāṣāgranthāvalī* No. 98.

IV

TAPATISAMVARANA—A STUDY

THE PLOT

(i)

The drama begins with the first flush of dawn. The sun is yet to appear on the eastern horizon and the darkness still lingers in the quarters.

Pārāśarya the Vidūṣaka hurt by the vicious fall from his horse enters. Very early in the morning he had been ordered by his lord, King Samvaraṇa of Hastinapura, to meet the queen and ask her to desist from her penance for the birth of a son.

Now the King enters distressed by the circumstance that he is childless. At the moment his misfortune seems to worsen, for he had a dream the night before in which the Sungod appeared before him at his prayer to tell him that the queen would ever remain barren.¹ The god then disappeared and Samvaraṇa woke up to the songs of the court bards at day break.

The king tells the Vidūṣaka of the dream. Strangely enough it receives a happy interpretation at the hands of the Vidūṣaka who asks the king not to feel despondent. He is of the view that the Sungod only meant that the queen being destined to be barren, the king could marry another, who would bear him a son.² But the king rejects the idea of marrying again. His love for the queen is too deep to brook the thought of another partner in life. Followed by the Vidūṣaka the king moves about in search of the queen when his right eye throbs to indicate a lucky turn in his affairs. He is intrigued as to its exact significance since the only matter of moment to him is the chance of getting a son.³ Hinting at the possibility of his realising the desire, Pārāśarya tells the king that it is no wonder that he comes across good omens as he is in search of a queen. They soon reach the bank of the holy Ganges and enter a garden near by the residence of Guha.

1 *TS.* p. 17.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 19.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 20.

There the unexpected awaits them. Pārāśarya is startled by a red patch on a stone, blood to all appearance. But the king coolly discovers in it the footmarks left by a celestial maiden, whose feet had been painted red with lac juice. The explanation rouses the curiosity of the Vidūṣaka who is unable to see how the king concluded them to be the footmarks of a celestial maiden. In answer the king shows him similar marks on the branches of Aśoka tree and to the conviction of Vidūṣaka explains that she has come from above. The sight of the footprints instils love in the king towards the lady of his imagination.⁴ The curiosity of Vidūṣaka is further aroused by another circumstance, namely the appearance of yet a different pair of footprints which also demands explanation. Baffled, he once again seeks the help of the king. The king on the other hand is positive that the second pair belongs to a friend of the maiden already mentioned.

Now the queen enters the garden followed by her maid. Seeing the king engaged in conversation with the Vidūṣaka, she wants to overhear them and promptly conceals herself behind a bower, with the maid by her side.⁵

Suddenly some object falls down from above, again giving a shock to the Vidūṣaka. He thinks that it is flesh dropping from heaven, where a battle must be raging between gods and demons. But the king discovers that it is only an ear ornament of some celestial damsel, made of the tender *Mandāra* twigs. The Vidūṣaka asks him if he could find out the owner of the ear ornament. With the aid of the sweat on both the footprints on the *Marataka* stone and the ear ornament the king infers their owner to be identical. The Vidūṣaka is intrigued as to why only one of the maidens perspired, their effort in the journey through the sky being the same. The king answers that the journey must not have caused the sweat. Instead the maiden in question having fallen in love with somebody, must have seen her lover so as to perspire in the ecstasy of love.⁶

The whole situation now appears to be clear to the Vidūṣaka who suggests that the lover must be none other than the king himself, for he can think of no one else in the world to be the object of a

4 *Ibid.*, p. 24.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 27.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 31.

celestial maiden's love.⁷ And presently Pārāśarya scrutinises the ear ornament made of the tender *Mandāra* twigs which betrays a few syllables written on it. He reads them, but the meaning eludes him. Again he turns to the king for enlightenment and the latter at once recognises in them the initial letters of a love lyric and recites the whole piece itself.⁸

The king is now visibly moved. Asked whether he was in love with that maiden, he evades the issue and answers that it was only wonderment that produced the change and nothing else.⁹ The queen who was listening to the whole conversation suspects that her husband might be under the influence of love for some other lady. Yet the words of the king, that only wonderment was to blame for the change in him, give her some consolation.

Meanwhile the Vidūṣaka smells the scent of flowers and following it comes across the women behind the bower. They, he presumes, must certainly be the maidens in question and he draws the unhappy king to their presence. Samvaraṇa of course cannot mistake the queen and is faced with the necessity of explaining to her that the conversation was inspired by inquisitiveness rather than by his love for anybody else.¹⁰ Pārāśarya is abashed as he realises his mistake. He regrets that hunger had made him blind. The queen somehow subdues her grief and leaves the king brushing away the entreaties of her maid.

It is now noon and the sun blazes forth in all his fury driving all creatures to the shelter of the shades. The king retires to the palace to take his bath as well as to pacify his angry wife. The Vidūṣaka decides to eat well, for next day early morning they are to go for a hunt.

(ii)

Act II begins with the Praveśaka, an interlude that links the first Act with the second. Rambhā and Menakā, the two celestial dancers appear in the stage engaged in conversation. They are the friends of Tapatī, and Rambhā enquires of Menakā about their friend when she narrates the following story.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 32.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 33.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 35.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 38.

Once the Sungod was sitting in his house with Tapatī his daughter on his lap. Nārada the sage happened to visit the god and seeing the child asked him as to who would win her hand in marriage. The god replied that of all people prince Samvaraṇa alone was fit to be her husband. Tapatī became interested in the matter and was eager to see King Samvaraṇa who had been ordained to be her consort. Once as she was going to Tapanavana accompanied by Menakā she saw the city of Hastinapura, the capital of Samvaraṇa below and suddenly stopped. Knowing her mind Menakā suggested that they might get down to the garden beside the temple of Skanda on the bank of the Ganges and have some rest. They descended and entering the garden sat down on a seat of emerald. They saw King Samvaraṇa entering the garden in the company of his friend Vidūṣaka and being bashful Tapatī wanted to avoid his presence by taking recourse to the power of becoming invisible. They ascended the sky and observed the king. The imprint of Tapatī's footsteps had been there and the king was seen examining them with real interest. This put Tapatī in a transport of delight. Menakā sensed the situation and snatching the ear ornament of Tapatī carved on it the initial letters of a love lyric and flung it before the king to test his intelligence and to inform him of the condition of Tapatī. The king promptly read the whole stanza, but Tapatī was upset to see that her friend's action made her look silly. Menakā jokingly said that the looks of Tapatī betrays her jealousy towards her rival, the queen. Tapatī could stand it no longer and abruptly left the scene.

Narrating these incidents Menakā further informed Rambhā that Tapatī had left for Tapanavana early morning where the king would be out hunting. And as suggested by Menakā the two maidens now leave for Tapanavana to meet their friend.

In the course of the hunt the king gets far away and reaches the table land of the Himavān. But he cannot enjoy either the hunting or the sacred and beautiful environments. Restless he pines for the owner of the ear ornament. The Vidūṣaka who keeps the ornament is left far behind owing to the speed of the king's courser, thus denying him the consolation of seeing it. The Vidūṣaka appears without the ornament and trembles all over with fear. He explains that he was bringing the ornament secured to a stick with his sacred thread lest it should be lost; but as fate would have it, it was actually lost on the way by the attack of a few mischievous monkeys. According to the Vidūṣaka the king need not worry about the loss, because the ornament

was the source of so much of unnecessary trouble to him from the queen.¹¹

By way of explanation of his delay on the way, the Vidūṣaka says that he had been to Bhṛgu's hermitage from whom he learnt that there was a temple of Viṣṇu a little to the north of the place called Kalyāṇavāmana. It was there that the Sungod acquired by penance his power to illumine the world. Since then the place came to be known as Tapanavana. It was also at the same spot that the water which consecrated Mahābali's gift of the world to Vāmana flowed to form the lake of Karatalodaka. Pārāśarya suggests that they might repair to this place. The king agrees to this and they reach Tapanavana.

They are attracted by the beauty of the region. The season being midway between the cold and the spring Nature reveals all her excellence. The atmosphere laden with the fragrance of camphor and other incenses proclaims the presence of a temple in the vicinity. Samvaraṇa enters the temple to offer his devotions to Vāmana the short-statured incarnation of Viṣṇu in the form of a Brahmacārin; while Pārāśarya goes in search of flowers.¹²

The forlorn heroine happens to be in another part of the wood occupying a crystal platform on the bank of the lake, after worshipping Vāmana. She sits with closed eyes lost in the contemplation of her lover, when Rambhā and Menakā come upon the scene to see their friend. They now hide behind a wall to watch her and show up at the right moment.

Pārāśarya in due course returns with flowers and with some wonderful news to tell his king. There is a spot not far away where, on the banks of a lake the water is solid with a picture resembling that of Lakṣmī resting on it.¹³ The king refuses to be taken by the canard, and with a hearty laugh explains to the egregious fool that water always flows downwards. But Pārāśarya is insistent and at last succeeds in taking the king along with him. They reach the spot, but there is neither solid water nor any picture to be seen. Instead the king sees a celestial maiden seated on a crystal platform on the bank of a lake which he recognises to be the one known as Karatalodaka. He

11 *Ibid.*, p. 54.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 61.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 66.

explains the fact to the Vidūṣaka who now contemplates the possibility of her being the person whose footprints and ear ornament they saw earlier. Nor is the king any the surer and they decide to watch her from behind the cover of a wall in the hope of overhearing her ejaculations.

- Tapatī is self-reproachful for having gone out to meet her lover, an act rather unbecoming of a dignified maiden. Rambhā and Menakā are anxious when they hear her, and the king now wants to turn away from her thinking that she might be in love with someone else. Pārāśarya persuades him to wait and make sure before departing, and Samvaraṇa agrees. Tapatī utters the name of Menakā, and Rambhā clearly turns huffy, for her friend cannot remember her. Menakā pacifies Rambhā by pointing out to her that in Tapatī's love affair she has had no place. Tapatī continues to think aloud of her love, and the king grows jealous of the unknown lover who would be the most fortunate being had he been on the spot. For according to him the chance of overhearing the loving words of the sweetheart is more valuable than the actual union with her.¹⁴ Pārāśarya reminds the king of the possibility of the king himself being the object of her love.

