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Mr. S. S. Vytilingam who was connected with our Printing Press for the last two years has been appointed Travelling Agent for the *Hindu Organ*. He is authorised to collect the subscriptions (arrear as well as current) due to the paper, to enlist new Subscribers, and to sign bills and receipts on behalf of the Manager, *Hindu Organ*.

P. CARTHIGASAPILLAI
(Manager, *Hindu Organ*)

Jaffna 3rd July 1901.

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N. B. The price list takes effect on the 1st of January 1902.

NOTICE

Sealed tenders (in duplicate) marked on the Envelopes "Tender for the purchase of standing timber" will be received up to noon on Friday 14th March 1902 from persons willing to purchase the under-mentioned trees in Mahamailankulam Chena in Kulakkumalai South in Vavuniya South of the Mullaitivu District, Northern Province.

For conditions see overleaf.

Species	No of trees	Approximate length.	Approximate Girth.	Estimated cubic feet.
Palu trees	1	15-0	7-0	46
Do	1	15-0	6-5	38
Do	1	16-0	6-4	37
Do	1	14-0	7-0	42
Do	1	12-0	9-0	60
Do	1	13-0	6-0	29
Do	1	12-0	8-0	48
Do	1	15-0	7-0	46
Do	1	21-0	6-4	52
Do	1	14-0	7-0	42
Do	1	12-0	6-5	30
Do	1	10-0	6-4	25
Do	1	16-0	9-4	87
Do	1	13-0	7-3	42
Do	1	12-0	6-8	33
Do	1	9-0	6-6	23
Do	1	16-0	11-4	128
Do	1	12-0	7-0	36
Do	1	22-0	7-8	80
Do	1	9-0	9-0	45
Do	1	13-0	6-9	37
Do	1	15-0	6-9	42
Do	1	17-0	6-5	43
Do	35	15-0	5-0	805
Do	40	12-0	4-0	480
Do	45	12-0	3-0	315
Do	12	12-0	2-0	36
Satin trees	12	12-0	2-0	48

Sigd/ L. W. C. SCHRADER
Asst: Govt: Agent.

Mullaitivu Kachcheri
4th February 1902.

CONDITIONS.

- The above are rough measurements.
- A few of the trees are hollow and burnt.
- Tenders are invited for the purchases of the timbers as they stand in the jungle.
- Offers will be received for the purchase of
 - all the trees in the whole block
 - all the trees of any particular species in the whole block.

- Offers may be made of lump sum or rates per tree or per cubic foot. If should be stated in the tender how payment of the purchase money will be made and within what time the trees purchased will be felled and removed from the forest.
 - In the event of a rate per cubic foot being accepted 10 per cent will be allowed for bark Etc. of cubic contents calculated from actual measurements of logs felled.
 - No tender will be accepted unless a deposit is made at time of tendering of 25 cents for every tree proposed to be purchased.
 - Tender must be sent to the Asst: Govt: Agent, Mullaitivu, and the duplicate of it to the Govt: Agent, Jaffna, both being despatched at the same time.
 - Should the persons tendering decline to enter into the contract and bond or fail to furnish security, such deposit will be forfeited to the crown.
 - All alterations in any tender should be initialled by the person signing it.
 - Security will have to be deposited in proportion to the trees purchased for the due fulfilment of the contract before it is signed.
 - The Govt: Agent reserves to himself the right without question of rejecting any or all tenders.
- Further particulars may be obtained on application to the Asst: Government Agent, Mullaitivu.

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E. CHELLAIAH.



THE HINDU ORGAN.

JAFFNA, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1902

Certain Views of Dr. Copleston.

