VOL. III NOS. 3 & 4 OCTOBER, 1954

TAMIL CULTURE

A Quarterly Review dedicated to the study of Tamiliana

Rs. 5 yearly

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Tamil Manuscripts in European Libraries

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FROM time to time various scholars have suggested a complete cataloguing of the Tamil manuscripts and printed Tamil books available both in India and Ceylon as well as in foreign countries, but hitherto only some preparatory work necessary for the documentation of such literature has been done here and abroad.[1] The present writer undertook a tour of some of the more important libraries of Europe for purposes of a preliminary survey of Tamil material available in them, and for the short time he was able to devote to this work he has been more than amply rewarded. He, therefore, sets down briefly his finds in the hope that this account not only will stimulate further research by individual Tamil scholars visiting Europe, but also will lead to organised study sponsored by Universities with departments of Tamil and by literary and cultural associations dedicated to the furtherance of Tamil studies.[2]

PORTUGAL

(1) The Biblioteca nacional da Lisboa had a Manuscript (M. 3141) which was catalogued under the same title as the manuscript itself "*Arte da lingua malabar*". It con-

1 E.g. L. D. BARNETT and G. U. POPE, *A Catalogue of the Tamil books in the library of the British museum*, VII, 590 pp., London, 1909; *Catalogue sommaire des manuscrites indiens de la bibliothèque nationale*, Paris 1912.

2 The Universities of Annamalai, Madras, Travancore and Ceylon have Departments of Tamil. The Academy of Tamil Culture, Madras, and the Tamil Cultural Society, Colombo, are associations founded for such academic purposes.

tained 160 pages of Tamil grammar written in the Portuguese language. It has been composed after the manner of a Latin grammar and the contents showed the division of Tamil nouns into five declensions and of verbs into nine conjugations. Examples are often written in Tamil but more often transliterated in Roman characters. The grammatical rules are all given in Portuguese and often interesting comparisons are made with Portuguese and Latin grammars. For a better understanding of Tamil grammar, the student of Tamil is urged (page 7) to compare it with any Latin grammar, and he who is ignorant of Latin to compare it with the Portuguese grammar written by Joam de Barros.[3] In the examples given, the place Punnacayil is mentioned more than once *e.g.*, Eu estou pera ir cedo a punicale (Portuguese) Nan punicaligu curuku poga irugiren (Tamil).

Both from internal and external evidence, it is clear that this is a manuscript copy of the first Tamil grammar known to be compiled by a European, and is the work of the Jesuit missionary, Henrique Henriquez (1520-1600) who writing to St. Ignatius on the sixth of November 1550 from Punnacayil, South India, mentions his having completed two books :—

(*a*) Arte da grammatica da lingua malabar.

(*b*) Vocabulario da mesma lingua.[4]

(2) In the same biblioteca nacional da Lisboa was a copy (Res. 248) of the Tamil translation of the one hundred and fifty psalms printed in Tranquebar in 1747. The title page reads "*தாவீதென்கிறவர் எழுதின ஞானசங்கீதங்களுடைய பொஸ்தகம், இரண்டாம் பதித்தல்.....இது தரங்கன்பாடியிலே அச்சடிக்கப்பட்டது.*"

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[3] JOAM DE BARROS, *Grammatica da lingua portugueza*, Lisbon, 1540.

[4] See J. WICKI, *Monumenta missionum, Documenta indica* relative to the sixteenth century ; S. G. PERERA, *The Jesuits in Ceylon*, pp. 156-157, Madura, 1941.

(3) In the same library (Biblioteca nacional) was a book in Malayalam printed in Rome in the year 1772 (Res. 499). Its title page was in Latin and read "*Compendiosa legis explanatio omnibus Christianis scitu necessaria malabarico idiomate*". That the copy came from India is evident from a note made in ink "Ex libris Archiepiscopi Granganorensis, Donum Congregationi missionis Lisboni".

(4) The Museu etnologico di Belem, which as its name shows is only a museum of ethnology, has in its iron safe a copy of the earliest printed work in Tamil. This is a brochure of thirty-eight pages and contains "briefly all that a Christian should know for his salvation". It was printed by order of King Joam III of Portugal in the year 1554 in Lisbon. The Tamil portion is printed in Roman characters with an interlinear word to word Portuguese translation. It is a magnificent specimen of sixteenth century printing, and as such has a prominent place in the history of printing in Portugal.[5] A manuscript copy of this same brochure is said to exist in the municipal library of Oporto.[6]

This brochure is, according to the Prologue, the work of three Tamil-speaking Indians, Vincente de Nazareth, Jorge Carvalho and Thome da Cruz. The prologue also says that Fra Joam de Villa Conde (the Franciscan friar who laboured in Ceylon in the first half of the sixteenth century) supervised the work. The history of this particular copy should make fascinating reading.[7]

(5) Arquivo historico do ultramar has two manuscript copies of the explanation of the Gospels in Tamil, சுவிசேஷ விரித்துரை written by J. Gonsalvez, Oratorian missionary in Ceylon.

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7 See Diccionario bibliografico portuguez, Vol. II, p. 216; Vol. VII, pp. 433, 434; A. J. ANSELMO, *Bibliografia das obras impresas em Portugal no século XVI*, Lisbon, 1926.

5 AMERICO CORTEZ PINTO, *La famosa arte da imprimissao*, Lisbon 1948, Plates XVII—XX—at p. 358.

6 SOUSA VITERBO, *Diario de noticias*, 16/3/1909.

FRANCE

Paris and London are the two foreign cities which contain the largest number of Tamil literary manuscripts and rare printed books. The *catalogue sommaire des manuscrites indiens de la bibliothèque nationale,* (Paris, 1912) is now out of print. The reference copy in the Bibliothèque nationale contained a great number of corrections and more accurate entries which had been made subsequently by better-informed curators. There is, however, need for a complete revision of the catalogue, and for identifying the numerous palm-leaf manuscripts that have not yet been studied.

(1) The catalogue contained the titles of several palm-leaf manuscripts of the *Tolkappiyam,* the *Tirukkural,* the minor didactic works, the *Kambaramayanam,* as well as titles like :—

(a) "சறளிப் புத்தகம்",

(b) "அகஸ்தியர் வயித்தியம்",

(c) "புதுச்சேரியம்மன் பேரில் விருத்தம்",

(d) "வேங்கை உலா",

(e) "மாணிக்கவாசகர் பிள்ளைத் தமிழ்",

(f) "சதிநூல்",

(g) "தேவமாதா பிள்ளைத் தமிழ்",

(h) "அருளப்பர் நாடகம்",

(i) "இஸ்தாக்கியார் வாசகப்பா",

(j) "மயிலை கபாலீஸ்வரன் அந்தாதி",

(k) "சிறீரங்க புராணம்".

(2) The Bibliothèque nationale contains a great number of manuscript dictionaries, published and unpublished, of incalculable value to the study of Tamil lexicography. The dictionaries compiled in Latin and Portuguese by Joseph Constantine Beschi for the literary language and the collo-

quial dialect are to be found in this library, as well as French translations of these dictionaries. Manuscript "Indien No. 225" is a very valuable French-Tamil-Telugu Dictionary.[8]

(3) Manuscripts "Indien 222" and "Indien 223" turned out to be two of the most interesting finds of the tour. They were entitled respectively "*Vocabulario Tamulico Lusitano*" and "*Vocabulario Lusitano Tamulico*". The first manuscript is a Tamil Portuguese dictionary of two hundred and twenty pages of folio size, each page divided into two columns, and has about seventy words per page. The second manuscript, a Portuguese Tamil dictionary, bore evidence of excellent penmanship and consisted of one hundred and twenty-seven pages written in two columns. I was subsequently able to identify these manuscripts as copies of a Tamil-Portuguese. Portuguese-Tamil dictionary that was compiled by Fr. Antam de Proenza and published at Ambalacadu, near Cochin, in the year 1679.

A great number of rare printed books connected with Tamil studies are to be found in the Library of the Ecole des langues orientales vivantes, in Rue de Lille, Paris. The following rare books of this library are among those which seem worthy of notice by scholars.

(1) Carolus Graul, *Bibliotheca Tamulica, sive opera praecipua Tamuliensium, edita translata adnotationibus glossariisque instructa,* Leipzig, 1854-1865, 4 Vols.

(2) *Vocabulary of English Sinhalese and Tamil languages,* 64 pp., Colombo, 1877.

(3) Bunyan's *Pilgrim Progress* in Tamil and English, Madras, 1826.

(4) R. Graul, *Indische Sinnpflanzen und Blumen,* 1865.

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8 For the different manuscript copies of Beschi's dictionaries in the Bibliothèque nationale and in other libraries, see L. BESSE, *Father Beschi, His times and his writings,* pp. 222-231, Trichinopoly, 1913.

(5) E. Lamairesse, *Poèsies Populaires de Sud de l'Inde traduction et notices,* 364 pp. Paris, Lacroix, 1867.

(6) N. E. Kindersley, *Specimens of Hindoo literature : consisting of translations from the Tamil language,* pp. XIII, 335, London, 1794.

(7) *Le livre de l'amour de Tirouvalluva, traduit de Tamoul* par G. De Brrigue de Fointaineau, Paris, 1889. This book is a translation of the Kāmattupal, and has a preface written by Julien Vinson. Professor Vinson states that about the year 1761, a complete French translation of the Kural made by a native of Karaikal was deposited in the Royal (now National) Library by a Colonel of the French Army. No trace has been found so far of this manuscript.

VATICAN CITY

The manuscript section of the Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana contains some rare Tamil books which are not found in other libraries of Europe. The manuscripts and books pertaining to India have not been catalogued with any precision, and hence it took time and a great deal of co-operation on the part of the staff to have access to some of the rare books treasured within the walls of the Vatican library.

(1) Borgiano Ind. 12. This proved to be the printed copy of the manuscripts found in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, under "Indien 222 and 223". The title page read as follows : *Vocabulario Tamulico com a significaçam Portugueza composto pello P. Antam de Proenza da companhia de Iesu missionario da Missam de Madurey.*

Na imprensa tamulica da Provincia do Malabar, por Ignacio Aichamoni impressor della Ambalacatta em 30 de lulho, 1679 annos.

The writer identified it as a copy of the famous dictionary printed at Ambalacadu in 1679 at the Tamil Press set up by the Jesuits. The author mentions in his preface a

dictionary compiled by Fr. Ignacio Bruno (1579—1659) in Jaffna. Within the covers of the dictionary is a manuscript of Tamil grammar entitled "*Arte Tamulica*".[9]

(2) Vat. Ind. 24. This turned out to be the far-famed *Flos Sanctorum* by Henrique Henriquez published on the Fishery Coast in the year 1587. Though several authors on the missions have mentioned this work, this particular copy had remained unidentified. It contained a Spanish introduction that was hand-written and the title read "*Libro do las vidas di algunos santos trasladadas en lengua malavar*". It is a magnificent volume of six hundred and sixty pages, and for the first attempts at Tamil printing it is a masterly achievement. It contains the lives of the important saints of each month and reflections on the chief feasts and mysteries celebrated during the year. It is the greatest attempt of the sixteenth century to express Christian thoughts through the medium of Tamil.

(3) Borgiano Ind. 7. This is a copy of the New Testament printed in Tamil at Tranquebar in the year 1714. It consists of four hundred and ninety-four pages and is de-

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9 *The Tamil Lexicon*, University of Madras, 1936, in Introduction, pp. xxxvi, xxxvii, speaks of Fr. Antam de Proenza's dictionary, as well as of three of Father Beschi's dictionaries as being unavailable. The *Kodumtamil — Latin* dictionary is available with a number of persons. The present writer saw in 1945 at least forty copies of the work at Bishop's House, Trichinopoly. A copy with the present writer is entitled *Vulgaris Tamulicae linguae dictionarium tamulico — latinum, auctore P. Constantio Josepho Beschio S.J., Trichinopoly, excudebat Pakkiam Pillay, filius Veda Nayagam Pillay, Typis South India Times, dictis, 1882.*

D. FERROLI, *The Jesuits in Malabar*, Bangalore City, 1939, in a note on the first printing presses in India, ibid. p. 470 quotes Bishop Medlycott as writing in the last century (the date of the note is not given) : "In 1679 Fr. Anthony de Provensa printed at St. Paul's College, Ambalacad, the first Portuguese-Tamil dictionary, possessing this peculiarity that the Tamil section was engraved on wooden blocks, while the Portuguese was printed in movable type. The appearance is smudgy. I saw a copy with my late secretary, Bishop Menacheri, at Trichur".

dicated to Frederick IV of Denmark. The dedication is signed by Bartholomaeus Zigenbalg and Iohannes Ernestus Gründler.

(4) Borg. P. F. Ind. 6. is an interesting poem entitled பள்ளிப் புள்ளையார் சிந்து. It is written in ink on thick white paper and probably belongs to the sixteenth or seventeenth century.

(5) Borg. 29 and 30 are brochures printed at Tranquebar. Borg. 30 is a பஞ்சாங்கம் of sixteen pages for the year 1792, and was probably printed in 1791. Borg. 29 is a brochure of seventy two pages printed in the year 1772, and deals with the problem of the salvation of the gentiles.

(6) Vat. Ind. 18 is a palm-leaf manuscript of the lives of the Twelve apostles in verse, and is a hitherto unknown composition.

(7) The Library of the Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith had at one time several Tamil manuscripts and printed books which were sent later to the Vatican Library. At present a copy of an English translation of the Nannool is one of the more rare books — "*English translations of the Nannool. Designed for use of University students by a Tamil graduate of the Madras University*" *47 pp.* 224 pp., Hobart Press, Madras, 1878.

NOTANDA

1. These are some of the important manuscripts and rare books seen on this preliminary survey. So many were the Tamil manuscripts and books sent to Europe during the last four centuries that to-day they should be found not only in the important libraries of European Capitals but also in provincial towns like Evora and Oporto, and with private collectors and families which have had civil, military and religious persons working in India, Ceylon and Malaya. Palm-leaf manuscripts turn up for sale occasionally and the European book-market has sprung the greatest surprises for collectors of Tamil documents.

2. Tamil manuscripts and rare books are to be expected mostly in countries which have had political and religious connections with South India and Ceylon, such as Portugal, France, Italy, England, Holland, Denmark, and Germany. But so unpredictable are the ways manuscripts travel that one should not be surprised if a manuscript of Tamil interest turned up at Oslo or Athens.

3. The civil and ecclesiastical libraries, chiefly of Portugal, Italy and Holland contain documents of great value for the history of the Tamil language and culture during the last four hundred and fifty years. Examples of the earliest Tamil writing on paper exist in documents that reached Portugal in the sixteenth century from such diverse places as Tuticorin, Malacca and the Court of the Sinhalese kings of Kotte.[10] The vast correspondence of the Jesuits, the Franciscans and other religious orders, as well as of the other Europeans engaged in civil and military occupations in the Tamil country yet remains to be studied.

In the first part of this century, it was believed that there remained no sample of Tamil printing of the sixteenth century. But a diligent search and research have brought to light four printed works of the sixteenth century.[11] They are (a) The *Cartilha* of 36 pages printed in Lisbon in the

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10 See G. SCHURHAMMER, *Ceylon sur zeit des königs Bhuvaneka Bahu und Franz Xavers*, 2 Vols; Leipzig, 1928; and *Die Zeitgenossischen Quellen zur geschichte Portugiesisch — Asiens und seiner nachbarlander* 1538—1552, Leipzig, 1932; M. A. HEDWIG FITZLER, *Os tombos de Ceilaõ da seccao ultramarina da biblioteca nacional*, Lisbon, 1927; PIERIS-FITZLER, *Ceylon and Portugal*, Leipzig, 1927, fails to mention or translate the Tamil sentences in the letters from the Court of the King of Kotte, though reproducing in a frontispiece plate the Tamil writing which precedes the signature of the Sinhalese king.

11 See G. SCHURHAMMER and G. W. COTTRELL, *The first printing in Indic characters* in the *Harvard Library Bulletin*, Vol. VI, No. 2, pp. 147-160, 1952.

year 1554 ; (b) The *Doctrina Christiana* of 16 pages by Henrique Henriquez and Manuel de Sao Pedro printed in Quilon in the year 1578 ; (c) The *Doctrina Christam* of 120 pages by Henrique Henriquez printed at Cochin in the year 1579 ; and (d) The *Flos Sanctorum* of six hundred and sixty pages by Henrique Henriquez printed (probably at Punnaikayil on the Fishery Coast) in the year 1887.

More important and interesting discoveries await the enterprising Tamil scholar that is prepared to work in European libraries.

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Manikkavacakopanisad

(The Tiruvacagam — An Upanishad)

G. VANMIKANATHAN

THE FOUR, as Sambandar, Appar, Sundarar and Manikkavacagar are lovingly called in Tamil-land, were the spearhead of a revolutionary movement in matters religious and spiritual in the South. A decadence had set in the religious life of the people. One of the causes, it may safely be presumed, was the entombment of the spiritual treasures — the heritage of the people — within the forbidding walls of Sanskrit. The common man was left with the shells of religion, the empty rituals and ceremonials, and the periodical festivals which had, as now, become commercialised into huge fairs and mere congregation of the people without the spiritual communion which had in earlier times characterised such concourses of people. The apostles of other religions found their opportunity in this very favourable atmosphere and seized the minds of the people with their tenets and beliefs, and had very soon made converts of the kings of the land, after which the conversion of the people was but the enforcement of a royal decree. The people were confused and torn among themselves. These four saints came to them as the leaders of the spiritual renaissance of Tamil-land. They did not come to establish any institutional religion. They came to restate the great truth — the perennial philosophy — and to lead the people towards the Godhead. It is therefore that we find all their outpourings of song are mystical in character.