Tapatī finds her worship of Vāmana fruitless. In utter desperation she decides to put an end to her wretched existence at the very door of the deity. Her fatal resolve uttered loud enough makes Menakā and Rambhā realise the gravity of the situation. In a flash they leap forward and lock her in a close embrace leaving the king practically nothing to do to save her. He is glad that the girl, obviously in love with someone else is saved by her own friends. But he stands there concealed as before in obedience to the counsels of wisdom given by the Vidūṣaka, in the hope of finding out the identity of her lover from their conversation.

Tapatī's body burns with the intensity of passionate love. Menakā and Rambhā fan her with lotus leaves. It occurs to Menakā that Tapatī's breast will receive the cool breeze if her bodice was removed. But Tapatī objects to the suggestion for fear of exposing her person to the curious gaze of some stranger. Menakā insists that the fear is unfounded for they are protected by 'samvaraṇa' — a wall.¹⁵ Tapatī is overwhelmed with joy at the mention of the name of Samvaraṇa, her

14 *Ibid.*, p. 78.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 83.

lord. "Where is my beloved?" she asks in anxious expectation.¹⁶ Menakā explains her meaning which unfortunately has reference only to the wall around them. Tapatī is hopelessly put out to hear the disappointing explanation and is abashed.

Samvaraṇa is transported with joy, for he heard what he wanted to hear.¹⁷ Pārāśarya backs up the king with the suggestion that she will bear him a son in due course.

A hermit now announces the approach of eventide and bids the disciples to perform their evening oblations. Reminded by her friends that it is time for evening worship she retires to the celestial regions in their company. Being pale and beside herself due to her love condition Tapatī is ashamed to meet her father, the Sungod. Yet she does not dare to break the customary worship. The king is also disappointed that he could not see his beloved who had been shut off by the wall.

The solar orb is slowly descending the jewel-studded steps of the sky to dip in the sea while the evening air fragrant with the scent of Mallikā blossoms worried the Cakravākas.¹⁸ Pārāśarya reminds the king of the request of the great sage of the hermitage to save the inhabitants from the obsession of the demons. The king agrees to destroy the demons as requested and they decide to go to the hermitage.

(iii)

The third Act opens with a Viṣkambha. An young ascetic on his way back from an errand to collect sacrificial materials is the only character in the scene. The sacrificial materials are for a rite to ward off the deception by the demonesses. Though weak in body owing to his love-lorn condition King Samvaraṇa killed a number of demons while protecting the sages. So the sages decide to save the king from the consorts of the demons who may resort to trickery to avenge their husband's death. Looking around, the ascetic sees Samvaraṇa arriving in the company of his friend. Finding that the day is almost over, he retires to the hermitage.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 84.

17 *Ibid.*

18 *Ibid.*, p. 88.

The king enters followed by his friend Pārāśarya. He is hapless and often curses Kāma for his mischief. He asks Kāma to shoot him with the side long glances of his sweetheart instead of using fresh Sahakāra and light dakṣiṇamāruta for his arrows.¹⁹ Pārāśarya is worried about the worsening condition of the king who has begun to talk incoherently. For comfort Samvaraṇa goes back to the crystal platform once occupied by Tapatī. He had his life's solace there, the assurance of her love. But now the spot is deserted by his sweet-heart and looks deplorable like ash-smeared body of Śiva without Pārvatī, and the snow white mountain without the Ganges and as the milky ocean devoid of goddess Lakṣmī.²⁰ The King grows desperately disconsolate and Pārāśarya prepares a bed for him collecting cold materials from the Karatalodaka lake. The lotus leaf used by Menakā to fan Tapatī is still there and Samvaraṇa entreats his friend to fan him with the same leaf. But it is all in vain. The king gets little comfort and asks Pārāśarya to stop.

The heroine accompanied by Menakā enters. Love-lorn Tapatī wants to know whether they are in the neighbourhood of Hastinapura. Asked by Menakā as to the purpose of going to Hastinapura, Tapatī tries to change the subject. But Menakā is wise enough to know that her friend is in love with Samvaraṇa and says that her lover is not there at present. Having despatched Rambhā to the hermitage of Bhṛgu to look for the king, they are on the way to Tapanavana in the hope of meeting him. At last they land in Tapanavana itself from the sky. Presently Rambhā joins them holding in her hand a stick to which the ear ornament of Tapatī is tied with a piece of thread. She got it from the hermitage where it had fallen on her body from a *Sahakāra* tree.

Tapatī is tired and wants rest. They reach the crystal platform and find that Samvaraṇa is in occupation of it. The Vidūṣaka mistakes the effulgence of their presence for the approach of morning and calls out that it is sun-rise. The celestial beings assume invisibility at the cry of the Vidūṣaka and remain there to watch the king. The effulgence disappearing, Pārāśarya is struck with wonder. He now imagines that day and night might occur at this place simultaneously as it was in the case of seasons. The king tells him that anything might happen at such holy haunts of celestial beings. He chafes at the carelessness of the Vidūṣaka in having stopped fanning. The poor Vidūṣaka

19 *Ibid.*, p. 94.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 98.

concludes that the king is not sound in mind, for he has forgotten his own order to stop fanning.

Tapatī notes the condition of the king, but mistakes that it is caused by separation from the queen. Menakā however asks her to be patient. Pārāśarya refers to the loss of the ear ornament which would have brought solace to the king. At once Menakā points out to Tapatī that she is the woman of his dream and there is no mistaking that fact. Yet Tapatī remembers the words of the king: '*Adbhutaraso'yam atra aparādhyati and Ākṣiptosmi kevalam vismayena*' and turns pessimistic. Rambhā now flings the ear ornament before Pārāśarya who believes that the monkeys must have thrown it back for fear of him. The king wants him to put it on his chest for comfort, but the next moment orders it to be removed mistaking its owner for somebody else. This again disappointed Tapatī but soon the words of the king convince her of his true love for her. He laments that his condition is such that only the touch of her hands could revive him.²¹ Tapatī is so overwhelmed with joy that she immediately faints. Her friends however revive her.

The king's love-pangs harass him to such a degree that his powers fail him and he too faints. The Vidūṣaka feels his pulse and concludes that his master has left him for ever. He laments that the prophecy that the king will obtain a son to perpetuate his lineage has proved false. Distracted he leaves the spot to end his life by hurling himself down from the top of a cliff. For to him life has lost all its significance.

These unexpected developments throw Tapatī into the vortex of deep agony. The helpless maiden drops to the ground unconscious, though a little later she being attended to by her friends regains consciousness. Her friends send her to the king to place her hand upon his bosom so that he may revive, and he revives at her touch. But he tries to seize her hand asking her to place those hands, which were placed on his bosom to revive him, in his own hands.²² Menakā interferes to make him desist from the unwarranted act. She tells him that Tapatī, the younger sister of Sāvitrī is to be given in marriage to him as already decided by her father, the Sungod. That being so it is advisable for him to approach the god himself and please him in order

21 *Ibid.*, p. 122.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 126.

to get her in marriage. She further informs him that Pārāśarya has gone to commit suicide taking him for dead. Thus entrusting the king with the duty of saving his friend the nymphs make their exit to meet again.

The king goes after Pārāśarya and sees him climbing a cliff. However, the king saves him and informs him of the happy turn of events. Pārāśarya is glad and enquires him as to what would be his next move. The king decides to worship the Sungod for getting Tapatī as his wife. He is sure that the Sungod would never refuse his request, as he is benevolent towards his devotees.²³

(iv)

The interlude which opens the fourth Act informs the audience that the king had to undergo a penance for twelve days to please the Sungod. Then sage Vasiṣṭha interfered and with the permission of the god gave Tapatī in marriage to Saṃvaraṇa. The marriage itself was solemnised in the forest of Tapanavana. Tapatī had a dream in which she saw herself giving birth to a son having the prowess of Śaktidhara.²⁴

These happenings are let known to the audience through the medium of the conversation between two maids Saugandhikā and Jambūnadikā, one of them asking the other about the fresh developments in the situation during her absence. Jambūnadikā had been away on an errand to Yamunā, a sister of Tapatī to inform her of the well-being of Tapatī, but had to halt at the place for a time. She has now returned with a present from Yamunā for Tapatī, a brilliant necklace of precious pearls. Meanwhile Saugandhikā collects fresh honey untouched by bees to be offered to Ratī by Tapatī. They retire to the side of their mistress.

The king along with Pārāśarya enters enveloped in the thought of the sweet moments he enjoyed in the company of Tapatī. He cannot bear separation from her for a moment. To his relief she reunites him presently with her friend Menakā. The pearl necklace presented to Tapatī by Yamunā is radiant enough to deceive the eyes of Pārāśarya who concludes that the wearer must be pale and sickly. Menakā informs the king that the necklace is a present from Yamunā and that

23 *Ibid.*, p. 129.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 132.

the pearls were gathered from the famous Pāñcajanya. It was first presented to Ganges by Trivikrama and then Yamunā secured it from Ganges for Tapatī.

Tapatī is under a vow to propitiate goddess Ratī, the consort of the God of love, for having granted her prayer to unite her with Saṃvaraṇa. A voice from the tiring room informs her that the various articles for the worship have been collected. Saṃvaraṇa is reluctant to part with Tapatī and according to him Ratī is to beg of her for favours.²⁵ However with great reluctance he allows her to fulfil her vow. And Tapatī with her friends leave the scene.

The king and Pārāśarya alone now remain when Mohinikā the demoness appears to avenge the death of her sons and of her friends who have been slain by Saṃvaraṇa. In the guise of a beautiful girl she approaches him and introduces herself as Sumanāvatī the friend of Gaganamālā, the daughter of the Gandharva king Citraratha. The king is astonished to see such a beautiful girl. She tells the king that Gaganamālā repaired to Hastinapura in her company having been attracted by his good qualities. There she saw the king examining her footmarks and ear ornament with the message of love, which she had left in the garden near the residence of Kārtikeya. Being a maiden, unable to express her love she returned to her own city. Today seeing that her desire is not easy to be fulfilled she tried to commit suicide by hurling herself down from a cliff. But Sumanāvatī interfered and persuaded her to be patient. If the king refuses to marry Gaganamālā she is sure to die. Further Sumanāvatī will put an end to her own life in his very presence since she does not want to see the death of her friend.