Turning over the pages of Dr. Copleston's work on Buddhism (at random only), we find him stating that a low standard of conduct is acquiesced in as proper to Buddhists as compared with Christians. As His Lordship's words may be said to apply to Hindus also *mutatis mutandis*, we have reason for commenting on them. The Bishop thinks that a Buddhist makes no claim to the possession of the virtue of truthfulness in the same way as a Christian does. Our experience is by no means different to that of his Lordship as regards the "Mission" Christian's claim:—"You can trust me, for I am a Christian." But we differ with His Lordship when he states that Buddhists make no such claim as regards themselves. In the opinion of Dr. Copleston, a Buddhist does not only not lay claim to a high standard of conduct, but indulges in such self-criminations as the following:—"What can you expect of me, I am only a Buddhist".&c.. We cannot think that the average Buddhist, unsophisticated by Missionary influences, is such a despicable being that he condemns himself so outright. The Bishop cannot certainly lay claim to an acquaintance with Buddhists in general, but only with those who come in contact with him, being either boarders or day-scholars in Missionary educational institutions. In these institutions, Buddhist or Hindu influence is *nil*, while Christian influence is everything. Non-Christian boys, whether Buddhists or Hindus, are treated by the Principal, Masters, Padre, Preacher, and every body as inferior to Christian boys even in the possession of the ordinary virtues of humanity. At college quarrels, the Christian boy, practically by no mean better than his Hindu confrere, protests his innocence, to his master in such terms as "I am a Christian, and I won't tell a lie"; and the

non-Christian boy also who is opposed to him clinches his argument and emphasizes his point by appealing to the vanity of the Christian thus: "You are a Christian and you should not utter a falsehood." And there are also found in Missionary schools such supremely complacent boys as would on occasions of admonition or remonstrance exclaim: "Am I not an Aggani ('heathen') on your own shewing, and can you expect anything better from me." These self-condemnatory remarks are due to years of Christian domineering over weak Hindu and Buddhist boys, and proves, if any proof is wanted, the necessity of placing the education of Hindus and Buddhists in the hands of their co-religionists or Government.

While the Bishop has put down in black and white what he regards as a proof of the superior morality of Christianity or the superior conduct of Christians, the other side of the story has not been told, evidently because his Lordship cannot, in the nature of things, come to know of it. We have met with Christians by the dozen who tell us that they are Hindus at heart and that they remain in the Christian religion in order to please that man and this man or for the sake of pay. There are others, mostly in low walks of life, who in their dealings with Hindus confess to be inferior to them in such terms as "Don't I know that I am not an wearer of ashes and that you won't trust me", &c.. Isolated instances of such complacent conduct on the part of Christians does not prove the inferiority of Christianity any more than similar conduct on the part of Hindus or Buddhists proves its superiority. But the Bishop, who is so highly placed in life that he cannot know of what takes place among ordinary mortals, has hazarded the opinion that non-Christians regard a lower standard of conduct as proper to them than to Christians. We do not venture to say anything further on the subject and are content to publish his views so that the public at large may know that even Dr. Copleston is not free from the bias, conscious or unconscious, which characterizes the ordinary Christian critics of Hinduism and Buddhism.

LOCAL & GENERAL

Weather—The skies have been overcast since Saturday last, and the intense heat has been allayed by occasional drizzles. The North-East monsoon blowing at nights, there is no dew. Since going to the press to-day we have had good showers of rain.

Station Masters for the Northern Railway—Mr. Ellis Koch, a well-known Jaffna Burgher gentleman, has been appointed Station Master at Jaffna; Mr. A. Dentrom, at Kangesanturrai; Mr. A. Malachias at Chavakachcheri; and Mr. C. Page at Chunnagum. Mr. C. A. Johnpillai will be relieving Station-Master.

Agricultural Operations—The reaping of paddy crops has been commenced throughout the District. In a few villages the crops are scanty, but on the whole the yield of paddy crops is not much below the average. The planting of tobacco is over, though the cultivators met with some difficulty in procuring plants, the nurseries having been washed away by the heavy rains of December and January.

Our Government Agent—Mr. R. W. Ievers has left for Vavuniya. He will be back in Jaffna on the 28th Instant in time to see that due arrangements are made for the reception of His Excellency the Governor. His Excellency comes overland, and Mr. Ievers will before his return to Jaffna make the necessary arrangements for the accommodation of His Excellency in the rest-houses along the Central Road. Mr. F. R. Sandrasegara, the energetic Maniagar of Poonakari, accompanies the Government Agent.

Railway Materials—The B. I. S. S. "Africa" which came here on the 6th Instant is discharging her cargo which consists of heavy railway materials. They will be removed to

the main line by trillies running along the branch line to the Customs.