"A mystical vein of thought had been present[1]", writes Ranade in his Introduction to 'Mysticism in Maharash-

1 "Mysticism", declares Ranade in his "A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy" (end of Ch. 1) "was the culmination of Upanishadic philosophy, as it is the culmination of all philosophies,

tra"[2], "throughout the development of Indian Philosophy from the age of the Upanishads downwards ; but it assumes an extraordinary importance when we come to the second millenium of the Christian Era which sees the birth of the practical spiritual philosophy taught by the Mystics of the various provinces of India." But even three to four centuries before this period, South India saw the birth of a mysticism with a genius of its own.

Discussing the difference between the mysticism of the Upanishads and the mysticism of the Middle Age, to which our saints also may be said to belong, Ranade says, "the mysticism of the Upanishads is different from the mysticism of the Middle Age, in as much as it was merely a tidal wave of the philosophy of the ancient seers while the other was the natural outcome of the heart, full of piety and devotion, the consciousness of sin and misery and final desire to assimilate with the Divine. The Upanishadic mysticism was a naive philosophical mysticism ; the mysticism of the Middle Age was a mysticism which hated all philosophical explanations or philosophical imaginings as useless, when contrasted with the practical appropriation of the Real. The Upanishadic mysticism was the mysticism of men who lived in cloisters far away from the bustle of humanity, and who, if they permitted any company at all, permitted only the company of their disciples. The Mysticism of the Middle Age was a mysticism which engrossed itself in the practical upliftment of the human kind, based on the sure foundation of one's own perfect spiritual development. The Upanishadic mysticism did not come forward with the deliberate purpose of mixing with men in order to ameliorate their spiritual condition. The business of the mystic of the Middle Age consisted in mixing with the ordinary run of man-

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and one who does not understand that the cosmology and the psychology, the metaphysics and the ethics of the Upanishads are merely a propaedeutic (preparatory introduction) to their mystical doctrine can scarcely be said to have understood the spirit of Upanishadic Philosophy."

2 History of Indian Philosophy : Vol : 7. Indian Mysticism — Mysticism in Maharashtra (1933) by R. D. Ranade, Professor of Philosophy, University of Allahabad.

kind, with sinners, with pariahs, with women, with people who cared not for the spiritual life, with people who had even mistaken notions about it, with, in fact, everybody who wanted, be it ever so little, to appropriate the Real. We may say," concludes Ranade, "that as we pass from the Upanishadic mysticism to the mysticism of the Middle Age, we see the spiritual life brought from the hidden cloisters to the market-place."

Substitute 'Tiruvacagam' for 'Middle Age' wherever it occurs and the genius of the Tiruvacagam stands revealed.

Thus arose, as Ranade says, "a Democratic Mysticism which laid stress upon the vernaculars as the medium of mystical teaching, as opposed to the Classical Mysticism of ancient times, which had Sanskrit as its language of communication. It was a democratisation not merely in language, but also in the spirit of teaching and we see how mysticism became the property of all."

These differences should not be allowed, however, to lead us to the conclusion that Manikkavacagar reveals something different from or antagonistic to the teachings of the earliest of the world's Mystics — the Seers of the Upanishads. To quote Ranade again, "the mystics of all ages and countries form an eternal divine society. There are no religious, no communal, no national prejudices among them. Time and place have nothing to do with the eternal and infinite character of their mystical experience....They have the same teachings about the name of God, the fire of devotion, the nature of Self-realisation.[3] It is only due to overweening superciliousness certain people regard the mystics of one country or religion as different from, or superior to, the mystics of other lands or faiths. If all men are equal before God and if men have got the same 'deiform faculty', which enables them to 'see God face to face', then, there is no meaning in saying that there is a difference between the quality of God-realisation of some as apart

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[3] See 'The Verities of Tiruvacagam' in *Tamil Culture* (September, 1953).

from the God-realisation of others. It is true that there may be physical, mental, and temperamental differences, but there is no difference in the quality of their mystical or intuitive realisation." The Tiruvacagam, therefore, made available to the people of Tamil-land the same pathway to Godhead even as the Upanishads did. If there is a distinction, it is this, — the Upanishads state the proposition, the Tiruvacagam furnishes the proof.

The very elements of democratisation which are the Tiruvacagam's metier are also the cause of the people's failure to realise its identity with the perennial truths revealed in the Upanishads. "In Manikkavacagar, the man of golden utterances," writes Ranade, "we see the upsurging of a natural devotion to God, which through a consciousness of his faults, rises by gradation to the apprehension of the Godhead. In his great poem he makes us aware of his past joy and exultation, his consciousness of his faults, his intensive shame and his final recovery and triumph." But the songs of the Tiruvacagam are so familiar to us that they slide off our mind without full comprehension. The cadence of the songs, the unique sweetness of the Tamil language, the use of simple household words to whose pregnant and poignant thought—content the Tamil mind had become insensible through over-familiarity, these characteristics contribute to our unawareness of the great heritage we have in the Tiruvacagam. Its flood of devotional outpourings has submerged the scintillating crystals of spiritual teaching even as a torrent of tears hides the lustrous iris of the eye. Thousands of poems composed by imitators in similar language, if not with similar content, have become popular among the people and have dulled their comprehension of the unique qualities of the Tiruvacagam.

It is the purpose of this essay to bring to relief the Upanishadic mysticism in the Tiruvacagam and to establish its claim to the name and fame of an Upanishad dedicated to the Tamil people.

II

The first four *agavals* in particular are nothing if not Upanishadic in character, and the rest of the work is but a development of these four *agavals*.

The first *agaval*, SIVA PURANAM is constructed even as the Upanishads are constructed. Upanishads begin with a prayer or invocation asking for the blessings of God and the Guru. The Tiruvacagam opens with these lines : [4]

நமச்சிவாய வாஅழ்க நாதன்தாள் வாழ்க
இமைப்பொழுதும் என் நெஞ்சில் நீங்காதான் தாள்வாழ்க
கோகழி யாண்ட குருமணிதன் தாள்வாழ்க
ஆகமம் ஆகிநின் றண்ணிப்பான் தாள்வாழ்க
ஏகன் அநேகன் இறைவ னடிவாழ்க

(*May*) Namasivaya[5] bless (*us*)[6]
(*May*) the Feet of Him who is Vibration[7] bless (*us*) !

(*May*) the Feet of Him, who never relinquishes my heart for even as much as it takes to wink, bless (*us*) !

(*May*) the Feet of the Jewel, my Guru, who in Kokazi enthralled me, bless (*us*) !

(*May*) the Feet of Him who stands (*revealed*) as the Scriptures and draws (*mankind*) unto Him bless (*us*) !

(*May*) the Feet of the Lord who is One and the many bless (*us*) !

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4 The writer has preferred to translate in his own words the required passages from the Tiruvacagam rather than use Dr. Pope's rendering. Wherever the latter has been used, due acknowledgment is made.

5 Na-ma-si-va-ya i.e., the mystic five letters which stand for and symbolise the Omkara or Brahman.

6 '(May we by) Namasivaya bless(ed) be (i.e., live in bliss) would be nearer the sense. So also the other lines.

7 The Omkara.

"The Feet of the Lord," sings Appar, "are the knowledge gained by learning, the Content of that knowledge, the resonant Vedas of the Brahmins, the sacrifices, the heavens and the earth, the effulgent light, the golden sun, the moon, the beginning and the end."

In one word, the Feet are the All. The Feet are the Omkara, the Brahman.

It was therefore that Manikkavacagar sang :

Hail ! grant in Your grace the flower, your feet —
(*which are*) the beginning,
Hail ! grant in Your grace the tender shoots—your feet—
(*which are*) the end,
Hail ! your golden feet, the origin of all creatures,
Hail ! your anklet (*ringed*) feet, flower soft,
the felicity of all creatures.
Hail ! your twin feet, the end of all creatures,
.....
Hail ! the golden blossoms which, that we may blissful become, enthrall us and bestow (themselves on us) in their grace.

The Feet and all they connote are verily the Om, for the Mandukya Upanishad opens with this Sloka :

> *"All this is the letter Om. It is explained thus :*
> *All that was, that is, and that will be is the Om.*
> *And also what is beyond all time is verily the Om.*
> *All this is assuredly Brahman."*

and the Katha Upanishad tells us (1. 2. 15, 16) :

> *"That word which all the Vedas declare, which all the austerities proclaim, desiring which (people) live the life of a religious saint, that word to thee I shall tell in brief, that is Om. This syllable verily is the everlasting spirit (Brahman).*

The Tiruvacagam fittingly opens with Omkara. Namasivaya, Vibration, the Feet all stand for Om.

III

The five lines which follow continue with a prayer for the Feet of the Lord to prevail over rebirth and the non-devotees, and to assume lordship over the devotees. The next six lines take up the Invocation into a paean of the Lord's Feet.

The Prologue which follows is composed in the ancient tradition, and is dedication, announcement of the subject and humble confession of incompetence.

Dedication

சிவனவனென் சிந்தையுள் நின்ற அதனால்
அவனரு ளாலே அவன்தாள் வணங்கி

For that the Supreme Bliss stood ever established in my heart,
By His grace His feet worshipping.....

The Mandukya Upanishad (7th sloka) concludes :

> *"Neither inward consciousness, nor consciousness of the intermediary state, nor ingathered nothing else as to consciousness, nor (total) consciousness, nor unconsciousness, — what is invisible, unrelated, unperceivable, devoid of all connotations, unthinkable, undefinable, essentially of the nature of self consciousness alone, negation of all relative existence, peaceful, of supreme bliss and unitary — that is the Atman, He is to be realised."*

The eighth verse avers :

> *"That is the self, which is the nature of the syllable Om."*

Radhakrishnan,[8] explaining the phrase 'that is the self' says, "it is the deepest essence of the soul, the image of God head."

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8 'The Principal Upanishads' by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan (1953)

The Upanishad concludes (12th sloka) :

"The transcendental, unitary state of supreme bliss devoid of all phenomenal existence is the syllableless, fourth (aspect) — thus Om is verily the Atman. By self, he enters the Self, who knows thus."

It is significant that the word in the text for 'supreme bliss' is शिव (*siva*). शिवोऽद्वत एनमोंआर आत्मैव is the full text. *Siva — advaita — evam — Omkara — atma — eva.* The supreme bliss — unitary — thus — Omkara — the Atma — verily.[9] Therefore Manikkavacagar sings, 'For that the Supreme Bliss stood established in my heart'. For, does not the Mundaka Upanishad say (II. 2. 6.) :

"Where the arteries of the body are brought together like the spokes in the centre of the wheel, within it (this self moves about) becoming manifold. Meditate on Om as the Self. May you be successful in crossing over the shore of darkness." (R)[10].

அவனரு ளாலே அவன்தாள் வணங்கி

'By His grace His Feet worshipping.'

The Katha Upanishad says (II. 15, 16, 20, 23.) :

"The goal which all Vedas proclaim....it is Om. This syllable is Brahman. The Atman (Brahman) smaller than the smallest and greater than the greatest, dwells in the heart of the creatures. This Atman cannot be attained by the Vedas, nor by intellect, nor even by much hearing the sacred scriptures ; by him it is attained whom It chooses, — this his (own) Atman reveals Its own (real) form."

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[9] This is why நாதன் (*nadan*) has been translated elsewhere as 'He who is Vibration', i.e. the syllableless Om, — the Brahman.

[10] (R) — Radhakrishnan.

Meditate now on Manikkavacagar's Upanishadic words :

அவனரு ளாலே அவன்தாள் வணங்கி

'By His grace His Feet worshipping.'

i.e.

"By him It is attained whom It chooses."

Announcement

சிந்தை மகிழச் சிவபுரா ணந்தன்னை
முந்தை வினைமுழுதும் ஓய உரைப்பன்யான்

With rejoicing heart, the Supreme Bliss — the Ancient One, verily It, (to the end) that my former karma may cease, I shall utter.

The Prasna Upanishad (v.5) declares :

"Again, he who meditates upon the Supreme Purusha by Om, as constituted of three syllables becomes united with the effulgent Sun. He is freed of all sins, even as the snake is freed from its slough. He is taken up to the world of Brahma by the Sama Hymns. From that mascrocosmic self he beholds the Supreme Purusha residing in the heart.

Anandagiri's illuminating comment on this verse is :

"The knower of the three elements, a-u-m,.....obtains liberation and is not forced to return to mundane life. He sees the Supreme Iswara who is beyond the world-soul and that vision qualifies him for liberation."

The same is declared by our Mystic in his verses quoted above.

Humility

நின் பெருஞ்சீர்
பொல்லா வினையேன் புகழுமா றொன்றறியேன்

.....**Thy glory great,**
I, of malignant karma, know naught to praise.

This is the language of one who has realised Brahman. The Kena Upanishad has these slokas about it (II. 1 to 3) :

Disciple (after reflecting further and realising Brahman) : "I think I have understood Brahman."

"I do not think that I know it well ; nor do I think that I do not know it. He who among us knows it, knows it and he, too, does not know that that he does not know."

Preceptor : "To whomsoever it is not known, to him it is known ; to whomsoever it is known, he does not know. It is not understood by those who understand it ; it is understood by those who do not understand it."

"I think I have understood Brahman", says the disciple. Manikkavacagar too declares in unequivocal terms :

மெய்யே உன் பொன்னடிகள் கண்டின்று வீடுற்றேன்
Verily, this day, Your golden Feet I saw, and release gained

All this Manikkavaccagar sings for us in verily Sama hymns, in peerless sweet Tamil.

IV

The Tiruvacagam is as much 'Sruti' — a Revelation — as the Vedas, Brahmanas and the Upanishads are. Ranade, in his "Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy" ventures to think that "the real meaning of Revelation seems to be not any external message delivered to man from without, but a divine afflatus speaking from within, the result of inspiration through god-intoxication. It was for this reason," he points out, "that Plato explained in his *Ion,* the origin of poetical composition through the afflatus of god-intoxication." 'The authors of those great poems,' says Plato, 'do not attain to excellence through the rules of any art, but they utter their beautiful melodies of verse in a state of inspiration, and, as it were, possessed by a spirit not their own. Thus the composers of lyrical poetry create those admired songs of theirs

in a state of divine insanity..... Thus every rhapsodist or poet.....is excellent in proportion to the extent of his participation in the divine influence, and the degree in which the Muse itself has descended on him.... And thus it appears to me.....that these transcendent poems are not human, as the work of men, but divine, as coming from God.' "It was in this way, " concludes Ranade, " that we may say that the Vedic seers composed their hymns, and the Upanishadic philosophers set forth their intellectual arguments." We are now able to understand why Manikkavacagar sings thus :

சிவனவனென் சிந்தையுள் நின்ற அதனால்
.....சிவபுரா ணந்தன்னை
.....உரைப்பன் யான்

For that the supreme bliss stood established in my heart,
.....the Siva-puranam, verily it, I shall utter.

V

Manikkavacagar condenses all the Upanishadic texts quoted above in one illuminating line, the very first after the invocation, dedication and confession, — all which are in the nature of a preface to this single glorious line.[11]

உய்யளன் உள்ளத்துள் ஓங்கார மாய்நின்ற
மெய்யா

O Truth, who stood established within my heart as Omkara, that I might have eternal bliss !

Brahman itself is the Omkara, the syllableless Om, the Vibration, and its seat is the heart. The next two lines are unsurpassed for their brevity and, nevertheless, clear declara-

11 The seven lines preceding this one have been passed over as they have been dealt with in 'The Verities of Tiruvacagam' (Tamil Culture, Septemper, 1953).

tion of the greatest mystic Upanishadic truth, which the Upanishads themselves take numerous slokas to reveal.

.....விமலா விடைப்பாகா வேதங்கள்
ஐயா எனவோங்கி ஆழ்ந்தகன்ற நுண்ணியனே

O Spotless One, O Rider astride Om, who—while the Vedas (*try to reach*) hail (*ing*) 'O Lord' — (*you elude them and*) (*as the*) O subtile One, rise to the zenith, penetrate to the nadir, and pervade all sides (*in my heart*).

छन्दसामृषभो (Chandasam rsabho) is the word in the Taittiriya Upanishad (I.4.I). Sankara commenting on this word says, "the syllable 'Om' is preeminent among the Vedic hymns. It is 'of all forms' as the whole universe is its manifestation."

Swami Sharavanandà,[12] commenting on this word in an extensive and exhaustive note, observes as follows: "The epithet 'Rsabha', according to the traditional Advaitic interpretation, refers to Om, the symbol and designation of Brahman." Hence விடைப்பாகா (Vidaippaga) is translated here as 'O Rider astride Om'. The Vedas try to reach Him, hailing Him, 'O supreme Lord', but he eludes them. "The Atman cannot be attained by the Vedas....." sings the Prasna Upanishad (II.15 to 23). But the Brahman, as the subtile One, rises, penetrates and pervades, not in the external world but in the heart. Of this we shall speak later on.

VI

The Mundaka Upanishad (II.2. 1, 2,3, 4, 5) exhorts the aspirant in these inspiring words:

"The self-luminous (Brahman) is seated in the cavity of the heart and is known as moving there..... Oh good looking youth, strike at that which should be struck.

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[12] Editor, translator, and commentator of the Ramakrishna Mutt editions of the Upanishads.

"Taking the bow, that mighty weapon, as prescribed in the Upanishads, fix in it the arrow rendered sharp by constant worship. Oh good looking youth, having drawn it with the mind absorbed in His thought, hit the mark,— the Imperishable Brahman.

"The Pranava (Om) is the bow, the arrow indeed is the atman *and Brahman is said to be its mark. Carefully that mark is to be hit and one has to become absorbed in Him just like the arrow at one with its mark.*

"Lives there within, in manifold ways, where the arteries of the body are brought together like the spokes in the centre of a wheel, within it (this Atman moves about) becoming manifold. Do you meditate upon that Atman as Om. Godspeed to you (in your journey) beyond, across the darkness!"

In the case of Manikkavacagar, the arrow has truly hit its mark—the arrow and the mark have merged, becoming the Omkara dwelling in the heart. Therefore, what is a supplication, a prayer in the Brahdaranyaka Upanishad becomes a reality with Manikkavacagar. This Upanishad chants this world famous prayer :

From the Unreal lead me to the Real,
From Darkness lead me to Light
From Death lead me to Immortality.