Meanwhile Pārāśarya smells a rare scent and concludes that more celestial maidens are on their way to love him. In an aside he remarks to the king that it is strange to see love being imposed on him. The king is not at all moved by the entreaties of Sumanāvatī. He sends her away by telling her that he will abide by her words lest she would commit suicide before him. He explains to the bewildered Vidūṣaka that he is not at all able to divert his mind from Tapatī.²⁶ He then asks Pārāśarya to cast off the ear ornament thinking that its owner is someone other than Tapatī. Pārāśarya at once throws it away, but lo ! it has mysteriously disappeared.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 141.

26 *Ibid.*, p. 147.

Soon a voice from the green room informs the king that the devices of Mohinikā have been foiled by the sacred rites performed for the same purpose. She can no more change her form at her will while she is in the holy hermitage. The king is thus disillusioned and realises that after all Sumanāvati was none other than Mohinikā herself.

But the king is not yet out of the woods. Menakā now informs him that Tapatī chanced to overhear his promise to Sumanāvati to meet Gaganamālā at her bidding. Menakā moves him to meet Tapatī at once and pacify her. She might take her life away unless Saṃvaraṇa succeeds to avert the disaster in time.

The king meets Tapatī who is preparing to commit suicide. She leaves the place immediately, but he holds her back and appeases her by saying that it is an injustice to herself that she considers his action an insult.²⁷ Menakā reveals to her that it is nothing but the hoax played by Mohinikā that has caused her so much heartburn. Tapatī now realises her mistake and begs pardon of the king who envelops her in loving embrace. Menakā asks the Vidūṣaka to receive the ear ornament, but he would have nothing to do with it as he believes that it belongs to a demoness. But on the assurance given by the king that it belongs to Tapatī herself, he receives it back.

Now that it is time for evening oblation all of them retire for the purpose.

(v)

At the beginning of the fifth Act the Vidūṣaka enters holding a stick to which the ear ornament is tied. He is totally shaken by fear, for he is left all alone in the forest. King Saṃvaraṇa, Tapatī and her friends are missing overnight. If the king had gone to Tapanaloka in the company of his consort he would have informed the Vidūṣaka of the fact. Nor is it possible that he is deceived by demonesses any more since magic devices fail in this hermitage owing to the prowess of sage Bhṛgu. The Vidūṣaka decides to look for the king outside Tapanavana. But the forest region instils fear in him. He is afraid even to look around, let alone to walk. And there is no possibility of help from anywhere. Anyway he continues his search for his friend.

Ārya Vasumitra, the minister of the king now arrives from Hastinapura in search of the king, who has long been away from the kingdom. The minister finds sufficient reason to curse the third principal object of human existence viz., kāma or love. Infatuated by this carnal desire even the great Saṃvaraṇa has left his country for the forest to sport in company with his consort. Ever since, not a rain cloud has blessed the country with rain. Now the State of Saṃvaraṇa may be compared to the body of Kāḷi since it is full of human heads and skeletons often surrounded by beasts and goblins.²⁸ So the minister has come to Tapanavana in search of the king. Fortunately enough he meets Pārāśarya who finds fault with the minister for coming away leaving the State unprotected. Does he not know that the Pañcālas are always waiting for the weak moment to attack them. The minister assures him that really Pañcālas could offer but little resistance. The more serious thing is that a famine is raging all over the country. The people have almost exhausted the Ganges of fishes by using nets and other devices. Now those weak-bodied fellows are plunging into the deep up to their neck exposing their heads to the attacking eagles, in the hope of catching the fishes that remain there.²⁹ The kingdom is now going to ruins in the absence of the king whose presence alone would bring some relief. Vasumitra is determined to take the king back to his capital at any rate and requests the help of the Vidūṣaka who readily agrees to the request. Following his footmarks which betray the signs of the king, the two at last find him. Seeing him almost mad in the search of his missing consort they wait in a bower for the suitable moment to approach him.

Meanwhile the king chides the mount Himavān believing that he is responsible for the disappearance of Tapatī. He challenges the Himavān and says that he could not escape his arrows even if the mountain finds protection at the hands of his grandson — the son of Śiva by Pārvatī or at the hands of Hara, his son-in-law who burnt the three cities.³⁰ The king calls for his bow and the mountain trembles with fear throwing the Vidūṣaka down. The minister is astonished to see the prowess of his king. On second thought the king decides to enquire of Kāma about the details of his missing wife since he is the one who united him with her. Finding that Kāma has no visible body he decides to seek her elsewhere. For a moment he feels relieved

28 *Ibid.*, p. 157.

29 *Ibid.*, p. 160.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 164.

mistaking the black bees on the landgrowing lotuses for her tear drops, polluted by collyrium. Soon he feels disgusted that Tapatī who knows his mind well has deliberately become silent, having left him alone. Again on second thought he concludes that the earth must have swallowed Tapatī owing to the grudge towards her rival. She has proved her capacity by swallowing Maithilī before the very eyes of the son of Daśaratha.³¹ But then there is no reason why this whore should envy that chaste woman. So he rules out the possibility of the earth stealing Tapatī, and continues his search elsewhere. Now the king bends down to pick up the lustre of the red emerald stone mistaking it for the ear ornament of Tapatī, finding fault with Pārāśarya for throwing it away. The minister advises Pārāśarya to approach the king. Vasumitra promises to show himself after a little while. The Vidūṣaka steps forward and hands over to the king the ornament which gives him some consolation. He places it on his chest and feels thrilled. To him the sun appears to possess rays of nectar since he is the father of Tapatī. So he chides the cloud which tries to obstruct the sun. While he is thus brooding Vasumitra brings him to his normal mood with the false announcement that Pañcālas have invaded the kingdom. So the king should rush to his capital to defeat the enemies.³² The ruse produces the desired effect and the king's rage is kindled. The Vidūṣaka is glad to note that the effort of Vasumitra to shake the king off his madness is rewarded. Saṃvaraṇa asks the Vidūṣaka as to what happened to Vasumitra the minister, whose presence in the country would have averted the danger of the attack. Now the minister enters, to whom the king asks whether he was not able to hold the enemies himself. Vasumitra replies that the Pañcālas themselves are incapable of invading his country, but all his enemies have now joined hands to defeat him. Hence the presence of the king in the capital is urgently needed.

The King wants to hasten to his capital and the minister tells him that he has brought conveyance with him. But Saṃvaraṇa thinks of travelling through the sky. Just now Hayasena appears in the sky flying in a chariot at the behest of the Sungod.

Hayasena the charioteer of the Sungod reveals to the audience by an aside that he removed Tapātī from the king to the side of her sister Sāvitrī in accordance with the wishes of his master. His master wanted to separate the couple in order to persuade the king to return to

31 *Ibid.*, p. 167.

32 *Ibid.*, p. 171.

his capital to save the people from famine. In his absence the rain-clouds fail to pour. Tapatī would not willingly submit to this enforced separation. So he had to take her away while she was sleeping. Now he is to provide the king who is ready to return to his capital, with the swift conveyance. Accordingly Hayasena descends to the earth and introduces himself as the servant of Indra. In case he reveals the fact that he is the charioteer of the sun the king would certainly make enquiries about Tapatī and create a scene.

Samvaraṇa thanks Indra for the favour and all of them occupy the swift-flying chariot. Before taking off the minister orders Simhaghoṣa the commander to return to Hastinapura with his retinue. The Vidūṣaka is glad that at last he is able to traverse the sky.

(vi)

The sixth and last Act opens with a Viṣkambha. An old Kañcukī reveals that following the king's return to Hastinapura heavy down-pours relieved the country from its distress. But in his case disability of his limbs has increased much. Now the king has ordered to furnish the Gangālokaprāsāda situated in the garden in the neighbourhood of the residence of Kārtikeya. For it is a suitable place to live during the rainy season. The Kañcukī having carried out the errands reports that the king has already moved into the palace.

The king enters in the company of the Vidūṣaka. He expected a stiff fight against the invaders, but things turned out otherwise on his arrival. Rain has blessed the country. The king has only praise for the sagacity of Vasumitra, his brilliant minister, who succeeded in shaking the king out of his madness.³³ He finds it difficult to bear the separation of his wife. The heroine now approaches him in the guise of Menakā. Seeing her the Vidūṣaka figuratively remarks that Tapatī has come. Asked to explain since there is no Tapatī to be seen, he tells the king that Menakā being the very soul of Tapatī, he referred to her as Tapatī. For a moment Tapatī is embarrassed and thinks that her disguise has been found out by the Vidūṣaka. But his explanation relieves her of anxiety. Being questioned by the king as to the whereabouts of his wife, she informs him that Tapatī has been prohibited by the order of her father from meeting Samvaraṇa and that she

is now staying with Sāvitṛī, her elder sister. Her father enforced the separation to persuade the king to return to his capital where his presence is urgently required to avert a famine. Now the king understands the whole situation well. The Vidūṣaka exclaims that the thieves who stole Tapatī have been known. Anyway the king asks Menakā to bring his consort after getting the necessary permission from her father. But the false Menakā is reluctant to part soon and she waits there glancing at the king longingly. The king thinks that it is quite unnatural of Menakā to behave like this and once again tries to send her away to the side of his consort. Meanwhile a thunder peals and the spurious Menakā in terror addresses the king 'husband! embrace me hard!' ³⁴ Saṃvaraṇa spurns her away saying that he is not fickle to be attracted by any other woman than his own consort. Tapatī unfortunately mistakes the good sense of the king for his callousness and leaves his presence in a huff asking him to enjoy the life with his queen. As for herself she has placed her love in the wrong place. The Vidūṣaka doubts the false Menakā to be a demoness since the real Menakā would not behave like this. The king remarks that it is quite in tune with the character of women, for their minds are fickle and often follow their whims. ³⁵ He thinks that Tapatī is simple enough to send this whore to his side. Again he tries to find consolation in her ornament and asks Pārāśarya to bring it.