The Supreme Court—The first Criminal Sessions of the Supreme Court for the Northern Circuit will be holden at Jaffna on the 17th Instant and following days.

The Rt. Rev. D. Copleston D. D.—Dr. Copleston, the Bishop of Colombo, has been appointed Metropolitan of India. His Lordship's erudition and scholarship will stand him in good stead in the administration of the Metropolitan see.

Mr. A. Chellappa Pillai—This Jaffna gentleman who is employed as an Assistant Conservator of Forests under the Madras Government and stationed at Cudappah, is on a visit to his friends and relations at Jaffna.

A Marriage—The marriage of Mr. Sandrasegaram Nadarajah, the second son of Mr. J. N. Sandrasegaram, retired Superintendent of Minor Roads, Jaffna, with the fourth daughter of Mr. V. Sangarappillai, the well-known broker of Colombo, took place on the 27th Ultimo at Colombo. We congratulate the bride and bridegroom on the happy event.

The Northern Agency—It is rumoured that when Mr. Ivers proceeds to Colombo in April next to act as Colonial Secretary, Mr. H. L. Crawford who was once Principal Assistant Colonial Secretary and now Special Commissioner under the Buddhist Temporalities Ordinance, will act for him. Mr. Herbert White also is a likely *locum tenens*.

A Murder—On the 6th Instant, a Moorish woman was murdered by an alleged lunatic at Vellathoru. The murderer has been taken into custody.

A New Notary Public—We congratulate Mr. S. Velupillai, a brother of Mr. S. Sittampalam, Proctor, on his appointment as a Notary Public. Mr. Velupillai will hold office in the Vainamam East Division.

The Late Mr. C. E. D. Pennycuik—The death is announced of Mr. Pennycuik, the late Treasurer and Acting Auditor-General of Ceylon.

The New Supreme Court Judge—Mr. J. P. Middleton has arrived and assumed duties so that the Supreme Court is now composed of four Judges.

Extension of His Excellency's Term of Office—We learn from a Colombo contemporary that the reason why His Excellency's term of Office has been extended is in recognition of his "distinguished service and great success in his present office".

A Wedding in Kandy—The son of Mr. C. Ganesekaram, Shroff of the National Bank of Colombo, was married on the 3rd February to a daughter of the Shroff of the Madras Bank, Kandy. We wish the parties health, wealth, long life, and prosperity.

Mr. G. Sagaragapillai—This gentleman who is District Engineer's Clerk at Ratnapura, is on a visit to Jaffna on leave.

Mr. H. Parker—This well known officer of the Irrigation Department is about to proceed to England on a year's leave of absence. Mr. Parker is an able and energetic officer.

The Medical Officer, Marichchukaddy—Mr. F. J. Ponniah, Medical Officer at Valluvettitarai has been appointed Medical Officer at Marichchukaddy.

Mr. S. A. Theagarajah—This gentleman employed under Messrs Walker and Sons, Colombo, is on a visit to his friends and relations at Araly.

Mr. H. Oliver—The Chief Resident Engineer, Northern Railway arrived at Jaffna last week.

M. R. H. Thwaites—This well-known officer of the Telegraph Department was in our midst last week.

POINT PEDRO.

A meeting for the distribution of Prizes to the boys of the English school founded by Mr. C. Chithamparappillai was held at Valvettitarai on the evening of the 3rd Instant. R. W. Allegecon Esq., Police Magistrate, presided. The programme consisted of several recitations by the boys. The Magistrate gracefully distributed the prizes and had some words of encouragement to say to each of the students touching their recitations. He also eulogised the patriotic spirit of Mr. Chithamparappillai and his friends and assistants who have successfully conducted the institution for the last five years. The Chairman also complimented the boys on their clear and distinct pronunciation and said it was a rare accomplishment and was chiefly due to the Head master, who read a lucid and interesting report on the working of the institution. Speeches were also made by Messrs Advocate Talavasingam, Thuriappa, a Tamil Pandit, and Chithamparappillai.

Before the close of the meeting the Magistrate was garlanded and bouquets were presented by some of the boys after which rose water was sprinkled and the party dispersed after spending a pleasant evening.