Translating the aspiration to a realisation, Manikkavacagar sings in ecstasy thus :

வெய்யாய் தணியாய் இயமான னெம்விமலா
பொய்யா யினவெல்லாம் போயகல வந்தருளி
மெய்ஞ்ஞான மாகி மிளிர்கின்ற மெய்ச்சுடரே
எஞ்ஞானம் இல்லாதேன் இன்பப் பெருமானே
அஞ்ஞானம் தன்னை அகல்விக்கும் நல்லறிவே
ஆக்கம் அளவிறுதி யில்லாய் அனைத்துலகும்
ஆக்குவாய் காப்பாய் அழிப்பாய் அருள்தருவாய்
போக்குவாய் என்னைப் புகுவிப்பாய் நின்தொழும்பின்.

As heat, as coolness, as sacrificer (*respectively*),
O spotless One,
Graciously coming (*as heat*) that all (*which is*) falseness might dispelled be,
Thou, Flame of the Real, as true knowledge shineth;
Void of aught wisdom (*am*) I, O Lord, that art bliss,
(*As cool grace thou art*) the dispeller of that ignorance,
O Preeminent Wisdom!
O Thou with neither beginning, limit or end!
all the world
Thou createth, sustaineth, destroyeth, grace bestoweth,
And send forth (*again*). Do Thou (*as sacrificer*) lead me into Thy fold.[13]

From death (involving rebirth), which all the five functions of the Lord are in essence, he prays to be led into the fold, — into Immortality.

VII

This supreme bliss, the syllableless Om, the means which becomes the end, the arrow and its mark, can neither be expressed by speech nor perceived by the mind.

> *"That from which all speech recoil along with mind being unable to reach It"*

is the Upanishad (Taittiriya II.4.1).

மாற்றம் மனங்கழிய நின்ற மறையோனே

"thou art the Mystic Word transcending word and thought" translates Rev. Pope. It is however not merely the Word; it is Brahman itself.

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[13] *தொழும்பு* (thozumbu) literally means service, servitude. A consideration of the Sivagnana Bodam Sutra "*அவனே தானேயான அந் நெறி ஏகனுகி இறைபணி நிற்க, மலமாயை தன்னெடும் வல்வினை இன்றே.*
(If one stands established in the service of the Lord, becoming one with Him by the path or law of Him verily becoming the Self, the passions along with illusion and the powerful karma become nought) will show that servitude to the Lord is indeed immortality.

VIII

"This Atman hidden in all beings, reveals (Itself) not (to all), but is seen (only) by the subtle-seers through their pointed and subtle intellect."

This Atman, the Purusha, the Supreme Goal spoken of thus in the Katha Upanishad (III. 11) is indeed that which is the

கூர்த்தமெஞ் ஞானத்தார் கொண்டுணர்வார் தங்கருத்தின்
நோக்கரிய நோக்கே நுணுக்கரிய நுண்ணுணர்வே

of Manikkavacagar which he hails thus :

O Vision, rare to be viewed, O Vision of the inner vision of those who intuit (*Thee*) with pointed wisdom true, O subtle Intuition, unsurpassedly subtile !

IX

There was, however, never any time when this Omkara, the Atman, the Brahman, the Purusha was not there within the heart. It is there in the Dark Night of the soul as much as It is in the illuminated state. Manikkavacagar therefore sings :

நள்ளிருளில் நட்டம் பயின்றுடும் நாதனே
தில்லையுட் கூத்தனே

O Vibration (*Omkara*) stepping a dance in the Dark Night (*of my soul*)

O Dancer in Tillai !

Tillai here is not a town in the South Arcot District. It is the place in the heart where धी: (dhī) = the intellect लय् *lie* (fusion, extinction, a place of rest, the supreme being) = merges, i.e., where the intellect merges.[14]

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14 Compare எல் el, i.e., light, the sun's rays, லை, *lie*, i.e., extinction, thus gaining the meaning of boundary. For to man, the first boundary was as far as his eye could see, the horizon.

The Katha Upanishad has this sloka about this :

> *"The wise man should merge speech in mind ; the latter he should merge in the intellect. The intellect he should merge in the great self. That he should merge in Sāntātman, the tranquil self." (III. 13)*

"The soul," explains Radhakrishnan, "must go beyond all images in the mind, all workings of the intellect, and by the process of abstraction, the soul is rapt above itself and flows into God in whom are peace and fullness."

"Purusha answers to the Sāntātman," explains Radhakrishnan. The dancer (koothan) in Tillai is this Sāntātman.

The Upanishad continues (III. 15) :

> *"Having realised that (Atman) which is soundless touchless, formless, imperishable, and also without taste and smell, eternal, without beginning or end, (even) beyond the Mahat, immutable, — one is released from the jaws of Death."*

The complement of death being birth, Manikkavacagar sings :

> அல்லற் பிறவி அறுப்பானே
> **Thou who dost sever the affliction of birth**

and concludes.

> .....ஓவென்று
> சொல்லற் கரியானைச் சொல்லித் திருவடிக்கீழ்
> சொல்லிய பாட்டின் பொருளுணர்ந்து சொல்லுவார்
> செல்வர் சிவபுரத்தி னுள்ளார் சிவனடிக் கீழ்ப்
> பல்லோரு மேத்தப் பணிந்து.
>
> **.....(therefore) the blessed ones, the indwellers at the Feet of the Supreme Bliss in the heart — the city of bliss —, intuiting the subject of the said song, in obeisance call him the O (m), — Him, the Inexpressible.**

சிவபுரம் (civapuram), the city of bliss is the heart. It is the city of which the Chandogya Upanishad says (VIII. 1. 1-3) :

> *"Now, here in this city of Brahman is an abode, a small lotus flower ; within it is a small space. What is within that should be sought, for that, assuredly, is what one should desire to understand.*
>
> *"If they should say to him, with regard to this city of Brahman and the abode and the small lotus flower and the small space within that, what is there that should be sought for, or that, assuredly, one should desire to understand ?*
>
> *"He would say, as far, verily, as this (world) space extends, so far extends the space within the heart. Within it, indeed, are contained both heaven and earth, both fire and water, both sun and moon, lightning and the stars. Whatever there is of Him in this world and whatever is not, all that is contained within it."*

It is therefore that ஓங்கி ஆழ்ந்தகன்ற நுண்ணியனே has been rendered elsewhere as 'the subtile One who rises to the zenith, penetrates to the nadir and pervades all sides in the heart'. His expansiveness, his immanence in the external world having been already stated in the following lines :

> *விண்ணிறைந்து மண்ணிறைந்து மிக்காய் விளங்கொளியாய்*
> *எண்ணிறந் தெல்லை யிலாதானே*
>
> **O Thou, who fill'st the heaven, who fill'st the earth, art manifested light,**
> **Transcending thought, Thou boundless One !**
>
> **— Pope.**

X

"It was not long before," writes Ranade in his preface to 'A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy', "I could discover that the Upanishads contained not one system of philosophy, but systems of philosophy rising one

over another like Alps over Alps, and culminating in a view of Absolute Reality....."

"We do not have in the Upanishads," says Radhakrishnan, in his preface to 'The Principal Upanishads' (1953) "a single well-articulated system of thought. We find in them a number of different strands which could however be woven together in a single whole by synthetic interpretation....If we are able to make the seeming abstractions of the Upanishads flame anew with their ancient colour and depth, if we can make them pulsate with their old meaning.. they will not appear to be altogether irrelevent to our needs, intellectual and spiritual."

The Tiruvacagam is woven in this spirit. It makes the seeming abstractions of the Upanishads flame anew with their ancient colour and depth. The abstractions of the Upanishads pulsate anew with their old meaning in the songs of Manikkavacagar. The Tiruvacagam furnishes the proof to the abstract propositions of the Upanishads. The reality of the Science of the Abstraction of the Real is for ever established.

XI

If one seeks for the core of the Upanishads, one would find it to be the Omkara. "That is the quintessence of the essences, the Supreme, the highest....." The Sivapuranam of the Tiruvacagam is in the beginning, the middle and the end, is all throughout the song of Omkara. It may fittingly be called the Omkara Upanishad.

"There is a core of certainty," says Radhakrishnan, referring to the Upanishads, "which is essentially incommunicable except by a way of life." The Upanishads are the way of life : the Tiruvacagam IS THE LIFE ITSELF, recorded in unfaltering words, in words of surpassing melody in a language that is nectar itself. It is an Upanishad, nay, the quintessence of the essences of the Upanishads, — Tamilland's unique gift to the world.

Therefore sang a poet, comparing the Vedas (and the Upanishads) with the Tiruvacagam, thus :

" .....If you would ask,
'which among these excels ?',
When the Vedas are chanted, we see not
Anyone stand with tears streaming from the eyes,
And with heart melting away fragment by fragment ;
But if here Tiruvacagam is but once sung
Even the stony heart along with the mind dissolves and flows ; and eyes,
Surpassing the well in the sands (of the river bed) which at touch swells with water, fill with streaming tears ;
The hairs of the body prickle, the body trembles,
And the hearers slaves become. No exceptions to this

There are in this world of Humanity."

The writer dedicates this article to Sri V. Subbarayar of Matunga, Bombay, a nectarine ocean of intuitive knowledge of the *Tirumurais*, of the waters of which it was given to this writer to take but a sip—much less indeed.

The Concept of Anava in Saiva Siddhanta

D. I. JESUDOSS, M.A., M. LITT.

INTRODUCTION

THE concept of Anava mala is the fundamental concept in Saiva Siddhanta philosophy and in the Saivite religion of Tamil Nad. Both Dr. S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri and Dr. G. U. Pope refer to it as "The original sin"[1] of Siddhanta. But the term, as the learned doctors point out, should not be understood in the Christian way. The word sin here connotes nothing more than imperfection, impurity, dirt and defilement in the soul. It is the root cause of ignorance and arrogance.

NAMES

The word Anava is a Sanskrit term. It is usually called in Tamil as Sirumai (smallness), thimir (arrogance), Irul (darkness) and Munnaippu (want of poise). The anava, the veil which enshrouds the soul, is also known by the names[2] such as Pasuthva (bondage) Pasunihara(mist round the soul), Mrityu (death), Murchai (swoon), mala (defect), anjana (pigment), avrithi (envelop), Ruj (malady), Glani (depression), Papa (evil), Moola (root), Kshaya (decay), and so forth. Some scholars point out that the word Mala occuring in the first Sutra of Tamil Sivajnanabodha, the basic work of Saiva Siddhanta, is not found in the Sanskrit

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[1] *Cf.* "The Cultural Heritage of India" (Ramakrishna Mission centenery publication) Vol. 2, p. 42 ; Pope's introduction to Thiruvasagam (trans.) p. XXXIV.

[2] *Cf.* "Outline of Indian Philosophy" by P. T. Srinivasa Iyyengar p. 156 ; Kshamaraja's commentary on Sivasutra.

Sivajnanabodha.[3] But the author of Dravida Mapadiyam, the great Tamil commentary, says that this view is not correct ; for, according to him, it is implicit in it. In a number of places he opines that it is wrong to see any difference between the two versions. There are other Siddhantins who differ from him.

THE NATURE OF ANAVA

The word Anava is said to come from Anu. Anu means atom.[4] So the term Anava connotes that which makes the soul small and binds it just as pasa is that which fetters the pasu (soul). But Anava is not an attribute of the soul nor is it a product of maya. It is not sheer absence of knowledge but a positive principle of obscuration. Further, it only hides the knowledge but does not destroy it. But it is wrong to refer to it as bhranti — jnana (unreal knowledge), jnanabhava (assumed knowledge), tamoguna (lethargic quality), maya-karma (illusory action) and Sivasakti (Siva's potency).[5]

From the fourth Sutra of Sivajnanabodha we glean that Anava in the solitary stage of the soul (kevala) cause nescience and in the embodied state (sakala) positive distortion. The former quality can be called its idiosyncracy and the latter one as its quality generale. Thus omission and commission are involved in the function of Anava.

The concept of Anava is the siddhantin's effort to solve the problem of evil. It is used to account for most of the evils in human nature. "It is the inherent taint which is attached to the soul from eternity. As a mala, it constitutes the principle of evil, for from it springs Ahankara or egotism, which obscures intelligence and hinders the soul from realising its true destiny namely, inseparable union with the

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3 *Cf.* Papavimochana — Padala of Raurava Agama.

4 Soul itself is called Anu (minuteness) because it is made small by Anava ; but its true nature is vibhu (pervasiveness).

5 For reasons vide pp. 130 and 131 of the proceedings of Saivasiddhanta conference 1941 (Dharmapuram Muth publication).

Lord."[6] It is no wonder that Thayumanavar exclaims — "Oh for the day, when I will become non-dual with the Being of True knowledge as I am now non-dual with Anava !". In Saivasiddhanta, non-duality or Advaita means Oneness by close association, difference by substance and togatherness by co-working.

ANAVA AND IGNORENCE ARE NOT IDENTICAL

Some scholars, who are usually not Saivasiddhantins themselves, do not see much difference between Anava and Ajnana or Avidya (ignorance). For instance, Dr. C. D. Sharma writes, "Avidya is one in all beings and is beginningless. It is also called Anavamala. It is Avidya because it makes the soul ignorant of its inherent glory and greatness. It is Anava because it makes the soul mistake itself as atomic and finite."[7] Dr. S. S. S. Sastri, an absolute idealist, sees in the arguments for the existence of Anava a striking parallel to the Advaitin's arguments for recognising nescience of a positive nature.[8] To him the concept of Anava Mala, among other things, is one of the links of Saivasiddhanta with monistic idealism. However, he admits that "there is sufficient contrast between Anava and Maya to warrant the non-identification of the two." But he immediately adds "those who would avoid the recognition of Anava have yet to admit ignorance as positive entity obscuring the natural powers of knowledge and action. This ignorance itself is called Anava by the Siddhantin".

At this juncture we can quote the substance of a stanza[9] of Sivaprakasam which makes the position of Siddhanta clear and also conveys the argument for positing the existence of Anava. "To posit the existence of only Maya

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[6] Cf. "A logical presentation of Saivasiddhanta philosophy" by J. H. Piet p. 58.

[7] Cf. "Indian Philosophy" by Dr. C. D. Sharma p. 557.

[8] Cf. "The philosophy of Saivism" An Article in the "Cultural Heritage of India" Vol. 2, p. 42 Foot note.

[9] Cf. St. 35 (Translation by K. Subramania Pillai).

and Karma will raise the position of their priority which will lead to an argument in a circle like that of the seed and the tree. Furthermore the question will arise how a bond can affect pure souls. If you say it is natural they may be affected even after salvation. If so what is the good of salvation? Suppose you say in the embodied state, the reals which attach to the soul do not show it its own true nature but only external world, then, when the soul is disembodied, it must go back to a state of self-knowledge, which, in fact, it does not. What is the cause of it? If you say it is ignorance, we say the cause of such ignorance is the original bond of ignorance or Anavam". This explanation seems to go deeper. While many of the systems of Indian Philosophy trace the cause for suffering up to Avidya (ignorance) only, the Siddhantin's conception of Anava goes deeper than Ajnana and so the Siddhanta can here be called depth philosophy just as Freudian psycho-analysis is called depth psychology in comparison with other schools of psychology.

ANALOGIES

Many an analogy is used to explain the nature and function of Anava. Let us now advert to them. The first and the most familiar comparison of Anava is with bran. The subtle obscuring nature of Anava, its eternality and its covering tendency of the soul is made clear by this illustration.[10] The rice is the soul, the bran is Anava, the chaff or husk is maya and its sprout is Karma. But this paddy-grain illustration is met with in different ways in different works. This point is brought out clearly by T. Isaac Tambyah by the following tabular statement[11]:—

	Anava	*Maya*	*Karma*	*Works or persons*
1.	Chaff	Bran	Sprout	Thiruvilangam
2.	Chaff	Bran	Sprout	Nallaswami (Siddhiyar)
3.	Bran	Chaff	Sprout	Nallaswami (Sivajnanabodham)
4.	Bran	Chaff	Sprout	Sivagra Yogi
5.	Sprout	Bran	Chaff	Siddhiyar
6.	Chaff	Bran	Sprout	Sivaprakasam
7.	Bran	Chaff	Sprout	Tirumanthram

10 *Cf.* Sivajnana Siddhiyar (Subaksham) St. 176 & 315; Sivaprakasam St. 25.

11 *Cf.* "Psalms of a Saiva Saint" (Thayumanavar's songs) translation and introduction. p. LXXXI.

Another familiar illustration is the likening of the Anava with verdigris (dross) or green rust.[12] Just as this impurity covers the copper, the Anava fully obscures the knowing faculties of the soul. Anava is also compared with a venomous snake. Thayumanavar says that the souls are held between its jaws and remain stupified. The same idea also occurs in Dotti Pahrodai,[13] one of the Saiva siddhanta Sastras. Umapathi Sivachariar in his Tiruarulpayan,[14] another of the Siddhanta works, compares Anava to a dark bride who is too chaste to appear before her husband, meaning thereby that the soul in the grip of Anava is completely unaware of the bondage which is the result of its hold. The same writer in an earliar place[15] in the work compares the soul under the grip of Anava to an owl which does not see in the sun light.

An old poem compares soul with a piece of cloth, Anava with the dirt in it, God to a washerman and His Grace to water that purifies. It is also usual to compare the soul with the swing-board, the ropes of which with Anava, Maya and Karma, and the floor beneath to God.

SAHAJA MALA

The relationship between Anava and the other two bonds-Maya and Karma—can now be seen. Out of these three bonds Anava alone is called Sahaja Mala (Natural impurity) and the other two as agantuka for they function only after Anava. Anava Mala is just like a wicked servant, within the household, who gives hints to the robbers to come and loot at the appropriate time. Maya and Karma affect the soul from without like the robbers from outside the household. The point to be noted here is Anava functions first and then only the other two just as the servant preceeds the robbers. More over Anava hides its own identity as the accomplice of the looters.