The demoness Mohinikā now reappears in the guise of Rambhā and informs the king that Tapatī had committed suicide unable to obey the prohibition of her father and that she herself is on the way to follow her dear friend Tapatī to death. The king at once swoons overcome by grief. Later recovering himself the king descends the palace and gets down to the bank of the Ganges. He descends the crystal steps and reaches the water to bathe and purify himself for fasting to death. There he finds a girl swept away by the waves, cursing the river for having foiled her attempt at suicide by removing the weight which she had tied to her neck. He hurls himself into the river and holds her before drowning. The girl feels angry with her saviour for polluting her with his touch. The king realises that she is Tapatī herself and is glad to see her alive. Meanwhile Tapatī also recognises her husband and hugs him in delight. As soon as they reach the shore they overhear the voices of Rambhā and Menakā who are preparing to commit

34 *Ibid.*, p. 191.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 193.

suicide. The king rushes to their side and saves them. They all embrace each other shedding tears of joy. As suggested by the king they occupy the emerald platform on which Tapatī had left her foot-marks, for rest.

Asked by the king as to the reason of her attempt at suicide Tapatī explains that she had taken the disguise of Menakā, unable to disregard the order of her father not to show her person to her husband. Having been rejected by the king in her attempt to embrace him she became angry with him. Later remembering her disguise she controlled her anger. Then Rambhā approached her and informed her of the death of Saṃvaraṇa. Hence she tried to end her life. Rambhā contradicts Tapatī's story that she ever reported the death of the king. Menakā corroborates her contention saying that all the while Rambhā was at her side. Menakā further informs the king that Jambūnadikā approached Menakā and Rambhā and informed them of the death of the king and his wife Tapatī. So they tried to commit suicide from which the king saved them. The heroine is alarmed to learn the attempt of the king at suicide. She says that Jambūnadikā did not come there. The king concludes that Mohinikā must be at the root of all their trouble, for she has once tried her deceptive method on him while he was at Tapanavana.³⁶

Tapati now regrets that she has violated the order of her father by meeting Saṃvaraṇa. She begs the king to permit her to go. The king becomes despondent. The friends now come to their rescue with the news that the Sungod has permitted their unbroken union for all time to come from that day. They present the royal couple with two clothes named *Avipravāsaka* which the Sungod sent through them to ensure everlasting union. The couple puts on the clothes as suggested by the maids. The heroine is glad that her father has consented to her union with her husband. Meanwhile Menakā and Rāmbhā retire to the side of their elders to prevent Mohinikā's further attempts at deception.

The Vidūṣaka now enters with the ear ornament crying that a mountain peak of collyrium blazing in a forest conflagration is falling from the sky.³⁷ The heroine suddenly clings to her husband in fear while the latter decides that it is a mistake on the part of the Vidūṣaka. Saṃvaraṇa looks up and sees Mohinikā falling from the sky

36 *Ibid.*, p. 201.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 202.

bound by a series of arrows. She reaches the ground and kneeling before the king prays that he must save her. She discloses that she is Mohinikā whose hundred sons were killed by the king. Having failed in her attempt to kill the king while he was at Tapanavana because of the prowess of the sage Bhṛgu, she disguised herself as Rambhā and Jambūnadikā and almost succeeded in persuading the king, his wife Tāpatī and her friends Rambhā and Menakā to commit suicide. Then she repaired to Tapanaloka and on her way she met the king's son coming in the company of Vasiṣṭha. She made an attempt to swallow him. But his son not only deprived her of the ability to traverse the sky but also tied her with a series of arrows.

It is only then that the Vidūṣaka understands that a series of sorrowful scenes are over. The king believes the story of Mohinikā except for the part relating to his son, because he has had none to the best of his knowledge. Tāpatī thinks that after all the king might have a son, for kings marry more wives than one.³⁸ Meanwhile the king unties the knot of arrows and frees Mohinikā to leave them for good. She leaves the scene blessing the couple with long life. Now the Vidūṣaka reminds the king of the ear ornament and the king adorns his beloved with it.

Sage Vasiṣṭha now enters with the son of Tāpatī and Saṃvaraṇa, having visited Nārāyaṇa, Brahman, Śiva, Mihira and Indra in their respective worlds. The boy says that the pleasure he is going to enjoy today by the touch of the dust from the feet of his father and mother will be greater than the joy that he experienced while the gods showered flowers on him on his victory over the army of Asuras.³⁹ They descend before the king from the sky. Saṃvaraṇa and Tāpatī pay respect to the venerable sage who blesses the couple to have a happy and prosperous life for a long time.⁴⁰ He then asks the boy to show respect to his father and mother. Accordingly Kuru, the son of Tāpatī by Saṃvaraṇa, prostrates before them. The couple though doubtful of their parentage blesses the boy, with longevity. Pārāśarya has no doubt as to the parentage of the boy since the likeness to his father is quite evident on Kuru's countenance. Now Vasiṣṭha explains the circumstances of the birth of Kuru to dispel all doubts from the minds of the couple. 'Of yore Tāpatī gave birth to this boy after

38 *Ibid.*, p. 205.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 206.

40 *Ibid.*, p. 208.

conceiving while she was at Tapanavana. As ordered by the Sungod, Rambhā removed the boy to the side of Sāvitrī after leaving the mother ignorant of the fact that she ever delivered a son. At the time she was stupefied and hence she felt it as though it was a dream. The boy was brought up with celestial food so that he would be strong enough to defeat the Asuras. When after a few days he became strong in body Indra requested his service in defeating the Asuras. Ordered by his maternal grandfather – ‘*kuru surakāryam*’ (carry out the business of the gods) he came to be known as Kuru.⁴¹ Now he having carried out his duty is sent to your side through me’.

The king is glad to receive his son and embraces him holding him in his lap. Tapatī a little jealous in depriving her of the pleasure of holding her son, forcibly draws him to her side and hugs him in delight. Saṃvaraṇa asks his son to prostrate before Pārāśarya. The boy obeys and the Brahmin blesses him with all his heart. On behalf of her mistress, Utpalikā, the maid of Sālva princess, the queen, comes there to congratulate the king on the occasion of his union with his son. She returns with the message that the son will be going to tender his homage to his revered mother.

Vasiṣṭha asks the king what else is desired by him. Saṃvaraṇa replies that he does not know anything else to be wished. For the daughter of the Sungod has been brought back from the city of the god of death. Further he is blessed with a worthy heir to his lineage. Indra has blessed his country by showering rain. What more is to be desired?⁴² Yet thus much is hoped: Let sincere friendship prevail all the world over. Let unjealous scholars recognise the merits of the poet. And my devotion to Śrīdhara whose figure is dark like a cloud, may increase day by day, disentangling from the grips of wordly objects.⁴³

The play thus concludes on a happy note.

THE SOURCE

The *Mahābhārata* has always been a source book on which Sanskrit poets and dramatists drew freely for their themes as well as plots. In fact Sanskrit critics are of the view that in order to ensure the propriety (*aucitya*) that is essential for the proper development of

41 *Ibid.*, p. 211.

42 *Ibid.*, p. 213.

43 *Ibid.*, p. 214.

sentiment it is safer for the authors to adopt stories from epics and other well-known works.⁴⁴ Kulaśekhara has adapted the episode of Tapatī from the epic for the plot in his *TS*. The story is narrated in chapters 160–163 of the Ādiparvan of the epic.⁴⁵ Addressed by a Gandharva as Tāpatya, Arjuna wants to know the reason for the appellation because so far as he knows he is only Kaunteya – the son of Kuntī. Then the Gandharva narrates the story of Tapatī and Saṃvaraṇa, the forebears of Arjuna. It may be summarised as follows :–

The Sungod has two daughters, Sāvitrī and Tapatī. Tapatī who is celebrated throughout the three worlds has no rival in beauty. She comes of age in due course and the god is at a loss to know who in all the three worlds should have her in marriage. He can think of no suitable bridegroom for her, for there is none in the three worlds, who for his beauty, accomplishments, behaviour and learning, deserves to be her husband. Now King Saṃvaraṇa, the son of Rkṣa and the lord of Hastinapura is worshipping the Sungod in all earnestness. The god finds in him a suitable bridegroom for Tapatī. He resolves to bestow his daughter on Saṃvaraṇa, the scion of a race of world-wide fame.⁴⁶

Once Saṃvaraṇa goes out on a hunting expedition to the under-woods of a mountain valley. His party is left far behind on the way owing to the speed of his courser. Overcome by hunger, thirst and fatigue the steed falls dead as it reaches the forest with its master. Saṃvaraṇa as a result, is forced to walk in the forest all alone. In the course of his wandering the king sees a maiden of unearthly beauty all alone in the wood and he stands motionless gazing at her steadfastly. He feels that his eyes are fortunate enough to behold this girl who is goddess Śrī herself or the radiant splendour of the mighty Sungod.⁴⁷ Soon the feeling of love wells up in his heart. Pierced with the shafts of Kāma, he loses his peace of mind. He addresses the girl with sweet words and asks her whether she is mortal or celestial. But to his disappointment, without uttering a word the maiden quickly disappears like lightning in the clouds.⁴⁸ The king searches the whole forest for her, like a man out of his senses, but to no purpose. At last he falls down lamenting his great loss.

44 See *Dhvanyāloka*, Uddyota III.

45 The critical edition of the *Mahābhārata*. (Poona).

46 *Ibid.*, I—160–15–16.

47 *Ibid.*, I, 160–25.

48 *Ibid.*, I, 160–39.

Now the maiden presents herself to Saṃvaraṇa and asks him to bear up and take cheer. Addressed in honeyed words the king opens his eyes and sees before him that self-same maiden. He implores her to marry him in right *gāndharva* fashion before his life ebbs away. Tapatī replies that she is only a maiden under the control of her father. If he has real affection for her he should demand her hand in marriage of her father. He need have no doubt regarding her love for he has robbed her of her heart even at first sight.⁴⁹ Therefore the king must propitiate her father Āditya for her hand. In case her father bestows her upon him, she will ever be his obedient wife. She is Tapatī, the younger sister of Sāvitrī. Saying this the maiden ascends the skies.

This proves too much for the distracted king who again faints. His ministers and followers searching for him arrive to see him lying on that solitary spot like a rainbow dropped from the firmament.⁵⁰ Approaching him quickly the minister raises the king and sprinkles him with cold water. After regaining consciousness the king sends away all his attendants with the exception of his minister.