Before returning to Point Pedro the Magistrate having heard of a case of stabbing held an enquiry promptly and at the spot, though the accused having heard of the Magistrate's presence was said to have absconded. Subsequently the culprit was fined Rs 10 on a charge preferred against him by his victim, a woman, and on his return from court, he is said to have inflicted knife injuries on her who at the instance of the Police Magistrate was immediately removed to the hospital for treatment.—Cor.

COLOMBO.

Weather Continues to be almost the same. The days are extremely hot, and the nights are dewy. Fever, Chickenpox, and cholera prevail here and there. This is the worst part of the year generally everywhere, but particularly in such malarial districts as N. gombo, Chilaw and Pattalam.

—I understand on good authority that A. Mailvaganam Esq., the "Laird" of Copay, was, when in Colombo last, visited by some respectable Buddhist Priests and was presented with valuable presents as souvenirs of his visit. Among such was a beautifully gilded ola copy of "Abbidharma". This is a rare book, and those who are well acquainted with it are far and few between among the Buddhists of Ceylon. It is the dharma preached to the Gods by Lord Buddha.

—An "At home" without a drop of liquor was held a few days ago by Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Perera of Colombo in anticipation of his son's marriage with a Kandian lady. The entertainment was purely of a Hindu nature, and the Hindus present on the occasion were surprised at it. There were present most of the respectable Singhalese gentlemen of Colombo. Mr. Andrew Perera, it may be added, was the first President of the Ceylon branch of the Theosophical Society, and was so for three consecutive years. He is one of the leading reformers of the Buddhist community.

—The Most Hon. Marquis Ito of Japan is to touch Colombo soon on his way home from Europe. Some Buddhists headed by Mr. Andrew Perera are preparing to present his Lordship with some suitable presents as a souvenir of his visit to the Island.

—The Buddhists are beginning to preach their religion in the Tamil language. It was only the other day, a 'bana' (sermon) was preached by a Buddhist Priest on "whatever a man soweth he shall reap".

தின விதைத்தவன் தின அறுப்பான்
வினை விதைத்தவன் வினை அறுப்பான்

—Mr. H. Dharmapala, the General Secretary of the 'Maha B dhi Society', is in our midst lecturing in different places. He is not much of a learned man, but is an earnest preacher and true patriot. He characterises God Siva as 'Kanjakaraja'. His speeches are soul-stirring and most pathetic. He cries out most earnestly during his speech.—

"Maga houha sakotharaia saka sakothari
arraku bondai eppah
ra bondai eppah
bondai eppah bondai eppah."

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE AGE OF TIRUGNANA SAMBANDA.

AUDI ALTERAM PARTEM.

(Continued from our issue of the 29th January.)

Sir,

Dealing with argument No. 5, Mr. Tamby Pillai is not right in saying that there is no historical record extant of the doings of the Jainas during the last 2500 years. Evidently there is no such record extant within Mr. Tamby Pillai's knowledge. All or even some of the records actually extant Mr. Tamby Pillai would do well to add to his library, such as Paravacharikam, Mahaveera Charaitram &c..

My argument No. 6 has been both misconceived and misrepresented. I showed that Tirumankai Alvar, Sambanda, and Tirunavukarasu were contemporaries who met each other and knew each other. Tirumankai Alvar as stated in the Vaishnava Prabandam was born during the first 1000 of Kaliyuga era. Then there is the impropria addressed to Sambanda by Tirumankai Alvar and handed down to us by tradition which I suppose is universally

acknowledged as an authority so that Mr. Tamby Pillai cannot refuse to give it credence without effectually closing perhaps the greatest source of past knowledge. There are mutual references made in the Devarams of Sambanda and Tirunavukarasu to each other which goes to show that they must have been contemporaries. Let Mr. Tamby Pillai keep in mind that the chronology of the Hindus cannot be tested by the standard of Missionary zeal which always reduces everything connected with the Hindu religion within the Christian era.