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12 *Cf.* Sivajnana Siddhiyar (Subaksham) St. 314; Sivaprakasam St. 20; "Psalms of a Saiva Saint" p. LXXIX.

13 *Cf.* line 16

14 *Cf.* St. 25

15 *Cf.* St. 19

MOOLA MALA

Anava is also called Moola Mala even though the three Malas are in beginningless union with the soul. This means that Anava functions without any interruption and the other two do not function during cosmic rest. Further, Maya and Karma are tools of Siva while Anava is not. However, Anava is subordinate to Him.

THE THREE BONDS COMPARED

Anava is a positive evil. But Karma and Maya are agencies for good. The latter two are called Malas in the sense that they prevent God-Realisation being accomplished rapidly and easily. Just as we remove the green rust on the copper vessels using a piece of cloth so also God removes the Anava in the soul by giving the soul, body made out of Maya. The Anava Mala can also be compared to rust in a razor blade. The Soul is the blade. The rusty and blunt edge is Anava. The grinding stone is the body made out of Maya. God helps the soul to get rid of the rust of Anava.[16]

Karma is another instrument by which God brings the soul to the sense of realisation. "It is the polish by which He remvoes ignorance, the agency by which He neutralises the force of the Anava Mala. This agency works through transmigration or rebirth".[17]

Maya in comparison with Anava is light or illuminating principle. Without it the soul should be in the encircling gloom of Anava Mala. So, within the Malas, Anava is like a malady and Maya its remedy. When the former is removed the latter also is unnecessary.[18] It is usual to say that there is a competition going on between Anava, the principle of darkness, and Maya, the principle of illumination. The two can be very roughly compared with the

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16 *Cf.* "A logical presentation of Saivasiddhanta's philosophy" by J. H. Piet p. 71.

17 *Ibid* p. 71.

18 *Vide.* proceedings of Saivasiddhanta conference 1941 p. 319.

Prince of Darkness and the Prince of light, Ahuramazda and Ahriman. However, it should not be forgotton that both Anava and Maya are impurities. The Mala of Maya is used to remove the Mala of Anava just as the cow-dung, which is a refuse, is used to remove the dirt in the court-yard, or the fuller's earth is used to remove dirt from clothes.[19] Further, it can be said, just as one thorn is used sometimes to remove another thorn, Maya Mala is useful to remove Anava Mala.

How the three Malas are connected can now be seen. Anava makes the pervasive soul cognise itself as finite and atomic. "Because of this limitation of cognitive and conative powers, souls act in certain ways which they take to be good or evil ; and these acts bear consequences which have to be worked out by being experienced. The consequences constitute the next bond called Karma. But in order to experience the consequences and gain knowledge thereby, there should be worlds, objects and enjoyments, and instruments of cognition and enjoyment. These are provided by Maya (the impure variety). The functions of Anava and Maya are thus opposed ; while Anava obscures, Maya illumines ; while Anava binds, Maya liberates ; but the illumination and liberation due to Maya are very limited ; such knowledge as results therefrom is delusive."

J. M. Nallaswamy Pillai describes the three shackles thus : "Anava Pasa binds or limits omniscience or perfect knowledge of the soul and hence called Prathi-Bhantham. Karma Pasa like an unceasing flood follows the soul and drives it to eat the fruits of Karma (Bhoga) without permiting it to seek moksha and hence called Anubandham. Maya Pasa limits the omnipresence (Vyapaka) of the soul and confines it to a particular body and hence called Sambandham".[20]

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[19] *Cf.* Sivajnana Siddhiyar (Subaksham) St. 142.

[20] *Cf.* Sivajnana Bodham with notes by J. M. Nallaswami Pillai, Note on p. 9.

ANAVA AND THE AVASTHAS

The religious experience of the soul is usually divided into three states, technically called Avasthas. The first of the three states is called Kevala. Here the Anava completely clouds the soul's conscience. All the powers of the soul-thinking, feeling and willing—are inactive.[21] Here the soul is like an open eye completely immersed in darkness. What is worse the soul is not able to understand that it is suffering thus. So Anava is referred here as worse than darkness. For the physical darkness at least makes us know that we are in the dark. But the spiritual darkness caused by Anava not only hides knowledge but also hides its own nature of obscuration. It is in this connection Anava is compared with the shy bride. In short the soul is now in complete black-out. Tirumantram says that this state of the soul's suffering had no beginning. It is from this state the rest of the soul's Pilgrim's Progress is to proceed.

The second state of the soul's experience in its onward journey toward liberation, from the thraldom of Anava to the spiritual freedom of union with Siva, is called Sakala state. This is the embodied state of the soul. Here Anava permeates all bodily and mental organs.[22] The results are passion, sorrow, infatuation, mean desires, conceit and self-satisfaction of the wrong type.[23] Dr. S. S. S. Sastri refers to them as Panchaklesas (afflictions or hindrences).[24] To use the war parlance, the soul in the sakala state is in the brown-out state. It gets knowledge which is usually called Pasajnana. Though this Jnana does not reveal the true na-

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21 *Cf.* Sivaprakasam St. 36.

22 *Ibid.*

23 Usually 8 qualities are mentioned. They are விகற்பம், கற்பம், குரோதம், மோகம், கொலை, அசூர், மதம், and நகை. vide p. 20 of Pati-Pasu-Pasa-togai (Dharmapuram publication.).

24 They are Avidya (ignorance), Asmita (Egoity), Raga (Desire), Dvesha (Aversion) and Abhinivesa (Identification). These are also called Pumstva Mala (Human impurities) and the soul undergoing these is called pursha.

ture of soul the little knowledge it gives the soul is welcome to the previous state of nescience. This knowledge is possible due to the sense organs which are the evolutes of Maya. Anava now loosens its grip.

The third state of the soul is called Shuddha Avastha or pure state. Now the spiritual preceptor makes his appearance and just like a wind, blows and removes the potency of the clouding Anava. This state of the soul is also known as the Jivan-Mukta state. Here the soul basks in the sweet flood-light of pati-jnana — God-centered and God-revealing knowledge.

ANAVA AND SOULS CLASSIFIED

It is usual to divide the souls into three classes. The vijnanakalas are those who suffer from Anava Mala alone. The Pralayakalas suffer from Anava and Karma. The Sakalas suffer from Anava, Karma and Maya. It is interest ing to note here that all the souls, in whatever stage they are, suffer from Anava, the impurity of impurities. The first category of the souls have their Mala removed by illumination got within, the second by Upadesa or teaching and the last by upadesa and experience. It may be mentioned at this juncture that Anava is one only although the souls are many. "It is able to prevent the many souls from knowing by means of its multiple sakthis or energies".

ANAVA AND GOD

God is not affected by Anava Mala. This point is vividly pointed out by H. W. Schomerus by the analogy of the umbrella, "which hides only us who open the umbrella while not affecting the sun". To use another analogy Anava is the dark cloud that hides the eye and not the sun. It obscures the power of the soul and not of the God.

The existence of God, among other arguments, can be inferred from the angle of Anava. "Anava being non-intelligent is not active of itself. Since for their own good,

souls should be made to act seeking the pleasures of this world as if they were ultimate happiness, and parviscience as if it were omniscience, God functions through His own energy called the energy of concealment (Tirodhana Sakti) and makes Mala (original impurity) active ; hence this Sakti too is figuratively spoken as a Mala ; and the function of the concealment is the fourth function of God in the interest of the soul".[25] The Siddhantin is never tired of insisting that it is the Grace of God which isolates the soul from Anava Mala and brings the soul into the Advaita (non-dual) relation with himself.

The argument for the existence of God from the angle of Anava is simply this. In order to rid the Mala the body is necessary. The souls are finite and helpless, and bodies are non-intelligent. So God is required to embody the souls.[26]

Now the process of freeing the soul is a long one. Though Siva may initiate and guide, the soul has also to take initiative. Deeksha or initiation is necessary to counter act the Anava which is not mere absence of knowledge but something positive. Anava is like snake poison which can be removed only by a skillful sorcerer who is capable of identifying himself with a mangoose. So Siva in the garb of human Guru gracefully removes the poison of Anava.[27]

In another analogy Anava is compared to the cataract in the eye and God as Guru is compared to a Surgeon. "The Atman is compared to the eye, which at all times depends on light for vision. In cases of refractive trouble it also stands in need of eye glasses to correct the defect. When there is cataract neither light nor glasses will be sufficient. In addition to this, the help of a competent opthalmic surgeon

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25 *Cf.* "The cultural heritage of India" Vol. 2, p. 43 ; The 5 functions are :—Creation, Protection, Sustenance, Obscuration and granting Grace.

26 *Cf.* Sivaprakasam St. 16.

27 *Cf.* Tiru Arul Payan St. 47.

is necessary to remove the cataract. God is likened to the Sun which dispels darkness and gives light to enable the eye to see. Maya corresponds to the glasses which afford temporary relief to defective sight. God's Grace answers to the Surgeon who eradicates the defect".[28]

ANAVA AS THE FULCRUM OF SIDDHANTA

Anava is the fulcrum or pivot round which the whole Saiva Siddhanta philosophy and religious experience revolves. Anava is the nimitha karana or efficient cause of human experience. Maya is the instrumental cause. Karma is the material cause.[29] The five states of consciousness are held to be due to the increasing influence of Anava.[30] The aim of the evolution and involution is to eliminate Anava Mala from the soul.[31] The word Alaya (Temple) itself is sometimes interpreted to mean the place where Anava Mala is cabbed, cribbed and confined. In the Nataraja Image the dwarf, on whom the Lord dances, symbolises Anava Mala. Unmai Vilakkam,[32] one of the Siddhanta Sastras, says that the dance of the Lord scatters the darkness of Maya, burns the thread of Karma, stamps down Mala, showers Grace and lovingly plunges the soul in the ocean of bliss. The wearing of the holy ashes by the Saivite, which is called Bhasma Dharana, reminds the wearer and the looker-on of the existence of Anava Mala ; for the ashes are obtained by burning the Mala of Pasu (Cow-dung) in fire. Similarly the Anava Mala, the internal impurity of the soul, should be burnt in the divine wisdom of Pati-jnana. The wearing of the ashes in bands of three (tiripundara) further symbolises Anava, Karma and Maya.

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[28] *Cf.* Saiva Siddhanta by Prof. R. Ramanujachari in the Journal of the Annamalai University Vol. 17, p. 130.

[29] *Cf.* University lecture on Saivasiddhanta by M. Balasubramania Mudaliar p. 15.

[30] *Cf.* Sivaprakasam St. 51 ; the 5 states are — swapna, susupti, jagra, turiya and turiyatheeta.

[31] *Cf. Ibid* St. 10 ; Sivajnanabodham Sutra 1 last line.

[32] St. 36 ; for the substantiation of this view vide proceedings of the S.S. Conference (Dharmapuram publication) of 1941 pp. 250 and 251.

There is a traditional belief that every Sutra of Siva jnana bodha is explained by every section of the canonical Saivasiddhanta literature. If this were true, the fourth Sutra of Sivajnana bodha is expounded by this first section of Tevaram hymns sung by Saint Appar. We may agree with this view since Appar attributes his conversion to Jainism to the Anava Mala.[32]

Dr. V. Ponniah in his "Saivasiddhanta theory of knowledge"[33] refers to a theory of interpretation of dreams based on Anava Mala that "if the experient's grip of Anava (root-evil) is thinned off and thereby rendered ineffective, dream-cognition will be true, however remote in time(backwards or forwards) or place the objects of such cognition may be. If on the other hand the grip is strong the cognitions will be untrue. This explains why all dreams of some persons, and some dreams of many turn out true".

The significance of Anava from the side of epistemology is this : Pasu-Jnana is the knowledge of the soul when it is in conjunction with Anava. The judgement that the body is the soul which is a perceptual illusion is due to Anava. In fact all perceptual errors are due to Anava. The quality of Anava should be taken as Asadharana Lakshana[34] for this character is neither found in the sister Malas—Maya and Karma—nor in God and soul. When the potency of Anava is lessened by Kala Tatwa (Animation) Indriya paratyaksha (sense-perception) results. Yoga Katchi (immediate intuitive knowledge) is the result of the practice of Yoga. For Yoga cuts down the power of Anava which is the ultimate hinderance to true knowledge.[35]

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33 Cf. p. 84.

34 Cf. "Saivasiddhanta theory of knowledge" by V. Ponniah p. 122.

35 Cf. "A logical presentation of the Saivasiddhanta philosophy" by J. H. Piet p. 16.

GETTING RID OF MALA

Birth in human body is the way to get rid of the Malas. It is said that Karma Mala is removed by Ashta Samskaras or 8 sacred acts ; Maya is removed by Achamana or ceremonial and purifying sipping of water ; and the Anava is removed by Bhasmasnana[36] or smearing holy ashes as a religious bath.

Some of the evolutes of Asuddha Maya are particularly said to stir and loosen the hold of Anava on the soul *e.g.* Kalai (animation).

Sometimes Puja is said to be the way to get rid of the Malas. In the word Puja itself, it is pointed out, the prefix "PU" stands for poorthi (completeness) of all the Karmas and the suffix "ja" stands for Jnana.[37] By jnana not the discursive knowledge but immediate intuitive knowledge is meant.

Charya (observance), Kriya (rite), Yoga (philosophic meditation) and Jnana (knowledge) are the four different steps[38] which lead the devotee to the final liberation. In these steps initiation and help of the Guru is needed. But out of these 4 margas (ways) the Siddhanta, like many other systems of Indian Philosophy, gives importance to Jnanamarga.

In the Jnanamarga to snap the hold of the Anava Mala the following are to be performed :—

1. Utterance of the 5 letter mantra NAMASIVAYA[39] (roughly this means 'Hail to Siva')
2. Observing Sivoham Bhavana (concentrating on the fact that 'I am Siva')
3. Antar Yaga Pooja (An inward concentrated worship)

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[36] *Cf.* "University lectures on Saivasiddhanta" by M. Balasubramania Mudaliar p. 27.

[37] Op. cit. p. 16.

[38] They are sometimes said to be connected with one another like the bud, flower, raw-fruit and ripe-fruit.

[39] Here 'NA' means screening power of God, 'MA' means Anava, 'SI' means Siva, 'VA' means God's Grace and 'YA' means the soul ; Sivayanamah is another way (sometimes held to be the proper way) of uttering the mantra *Cf.* Sivaprakasam St. 91.

Here we may refer to what is called Vasana Mala. This means that the Jeevan Muktha, who is in Shuddha Avastha, due to his connection with the physical body is likely to be pulled down to the Sakala Avastha. To counter act this tendency he is enjoined to concentrate on the mystic Mantra NAMASIVAYA, to worship the Siva Lingha, to go to the temples and to keep communion with the Siva Baktas.[40] This reminds one of the biblical saying that one should be careful lest one should fall in the path of spiritual progress. Vasana (Smell) means habitual tendency or pre-disposition. The soul must be ever watchful so that the three malas, even their smell, must be completely removed.

Irru-Vinai-Oppu (or samatva-Buddhi) and Mala-paripaga (or chitta-suddhi) are the two stages again in the process of self-realisation. The former means a poise of mind when the soul is neither attracted by any worldly thing nor repulsed by it. The latter means riddence of the Mala. After this the soul enjoys Sakti Nipata, which means that descent of Grace. Then it attains Mukthi (salvation), and remains in Adwaita relation with Siva.

ANAVA MALA IN MUKTI

There are many Saiva Siddhantins who believe that even in mukti there is the Anava Mala. But it is said to have no power of obscuration.[41] It is here compared to a fried seed. This position is justified because the Siddhantin is a believer in Sat-karya-vada *i.e.* nothing is created anew and nothing is completely blotted out. This is the scientific law of conservation of energy. On the basis of this law Unmai Vilakam,[42] another Saivasiddhanta treatise, says even in mukti there is Mala.[43] It goes a step further and

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40 *Cf.* The last sutra of Sivajnana bodha.

41 *Cf.* Sivaprakasam St. 88.

42 *Cf.* St. 50.

43 A book entitled 'Sivarajya' (Dharmapuram Publication) points out the positing of Anava in Mukti not only satisfies metaphysical requirements but also solves the problem of dualism between extended substance and non-extended substance. Dr. Bain has been quoted in this connection *Cf.* pp. 31 and 32.

says even the presence of the Mala makes the blissful experience very keen. This point had been made clear by the late lamented Tamil Scholar Pandithamani (the gem among the Pandits) M. Kathiresan Chettiar by an analogy in one of his collected essays. The analogy is this. A piece of ice on the hand in the cold weather is positive nuisance. But the same in the hot weather is a positive bliss. So also Mala in the Bheddha (bound) state of the soul is a positive hindrance but in the Mukta (free) state is positive, some say indirect,[44] help. This view seems to be plausible if one believes that the Tirodhana (obscuring) Sakti of Siva becomes Arul (Grace) Sakti in the liberated state.

Among the modern scholars Mr. M. Balasubramania Mudaliar differs from the view given just above, and holds there is no Anava in Mukti.[45] But he gives another argument for believing in the eternality of the soul incidentally basing his arguments on the Siddhantin's belief in Anupalabdhi (non-perception) as source of knowledge. Here are his words, "From the absence of Chill, we infer absence of dew. This principle is used to infer the complete disappearance of the Anava Mala in the Mukta soul, though the perennial nature of its existence is not compromised because it is found in all bheddha souls".[46]

One of the schools of Saivism by name Pashana Vada Saivism holds that Anava does not leave the soul even in Mukti and the soul remains there like a stone (Pashana) covered by Anava. So according to this view if the Anava is destroyed the soul is destroyed. Against this view some Siddhantins maintain that "just as the husk is removed without impairing the grain, so Anava is removed without injuring the soul. This removal is necessary, for it is only when Anava leaves the soul that jnana comes; and it is only when jnana comes that Mukti is attained".[47] They

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[44] Cf. 'Indian Philosophy' by C. D. Sharma p. 558.

[45] Cf. 'University lectures on Saivasiddhanta' by M. Balasubramania Mudaliar p. 32.