Saṃvaraṇa having purified himself chooses a suitable spot to conduct the penance to propitiate the Sungod. He also meditates on Vasiṣṭha his chief priest and prays to him to ensure success in his venture. Day and night the king continues his penance. Vasiṣṭha knowing well by his ascetic power that the king has lost his senses in consequence of Tapatī, appears before the king on the twelfth day. The sage assures the king of the achievement of his desire and ascends upward to meet the Sungod. He introduces himself to the Sungod who accords him a cordial welcome. Vasiṣṭha asks for the hand of Tapatī for Saṃvaraṇa. The Sungod gladly gives over Tapatī unto the illustrious Vasiṣṭha to bestow her upon Saṃvaraṇa. The sage accepts the girl on behalf of Saṃvaraṇa and takes leave. He arrives before the king accompanied by Tapatī. The king has the joy of his life on seeing his love coming to him along with his preceptor.⁵¹ Their marriage is solemnised by Vasiṣṭha himself.

With the permission of the sage who bids farewell, the couple stays on that mountain valley which is resorted to by celestials and the Gandharvas. The king sends his minister to Hastinapura to take over the administration of the country, Saṃvaraṇa like a celestial being

49 *Ibid.*, I, 161-15.

50 *Ibid.*, I, 162-2.

51 *Ibid.*, I, 163-7.

enjoys the life with Tapatī in the woods and underwoods of that mountain. Twelve long years pass with nothing to hinder the perfect happiness of the couple.

Meanwhile the kingdom of that monarch faces a crisis. Not a drop of rain falls for twelve years on the kingdom of Saṃvaraṇa.⁵² The season of drought breaks out and the inhabitants are worried. Afflicted with the fear of hunger they leave their houses and wander away in all directions. The people, without having a morsel of food are reduced to skeletons. The capital looks very much like the city of the king of the dead, full of only ghostly beings.⁵³ Seeing the capital reduced to such a state Vasiṣṭha comes to the rescue of the people. Realising their disastrous condition he hastens to the forest and brings back the king along with his wife.

The country opens a new chapter in its history with the return of the king. Rain comes down in torrents and Nature showers her bounties on the people. There is peace and plenty again and fortune smiles all around. The king performs a sacrifice lasting for a period of twelve years in the company of his wife Tapatī.⁵⁴ A son is born to them in course of time and he is named Kuru.⁵⁵

DEVIATIONS

It is said that in the world of literature the poet is the sole creator.⁵⁶ Even though he is indebted to the epics he modifies it, his chief interest being to mould a new literary piece full of dramatic situations. Ānandavardhana has observed that a really good poet is free to introduce such changes as are fit for his plot.⁵⁷ Deviations effected in *TS* may be classified under two heads — deviation with regard to plot construction and those relating to characterisation. Minor characters like Vidūṣaka, Ceṭī, Kañcukī, etc., are also essential in a drama.

Introduction of dramatic situations

(1) The first important incident, introduced by the author that influences the play as a whole is the dream experienced by the hero.

52 *Ibid.*, I. 163-15.

53 *Ibid.*, I. 163-16.

54 *Ibid.*, I 163-21.

55 *Ibid.*, I 163-23.

56 *Dhvanyāloka*, III, *Apāre kāvyasamsāre kavirekaḥ prajāpatih yathā'smai rocate viśvam tathedam parivartate.*

57 *Ibid.* *Itivṛttavaśāyātām tyaktvānānugunām sthitim utprekṣyo'pyantarābhiṣṭarasocitakathonnayaḥ.*

The Sungod appears to him in his dream and informs him that his queen is barren and she cannot bear him a son to perpetuate his lineage. This incident prepares the background for the seed of the plot, viz., the love of the hero for the heroine. The author also hints at a motive for the love of the couple in that it is for obtaining a son. The interpretation of the dream at the hands of Vidūṣaka crowns the incident with the definite motive.⁵⁸

(2) The footprints and the ear ornament of the heroine which the hero comes across prove to be of great importance from the point of view of the development of the plot. The hero visualises their owner to be a celestial maiden and falls in love with her. The plot assumes novelty in that the hero falls in love with the heroine even before he actually meets her.⁵⁹ The heroine also falls in love with the hero even before she meets him. The queen and the heroine watch the hero examining the footmarks and ornament made of tender *Mandāra* twigs. While the former doubts the sincerity of the hero's love, the latter experiences the joy of her life. All these developments centre on the ornament and footmarks. The situation is exploited later in the play when Mohinikā in the guise of Sumanāvati claims them to be her friend Gaganamālā's. That again leads to complication, for the king is shocked to learn the ownership of the ornament and throws it away in disgust believing it to be that of another. This worries the heroine and she turns huffy. After the final reunion of the couple once again the ornament comes into the possession of the hero who adorns the heroine with it. This is also used as a memento by the hero. Thus the incident proves to be of great significance throughout the play linking the various scenes.

(3) The depiction of the mutual love of the couple is far better than in the original. What has been described in the original as a sudden physical urge is transformed into a sweet feeling of love.

Tapatī falls in love with Saṃvarana from the moment she happens to know that she is ordained to be his wife. She comes to know of her father's decision when sage Nārada asks for it. From that moment she longs for union with her lover.⁶⁰ She worships Vāmana to

58 TSS., II p. 19.

59 Ibid., p. 24.

60 Ibid., p. 43.

bring about the union and finding it futile she propitiates Ratī the wife of Manmatha to unite her with Saṃvaraṇa. Lovelorn as she is she mistakes the word 'Saṃvaraṇa,' used by Menakā to denote a wall, for her husband. Thus the dramatist goes one step further to improve his heroine from her counterpart in the *Mahābhārata*.

• The depiction of the gradual development of the love of the hero is an excellent instance for the skill of the dramatist. He has changed the rough, fickle-minded Saṃvaraṇa into a sincere lover pining for the union of his sweet-heart. Here his love is depicted as sprouting the moment he sees her footmarks and ear ornament.⁶¹ By the time he meets her he is so tormented with love that he cannot bear separation from her any more. In the heat of love he loses consciousness and the heroine revives him with her touch. He wants to marry her in the gāndharva fashion. But Menakā her friend suggests that he may propitiate the Sungod, to win her hand in marriage. In the original the hero meets the heroine in a forest and immediately stricken with love he demands her hand in marriage with entreaties. She herself asks Saṃvaraṇa to approach her father with his request. The version of the play looks more appropriate.

(4) The birth of Kuru, the son of the couple is concealed from both his parents.⁶² This proves to be an interesting situation. If it is revealed earlier the drama would not progress, for it is the result that should come at the end of the play. So when Kuru enters accompanied by Vasiṣṭha after completing his education in the last act, it provides wonderment which should be delineated in the last *sandhi* of a play. The version differs much from its source where the son is born only after the heroine is taken to the city of the king.

(5) The separation of the couple as depicted in the play is important for various reasons. It helps to reveal the sincere love of the hero for the heroine. The dramatist uses the occasion to draw a colourful picture of a lover in separation. Saṃvaraṇa is almost mad owing to the separation and it is only the timely ruse played on him by minister Vasumitra that brings him back to his normal state. Whereas in the original Saṃvaraṇa searches the whole forest for Tapatī who disappears like lightning in the clouds. And the king has seen her only once. So actually there is no justification for anxiety in searching for a girl who is a total stranger as far as the hero is concerned.

61 *Ibid*, p. 51.

62 *Ibid.*, p. 205.

Tapatī is taken to the side of her sister Sāvitṛī at the instance of the Sungod to expedite the king's return to his capital. Further he prohibits Tapatī from showing her person to her husband for a time. So she resorts to the disguise of Menakā and approaches Saṃvaraṇa who rejects her since he thinks that she is Menakā. This creates a misunderstanding in the heroine who doubts the sincerity of Saṃvaraṇa.

This issue of separation gives the poet an opportunity to enhance the sentimental charm of the play to a great extent. The predominant sentiment being love, separation assumes an important part in its delineation.

(6) A short but significant situation develops when the sages request the help of the king to ward off the evil caused by the demons. The request proves a blessing in disguise to the king. Thus the dramatist offers an appropriate cause for the king remaining in the forest even after his hunting expedition is over. The hero kills demons in hundreds while assisting the sages. Here again the incident paves the way for further development and complication of the plot. The appearance of the demoness Mohinikā is also hinted here.⁶³

(7) Among the most significant deviations in the plot, the attempts at committing suicide by the hero the heroine and their friends may be noted.

The heroine threatens to commit suicide not less than four times. Finding it difficult to fulfil her desire in marrying Saṃvaraṇa she decides to put an end to her life. But her friends arrive in time to dissuade her from her decision. Later she happens to overhear the promise of her husband to meet Gaganamālā. She could not tolerate this and hence wants to take away her life. The king comes to her rescue and explains the real state of affairs. Later repudiated by the king when she tries to embrace him while she is in the guise of Menakā, she once again tries to commit suicide. On second thought she realises the actual situation and calms down. Lastly she is tricked into an attempt at suicide by Mohinikā.

The lovelorn hero knocks at the door of death more than once. His friend Pārāśarya is deceived when the king falls into a swoon. The Vidūṣaka taking his friend for dead wants to follow him by hurling himself down from a cliff. The king revived by the touch of

the heroine saves him in time. Later Mohinikā lures the king to a rendezvous in order to kill him. But the attempt is foiled by the sacred rites performed by Bhṛgu to save the king. Once he resolves to fast to death when he is told by Mohinikā disguised as Rambhā, that his wife Tapatī has committed suicide. But soon he meets his wife and saves her when he reaches the Ganges to purify himself. Rambhā and Menakā, their friends also try to hang themselves to death. But they are rescued by the hero in time.

By these various tragic situations full of dramatic significance the dramatist reminds the audience that the play is a tragi-comedy. Śṛṅgāra, the main sentiment of the play is delineated further by the sentiment of *Karuṇa* subordinated to it.

Deviations with regard to characters

Sometime the poet has to introduce new characters besides presenting old stereotyped characters in a new garb. An examination of the plot from this point of view is attempted here.

(1) The queen Sālva princess is an additional character who is not found in the original story. Her barrenness coupled with the extreme desire of the king for a son provides the basis for the love story of the hero and the heroine. The union of the hero and the heroine is made purposeful in that it is for getting an heir to the kingdom. The depiction of the queen helps to bring out the hero's noble qualities.⁶⁴ Her introduction enhances the sentimental value of the play to a large extent.

(2) Mohinikā the demoness is an innovation of the dramatist. Her attempts on the life of the chief characters of the play provide great dramatic effect in the drama. On each occasion the play moves on the precipice of tragedy. Her introduction helps to throw spotlight on the greatness of the hero and turns the play into a tragi-comedy.