There is no reference I admit in Sambanda's Devarams to the Pallavas. But his contemporaries Tirunavukarasu and Tirumankai Alvar refer to them in theirs. Generally speaking the Tamil poets dedicated their poems and praises not to princes who lived thousands of years before their time, but to those who flourished while they were living and whose patronage they naturally sought; and there is therefore a strong presumption that the references made by Tirumankai Alvar and Tirunavukarasu to the Pallavas, who according to the well-known oriental scholar M. F. Stokes, were the foremost kings of South and Central India, are not to ancient but to contemporary sovereigns, thus showing the proximity of their time to that of the sages in question. I have also to state that in the "Puranas" mention is made of Tirumankai Alvar, Sambanda, and Tirunavukarasu to the effect that they were called into being to specially oppose Jainism, and from the account given of their successful controversial warfare against a heterodox sect making headway, the presumption is that they lived at or about the same time as the Jainas.

As a further proof I may add that Sambanda has made explicit reference in his Devarams to Nanda who was the emperor of the Continent and to his contemporary subordinate kings. The Vishnupurana records that the Nanda dynasty began about 1000 of the Kaliyuga, and this is confirmed by Greek reference to Nanda. The Nanda referred to by Diodorus Siculus as the son of a barber was the last of the illegitimate line. Hence the time fixed by the author of the Vishnu Puranam is correct. Oriental scholars hold that the Nanda dynasty flourished prior to the rise of Buddhism, and Buddhism according to them had its starting point about 2500 years ago.

A. Mootootamby Pillai

Navalarkottam,

19th January 1902.

(To be continued)

(The presumption arising from the fact that Hindu savants and sages almost always sang the praises of the kings of their own days and not of those who flourished anterior to their time is so strong that to rebut it something more than fanciful theories and inconclusive deductions generally indulged in by non-Hindu critics is required. Ed. H. O.)

SELECTIONS.

THE MAKARA SANKRANTI OR THE PONGUL FESTIVAL.

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

The most important religious and social institution of the Hindus, common to all classes of the Hindu community, irrespective of caste or sect, is the Makara Sankranti or the Pongal festival, which falls generally on the first day in the month of Tai, and sometimes on the last day of the month of Margali, which precedes Tai. The first of Tai corresponds to the 12th or the 13th January of the Anglican year and to the 4th or the 5th in the lunar half of the month of Pushya of the Telugu or the Andhra year. According to Hindu astrological calculations it is the day which marks a particular stage in the transit of the sun from the Southern limit to the Northern limit *i.e.* from Dakshinayanam to Utharayanam, and so it is called *Sankramanam* or passing over. Hence the Sankranti is the day which marks the entry of the sun into the different signs or mansions of the zodiac and as such the day in question is known as Makara Sankranti since it marks the entry of the sun into the mansion of Makara or Capricorn from the mansion of Dhanus after a period of one full month. It is a day of great rejoicing and is regarded as an auspicious one, which is sure to bring virtue, since it marks the stage of the transition of the sun from a dark and unhealthy half-year consisting entirely of unlucky days and gloomy months to a bright and cheerful, healthy half-year, made up of lucky days and fortunate periods.

As in the other festivals, Deepavali and Krithika Deepam, the sectarian element does not predominate in this feast, and the Saivite as well as the Vishnavite, and the Madhwa take part in the celebration of this all important festival without any reserve

whatever. This festival exhibits a curious combination or blending up of the Aryan element and the non-Aryan elements or the Dravidian element, and it is a hard task for us, after all, to distinguish or to discriminate one from the other. Originally an Aryan festival, this was soon modified to suit the tastes and inclinations of the conservative Dravidians of South India who gave to it a different mode of observance, since the Aryan notions appeared ridiculous in their eyes and thus we find it losing its original integrity. At first this festival was regarded by the Aryans as a festival of harvest. They were a pastoral people and at the end of the year, after a good harvest, they used to make offerings to God Indra who was regarded as the King of Heaven and the bestower of all good fruits, supplying strength and milk to the cow, and in fact the guiding spirit of all prosperity and welfare of the ancient Aryans. Hence we find in the Vedas, sacred hymns sung in praise of God Indra by the pastoral Aryans. Gradually, owing to the degeneracy of the Hindu nation, this festival soon lost its significance as a worship of Indra and finally we find it entirely lost and it is a pity that even the very little traces of the Aryan element have faded out of the memory of the existing nation, and at the present moment even the very name of the festival rings strangely in the ears of the people of Bengal. Though its significance was lost, the festival disappeared only to re-appear in its new Dravidian elements added on to it. The religious principles and doctrines of the Dravidians began to mingle with the few Aryan traces, still left undestroyed, and in later times, we find the festival observed by the South Indians as an entirely new one produced out of their own creative genius. Such is the reason for its non-prevalence among the people of the Northern Provinces of India. The above remarks can be fully verified later on, when the whole account comes to an end. But we are extremely sorry to find that, where devotion and sanctity prevailed, there exists a good deal of mirth and merriment of a rude character, with a certain degree of show and pomp about it.