[46] Op. cit p. 4.

[47] Cf. Saivasiddhanta (Second edition) by Dr. Violet Paranjoti p. 107.

further maintain, "the most important negative aspect of the Siddhanta Mukti is the absence of Anava. Whereas in the Jeevan Mukta state it was present, though in a powerless state, in Mukti, it is absent along with the body, which also have been left behind".[48]

It may perhaps be proper to point out here that there are certain schools of Saivism which do not mention the term Anava Mala itself (*e.g.* Sivadwaita) ; and that there are yet other schools which positively deny the existence of Anava (*e.g.* Pasupata and Aikyavada).

MODERN CRITICS OF ANAVA MALA

Now let us advert to the opinions of modern critics regarding the concept of Anava Mala. Some praise it and some adversely criticise it. To the former group belongs Maraimalai Adigal (Swami Vedachalam). He writes "so far as my knowledge of various religions and various systems of philosophy is concerned, I venture to say that I have not come accross any religion or any system of philosophy in which this root cause of creation, this free existent principle of evil has been recognised and explicitly mentioned as in the system of Saivasiddhanta. Of course, there is a hint of it in the first chapter of the book of Genesis of the old Testament as has been so penetratingly pointed out by Dr. F. C. S. Schiller, but it has unfortunately escaped the notice of almost all commentators on the book".[49]

A scholar by name Subramania Kathiresu in his "Hand book of Saiva religion" points out that many of the modern day evils are due to Anava. He writes, "Pride of position, birth, colour, caste, book-learning and wealth are outstanding examples of Anava. To claim superiority due to caste is clearly a bad case of Anava Malam as it is to

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[48] *Ibid.* p. 108.

[49] *Cf.* "The Saivasiddhanta as a philosophy of practical knowledge" by Maraimalai Adigal p. 10 of preface.

claim superiority due to colour. To hate another of a caste considered low is also Anava Mala. It is equally so to hate another because he claims to be of a superior caste".

Dr. Violet Paranjoti in her book "Saivasiddhanta in Meikanda Sastra" raises a number of questions from the absolutist's stand point. For example she asks what is it that connects the soul with the Anava? Is it some other principle? How does soul, a chit (intelligence), and Anava an achit, come together? Why should Anava be called by that name even in Mukti? Is not Anava a serious menace to the absolute nature of Siva? Mr. A. Shivapadasundaram had attempted to reply to some of these points in his book-let "An outline of Sivajnanabodham with a rejoinder to a Christian Critic". Recently Dr. Paranjoti has published a second edition of her work mentioned above without the absolutistic bias. Even in this work she has raised certain difficulties regarding Anava Mala. For instance she asks how can Anava account for the different kinds of sins that man commits?[50] She points out further that "the question arises as to what happens to the three Malas when the redemption is completed. As they are eternal, their continuance even after their usefulness is served is assured. Regarding the form in which they continue to exist in the post-redemption stage, there is no answer in the Siddhanta".[51]

Dr. J.H. Piet in his logical presentation of Saiva Siddhanta philosophy holds that there are seven assumptions in siddhanta philosophy which Siddhanta logic can never prove but which must be accepted by faith alone. Out of the seven" the fourth is the one of the soul and its fundamental taint of spiritual ignorance or Anava which manifests itself in egotism. The fifth is that which says this taint is removed by Karma as the basis of transmigration".[52]

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[50] *Cf.* Saivasiddhanta (Second edition) by Dr. V. Paranjoti p. 147.

[51] *Ibid.* p. 97.

[52] *Cf.* "A logical presentation of Saivasiddhanta philosophy" by Dr. Piet p. 180.

He further complains that the word Pasa is used in two ways, and that, sometimes, in a confusing manner. It is sometimes used a synonym for Anava, in which case it stands for the source of the soul's ignorance and arrogance. Anava is that which eternally encases the soul until it has realised Siva. The second use of Pasa is as a synonym for the three Malas as a combination of binding principles, namely, the Anava Mala, Karma and Maya".[53] Earlier than Dr. Piet Rev. Fr. A. P. Arokiasamy in his "Doctrine of grace in Saiva Siddhanta"[54] had pointed out that the concept of Anava offers logical difficulty on the basis of certain other doctrines of the Siddhanta and that various attempts, from the days of sage Arulnandhi, had been made to reconcile them.

ANAVA IN PURANIC LORE

It is usual to illustrate the Anava Mala from certain incidents in the last few centuries and from the Puranic lore. Let us now make an advertance to some of them. The story is told that a Brahmin[55] well learned in Agamas, who was the Guru of the father of the author of the Tamil Sivajnana Bodha, was pointed out as personified Anava by Meikanda to his disciples and this made the Sakala Agama Panditha realise his position and become the disciple of Meikanda himself. Again, the puranic story of the persecution of Soora, a demon, is said to convey that Anava Mala is blotted out by Siva and that the demon symbolises the Mala. Yet again Ravana is said to be a symbol of Anava when he tried to lift the Mount Kailas. For this act he was crushed under the hill till he felt regret for his deed. This particular incident is celebrated on one of the ten days of festivals in the Saiva Temples. This incident is also referred in almost every decade of saint Sambandar's Tevaram. The famous incident in the forest called Taruka Vanam is also said to

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[53] *Ibid.* p. 18.

[54] pp. 15 and 16.

[55] He is none other than Arul Nandi Sivacharya, the author of Sivajnana Siddhiyar.

have taken place due to the Anava of the sages there. They were puffed up and to punish them Siva appeared at their doors in the guise of a beggar. His bewitching manliness captivated the hearts of the women folk of the sages. This enraged the sages who performed the sacrifice out of which came a deer, a tiger, a fireball, a serpent and a demon all of which were set at Lord Siva. He easily got an upper hand over them and danced in glee. The conceit of the sages came thus to nought. The dance here is the famous dance of Nataraja. This incident is celebrated annually at Chidambaram.

CONCLUSION

We may conclude now this paper on Anava Mala by observing that in recent years a spirit of ecumenism is running over the Tamil Nad which is symbolised by a number of religious movements such as Tiruppavai-Tiruvembavai conferences. In keeping with this spirit a recent publication of a Saiva Mutt observes, "we forget those features of Hindu religion and emphasize those differences which after all constitute the shadow. If for instance the Vedantin recognises in his Avidya the Anava Mala of the Saiva Siddhantin and if the Saiva Siddhantin recognizes in his Anava Mala the Ahankara of the Vaishnavite, would not this recognition of unity amidst seeming diversity create real concord and fellowship and promote the cause of the true faith in this land"?[56]

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[56] *Cf.* 'Siva Rajya' p. 89.

Paranar

C. JESUDASAN M. A.

WITH Paranar we come to one of the poets most closely associated with Kabilar's name. Just as the names of Keats and Shelley, or Tennyson and Browning are linked together by posterity for certain reasons, so also the names of Kabilar and Paranar are mentioned in one breath by Tamil scholars.[1] That they were contemporaries is proved by the fact that both poets have left on record verses addressed to Pēhan on the same subject, beseeching him to go back to the wife whom he had forsaken.[2] The commentary on Vīrasōliyam informs us that Paranar entered into a controversy with Kabilar.[3] All the myths[4] associated with Paranar's name introduce him to us as one of the great trio of Sangam literature, the other two being Kabilar and Nakkīrar. His relationship with Kabilar is thus beyond doubt.

It is unfortunate, however, that we know hardly anything else of Paranar's life. Myth cannot be relied upon, and we have no history of the lives of the Sangam poets. The outline of Kabilar's life, however, can be traced from the evidence of his own poems ; but we are denied, in a study of Paranar, even such a bare outline of his life. The prolific allusions to Tamil kings and chieftains in Paranar's poetry, hint that he had some sort of connection with many of them ; but the exact kind of relationship is unknown. It follows that we can take but little sympathy to a study of Paranar's works, and it is in such cases that we really regret the extreme

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1 *Tol* : *Ilampūranam* and *Perasiriyam* : Seyyul Iyal verse, 178.

2 *Puranānūru* : 143, 144, 145.

3 *Vīrasōliyam* : Tohaippadalam, 6.

4 *Kadambāvana Pūranam, Halasya Mahatmyam, Paranjodi-Tirūvilayadal Pūranam, Tirūvalavayūdaiyar Tirūvilaiyadal Pūranam.*

conventionalism of Sangam literature. Had there been some subjective poetry, we would have had material for remoulding the personality of the poet.

As is natural for a poet so far removed from our times, Paranar is credited with the authorship of works not his own. Sivaperumān Tiruvandādi is one of them. But there are positive internal evidences to prove that Paranar is not the author of this work. The profuse use of Sanskrit words and derivatives, and the presence of morphemes like 'kinru' (present tense sign) stamp it with a late origin. Thirty-seven sūtras in Pannirupāttiyal, again, are ascribed to Paranar; but they will really not stand to scrutiny, as by reason of the needless repetitions they contain, they are plainly wholly unworthy of Paranar. Besides, we find in them references to Pillai Tamil, which is definitely a type of poetical composition not known so early as the Sangam period. The sixth stanza in Tiruvalluvamālai is also said to be Paranar's; but the whole story of the composition of Tiruvalluvamālai is obviously so spurious that Paranar's share in it might safely be dismissed.

All that we can claim to be Paranar's work, therefore, is what we find in the Sangam anthologies. We have to guess that some of his writings are lost, because that poem of his referred to by Avvai in the often-quoted line "True, Paranar sang of thee this day,"[5] is not now extant. But the available output of Paranar's is only eighty-five poems, running to 1261 lines. Considering the sheer bulk of the poet's writings, Paranar is second only to Kabilar among the Sangam poets.

Paranar is very largely represented in Ahanānūru. Thirty-four of his poems, covering about half of his output, are included in this anthology. What strikes us at a first reading of Paranar's Ahanānūru is the abundance of the allusions. There are but three poems[6] here free from such digressions; truly, in yielding to the temptation of straying from

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[5] *Puranānūru*, 99.

[6] *Ahanānūru*: 78, 276, 367.

his subject into allusions, we find Paranar outdoing even Nakkīrar, Kallādanār, and Māmūlanār. In some of Paranar's pieces[7] the allusions become almost oppressive, the poems looking top-heavy. Some of his favourite allusions are repeated in as many as five or six places.[8] They are all very well as a record of historical events and perhaps they appealed to the imagination of his contemporaries, being, obviously, popular stories. But they do seem to show the lack of a sense of proportion in the poet, looking as they do like epic similes thrust into lyrics. Detached from their setting, however, some of these elaborate allusions look very beautiful. The story of Ādimandi, bewailing the loss of her husband in the river, is quite touching in one piece[9] .

> Like Ādimandi, widowed, who with eyes
> Brimming with tears, went mourning o'er her loss,
> Through every land, and through every town,
> Demanding who had seen her curly-haired,
> If Ocean took him, or if the river hid ?

The allusion to the battle of Pāli of Nannan is quite beautiful considering the picturesqueness of its description.

> That Āy is fallen, staining red the field,
> A noisy flock of birds but newly come,
> Covers the spacious heavens, so to hide
> The heat of the sun's bright rays.[10] .....

That one line "Vambappullin kambalaipperundōdu" is a marvel of condensed expression.

Paranar attempts a variety of themes in Ahanānūru, unlike Kabilar, who confines himself to Kurinji. Fifteen of Paranar's are on Marudam, another fifteen on Kurinji, and four on Pālai. But we are surprised to observe that there is greater monotony in Paranar than in Kabilar. In a way

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[7] *Ahanānūru* : 142, 152, 181, 208, 376, 396.

[8] The story of Ādimandi and Āttanatti in *Ahanānūru* : 142, 148, 181, 208, 396.

[9] *Ahanānūru* : 236.

[10] *Ahanānūru* : 181.

the repetition of his pet allusions is responsible for it. It is further aggravated by the repetition of pet moods and situations. Taking Marudam for instance, the injured wife upbraids the faithless husband in much the same strain in several pieces.[11]

> They say that yesterday with one fair dame
> You in the river bathed ; it is become
> A scandal, louder than the sounds that ring
> In the battlefield, when victory is won.

In passing, one must observe, that similar as the ideas expressed in these poems are, one of them is redeemed by a flash of unusual dramatic brilliance. This is in Ahanānūru, 6. The hero, after his escapade, comes home, seeking the love of his wife. To placate her, he calls her, 'Mother of my darling son', hoping perhaps that the thoughts of that sacred tie would make her forget and forgive. But she takes it to be a hint that she has lost her youth. She fires up :

> "With such deceitful words seek not to mock
> The advance of age in me ; enough of this !" [12]

But this is an exception.

Very high credit cannot be given to Paranar on the score of characterisation. The lover is little besides a bundle of desires. He dreams of his lady's beauty,[13] he pities himself for loving the unattainable,[14] and curses his heart for bewitching him.[15] That is all he is good for, unless it were also for his escapade with harlots, of which we hear very often. The harlot's picture however, is in keeping with her character. She is aggressive, voluptuous, indelicate and cunning. She boasts of her own powers.

> "I am resolved to drag him by the hand." [16]

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[11] *Ahanānūru* : 6, 116, 226, 246, 266.

[12] *Ahanānūru* : 6.

[13] *Ahanānūru* : 152, 162, 198, 208, 262.

[14] *Ahanānūru* : 322, 372.

[15] *Ahanānūru* : 212, 258.

[16] *Ahanānūru* : 76.

In the presence of the heroine's attendants she defiantly says :

"In sight of his own household dames,
I'll drag him by his garland and his scarf,
And bind him to my shoulder with my hair."[17]

As for the heroine, she is meek and mild enough as a girl, but when she is the injured wife she is, quite naturally, irritable towards her husband. Her attendant is not given the privileges which early convention has conferred on the lady's maid elsewhere in Sangam literature. Under Paranar's eye she dwindles into insignificance. These are the dramatis personae in Paranar's poetry, and as such they are often colourless.

But there are beautiful poems that Paranar has contributed to Ahanānūru, in spite of these deficiencies. Two at least of these poems remind us pleasantly of Kabilar. One is the description,

"From swaying branches of the dusky boughs
Of the mango in the fields, the new flowers fall
Like the close-falling raindrops."[18]

The other is the simile,

"Love breaks through shyness, like floods not to be stayed
By barriers of salt."[19]

A very beautiful image, familiar to all Indian minds, arrests us with delight in the following passage.

The broad and long-stalked lotus leaf, upborne
Upon the water, keeps waving like the ears
Of the mighty elephant, with every wind
That stirs the azure depths.....[20]

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17 *Ahanānūru* : 276.
18 *Ahanānūru* : 236.
19 *Ahanānūru* : 208.
20 *Ahanānūru* : 186.

Another poem shows an equally loving observation of the details of Nature.

> To eat the silver fish, the stork, as though
> Afraid its steps were audible, moves soft,
> Like a burglar entering a guarded house.[21]

The comparison of an agitated, trembling girl to a "tender leaf wind-shaken" in Ahanānūru is no image alien to Engilsh readers.

It seems that by the laws of poetry, no poet can exist without similes. Paranar also has his fund of them. One of the very best of his poems is nothing but a bundle of similes, the cumulative effect of which is beautiful in the original.

> The boar, with hair as thick as bamboo roots
> And tusks as hard as diamond,
> Drinks of the spring like the tom-tom's face,
> Descends the rocks like the she-elephants at rest,
> And brushes swaying bunches of the flowers
> New-opening, white as paddy-birds,
> Till golden pollen, shaken down, makes it appear
> Like the touchstone.[22]

Ahanānūru 122 is a lovely little piece, remarkable for its lyrical grace and beauty, and it owes half its charm to the cumulative effect of parallel statements.

> Though it were not a festival, the town,
> Of revellers will hardly go to sleep ;
> Though all the busy streets might chance to rest,
> My sharp-tongued mother still keeps wakeful watch ;
> Though she, too-cautious guardian, choose to doze
> The sleepless sentries run their midnight rounds ;
> And if the sworded sentinels but chance
> To sleep, the watchful dog will wake and bark ;
> If the noisy dog take rest, like broad daylight
> The moon stays in the heavens to spread its rays ;
> And if, one day, all these are hushed, then he,
> Not firm enough at heart, comes not to me !

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[21] *Ahanānūru* : 276.
[22] *Ahanānūru* ; 178.

And in this poem, as in Ahanānūru 125, we hear a wonderfully soft, rippling music, falling on the ears, 'like petals from blown roses on the grass' as in these lines :

"Arava vāy namali mahilādu madiyin
Pahaluru urala nilavukkānru visumbin
Ahalvāy mandilam ninruviriyummē"

Sometimes his imagery is charged with feeling, as in this description of the evening, when the heroine sits lonely, brooding over thoughts of her lover who has left her :[23]

When the radiant sphere, the sun, forsakes the world,
To seek the mountain with fast-fading rays.....
The green-eyed wildcat with the padded paw,
In wait lies for the cock with silk-soft cheeks,
Close-feathered neck and crest like crimson flower,
So to appease the hunger of its mate.
And how sweet to lovers, even this dismal eve,
If but they are together !

These lines, with the others that have just been selected from Ahanānūru as examples of Paranar's best, can very well stand comparison with the most highly prized treasures of Tamil literature.

Paranar's contribution to Kurundohai is very slender, and chiefly by reason of the brevity of the stanzas, does not show him in a very favourable light on the whole. But there is one of them[24] that makes ample amends by a lightning-flash, as it were, of the imagination. The paleness on the heroine's complexion is compared to the moss that covers the surface of still water. When she is happy with her lover, the paleness shrinks away, leaving the natural healthy brown of her complexion. But when she begins pining for him, the paleness creeps back. Like the persistent moss, we find the pallor

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[23] *Ahanānūru* : 367.

[24] *Kurundohai* : 399.

"With every touch gives way,
And back with each estrangement spreads."

It might be a conceit, but a very brilliant one, and wholly untranslateable owing to the charm of the sound arrangement in the original.

"Toduvuli toduvuli nīngi
Viduvuli viduvulip paratta lānē."

These two lines may safely be ranked as the crest of all Paranar's achievements.