(3) The Sungod as depicted in the play is perhaps the finest example of presenting a stereotyped character in a new garb. According to the version of the play he shows eagerness to obtain Saṃvaraṇa for his son-in-law. He persuades Saṃvaraṇa to marry his daughter by the device of a dream. Then he wilfully separates his daughter from the king in order to expedite his return to his capital. He once again unites the couple presenting them with clothes called *Avipravāsaka*.

Minor characters

Characters like Vidūṣaka, Ceṭī, etc., help the dramatist to create complicated but charming situations in the play. Pārāśarya the Vidūṣaka forms the bosom friend of the hero sharing his joy and sorrow alike. Similarly Rambhā and Menakā are inseparable friends of Tapatī and they fit well into the plot. Hayasena the charioteer, maids, Kañcukī, etc., are there to fulfil their minor roles. Yamunā another sister of Tapatī also is mentioned in the play with a view to perfecting a minor detail.

TIME ANALYSIS

(i)

The incidents in the first Act begin on an early morning in the spring season and come to a close by about noon as is clear from various references. The king notices that the sun is yet to appear and that darkness still lingers on the horizon.⁶⁵ He also refers to a dream which he had experienced the previous night. Towards the close of the Act a voice is heard announcing noon time.⁶⁶ The place of action is Hastinapura the capital of Saṃvaraṇa.

There is only a short interval between the first two Acts. The Vidūṣaka mentions that they are to set out for hunting the next morning.⁶⁷

(ii)

The incidents in the second Act also begin on an early morning, the season being spring.⁶⁸ The king goes out for hunting and the heroine also leaves for Tapanavana – a valley of the Himavān, early in the morning.⁶⁹ Incidents in the Act are spread over the whole day and come to a close in the evening. The ascetic announces that it is evening.⁷⁰ The king's remark also is suggestive of the time.⁷¹

65 *Ibid.*, p. 11.

66 *Ibid.*, p. 40.

67 *Ibid.*, p. 41.

68 *Ibid.*, p. 56.

69 *Ibid.*, p. 49.

70 *Ibid.*, p. 86.

71 *Ibid.*, p. 88.

The interval between the second and third Acts may be presumed to be two or three days. The king has dispatched his retinue to his capital. He kills demons while assisting the sages to perform their rites. A sage praises the hero that even though the latter is emaciated owing to love sickness, the valour exhibited by him in dealing with the demons is praise-worthy.

(iii)

The events in the third Act begin in an evening as is suggested by a sage.⁷² Soon the evening twilight fades and the bright fullmoon appears in the sky. The king notices the appearance of the moon.⁷³ The act comes to a close soon after.

At least a year must have elapsed between the third and fourth Acts. The introductory scene reveals that the hero had married the heroine after twelve days' penance and in the course of time the heroine gave birth to a son. The place is Tapanavana.

(iv)

The fourth Act begins on an early morning, for a maid enters to collect fresh honey from flowers untouched by bees. The flowers have just bloomed.⁷⁴ After one or two hours an announcement informs the heroine that it is time for worship. It is to be gathered that the incidents are spread over the whole day and they come to a close by evening.⁷⁵

A period of no less than ten years must have elapsed between the fourth and fifth acts. In the sixth Act, Kuru the son of Samvarana and Tapatī appears with a bow in his hand and claims that he had already won victories over Asuras.⁷⁶ He was asked by his maternal uncle to assist the gods in their battle with Asuras.

72 *Ibid.*, p. 91.

73 *Ibid.*, p. 115.

74 *Ibid.*, p. 130.

75 *Ibid.*, p. 152-153.

76 *Ibid.*, p. 206.

(v)

The fifth Act begins on a morning. The Vidūṣaka is seen seeking the king who disappeared a short time ago. Later the king's remark suggests that it is midday.⁷⁷ The rest of the incidents take only two or three hours more, before the Act comes to a close.

(vi)

Apparently there is no interval between the fifth and the sixth Acts. It begins on a day at the beginning of the rainy season.⁷⁸ The incidents in the Act occur within a day's time.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLOT

A plot, for the sake of its gradual development is conveniently divided into five divisions called *Arthaprakṛtis*.⁷⁹ The first is the germ or *Bija*. The second *Bindu* or drop develops the theme further. *Patākā* or banner is an episode suggestive of the progress of the plot, while *Prakarī* forms an episodical incident of minor importance. *Kārya* is the final object that is to be obtained in the plot.

An action is developed through the five different stages called *Avasthās*.⁸⁰ They are (1) *Ārambha* the beginning of the action; (2) *Yatna* the effort; (3) *Prāptyāśā* the prospect of success; (4) *Niyatāpti* the certainty of success through the removal of impediments and; (5) finally *Phalāgama* the attainment of the desired object.

There are five Sandhis in which these five *Avasthās* and *Arthaprakṛtis* are harmonised.⁸¹ Thus *Mukhasandhi* harmonises *Bija* and *Ārambha*, *Pratimukhasandhi* unites *Bindu* and *Yatna*, *Garbhasandhi* combines *Patākā* and *Prāptyāśā* while *Vimarśasandhi* is the combination of *Prakarī* and *Niyatāpti*. *Kārya* and *Phalāgama* are combined in the *Nirvahanasandhi*.

Mukhasandhi

The first Act of the play forms the *Mukhasandhi* wherein the germ of the plot is sown and the beginning of the action is elucidated. The

77 *Ibid.*, p. 169.

78 *Ibid.*, p. 182.

79 *Sāhityadarpaṇa* (Calcutta edn.) pp. 320-323.

80 *Ibid.*, pp. 324-326.

81 *Ibid.*, pp. 326-327.

final result towards which the seed grows is also hinted at in this division.

Samvaraṇa's love for Tapatī with a view to obtaining a son to perpetuate his lineage forms the germ of the plot. The barrenness of his queen revealed in a dream experienced by the hero provides the background for the love story. The hero admits the probability of the explanation of the dream by the Vidūṣaka that he should marry again. Samvaraṇa's description of the footprints and the ear ornament of the heroine reveals that he is attracted by the owner of the footprints.⁸²

Having inferred that the maiden is a celestial he is careful not to disclose his heart to his friend. He is encouraged in his love for her by the love letter dropped by the heroine's friend. He proceeds carefully in his effort to acquire her. So he misinforms his friend Pārāśarya, who questions his attitude to the unknown celestial maiden, by saying that he is just curious. All the same he is embarrassed that his mind is almost known to his friend. He knows that it is difficult to secure her since she is a celestial.

Pratimukhasandhi

In the second Act *Yatna*—the effort of the hero towards the attainment of the result and the further development of his love for the heroine is elucidated. Thus the Act forms the *Pratimukhasandhi* wherein *Bindu* and *Yatna* are harmonised.

The love of the hero for the heroine mentioned in the first Act and subsequently broken up by the hunting expedition is revived in the words of the hero. Soon he chances to meet her even though her identity is still unknown. The Vidūṣaka's suggestion that the girl may be in love with his friend makes the hero hopeful.⁸³ Within a short time the hero is able to note that the girl reciprocates his love and he feels that he has heard what is worth hearing. It is by pure chance that the hero meets the heroine. But he is careful not to make haste with his effort to secure her hand in marriage.

The *Pratimukhasandhi* also elucidates the *Patākāsthānaka*. This is an equivocal speech or situation which foreshadows an event whether

82 TS. p. 24.

83 *Ibid.*, p. 78.

near at hand or distant.⁸⁴ The following words of the hero apply not merely to the immediate matter in hand, but allude to the future. "The bees leave aside the Priyaṅgu creepers which have stopped to put forth blossoms since the season is over. Now they are eager to approach the Aśoka twigs that are about to bloom".⁸⁵ The words also suggest the mentality of the hero who has practically stopped loving his queen who has proved to be a barren. He has only some respect for her. On the other hand he is deeply in love with Tapatī who is likely to give him the boon of a son to perpetuate his line.⁸⁶

Garbhasandhi

Garbhasandhi described in the third Act of the play unites *Patākā* and *Prāptyāśā*. In this juncture the plot further thickens.

Patākā is an episode in the plot having an indirect bearing on the development of the theme. Sometimes it may reach up to the denouement. The introductory scene to the third Act reveals that the hero assisted the sage (Bhṛgu) in performing his sacrificial rites by killing demons. The possible retaliation of the demonesses is also hinted at.

Prāptyāśā is the stage in which success is felt to be possible having regard to the means available and the obstacles in the way of achievement. Samvaraṇa is able to find his sweetheart. Fortunately enough he realises that his love is reciprocated by the heroine. The very touch of her hand revives him from a swoon. But Menakā would not permit him to marry the heroine immediately. She asks the hero to please the Sungod in order to secure Tapatī in marriage. The hero decides to follow her advice and to please the Sungod by penance. He is almost sure of his success in his mission.

Vimarśasandhi

Vimarśa essentially involves doubt. It consists in the reflecting over a situation that does not seem to lead to the goal. The fourth and fifth Acts of the drama form this juncture. *Prakarī* and *Niyatāpti* which represent the development of plot and actions respectively, are harmonised in this division.

⁸⁴ Keith, *Sanskrit Drama*, pp. 303-304.

⁸⁵ TS. p. 57.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

Prakarī is an episode inserted in a drama to explain what is to follow. The interlude to the fourth Act reveals that the hero and the heroine are united in marriage. The birth of a son is also hinted at. The attempt of Mohinikā to kill Samvaraṇa by resorting to treachery also forms an incident of great importance.

Niyatāpti is the removal of impediments. Here the certainty of of success is felt if only some specific difficulty can be surmounted. The heroine is missing overnight, and the hero roams about the forest in search of her. He is almost mad owing to separation. Further the reported attack on his kingdom by Pāñcālas worries him and forces him to act. The difficulties are to be surmounted in order to obtain the goal.

Nirvahaṇasandhi

Nirvahaṇasandhi [completes, unites and focuses together all the scattered shreds of the plot. The final achievement of the result is enunciated with a touch of wonder. The sixth Act of the play forms this division. *Kārya* the final element of the plot and *Phalāgama*, the attainment of the desired object unite together to form this juncture.