The traditional origin of the Pongal festival is not as lively and interesting as can be expected, since it is so commonly and widely known among the people of South India. Yet to complete the account, the story briefly narrated winds up thus:—

The people of Aryavarta, the descendants of the original Aryans who entered India from the North, were a religious people who led a simple rural life. They were in the habit of worshipping Indra for heavy down-pour of rain on their cultivated farms in order that they may yield an abundant crop. They were happy and prosperous, and their welfare depended more or less upon the manner in which they expressed their thankfulness and devotion to God Indra. A series of happy years was always followed by another series of smiling periods, and not a single man suffered from want and misery. It so happened that there prevailed throughout the land of the Aryans and in the adjoining places, a terrible drought which devastated vast fields and blighted all the crops on which depended the entire prosperity of that ancient people. The votaries of Indra, as these Aryans were, thinking that the scarcity of water and its consequent depression were due to Indra's dissatisfaction with their present mode of offering sacrifices, began to celebrate a grand feast in honor of Indra, the God of rain, and seasons and crops. The chief feature of the festival was the offering of rice boiled in a new vessel with milk and seasoned with spices.

The news of the grand sacrificial feast soon reached the ears of the ever-vigilant Lord Sri Krishna, who, enraged at the faithlessness of his subjects, went in person and ordered them to stop their worship to Indra and urged that the offerings should not be given to Indra but only to him. The subjects, perplexed and bewildered as to their further procedure, after a deep consultation with the elders of the respective families, determined to give their offerings only to Krishna, and not to Indra. Now Indra, who was all the while in expectation of the newly prepared offerings of the shepherds thinking the delay might be due to some ill-feeling among the people themselves, sent his envoy to ascertain the real cause of the delay. But Indra was destined to meet with disappointment and his consternation knew no bounds when he learnt that all the offerings due to him by divine right were about to be given to Krishna. He sent word to the shepherds telling them that he was the rightful person to whom the offerings should be given and threatened that he would destroy all their grand preparations by employing every means that lay in his power. The shepherds thus frightened out of their wits, but still encouraged by the all-pervading influence of Krishna, refused to give him his lawful one. This stern refusal on the part of his once faithful subjects exasperated Indra all the more, who had his feelings already wounded, and thereupon he began to create perfect darkness throughout the whole sphere which came under his powerful influence and soon the skies were filled with huge gigantic black and grey clouds. The sun was powerless to thwart the evil-doings of Indra, and the Gopals were unable to continue their festivities for want of light. Soon Indra raised his sceptre and the clouds began to flood the whole universe with a heavy downpour of rain in successive torrents. For the space of seven days and nights there were perpetual falling of the rain and the whole sacrifice had to be stop-