There are three other pieces of his in Kurundohai worthy of notice. One is remarkable for the sheer sweetness of its melody :[25]

"Sēri sēra mella vandu vandu
Aridu vāy vittiniya kūri
Vaihal tōrum nilambeyarn durayumavan
Paidal nōkkam ninaiyāy tōli."

Rarely can any poet rise to such mellifluousness.

There is another piece that defeats Kabilar on his own ground — that of the simile.[26] The heroine expresses the desire of parted lovers thus :

The cripple who has glimpsed the honeycomb,
High on the hill, points at it while he licks
The hollow of his hands held as a cup.

We cannot help noticing Kurundohai 292, on account of the much-quoted tale it has to tell, of

....."Nannan, who did commit
Girl-murder, for this fault :
The bright-browed child, who at her bath,
Seeing the green fruit on the current borne,
Ate it. Nor would he ransom take,
Of elephants in number eightyone,
And gold her weight,"

....., and also on account of the unusual force and energy we find in the poem aptly expressing through the allusion the anger of the speaker.

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[25] *Kurundohai* : 298.
[26] *Kurundohai* : 60.

But when we have noticed the above, we have seen all that is worthy of notice in Paranar's Kurundohai. It might be observed in passing that though in general Paranar's Kurundohai pieces are slightly longer than Kabilar's, they are definitely less powerful.

Paranar's Narrinai poems are more impressive on the whole than his Kurundohai. There are lovely descriptions of nature, worthy of Kabilar. See this : [27]

The black-foot buffaloes that feasted on
The hyacinths, turn satiate away
From the dewy lotus blooms in watered fields,
And warrior-like strut neighbouring mounds

Of white sand, where to doze in peace,

or this : [28]

The sweet fruit, loosened from the mango-tree
Drops with a splash in deep still waters where
The buds of water-lilies look like storks that wait
In silence for the fish.

This is how Paranar sees the cloud that has shed its rain.

The raincloud that has spent its falling drops
Is like pure sifted cotton.[29]

Narrinai, 300 is quite interesting, revealing dramatic powers quite unusual for Paranar. The heroine's hand is desired by a suitor other than the lover. He is clever enough to try to make prompt arrangements for the marriage. Her maid is having a hit at her mistress' lover for not having formally proposed the desired match to the lady's parents.

"He of the well watered land,
Left having stationed at our door the coach
He brought as price of my lady's hand ; and thou
Not ready with such a coach, standest close
Beside the kitchen, touching the thatched roof, like
A mighty elephant that waits for alms."

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27 *Narrinai* : 260
28 *Narrinai* : 280
29 *Narrinai* : 247.

But the noblest of Paranar's Narrinai poems need to be quoted in full below, although a translation cannot do it full justice. It contains one long simile, the kind that would be recognized as the epic simile, but which is freely allowed in short verses in ancient Tamil. It is the complaint of the lover, who has been refused the hand of his lady by her parents :

> The crimson-footed swan, with feathers soft
> Distinctly seen, come from the low South Sea
> After its feed, takes for its naked young
> Petted of goddesses in golden heights
> Of the Himalayas, their daily food,
> Like those unwearied mighty wings that strained,
> You have been sorely troubled, O my heart,
> That went to her and is returned repulsed.
> But still, someday, might she not at my side
> Shine like the morning star in the Eastern sky ? [30]
> . . . . . .

Paranar's Padirruppattu poems are a great achievement. Truly, they are superior to Kabilar's contribution to the 'Ten Tens,' which is saying a great deal. In the colophon to these pieces, we find that they were sung in honour of Cēran Cēnguttuvan, and that, in return for them, the king gave the poet, besides land, his own son as a reward ! What we might think of the king for his extravagance, need not, however, shake our opinion of the poet. Paranar's 'Ten' are among the glories of Tamil literature. They celebrate the great Tamil king's valour and generosity.

It appears this Cēran Cēnguttuvan numbered, among his victories, his victory over a horde that came from overseas to invade his territory. The event is celebrated in several of the Ten. The poems breathe of the sea, and lend exquisite imagery. Here is a description of Cēnguttuvan's horses :

> More numerous than the cold and countless waves,
> With heads of white foam spraying coloured drops,
> From many -billowed, dark, and mighty seas.[31]

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[30] *Narrinai* : 356.

[31] *Padirruppattu* : 42.

Here is a wonderful simile, that is not exactly a conceit for one who has really seen the bird in question dive into the water for prey, and emerge with its thin, tapering beak upward. But we can guess it was crude surgery for the warrior who had his wound stitched.

> The long, sharp needle that sinks in the breast,
> As the halcyon, that looking for its prey,
> Swoops in the cold depths, and flies up again.

The following poem is quite remarkable for the beauty of its description.

> In streets where from the terraces, like streams
> That flow down mountains, banners upon the wind
> Tremulously unroll, the stout flames keep
> Brightening in the lamps because the oil
> Overflows from the burner [32]

Paranar's Padirruppattu rises sometimes into deep and complex harmonies, like the piece beginning.

> "Māmalai mulakkin manganam panippa
> Kān mayangu kadalurai āliyodu sidari" [33]

Sometimes the poet is quite lyrical, as in that poem opening thus :

> "Come ye, join us." [34]

He indulges freely in parallelisms :

> "Minstrels he crowns with lotuses of gold ;
> Gold necklaces he gives the dancing girls." [35]
> "The bamboo fades ; the rainclouds fail ;
> The hills are dry ; rages the sun." [36]

Perhaps it is natural that a lover of parallelism should also be a lover of antithesis.

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[32] *Padirruppattu* : 47.
[33] *Padirruppattu* : 50.
[34] *Padirruppattu* : 49.
[35] *Padirruppattu* : 48.
[36] *Padirruppattu* : 43.

"Gentleness that yields, courage that will not bend."
Born in thy hills, lost in thy sea" [37]
"The sea
That is not shrunk up by the clouds that drink
And is not swollen by the river-streams." [38]

We are told several interesting facts during the course of these poems. Cēran Cēnguttuvan wore a gold chain wrought from the gold crowns of seven kings. His warriors would fight for glory only with veterans. He was bounteous to his followers and distributed his gifts thus :

"Hold, she-elephants for dancing-girls,
Fierce tuskers for the heroes of the war,
And here, are horses for the bards." [39]

The poems are not completely without faults. Padirruppattu, 44 does not seem quite in good taste, when the poet wishes

"May not the urn that hid great monarchs see
Thy glorious body."

But we can afford to overlook them and be thankful to Paranar for the wealth of his Padirruppattu.

We have only a few poems of Paranar's in Purananuru. The subject is, as in Padirruppattu, that of war, but the poems are no longer addressed to Cenguttuvan. Other kings and chieftains claim the poet's notice. The first of these poems, (Puram 4)' is remarkable on account of the deft artistry that serves to relieve the monotony of a catalogue.

Thy sword, bloodsmeared in bringing victory,
Is like the beauty of the blushing sky.
Thy shield, all holes made by the arrows, is
Like a steady target to the shots exposed.
Thy elephant, tusks blunted in the acts
Of bursting barriers, is like grim Death.
And thou art glorious like the crimson sun.
Hence, like the motherless and hungry child
Unceasing, wails the country of thy foe.

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[37] *Padirruppattu* : 48.
[38] *Padirruppattu* : 45.
[39] *Padirruppattu* : 43.

What is noteworthy here is the delicate modulation of each rhythm, together with the fine parallelism, and the powerful contrast at the end. The poem naturally sings its way to the heart. If it would not be too ungrateful one might here recall how even Kabilar overdid matters when he made a catalogue of the flowers in Kurinjippattu.

Puram 63, again reveals Paranar as a careful and conscious artist. The poetry is even more powerful, and one detects the genuine sob of the elegy.

> The countless elephants by arrows shot,
> Their battles ended, died upon the field.
> The horses, famed for bringing victory
> With their heroic riders, there are slain.
> The warriors in chariots, there lie
> Together dead, their shields upon their eyes
> .....
> With spears that plunged deep in their breasts, the kings
> That fought, perished upon the battle-field !
> Alas ! what shall become
> Of the spacious kingdoms with
> New riches everyday,
> Where girls with wristlets made
> Of water-lily stalks,
> Feasted on soaked, flat rice,
> And bathed in the cooling streams ! "

Examining the poem in original, we find that the devices employed to heighten the poignant effect are the long vowels rhyming at the end of alternate lines[40] and the subtle metrical arrangement, beginning with pairs of long-drawn out, end-stopped lines, and ending with short run-on lines, as though the poet were gasping for breath.

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40 *Lines* 2, 4, 6, 8 end with vē, and line 9 ends with 'ē'

Several of these poems are addressed to Pēhan, of whom we are told an interesting story.

> Pēhan, the lord
> Of horses proud and savage elephants,
> Who, taking pity that the peacock blue
> And soft, should shiver in the cold, bestowed
> On it his mantle.

This almost makes Cenguttuvan's generosity sane enough !

Puram 144 runs parallel to Kabilar's poem[41] on the same subject, requesting Pēhan to return to his wife. It is a matter of pride for Paranar, to recognize that, of the many poems addressed to Pēhan in the same strain,[42] Paranar's stands next to Kabilar's.

There are two poems[43] addressed to Pēhan as tributes to his generosity. In one of them[44] Paranar tells a wandering minstrel to seek Pēhan out, because he is sure of the latter's bounty.

> Poorer than thou were we, before we saw
> Pēhan, victorious patron ; and now are we
> Thus satisfied. He knows 'tis good to give.
> His bounty is not meant to earn his heaven,
> But to soothe the poverty of men.

Puram 343 and 352 would afford material for linguists, for in both there occur finite verbs with the ending ' ndu ', from which it is suspected that the modern Malayalam present tense ending with ' nnu ' is derived.

Puram 341 is an interesting piece in which there is a brilliant simile, comparing the confusion, likely to be caused in a village by a girl's beauty to

> " The cold lake muddied by the elephants
> At war."

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[41] *Puram* : 145.

[42] *Puram* : 143, 144, 145, 146, 147.

[43] *Puram* : 141, 142.

[44] *Puram* : 141.

But of all Paranar's Puram poems, Puram 369 is by far the best. It contains an elaborately worked-out metaphor. The battle is compared to the agriculturist sowing his seeds in the midst of thunder, lightning and rain. The trend of the metaphor may be guessed from the few lines quoted below :

> The black-trunked elephant serves there for cloud ;
> The sword is lightning ; thunder, the battledrum ;
> The fleet-foot horse, the wind, in the broad wet field
> Wherein rain down the arrows from tense strings
> By drawn bows ; there, the chariots are ploughs ;
> Bright spears are seeds ; the crops, the trunks of foes.

It is futile to compare Paranar's Puram poems with Kabilar's, because the former is but meagrely represented in this anthology. But as has been seen, the few that are available are well worth the reading.

There is no doubt that Paranar is a true, perhaps a great poet. But there seems to be no justification for ranking him beside Kabilar. The late Mr. Sivaraja Pillai, in his admirable book 'The Chronology of the Ancient Tamils' actually places Paranar high above Kabilar, a decision which is wholly unwarranted. Kabilar was of the few who need not 'abide our question.' In Paranar, as has been noticed, there are several vulnerable spots. He does not show a very high dramatic sense, he is not consistently musical,[45] his allusions are often provokingly tiresome and his flashes of imagery are certainly not so abundant or always as rich as Kabilar's. Besides, his personality is submerged in the literary conventions of his day, unlike Kabilar's, which is kept above water in Puranānūru. But it would be ungrateful to Paranar to compare him with incomparables, or dissect his weaknesses when they are such that many a great poet may plead guilty of them without losing his place. There are flashes of greatness in Paranar. The flashes are neither few nor far between, and some of them transcend all praise. If he

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[45] See *Puram* 141, 142, where the persistent use of the hard 'da' shows definite want of taste. So also *Puram* 145.

is not uniformly musical, to him we may ascribe some of the most musical passages in ancient Tamil literature, like that beginning.

"Arambōlavvalai tōlnilai nehila." If there is not so much wealth of imagery in Paranar as Kabilar, there could be no more magnificient image in all literature than his description of the moss which yields to the touch and spreads back when left alone. Thus, some of the heights of ancient Tamil literature are touched by Paranar. Judging by the bulk of his verse, he is nowhere beside the pinnacle. But there are instances of his leaving the earth and shooting straight for the stars. It was not for nothing that Avvai remembered him with such warm admiration :

'True, Paranan sang of thee this day.'

The Tragedy of Ahalya

(Continued)

BY

MISS E. T. RAJESVARI, M.A., L.T.

KAMBAN gives this story of Ahalya in what is now the ninth Patalam or chapter in Balakantam called Akalikaippatalam consisting in all of eighty six verses. Of these eighty six, the last twenty three or twenty four alone deal with this story. One wonders whether Kamban is justified in giving the title Akalikaippatalam for a chapter where only one fourth of it is concerned with this story. The Tamil Grammarians will justify this title because it is the best of the three stories narrated in this chapter (Tolkappyam 532). In some manuscript copies, however, the last twenty three verses alone, are grouped together as a separate chapter under this title of Akalikaippatalam, whilst the other two stories of the Ganges and Durvasa are numbered as two different chapters. From the way in which Kamban is treating the story of Ramayana, one may be tempted to suggest that the two different stories other than that of Ahalya did not form part of his original work; as these stories do not represent any incidents in the main story of Rama. But in the absence of a detailed study of all the manuscripts, grouped together as various rescensions, in terms of the regions of their currency and in terms of the age of the manuscript, it will be too presumptuous to conclude that any portion is an interpolation. Suffice it for our present purpose to follow those manuscripts which group the last twenty three verses alone as a separate chapter on Ahalya.

B

Visvamitra and the princes enter Mithila and this chapter starts with a description of this land of Sita. The first six verses describe the beauty and the fertility of Mithila reminding us of Kamban's description of the land of Rama.

The gardens of Mithila form a beautiful theatre resounding with the music and dance of Nature (verse 64). The gurgling noise of water rushing through sluices gives us the music of the drum. The fire-like red flowers of Asoka all round the place, are so many lights hung all around the theatre. The flowers with the string-like flow of honey represent the yāl or the lyre. The bees humming thereon are musicians playing on the lyre. The peacocks are the beautiful damsels dancing on this wonderful theatre.

This reminds us of Kamban's description of Kosala and forces us to compare and contrast these two together. In Rama's Kosala the fertile rural area is personified as a King—a unique suggestion of the Tamil poet so full of significance and meaning. This King holds his court or durbar. There is the theatre before him where dance the peacocks keeping time with the drum of the clouds, the water plants holding up the lamps of lotuses, the ripples forming the screen on this stage, whilst the bees sing like minstrels to the enjoyment of the attentive eyes the 'Kuvalai' flowers.

There is so much similarity that one may be tempted to speak of these poems as identical. In the description of Kosala, Kamban's imagination takes, in one great sweep, the whole of the fertile lands as a unity and their importance to the state leading on the development of his idea of the divinity of labour, and his much more important conception of a state and that a cultural state where the subjects form its very life whilst the King becomes its body. In the description of the land of Sita this ulterior significance of a state is wanting, but it is a picture of harmony of Nature or Universe, a harmony of beauty the birth place of Sita the Beautiful Sita the Loving Harmony. It is the feminine soul that is revealed here even as the masculine soul is revealed in the description of Kosala. But there the conception of a King and a state comes in, as the unifying principle, whereas, here, the description of the garden does not suggest anything more than the harmony and beauty which from the phenomenon lead up to the noumenon of a harmony of Love.

The workers in the paddy fields—men and women, as lovers come on the scene, as though in a love story. The women are dying to express their hearts through their eyes to their lovers working on the fields. They go round the fields only to become miserable at seeing the lotuses and lilies uprooted and thrown away by their lovers on the bunds, perhaps because these women feel that these men had not the loving eyes to recognise in these flowers, the hands and eyes of their sweet hearts—a recognition which would have prevented these hard-hearted men, throwing away so unceremoniously and mercilessly these reminders of loving duty. In Rama's land is enacted the selfsame scene of love, but there, without the women pining for an occasion for pouring forth their hearts, the loving men themselves, ever inspired by the love for their beloved, remove none of the weeds ; for, there is no other weed in the fields except the flowers which are to them so many signs and symbols of the beauty of their sweet hearts. In Rama's land, the land of the hero, it is men who are inspired by love whereas in Sita's land, the land of the heroine, it is the women who are inspired by ideal love, the men however going about inspite of their love as practical men of the world.

In Mithila, the swan feels its kinship with the womenfolk and follows them whilst walking. The cuckoo — the koel-feeling this affinity begins to sing. In Rama's land the peacock, mistaking the damsels of the grace for their peahen, follow them like their lovers. It is there a pining for their love. Here it is a feeling of community that arises in the mind of the swan and the cuckoo at the sight of their gait and at the hearing of their song.

The women of Mithila bathe and all the fragrant kesari paste on their bodies, washed and dissolved in the waters of their bath, is found coated on the bodies of the birds of this water. Because of this change in the colour of their bodies, they are not owned by their kith and kin, who mistake them for birds of a different kind. This creates a perpetual commotion. Even the flowers close their eyelids

of petals and sleep but—alas ! not these poor birds. This is how Kamban describes — if we believe these are from his pen — the numerical strength of the woman-folk in the land of Sita, thus leading to a great commotion — a commotion which is symbolical of the commotion of coming war.

In the land of Rama it is not the fragrant Kesari paste of white and red hues, besmeared on the chest of the beautiful men that comes to the mind of Kamban and it is the paste being washed away, that floods, the fields — an exaggerated way of explaining the numerical strength of men. When Kamban thinks of the innumerable damsels of Rama's land — damsels who gave birth to Rama and the citizens of Ramarajya, he is not satisfied with the ponds alone turning red with the Kesari paste washed away from their bodies; his fertile imagination dreams without any restraint of the whole ocean smelling sweet with the fragrance of the sweet smelling tresses of their hair made sweeter by the flowers adorning them. Ordinary standards will condemn this as an exaggeration but Kamban is so over-powered by his conception of the universal influence which has to blossom as Ramarajya, that he finds no other way of expressing this supernormal ideal except through this supernatural way, in keeping with his supernatural and deified conception of Ramarajya.