Mohinikā's attempt to kill Samvaraṇa with his wife and friend proves futile. The restriction on the heroine imposed by her father that she must not reveal her person to her husband for sometime, is withdrawn. The couple is once again united. All misunderstandings created by situations fade away once they are explained by Vasiṣṭha. The birth of a son to Tapatī is revealed. Both father and mother are surprised to learn this.⁸⁷

The final achievement of the object — the crowning success — towards which the action is started, is enunciated in this division. The hero attains his life-long desire of getting a worthy successor to his line. He is a contented man; for he is united with his wife and son. His country becomes prosperous. Nothing more is desired by him.

The germ of the plot sown in the first Act gradually develops and passes through the various stages finally culminating in fruition.

SENTIMENTS

According to the conception of the Indian theatre the chief sentiment in a drama should be either *Śṛṅgāra* the sentiment of love or *Vīra* the sentiment of valour. All the other sentiments are subordinated to the chief sentiment and they serve to enhance it.⁸⁸

In *TS* the *Aṅgīrasa* or the main sentiment is *Śṛṅgāra*, the erotic.⁸⁹ *Hāsyā* etc., are its subordinates. The hero and the heroine form the *ālambanavibhāva*. The *sthāyibhāva* or the permanent mood of *Śṛṅgāra* is love or *rati*. *Śṛṅgāra* is mainly of two kinds; *Sambhoga* and *Vipralambha*. The latter is divided into four i.e., *Pūrvārāga*, *Māna*, *Pravāsa* and *Karuṇa*. Of these the first is divided into ten stages. They are *Abhilāṣa*, *Cintā*, *Smṛti*, *Guṇakathana*, *Udvega*, *Sampralāpa*, *Unmāda*, *Vyādhī*, *Jaḍatā* and *Marāṇa*. The varieties of *sambhogasṛṅgāra* are so many that it is not easy to enumerate them.

The play begins with a note of humour, the *Vidūṣaka* describing his equestrian skill in a mock-heroic spirit. Soon after, the hero enters with a touch of sadness; for he had a dream the previous night in which the barrenness of his queen was revealed. The interpretation of the dream at the hands of the *Vidūṣaka* shakes the hero out of his gloom. This only forms a background against which the main sentiment is developed gradually.

The main sentiment being *Śṛṅgāra*, the *Ayogavipralambha* of the hero and the heroine is delineated in the earlier Acts. The first Act elaborates the *ābhilāṣa* of the hero and the heroine. The footmarks and the ear ornament left by the heroine attract the hero and entangle him in a web of love. The ornament made of tender *Mandāra* twigs betrays a coded love message which the hero deciphers and reads aloud. Thus his interest in the unknown lady, increases further. While the invisible heroine who is watching the scene is satisfied, the queen who happens to overhear his words turns angry. The *Vidūṣaka* drags the king before the queen mistaking her for a celestial nymph. The king tries to explain away the situation by assuring that he is only curious, but to no purpose.⁹⁰ While the queen is not satisfied with his explanation the heroine feels dejected thinking that the king is not really interested in her. Though she rebukes *Menakā* for throwing her ear ornament

88 *Sāhityadarpaṇa* p. 291.

89 *TS.*, p. 9.

90 *Ibid.*, 38.

before the king scribbling the love message, Tapatī is perfectly happy at the outcome of the incident. But the attitude of the king in the presence of his queen worries her a little.

The interlude to the second Act discloses the love the heroine for the hero indicated in the first Act. The second Act, besides revealing the ardent love of the heroine for the hero, elaborates the fast growing love of the hero. The erotic sentiment, of which the permanent mood is *rati* gains ground in this stage.⁹¹ The hero is thinking about the heroine whom he has not yet seen. But her ear ornament proves to be a means of solace in his distress owing to love. This forms the second stage of *Ayogavipralambha* called *Cintā*. Here again the sentiment of humour is subordinated to enhance further the predominant one. The Vidūṣaka's cry of distress diverts his attention and he rushes to help his friend. The Vidūṣaka reports that the ear ornament is lost in a fierce encounter with the monkeys. Though the attitude of the Vidūṣaka brings a smile to the face of the hero, he is worried. In order to distract the mind of the hero the Vidūṣaka takes him to Tapanavana where the hero meets the heroine. Thus the humorous incident is seen leading to the further development of love.⁹²

The hero enters a temple dedicated to Vāmana and worships him. Meanwhile the Vidūṣaka who has gone to collect flowers returns with the sensational news that he has seen water solidified and a picture painted on it. Again this humorous situation leads to the further development of the theme since it paves the way for the meeting of the hero and the heroine for the first time.⁹³ The hero describes her beauty which has no parallel. The love of the hero for the heroine is suggested by this passionate description.⁹⁴ He overhears the words of the heroine who feels dejected since her love has forced her to go out in search of her lover—an act which is not befitting of a maiden. While Menakā and Rambhā who were also overhearing her words become anxious the hero feels dejected over the whole affair and wants to turn away from her since the girl is apparently in love with somebody else.⁹⁵ But respecting the advice of the Vidūṣaka he stays there with a view to know the identity of her lover.

91 *Ibid.*, p. 50.

92 *Ibid.*, p. 53.

93 *Ibid.*, p. 65.

94 *Ibid.*, p. 71.

95 *Ibid.*, p. 72.

Meanwhile the heroine who has reached the stage of *unmāda* owing to love decides to put an end to her life.⁹⁶ The incident leads to a dramatic situation. The friends of the heroine as well as the hero become anxious. Before the hero could think what to do, the friends approach the heroine and embrace her. The hero feels relieved; but his anxiety to find out her lover and to secure her love increases. This shows a further stage of the development of love called *Udvega*.

By a strange coincidence the love of the heroine for the hero is revealed. The word '*samvaraṇa*' used by Menakā in the sense of a wall is wrongly understood by the heroine to mean the hero. Naturally she enquires about him, thus revealing her heart. The incident enables the hero to decide the object of her love and he exclaims that he has heard what he wanted to hear. This represents the stage *Sampralāpa*.

The state of *unmāda* suffered by the hero owing to his love is elaborated in the third Act. He rebukes Kāma in various terms.⁹⁷ The next moment he begs Kāma to attack him with the darts of the heroine's glances. He is so afflicted by the pangs of love that he cannot even lie down.⁹⁸ Meanwhile the heroine who has arrived there watches him in the company of her friends resorting to the power of invisibility. She believes that the hero is worried owing to the separation from his queen. Menakā's efforts to convince her of the reality of the situation almost fails. The desultory words of the hero worry the heroine who is harassed by doubts.⁹⁹ The words '*Tapatī*' and '*Ravisambhavā*' used in the respective senses of 'worries' and 'of the sun' are taken by her to be her name and family name. When the sentence is completed she understands the true significance and becomes despondent. Soon afterwards the love of the hero for her is revealed in order to relieve her of her despondency. For it is not proper to delineate a *rasa* again and again after it has been delineated to perfection.¹⁰⁰ Then the hero lapses into a swoon and the Vidūṣaka takes him for dead. Unable to bear the grief the Vidūṣaka leaves the scene to commit suicide. Now the heroine comes forward

96 *Ibid.*, p. 79.

97 *Ibid.*, p. 93.

98 *Ibid.*, p. 116.

99 *Ibid.*, p. 120.

100 *Ibid.*, p. 122.

and restores the hero back to consciousness by the touch of her hands. As suggested by Menakā the hero worships the Sungod to marry the heroine.

Thus the *Ayogavipralambha* is elaborated up to the last stage before the *Sambhogasṛṅgāra* is delineated in the fourth Act. The introductory scene to the fourth Act narrates that the mutual love of the hero and the heroine has found fulfilment in marriage and that a son is born to the couple. But the birth of the son is concealed from the couple by divine agency. The Act shows the united couple in perfect happiness. Soon a demoness enters to mar their happiness by luring the king to a rendezvous. The heroine overhears the promise of the king and turns huffy. This depiction of the quarrel caused by jealous anger serves to enhance the predominant erotic sentiment. Menakā explains the situation to restore the couple to happiness again.

Another aspect of the *Śṛṅgāra* is delineated in the fifth Act.¹⁰¹ *Viyogavipralambha* or separation after the union is described here effectively. The heroine is separated from the hero by the Sungod, in order to persuade the king to return to his country. This sudden separation comes as a shock to the hero as well as to the heroine. While the heroine is back at the side of her sister Sāvitrī, the hero roams about the forest in a frantic search for his wife. One moment he is in tears, but the next moment he is furious. He addresses the inanimate objects like mountain and earth and he mumbles to himself in reply. The different emotions like compassion, anger, jealousy etc., are here subordinated to the predominant sentiment. All these emotions are depicted against the main theme – the ardent love of the hero for the heroine.

Now a different sentiment is introduced and the predominant one is relegated to the background for a moment. The minister's report of a fictitious attack on Samvaraṇa's kingdom kindles his wrath and brings out his inherent heroism.¹⁰² This introduction of another sentiment does not adversely affect the predominant one; for the sentiment of *vīra* is not opposed to that of the *śṛṅgāra*.

The beginning of the sixth Act shows the hero and heroine suffering the pangs of the separation. Once again it proves that the path of love is never smooth. The heroine appears before the

101 *Ibid.*, p. 154.

102 *Ibid.*, p. 171.

hero disguised as Menakā. She is repelled by the hero from her attempts at making love. This again leads to a misunderstanding between the couple. The heroine feels insulted.

Then the plot tends to develop as a tragedy, the hero, the heroine, and their friends Rambhā and Menakā try to commit suicide each believing the other one to be dead. The introduction of such hindrances after a full development of the main sentiment only serves to enhance the sentiment further. Thus once the difficulties are overcome the main sentiment appears more attractive.¹⁰³

Tragic circumstances brought about by the hostility of Mohinikā are averted by strange coincidences. The hero and the heroine are surprised to see each other alive. The report of Mohinikā that she has been bound by the arrows of Kuru, the son of the couple provides further surprise to them. Now the entrance of Kuru in the company of Vasiṣṭha clears the situation. Vasiṣṭha explains the various incidents in their correct perspective. The sentiment of wonder is thus delineated by subordinating it to the predominant one. Again the main sentiment is delineated to perfection, the mother teasing the father for depriving her of the pleasure of embracing her son.