ped as the sacrificial fire could no longer be kindled. The preparations were all utterly spoiled and great was the loss of the poor shepherds. The Yagasala, or the grand sacrificial enclosure, was immersed in deep water and the cattle of the shepherds died off in hundreds and thousands. They began to pray to Sri Krishna who was all along watching the sacrifice with a playful mirth, and Krishna moved to pity at the miserable plight in which the shepherds were placed for his sake, came to their relief and without any effort lifted the mountain henceforth known as Govardhna or the shelter of cows, and held it over the sacrificial enclosure. The shepherds with their kith and kin and with their cattle which was all the wealth they possessed, took shelter under the mountain which looked like a huge umbrella sent by the Almighty to protect the innocent flocks, through the medium of Sri Krishna. Thus Sri Krishna whose playfulness had been the cause of such dire calamities with which the people of Dwarka were visited, saved them from mighty Indra's powerful wrath. Such is the brief account of the traditional origin which goes to say that Krishna himself was the supplanter; but whatever may be the essential nature of this episode of the Bhagavatam, the main fact to be borne in mind is that from this time forwards the Aryan element began to disappear and now we find the non-Aryan element taking a prominent part in the original pastoral feast. Hence we see that the festival is no more dedicated to Indra, but Sri Krishna becomes the presiding deity of the festival. Perhaps it was the real intention of the beloved subjects of Krishna to connect his name with this primitive festival and to spread his popularity far and wide since Krishna's mighty influence was not then so felt as it was sometime hence. With the invasion of south India by the Aryans the festival underwent a through radical change, and it now appears as a pure South Indian festival, with the significances originally attached to it quite forgotten and neglected, and is now regarded as a festival solely dedicated to Surya, the sun, the God of light and brightness. Ask every South Indian peasant and he will at once tell you that the Pongal day is intended for their class to worship the Sun-God who is the giver of all mirth and cheer and comfort. Before entering into the minute details of the festival it is but necessary for me to describe certain curious social customs of the Hindus which are observed by the people for a period of one month, attended with certain religious ceremonials connected with the forthcoming annual feast of Pongal. It is the Dhanurmasam which I refer to. The Dhanurmasam is the month in which the sun remains in the mansion of the Dhanus of the zodiac. It corresponds to the Tamil month of Margali and to a period of 30 days from the 4th of the lunar half of the month of Margasira, to the 4th of the lunar half of Pushya, according to the Andra calculations of Chandramana. It is a month, the festivities of which, with special sanction, is dedicated to Sri Krishna, and during this month the votaries of Krishna pay more attention to his worship. To the Saivites, this month is very holy, as their saints Nanda and Manika Vachakar attained to salvation or Mukti. In the early morning, at four or five, the devotees rise and after a refreshing bath in the intensely cold water they perform their morning ablutions and pay homage to Sri Krishna with true devotion. Then salt pongal seasoned with pepper and ginger is offered to him for his kind acceptance. This offering is afterwards partaken of by the children and by the elder members of the family with great avidity. While others, especially, the mendicants of the pandaram and the Dasari class take their rounds in the early morning through the different streets of the village or the city stopping at the doors of the houses of wealthy men as well as the humble cultivators, and rouse the inmates who are enjoying a sound sleep after the day's hard toil and torment, by blowing the conch-shells which serve as emblems to distinguish the pandarams from other people and by beating at regular intervals the brazen gongs, the peculiar emblems of the Dasarees. The chatter-box mendicants and the Malayalabagavatis are not in any way less devoted than their brother-mendicants, and they all sing songs in praise of Krishna. As there is a profusion of pumpkin flowers in this season, the girls who have not as yet attained their maidenhood, get up in the early morning and at the thresholds of their respective house-doors they place balls of cow dung prepared in a peculiar way, and artistically decorated with pumpkin flower. The ceremonial is commonly known as Gobbi or Koppi and it is done as a homage to God Ganapati, the destroyer of impediments and obstacles. The balls are so placed that they may keep off the Bhutaganas or the evil spirits from entering the house, and that the evil effects of the closing period may pass away unchecked. At noon, these balls are collected and are made into cakes which are then pasted on the mud walls by the maid servants of the house. These cakes are afterwards used as fuel in preparing the pongal on the Sankranti day. They are in fact the fuel in reserve. Apart from the devotional worship of Krishna by the respective inmates of the house, as a sign of the modern religious upheaval in India, in some of the refined cities, men of high education and superior position rise in the early mornings at three or four, and assembling together near the sacred precincts of a temple of local fame, go round the streets in regular procession singing songs in praise of Krishna and Radha. To place this new institution on a stronger basis, they have organized regular Bhajana and Sankirtan parties which have been patronised by some of our highly cultured and wealthy natives of this part of the presidency. This digression from the usual way of describing the festival has been made with a view to impress upon the minds of the readers that the ceremonials of the Dhanurmasam are only the nucleus from which the Pongal festival has taken its growth and development.

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