The fertile yield of the land of Sita is suggested by a beautiful conceit — a description of the rivers of the country not following (1) with ordinary water, but (2) with the milk of the buffaloes whose milk surges forth and flows whilst, away from their home they rest in the waters thinking of their calves, (3) with the juice flowing from the fruits of mango trees grown tall and big on the banks and overhanging the river fords, (4) with the nectar churned in the pressing machine out of the sugar cane cut to pieces and, (5) with the abundant honey, overflowing from the pierced beehives.

In Rama's land, also, there is a flood of sweet liquids but it is all a flood of honey offering a rich intoxicating feast to the fish of the ocean, in keeping with the author's conception of Rama's universal influence. True to this conception, the buffaloes of Rama's land, by a happy, — almost a divine, coincidence in nature, pour their surging milk welling forth at the sweet thought of their loving calves, into the mouth of the newborn swan just opening its mouth and crying for its mother which has left it in search of food. Perhaps in the land of heroine, ordaining feasts, the sweet mixture of a drink or pancāmrta comes to the mind of Kamban and he offers us a sweet mixture of honey, milk, mango juice, soup of the sugar cane and the icy cool water mixed in right proportions as in preparing a cocktail — a sweet and holy drink which can be relished only by the men of artistic taste and not by the fish or other lower orders of creation, believing only in matsya nyaya. If Sita saves Rama the man, the whole world is saved — that is the way woman saves the world not directly but indirectly through the man or the child through her life giving a sweet feast of divine love.

We are gradually taken to higher and higher spheres of more and more refined pleasures and happiness and bliss. In the land of Sita the sweet music of the drum of the minstrels resound all around the theatres on which the young beauties dance. The young inexperienced calf just straying for the first time beyond its home, at this strange unheard of sound, takes fright and dashes into the stream in such hot haste that the astounded sword fish of the waters, in confusion and fear, jump up high into the bunches of arecanut buds. That is how the beings not human in essence react to the beauty and art of women — a suggestive reminder of things to follow in the Ramayana. In Rama's land also there is music, but there is not this fright, of the bards resounding everywhere with their drum, awaking at dawn the damsels of peacocks sleeping on their jewel bedecked cots — a wonderful call to duty of the day, suggesting a happy harmony of the social life.

Kamban gave us a glimpse of the ever-resounding ponds of nature. In the ponds of human art, the damsels close down their eyes while ducking into the water to the music of their jingling bangles and resounding birds and rise up from the waters like the Goddess of Beauty and Wealth, coming up in olden times from the churned ocean of white milk. The damsels bathe in the ponds ; the bees bathe in the flowers. This commingling of sounds creates no confusion of noises but forms into a wonderful orchestra revealing at the same time a miraculous vision of divine Beauty. It is, indeed, a very beautiful and suggestive description of the land of Sita, the very incarnation of the Goddess of Beauty and Wealth, of divine harmony and love.

In the land of Rama also, the damsels bathe in ponds and there is the whirling ripples of water formed. There also the beauty of the damsels is revealed, the very red lilies of water become the disciples as it were of the coral like lips of the women bathing in their waters. Women's beauty sets there the standard everywhere and the whole world imitates them creating in that way a harmony of uniformity, Nature itself resonating to the tune of the blossoming beauty of women. It is the Ramarajya where Rama and others walk in the footsteps of their mothers. But Sita has to live in a land of hostility which has to be saved through divine love which alone can convert the confusion into a symphony.

C

All this is the description of the exterior of Mithila suggesting that we are entering the city of womanhood. It is on the outskirts of this city that the drama of Ahalya has been enacted. These descriptions hold up before us the reflections of so may illusions and delusions to which unfortunately innocent women fall a prey. Is not Sita herself going to be duped by a golden deer of Rakshasa and then by a false sanyasi of Ravana. But all the glory to Sita that she escapes from the hell-fire of degradation, thanks to the

training, she received in the midst of their wonderful surroundings of Mithila and to her own divine fire of chastity and love so beautifully suggested herein.

Janaka the father of Sita is indeed famous for his realisation of the ultimate spiritual truth a great and saintly king who could live amidst the enchanting powers of Māya or illusion and still escape their dangers. Perhaps all this and more is suggested by this short description. Whether we are correct or not in thus reading here a greater wider and deeper significance in relation to the story of Ramayana, one will be justified in concluding that these descriptions of delusions form a very suggestive introduction to the story of Ahalya that unfortunate victim to the evils of the great Lord of the Heaven Indra. This version of delusion itself forming as it were a contrast to the other version *viz.*, Sita's abduction heightens thereby the beauty and force of the latter and attains an organic unity with the main story whose hero becomes the deus ex machina of this subsidiary plot.

Islamic Poetry in Tamil

M. MOHAMED UWISE, M.A.

THE idea of one world was voiced two thousand years ago by a Tamil Poet who said that every country is his country and every one is his kinsman (யாதும் ஊரே யாவரும் கேளிர்). The cosmopolitan nature of the Tamil Language is manifest in its literature. The Tamil language is one of the few, if not the only one, which could lay claim to the religious, ethical and devotional literature of all the leading religions of the world. It has been the literary vehicle of thought of (Saiva and Vaishnava sections of) Hinduism, of Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity and Islam.

By far the least known section is the Muslim contribution to Tamil literature. This section of Tamil literature has been long neglected by students of Tamil. Perhaps, the non-Muslims of the Tamil country are not aware that there are many works in Tamil written by Muslim authors and even the Muslims themselves are ignorant of the existence of so many Tamil literary works of their ancestors. This neglect was mainly due to the fact that most of the Muslim Tamil literary works were not easily available. But I was able to collect together more than two hundred Tamil literary works written by Muslim authors. Accounts of these works are given in my thesis for the degree of Master of Arts submitted to the University of Ceylon in May, 1951.[1]

Muslim Tamil literature can be classified under four main heads :—

1. Literary forms.
2. Prose works.
3. Mystical works.
4. Works of theology and ethics of Islam.

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[1] Muslim contribution to Tamil literature : Published by Tamil Manram, Galhinna, Kandy (Ceylon) (1953).

The literary forms can be further divided into :—

1. Classical literary forms.
2. Popular literary forms.
3. Muslim literary forms.

The epic (காப்பியம்) is the chief literary form in Tamil. Cīrāppurānam (சீறாப்புராணம்) Irājanāyakam (இராஜநாயகம்) Putukuccām (புதுகுச்சாம்) and Mukiyttīn puranam (முகியித்தீன் புராணம்) are the Tamil epics popular with the Muslims. Many literary works in each of the following minor classical literary forms are found in the Muslim section of Tamil literature namely, Ārruppatai (ஆற்றுப்படை) Antāti (அந்தாதி) Kōvai (கோவை) Kalampakam (கலம்பகம்) Pillaittamil (பிள்ளைத்தமிழ்) and Ammānai (அம்மானை). Very common among the Muslims are the popular literary forms namely, Tiruppukal (திருப்புகழ்) Mālai (மாலை) Ēcal (ஏசல்) Kīrttanai (கீர்த்தனை) Cintu (சிந்து) Kummi (கும்மி) Ānantakkalippu (ஆனந்தக் களிப்பு) Tempānku (தெம்பாங்கு) Kapparpāttu (கப்பற் பாட்டு) etc. The literary standard of these popular literary forms rank somewhat higher than that of Folk poetry.

The Tamil literary forms that are peculiar to the Muslims of the Tamil country are termed Muslim Tamil literary forms. The names by which these literary forms are known are Arabic and Persian except one which is Tamil. This is called Pataippōr (படைப்போர்) or war-ballad. The literary forms known by Arabic and Persian names are Munājāt (முனஜாட்). Kissā (கிஸ்ஸா) Masālā (மஸலா) and Nāmā (நாமா).

By far the most numerous are Munājāt poems which are sung to invoke blessings. Munājāt is an Arabic verbal noun meaning " Uttering in secrecy ". In later usage it began to indicate supplication addressed to Allah and his blessed devotees. Munājāt is also generally used for the extempore prayer offered after the usual liturgical form has been recited. Kissā means a narrative or a story. The Arabic word Masālā

means questions or problems. Namah (நாமா) in Persian stands for a story, a book or a Chronicle.

The prose section of Muslim Tamil literature consists chiefly of books on religion and literary controversies. It also comprises a large number of works dealing with the jurisprudence of Islam. Some of the religious controversies were between different sects of Islam, while others were between Islam and other religions. As in North India, Tamil country did not experience so much of the religious controversies based on religious sects. In North India there are two groups of Muslims known as Sunnis and Shias, arguing out the soundness of their respective ideologies. But the sectarian controversy among the Muslims in the Tamil country was mainly confined to the divergent interpretation of the different orders in Islam.

A significant share of the Muslim contribution to Tamil literature is composed of the literary compositions of Muslim mystics of the Tamil country. The history of Tamil literature shows the prominent place the great Saiva mystics occupy in the revival and the development of the Tamil language and its literature. The same could be said of the Muslim Tamil mystics. Mystics of different religions have sung almost the same type of songs when they reach the height of their mystical experience. But these songs are not without the distinguishing features pertaining to the particular faith to which the particular mystic belongs. The songs of Tayumānavar and Mastān Sāhib have much in common. Two important features that distinguish the songs of Tayumānavar from that of Mastān Sāhib are the latter's Islamic theme and occasional use of words of Arabic origin. Similarly songs of another Muslim Mystic, Pīr Mukammatu Sāhib have much in common with the lyrics of the Tevāram Trio.

Although almost all the Tamil literary works of the Muslims have Islam as their main theme, yet there are also Muslim Tamil literary works which deal exclusively with the theology and ethics of Islam.

It is said that the English poets of the Seventh and Eighth centuries wrote in an English manner and very often in an English mood but what they had to express was of Latin ecclesiastical traditions (see Rose Macaulay : Hogarth Lecture No. 14. Some Religious element in English literature pp. 30-31). Similarly it could be said that the Muslim Tamil poets wrote in a Tamil manner and very often in a Tamil mood but what they had to express was of Arabic ecclesiastical traditions. At times Muslims poets went a step further by writing Tamil poems in Arabic script.

Generally a language is written in the script of another language, only when that particular language has no script of its own. Since Tamil has an indigenous script, this usage may be due to the fact that Muslims hold Arabic as a sacred language. The Arabic script is said to be the universal mark of Muslim dominance or influence wherever Islam spread. Muslim Tamil literature of Peninsular India has a close parallel in the literature of the Muslim Spaniards of the Iberian peninsula. In many of the Muslim Spanish literary works, the words are Spanish and the verse form is French while the script used is Arabic.

The poems of the Muslim Tamil authors betray traces of Hindu influences. This was inevitable as the Muslim Tamil poets lived in a predominantly Hindu society. Many of the Hindu ideas and conceptions have crept into the works of almost all the Muslim Tamil mystics. Some of the Hindu ideas in these poems are very much opposed to the fundamental beliefs of the creed of Islam. There are also instances where Hindu ideas have been twisted to make them Islamic.

The distinguishing feature of Muslim Tamil literature is the presence of a large number of words of Arabic origin. These words cannot be dispensed with as they are very essential to convey the Islamic ideas. The importance and indispensable nature of the Arabic words of Muslim Tamil literature is analogous to the presence of Prakrit,

Pali and Sanskrit words in the Tamil literature of the Jains, Buddhists and Vaishnavites respectively.

The esteem in which the Jaina and Buddhists sections of Tamil literature are held is mainly due to the pioneer efforts of research scholars who devoted their lives in the publication of these works. These scholars thus, made these literary works—some of which are masterpieces—known to the Tamil speaking world. Muslim Tamil literary works also will be popular if they are published with critical editions and made easily available to the Tamil speaking world.

Beschi, the Tamil Scholar and Poet

THOMAS SRINIVASAN

THE MISSIONARY

THE few facts that are known about Beschi's life are easily, available[1] and can be rapidly summarised here. Born in 1680, in Italy, he entered the Society of Jesus in 1698 and joined the Madura Mission in 1710. The mission, which had been founded by another Italian, Robert de Nobili more than a century before, for that reason possessed a certain attraction for Italians. Beschi spent the first years in the south of the peninsula at Kamanayakenpatti and Gurukalpatti. In 1712-13 we hear of his being stationed at Ayyampet in the Trichinopoly District. The next two years saw him again in the south where, on one occasion, he was on the point of being put to death for his religion. After another year, spent partly at Madura and partly in Marava, Beschi was definitely stationed in the north.

He was to spend the rest of his active life at Elakurichi near Tanjore, Conankuppam in South Arcot and Vadugerpet to the north of Trichinopoly. At Elakurichi he secured a considerable grant of land from the Nayanar or Zemindar of Ariyalur. Later on he came in contact with Chanda Sahib who seems to have been completely taken up with the talents of the great missionary. The influence which Beschi wielded over Chanda Sahib saved the neighbouring missionaries from many a vexation in that period of ceaseless civil war. It was very likely that Chanda Sahib showed

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[1] La Mission du Maduré by L. Bertrand, S.J. Vol. IV and Beschi, by L. Besse S.J. The latter has superseded all the earlier biographies. The older notices by Babington, Caldwell, mahon &c., were all based on the unreliable 'life' by Muthusami Pillai.

his admiration in the usual manner of the time by awarding Beschi a pension in the shape of a grant of land. This is apparently the only basis of fact behind the later tradition that he was actually Diwan to the Nawab and kept great state.

In any case, Chanda Sahib's nawabship came to an abrupt end in 1742, and Beschi soon after withdrew to the Fishery Coast, presumably to rest after his thirty years' labour. In 1746 we find him at Ambalacat as Visitor of the Jesuit College there. It was at Ambalacat, according to Besse, that he died in February, 1747.

The few letters of the period that have been utilized by Fr. Besse tell us very little about his literary history. There is just a hint in a letter of 1715, while Beschi was working in Tinnevelly, that he availed himself of the leisure enforced on him by persecution to devote himself to the study of Tamil poetry. This was quite in keeping with the traditions of the Madura Mission. Its founder, de Nobili, could write with equal facility in Telugu, Tamil and Sanskrit. In fact, he may claim to be the pioneer of Tamil prose—a species of literature which was little esteemed in the country. It is true that his prose is rather turgid. But he points with justifiable pride to the purity of his own language compared with the barbarisms of the Tamil spoken by the Portuguese on the coast. With equal justice he could have contrasted his business-like style with the stilted circumlocutions that passed for prose even among his Tamil contemporaries. Fr. de Nobili is also said to have composed verse—of what quality we cannot judge, for nothing of it has come down to us.

But deep scholarship in the languages of the country was the least part of the missionary's equipment in Madura. In his dress his food, his manner of life, in his very outlook, he was expected to turn Indian, or rather Hindu, so far as the square peg of his Christianity could fit into the round hole of the Hindu social system. This

method, which owed its inspiration to the genius of de Nobili, and on which the Madura and Carnatic missions worked, has had severe critics ever since its foundation. But it is difficult to see the point of their criticism. The Christian religion did not enjoy in the interior the political support which helped its spread in the Portuguese territories. On the contrary, de Nobili had to live down the heavy reproach of preaching a religion which was associated in the popular mind with *Mlecchas*. His first task, therefore, was to overcome this reproach and prepare the minds of the people to judge his message on its merits. It was only by this means that he and his successors were able to start a mass movement towards the Church among the higher classes—a movement based on religious grounds alone, which forms a unique chapter in the history of Indian Christianity. Even apart from its tactical value, there is no doubt that de Nobili's method was in direct conformity with the spirit of Catholicism. There has always been a school, or rather a tendency, among Christians to identify the cause of Christ with a definite race, culture, political regime, or particular system of social ordering—an unfortunate tendency which in spite of occasional or temporary advantages, has always ended by doing more harm than good. It is the eternal glory of de Nobili that he took up arms against this tendency and enlisted on the side of Catholicism that social purity and personal asceticism which is so much esteemed in India. It was now Beschi's turn to add to it the glamour of a great literature and the attraction of popular poetry.

THE SCHOLAR

Beschi's writings fall into three broad categories. In some his aim was to facilitate the study of the language, particularly for his fellow-missionaries. To this class belongs his grammar of Kodum-Tamil. The word Kodum-Tamil was originally used to denote the dialects of the 12 countries adjoining the land of Sen-Tamil, *viz.*, the Pandya country. Beschi was the first to use it in the sense of colloquial, as

opposed to literary, Tamil. His aim was to give the missionaries a means by which they could quickly equip themselves for contact with the people, leaving it to the taste and ability of each one to master its literature later on. But the results of the distinction thus made by him have been unfortunate. On the one hand, some at least of his successors have been satisfied with this Kodum-Tamil and thus helped to perpetuate a variety of Tamil-Christian Tamil, as it is called,—decidedly less polished than the language of the schools. On the other hand, it has been responsible for the rather foolish idea of some scholars that there is a wide gulf between literary and colloquial Tamil—as if it were greater than exists between, say, Cockney and the king's English.

At any rate, Beschi's work on Kodum-Tamil and its sequel on Sen-Tamil have formed the starting point of all modern grammatical studies in Tamil. Native grammarians had hopelessly complicated the system of Tamil grammar in an ill-conceived attempt to force it into the altogether uncongenial mould of Panini. Again, most existing grammars were recondite with obsolete exceptions and obscure in the last degree, so that they were generally accompanied by scholiasts, not much more enlightening themselves. The only grammar that was at all in general use was the NANNUL. But even this was very jejune, and confined itself to two out of the five sections of Tamil grammar. The result was that prosody, rhetoric and the allied arts had fallen into neglect.