CHARACTER SKETCHES

Samvaraṇa—the hero

Samvaraṇa, the son of Rkṣa, and the king of Hastinapura is a *dhīrodātta* even though he is *Sacivāyattasiddhi*.¹⁰⁴ He is also a *dakṣiṇanāyaka* as evident from his love affairs with the heroine.¹⁰⁵

Possessed of all auspicious marks prescribed for an emperor according to the *Sāṃudrikāśāstra* (the science of Physiognomy) he is second to none in masculine beauty.¹⁰⁶ Therefore the Sungod has no doubt in selecting him to marry his daughter Tapatī.

Beyond doubt he is intelligent. From a pair of footmarks he deduces their owner to be a celestial maiden in love. Menakā tries to

103 *Dhyanyāloka* III p. 164,
Vivakṣite rase labdhapratīṣṭhe tu virodhinām
bādhyānāmaṅgabhāvam vā prāptānāmuktiracchalā.

104 *TS.* p. 9.

105 *Ibid.*, p. 25.

106 *Ibid.*, p. 162.

test his intelligence by putting Tapatī's ear ornament before him, having scribbled the initial letters of a love lyric which he promptly deciphers.¹⁰⁷ He is able to conceal his feelings even from his close associates.

Sages wonder at his courage when he kills demons. Even the great Himālaya trembles when he calls for his bow. The reported attack of the enemies on his kingdom kindles his wrath and he rushes to his capital to destroy them.

Being magnanimous he forgives Mohinikā and spares her life when she confesses her guilt and seeks protection. He even forgives Rambhā, who conceals his only son.

A gentleman to the core he turns away from looking at a girl whose exclamations inform him that she is in love with someone.¹⁰⁸ He repels even Tapatī when she approaches him in the guise of Menakā.

A devotee, he pleases the Sungod and secures his daughter's hand in marriage. He worships Vāmana and bows to the holy river Ganges. His anxiety to get a son is for pleasing the manes by annual offerings even after his death.¹⁰⁹

His love for the heroine is deep rooted and undivided. He even prepares to end his life when he comes across the false information that Tapatī is dead. He loves and respects his queen and sympathises with her in her barrenness. He has great regard for his Brahmin friend Pārāsarya and often rushes to his help when the latter is in trouble.

Tapatī—the heroine

Daughter of the Sungod and the younger sister of Sāvitrī, Tapatī belongs to a worthy line. She is a celestial nymph capable of traversing the sky and becoming invisible as she likes. She may be classed under the *Mugdha* variety of heroines. In beauty she has no rival in all the three worlds.

She is very timid and is abashed when her friends find out her love for the hero. She takes in their literal sense the hero's words

107 *Ibid.*, p. 46.

108 *Ibid.*, p. 73.

109 *Ibid.*, p. 18.

purported to deceive his friend and the queen concludes that he is not in love with her. When Menakā uses the word 'Samvaraṇa' to denote a wall she mistakes it for the name of the hero and enquires about him. When the hero swoons in the heat of his love pangs, she takes him for dead and herself tries to commit suicide.

She is easily carried away by emotions. Seeing that her worship of Vāmana does not meet with immediate success she decides to throw away her life. She swoons in excess of joy as well as sorrow. Her devotion to gods is evident from the fact that she worships Vāmana. She also propitiates the goddess Ratī with honey untouched by bees.

Her love for the hero is so deep that she is unable to tolerate the hero paying attention to any other woman. She cannot bear separation from the hero. When her father forbade her from meeting the hero she resorts to disguise and appears before him. Believing the report of Mohinikā, that her husband is dead, she tries to commit suicide.

The hero has great regard for her and her presence in Tapanavana makes the hero forget his own kingdom.

Sālva princess — the queen

The attractive daughter of the Sālva king, the queen and the first wife of Samvaraṇa deserves attention. *Vyaṅgyavyākhyā* gives her name as Mālinī.¹¹⁰ She appears only in the first Act.

She is beautiful in appearance. The Vidūṣaka by mistake takes her to be a celestial nymph. Simplicity and timidity are her outstanding qualities. She is devoted to her husband and is always submissive. Her failure to bear a son drives her to severe penance. She is wise enough to see through the deceptiveness of a lover when the king explains his love affair with Tapatī. Samvaraṇa has great respect and regard for this simple kind-hearted princess.

Pārāśarya—the Vidūṣaka

Pārāśarya is a Brahmin. He is almost of the same age as the hero. In appearance he is not at all attractive.¹¹¹ Being a dunce he

110 T—281, p. 125: *Atha Vidūṣakastām mālinināmadheyām Samvaraṇa-bhāryām.*

111 TS. p. 53.

mistakes the queen for a celestial maiden for a moment. Lac juice seems to him as blood and a bunch of flowers appears to him to be a piece of meat. Sometimes he is able to arrive at the right conclusion, and he correctly interprets the dream experienced by the hero to mean that the king should marry again. Even the hero admits his reasoning. He is always in a mock-heroic mood boasting his experience while galloping. He explains his encounter with the monkeys with pride, comparing himself to Indrajit.¹¹²

A devoted companion of the king, Pārāśarya accompanies him even on hunting expeditions, doing yeoman's service. When the king swoons owing to his love-lorn condition, Pārāśarya takes him for dead and decides to commit suicide. The king has great regard for this Brahmin, for he asks his son to salute the venerable friend.

He likes food in plenty, especially sweets. Eager to see the welfare of his country he helps Vasumitra the minister in persuading the king to return to his kingdom. A religious minded man, he worships Vāmana. Having lost his sacred thread he performs daily rites by *mānasabrahmasūtra*.

The Sungod

The Sungod plays an important role in the drama. Having decided to give his daughter Tapatī to king Samvaraṇa in marriage, he appears before the king in his dream and informs him that his queen is barren.¹¹³ So when sage Vasiṣṭha approaches the god on behalf of the king to beg the hand of his daughter in marriage he readily agrees to the proposition.

He removes the son of Tapatī from her as soon as he is born, leaving the mother ignorant of the fact. For he decides to bring up the child in such a way that he will be strong enough to combat the demons. After bringing up the child with proper care he sends the boy to the couple in the company of Vasiṣṭha.

Later he finds it necessary to separate the royal couple to avert a crisis. He also provides the hero with his chariot to quicken the latter's return to his capital. Again the Sungod unites the couple by supplying them with the clothes of eternal union. Though he never appears on the stage his presence is felt throughout the play.

112 *Ibid.*

113 *Ibid.*, p. 17.

Menakā and Rambhā

Menakā and Rambhā two close friends of Tapatī, are celestial nymphs noted for their beauty. Both of them are eager to promote the welfare of their mutual friend.

Menakā is bolder than Rambhā and hence Tapatī is more attracted by her deeds. Seeing her friend Tapatī unable to inform the hero of the love for him, Menakā snatches the ear ornament from the heroine and puts it before the hero after scribbling the initial letters of a love lyric purported to inform him the heroine's love. Tapatī is angry with her for doing so. But Menakā is wise enough to know that it is only a pretence.¹¹⁴ She is able to find out the love of the hero for the heroine though the latter doubts it.

Rambhā also contributes much towards bringing the hero and the heroine together. She removes Tapatī's son from her according to the wishes of the Sungod.

Their love for the heroine is so deep that they decide to commit suicide as soon as they hear of the death of the heroine, reported by Mohinikā. It is only the timely interference of the hero that saves their valuable lives.

Mohinikā

Mohinikā the demoness has an important part in the development of the plot. Her appearance is hinted at in the third Act, that the demoness are likely to play tricks on the life of Samvaraṇa to avenge the death of their relatives. Accordingly in the fourth Act Mohinikā enters declaring that she is to kill the hero at the request of her friends.

She is able to change her appearance at her will and to traverse the sky. She approaches the hero disguised as a beautiful lady and tries unsuccessfully to take him to a rendezvous. She skilfully performs a series of tricks resorting to one disguise or another. Fortunately none of her tricks prove effective. Helpless, she approaches the king and saves her life capitalising on his magnanimity. Being grateful she blesses the royal couple with longevity and retires.

Vasumitra

Vasumitra the minister of Samvaraṇa is able as well as loyal. Entrusted with the responsibility of governing the kingdom he performs his duty to the satisfaction of the king, who is far away in Tapanavana. But when a great famine rages in the kingdom he is helpless. So he reaches the forest to persuade the king to return to his country. He is worried that he will be blamed for this misfortune. He meets the Vidūṣaka and learns that the king together with his wife is missing overnight. The minister reasons that Samvaraṇa would not have gone far away leaving the Vidūṣaka alone. For he notices the footmarks embedded on sand and concludes that they belong to the king since royal signs are noticeable. Seeing the king roaming about the forest in a state of insanity he shakes him off his madness by announcing the false news of an attack on the kingdom by Pāñcālas. Once the king becomes indignant, the minister approaches him.

The king has great respect for the minister whose judgement is always correct and sound.

Kuru

Kuru the son of Tapatī and Samvaraṇa is separated from his parents as soon as he is born. He is strong and courageous while yet young; for he is brought up and nourished with divine food. Once he is asked by his maternal grand-father to assist the gods in the following words: '*kuru surakāryam*'. Hence he is called Kuru. He defeats Asuras to help the gods and they shower him with flowers as a token of gratitude. Later when Mohinikā attempts to swallow him he binds her with his powerful arrows.

He is loyal and obedient. He is taken to the side of his father and mother by Vasiṣṭha. The worthy son bows before his parents and elders. Everybody who comes into contact with him showers affection on him.

Vasiṣṭha

Vasiṣṭha the preceptor of Samvaraṇa is always eager to see the welfare of his protege. Seeing the king undergoing severe penance to secure Tapatī for his wife Vasiṣṭha comes to his help and approaches the Sungod to beg the hand of Tapatī on behalf of Samvaraṇa. He succeeds in his mission and unites Samvaraṇa with Tapatī in marriage.

Later he brings the son of the royal couple to their side and thus once again shows his concern for the well-being of his protege. He also explains the details of Kuru's birth etc., to his parents.

He has access to all the three worlds. His presence provides a sublimity to the scene.

Minor characters

Among the minor characters the name of Hayasena the charioteer deserves mention. He performs his duty to the satisfaction of his master. Siṃhaghōṣa the commander of the army is also mentioned in the play. Characters like Kañcukī, maids and other servants, hermits etc., fulfil our expectations.



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