Beschi, with his mastery of European languages, was the first to reduce the rules of native grammarians to an intelligible and consistent system. His Grammar of Sen-Tamil in Latin is a supreme achievement of conciseness and clarity which has not received its due as a brilliant anticipation of the science of philology. At the same time, Beschi wrote a grammar in the style of the native works, in sutras, called Thonnul (the ancient book). He meant it to be complete and, thus supersede Nannul, because it embraced all the five sections. In some places he has bodily taken

over the sutras of his Jaina predecessor. But while it took the latter 462 verses to do his two sections, Beschi has completed his five sections in 370 verses. It is a sufficient commentary on the obscurantism of all those responsible for the teaching of Tamil in the schools to say that this excellent work was printed only in 1891, and has not been reprinted since then.

Beschi was also the first scientific lexicographer of Tamil. He edited two dictionaries, one Latin-Tamil, the other Portuguese-Tamil, and followed them up with one in Tamil, the Saduragaradi. In the Saduragaradi he was breaking altogether new ground. The old dictionaries in Tamil or *nigandus*, as they were called besides being in verse, followed a peculiar classification of their own. Thus the Pingalandai is divided into ten sections and its more famous successor, the Chudamani is divided into twelve sections, such as names of gods of men and animals, words with many meanings &c.,. Neither of them follows the alphabetical order which to us is the distinctive mark of a dictionary ; they can be used only by memorising or by frequent cross-reference. Beschi divides his own work into four sections as his title indicates ; the first being on names, the second on things, the third on series,—*e.g.* Angas : 6 ; countries : 56 ; &c.,—and the fourth on rhymes, that is, grouping the words according to initial rhymes. In each section the words are arranged alphabetically. This book, which was the first dictionary in Tamil on modern lines, has set the standard for all subsequent lexicographers. Rottler and Percival and Winslow and native lexicographers have, with acknowledgement or without, drawn largely on it.

According to Burnell, it was Beschi who carried out some salutary changes in the Tamil alphabet. The *Virāma* or *Pulli* which had originally been used to distinguish the consonant had fallen into disuse owing to the apathy of palm-leaf writers. Beschi saved much confusion to Tamil readers by restoring it. In writing the peculiarly Tamil long ē and ō after a consonant the old practice had been to mark

the *dīrga* above the consonant. This diacritical mark (-) had also fallen into disuse in an age of indolent scribes. In restoring its use he carried out a modification of the symbol also. The symbols had been கெ-கெ (Ke-Kē) ; கொ-கொ (Ko-Kō). He introduced the new symbols கே (Kē), கோ (Kō).

THE PROSE WRITER

The second class of Beschi's works are his prose writings. The shortest of them, probably meant to serve as a primer to learners of Tamil, was a humorous skit called THE STORY OF GURU PARAMARTHA (Sir Noodle). It is in effect a gentle satire on the crass ignorance of his contemporary Hindu *Matādhipathis*. Not only has the book been translated into many European languages, but many of Beschi's expressions and episodes have passed into proverbs among the people. Guru Paramartha has become as celebrated as Pickwick or Don Quixote.

The bulk of Beschi's prose, however, consists of apologetics directed against the Protestants. The Danes had occupied Tranquebar a century before, and set up a printing press and appointed a pastor there. Some of their publications reached Beschi at Elakurichi. The danger of defection among his flock was at one time so great that he placed his church and flock under the special protection of Our Lady, Refuge of Christians, and instituted a feast which is still held there annually. He also resolved to take up his powerful pen against the Protestants.

To this purpose of polemics were devoted the VĒDAVILAKKAM (Explanation of the Faith) the PEDAGAMARUTTAL (Rebuttal of Dissent) and the LUTHERINATTIYALBU (The Character of the Sect of Lutherans). The first is a comprehensive treatise on the Christian religion with special emphasise on those doctrines which the Protestants denied. The second was a reply to a Protestant pamphlet called Pedagam (The Corruptions of Rome).

Beschi, therefore, called his book the counterblast to (the charge of) corruption. This is in some respects the most brilliant of his prose writings. With merciless sarcasm he examines every charge in the Protestant indictment and shows its untenability. He gives copious extracts from their works in order, he says, to show up the lies couched in their crude Western Tamil. Along with other arguments well known to Catholic controversialists Beschi does not hesitate to appeal to the 'idols of the tribe' — the religious experience and even the social prejudices of the country. Thus arguing against the right of private judgment he says: 'The Bible is like the ocean full of rich pearls, but to get at them a man must be an experienced diver, else he will only vainly imperil his life..Is it possible for a washerwoman, for a PANCHAMA woman picking oysters in a paddy field, to explain the CHINTAMANI or discuss the THOLKAPPIYAM? Is it not proper that the Scriptures, like a tank of drinking water, should be guarded from the pollution of the unclean and the casteless, who shall, instead, be served with a potful by the guardian brahmin? In this way Beschi tells off seventy-eight 'lies' which he claims to have discovered in the thirteen pages of the Lutheran pamphlet.

In the third work Beschi drops the heavy weapons of his theological armoury and covers his adversaries with ridicule. The Lutherans had sent him a letter couched, he says, in barbaric Tamil; and Beschi replied with a quotation from the book of the Apocalypse where the fifth angel describes the infernal locust (IX, 7-11). He applies this description to Luther and pitilessly works out the comparison under each detail.

The fourth important prose work of Beschi's is the VĒDIAR OLUKKAM which has meant to be a guide book for the Catechists. By the elevation of its style, the unction of its piety, and the exalted ideal it teaches, this book takes rank among the classics of Christian spirituality. The Protestants, who had so little reason to love its author, paid

to his work the unwilling tribute of appropriating it to their own use. It has been printed and used among them to this day with alterations to suit their own taste.

THE POET

The Third Class of Beschi's writings, and the one, by which he is best known, are his poetical works.

In the order of merit the least among them is the KITHERIAMMAL AMMANEI (The Song of St. Quitteri) in 1,100 lines. The Ammanei is a popular metre of the nature of the ballad, with a lilt which makes it easy to learn and pleasant enough to hear recited. Into this form had been thrown many a story from epic and PURANA which to this day is worth a living to several wanderings minstrels. Beschi had only recently introduced the devotion to this Portuguese saint among his people, and now proceeded to enlist on the side of her cultus the powerful engine of popular instruction. At the same time he was supplying one great desideratum of the Catholic religion—popular poetry.

Another piece in verse is the ANNAI-ALUNGAL-ANDĀDHI (The sorrows of Our Lady) which contains a hundred verses in the Andādhi metre, in which the last syllable of every verse is taken up as the first syllable of the next. Religious dramas had always been popular among Tamil Catholics, the first such play having been staged at Candalur, near Trichinopoly, in 1653. Beschi's Andādhi was apparently written on the occasion of some such Passion play as we witness even to-day. Other short pieces are the ADAI-KALAMĀLAI in 120 lines, the KALIPPA, in 100 lines, dedicated to Our Lady, the THEVARAM, in ten stanzas which is sung as a dirge, and ten verses in Sandam, an extremely difficult metre.

The most noteworthy among the shorter pieces is the THIRUKKĀVALŪR-KALAMBAGAM in honour of Our Lady of Refuge at Elakurichi. It was usual among Tamil devo-

tees, Saivites as well as Vaishnavites, to go on pilgrimage to sacred places and sing in honour of their god at each shrine. Beschi was, therefore, following them in dedicating the poem to his favourite shrine at Elakurichi. But the Kalambagam is a difficult form in which the poet uses all the metres at pleasure. In the hundred verses he has given at least one specimen of each of the Tamil metres.

Taste in poetry had become considerably sophisticated by Beschi's time, and poets had come to be judged by the jingle of their alliteration, the acrobatics of their metre, their endless puns on words, and rare conceits. Beschi never quite yielded to this facile temptation but in the Kalambagam he shows himself equal to the cleverest versifier of them all. What imparts the additional quality of greatness to this *tour de force* is the loftiness of his ideas, his majestic cadences, and the purity of his literary manner.

It is unwise to choose where everything is beautiful, but a few specimens will illustrate the thoroughness with which Beschi had imbibed the tradition of the Tamil Alwars and Nayanars—the Bhakti school.

"Why was it not my good fortune to share with the crescent moon the honour of carrying her lotus feet ? I should envy the bee singing her praises as it dives for honey among the flowers in her hair. I would willingly become the grass in her fields if she, the deer that bore the Lion who destroyed our sins, would come down to browse there."

This verse is far too reminiscent of one of Kulasekhara Alwar's moods to be a mere coincidence. Or again :

O Sheperdess of bewitching eyes and honeyed words, thy wiles are wasted, for here has her temple the daughter of Annammāl (St. Anne.) who true to her mother's name has the rare gift of detecting the water in your milk and showing up your deceit. (This refers to the Tamil literary convention that the swan has the ability to separate water from the milk to which it is added.)

But, excellent as Beschi's minor poems are, his reputation as a Tamil poet stands or falls with the THEMBAVANI—The Garland of Sweet Verse. It is an epic in honour of St. Joseph in 36 cantos, which are arranged in three books and contain 3,615 lines, altogether. It is based on the Scripture account of St. Joseph, which is very meagre, and on some works of tradition, both amply enriched by the Poet's fancy.

The poem opens in the usual manner of the Tamil Kāppiams (Skr. Kāvyas) with a pāyiram or exordium followed by two cantos describing the country of Palestine and the city of Jerusalem. A couple of cantos follow on the birth and upbringing of Joseph. The fifth canto deals with the marriage of Joseph and Mary. From the sixth to the ninth canto is a description of the life of married continence they led, and enshrines some idyllic scenes of domestic bliss. The tenth canto describes the Nativity, the eleventh the visit of three kings, and the twelfth the Presentation in the Temple. This concludes the first kanda or book.

The journey to Egypt takes up the ten cantos from the thirteenth to the twenty-second. The next seven cantos deal with the life of the Holy Family in Egypt. The thirtieth is concerned with the return journey from Egypt and the next describes the missing and finding in the Temple of the boy Jesus. Then follow a couple of cantos on the last days of Joseph. Canto XXXV takes us to the limbo of the Patriarchs where Our Lord appears after His resurrection. Canto XXXVI is a superb paean of triumph celebrating the ascent of the patriarchs with Christ at their head into heaven. Joseph, the faithful guardian of the Virgin and of the Incarnate God, is crowned as the head of the saints and the King of men. The poem concludes with an account of how Leopold of Austria, Holy Roman Emperor, dedicated his kingdom to St. Joseph in gratitude for his wonderful escape through his intercession from a dangerous conspiracy.

At first sight such jejune material looks unpromising stuff out of which to weave an epic, even when amplified by the loving hand of tradition. But nothing can excel the skill with which Beschi has made his work an epitome of sacred history, Christian theology and apologetics in the face of Hinduism. Thus he has woven into the texture of the poem no less than a hundred and twenty episodes from the Old Testament. In tracing the ancestry of Joseph he takes occasion to tell the history of David. In describing the journey to Egypt he recalls the great scenes of Israelite history like the Exodus and the victory of Josue. The history of John the Baptist is brought in as a corollary to Herod's persecution. After describing the overthrow of the gods of Egypt, the poet makes the deposed deities hold council in hell with their infernal leader. This is an opportunity for him to denounce the obscenities of idol-worship. One result of their deliberations is that the fallen angels make war on Joseph : but they are compelled to retire discomfited.

In Egypt, again, Joseph is portrayed as an apostle — precursor of Christ, pointing out to his neighbours the errors of paganism and the excellence of the unique way. Thus Canto XXVII is concerned with refuting the assumptions of Hindu metaphysics, and shows the thoroughness of Beschi's Indological equipment. On the return journey from Egypt Our Lord decribes as in a prophecy the ascetics that will one day convert the desert into a vestibule of heaven. At Nazareth, again Jesus predicts how the house they live in will one day be transported to Loreto in Italy, and incidentally traces the spread of the Faith in European countries. In an enthusiastic vein the poet now throws aside his reserve and concludes with three beautiful verses on Italy, "she that gave birth to me". Of his own province of Venice he says that she is surrounded by the low sea that brings her tribute from every land. A score of verses in the thirty-fifth canto deal with the Life and Passion of Christ, His Resurrection and Ascension.

The first impression that the poem leaves on the mind is its utter naturalness. It is Indian, and Tamil, from the names to the entire atmosphere and background. The rendering of Latin or Hebrew names by translation was an old habit in the Madura Mission which had much to commend it. So in the poem Joseph the hero becomes Valan, the other Joseph of Egypt being called Ānaran, the Baptist is called Karunaiyan, Issaac becomes Nakulan, and the Egyptian interlocutor of Joseph is called Sivāsivan.

So also in the descriptions, with which the poem abounds, Beschi like every other poet in Tamil, has followed the accepted canons of the language as laid down in the "Poruladikaram" of the Tholkappiam. One of these was to depict all scenes according as they belong to one of five categories of land : Marudham or city, Kurinji or mountain, Mullai or forest, Neidhal or seacoast, and Palai or desert. Hence descriptive passages in the best Tamil works are apt to pall, because they are too conventional and standardised. Beschi had hitched his waggon to the star of the Jivaka Chintamani, a Jaina romance, (one of the five 'epics' that once existed, one of the three that still are left) of more than three thousand verses dealing with the life and marital adventures of Jivakan. This poem had become the standard and the thesaurus of all descriptive Tamil poetry of the erotic or naturalistic variety. Beschi had dived deep into that sea, and his descriptive pieces are bold, picturesque and full, while all the time they conform to the accepted standards. The grave author of the Comparative Grammar accuses him of having falsified the geography of Jerusalem. With due difference to Caldwell, however, we may doubt the poetic proprietory of introducing the fauna and flora of Palestine in a Tamil poem intended for the Tamils. Beschi knew better, and his landscapes while they abound in the asoka, the hamsa, the kokila, the bounding monkey and the lordly elephant, show no traces of the clumsy camel and the arid desert palm.

One or two specimens from the large number of such verses may help to give some idea of his method :

The sowers were scaring away from the fields the hamsa birds that had drunk the milk of the big buffaloes which were spontaneously shedding their milk at the thought of their absent calves. (Canto 12, v 50.)

The peacocks dashed at the open flower of the kritika, taking it to be the outspread hood of the cobra, and retreated in confusion on realising their folly. The bees ran away from the kasa flowers, thinking them to be the necks of hidden peacocks, whereat the *mullai* creeper laughed, showing the teeth of its buds. (Canto 30, vv 53-54.)

A distinctive mark of Tamil verse is its use of initial rhyme. The poet therefore, must have a vast vocabulary at his command to find the words that will rhyme perfectly without spoiling the sense. But here the lexicographer in Beschi came to the rescue of the poet. Thus in Canto 12, v 21 we have :

The mountain was adorned with the flower-bearing *punnais* as an elephant is adorned with its temple pendant. From its top rushed a river, heavy with the weight of precious stones and carrying fertility like the Veda of Christ, whose spray covered the top of the hill as the stars cover the sky.

Here the first foot in each of the four lines is Naga, but it is used in the four different senses of elephant, punnai, (tree) mountain and sky.

According to definition, a Kavya should contain matter that will promote the four-fold purusharthas of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. The Jaina ascetic Thiruthakkadever, had been taunted with the absence in Jaina works of the third element, the srngararasa of erotics, and amply vindicated himself in the Jivaka Chintamani which abounds in the most sensuous scenes. Beschi has just enough of this

manner to show what he could have done in the line if he had wished. A good example is the incident of Neepakan's temptation in Canto XX, which is said to be modelled on Tasso. But Beschi's priestly calling and the majesty of his theme prevented him from exploiting this rich vein of Tamil poetry.

He took his revenge, however, in the excellence of his moralistic verse. Such poetry has always been highly esteemed, by the Tamils, witness the religious honours paid to Thiruvalluvar, the author of the Kural. The Christian poet was not to be outdistanced in this sphere, and many of his verses are strikingly original :

Selfishness is only cured by asceticism, even as the snake sloughs by sqeezing itself between two stones. (Canto 26, v. 122.)

In adversity, stand steadfast like the mountain. Run after God ceaselessly as a river runs towards the sea. Avoid sin as if it were fire. Rate all earthly good as the foam on flood-water. Seek after salvation as intently as a swimming man strains after the other bank. (Canto 30 v. 8.)

Life is the axle of the cart which is the human body, charged with the precious load of soul and intellect and making for the goal of salvation. Avoid, therefore, the rut of sin and the bog of temptation, for, once broken, this axle cannot be mended or replaced. (Canto 28, v. 158.)

Besides, there are numerous verses brimming over with devotion and couched in the language of Hindu piety.

In such a great master of verse it would be an endless task to look for instances of vast learning. Beschi had studied the Tamil language critically and with enthusiasm. He had dived into the depths of its literature and emerged, as far as that was possible for a foreigner, a Tamil and a poet. The fragments of famous poets constantly come back in his poetry, almost in spite of himself. He has,

again, a way of recalling some verse of a master and tacking a part of it on to his own, thus vindicating the truth of Mirabeau's great saying that originality consists in knowing how to make use of other people's work. A cursory reading is enough to show three such verses bodily taken over from the CHINTAMANI but fitted into a new context. Thus verse 14 of Beschi's Canto 1 is nearly the same as Canto 1, v. 24, of the CHINTAMANI. Again, verse 112 of Canto 4 of the Jaina romance is the prototype of Canto 26, v. 61 of the Thembavani. Lastly, most of the words in Canto 12, v. 11 of Beschi are the same as Canto 11, verse 4 of the Chintamani, except that Beschi has deftly applied to a hill a description in which his Jaina predecessor protrayed court women, Extending the same inquisitiveness to other authors, it is easy to discover that the model for verse 4 in Beschi's exordium is verse 2 in Kamban's exordium to his RAMAYANA. Many of the descriptive sketches in the THEMBAVANI are reminiscent of the same poet, who has been called the Kalidasa of Tamil and the emperor of Tamil poets. This is especially true of the battle-scenes in Book II which recall, by the vigour of their movement and the picturesqueness of their detail, the famous scenes of Kamban's Yuddhakanda. But Beschi had a special predilection for Thiruvalluvar, he of the divine muse, and his Kural. Thus he has incorporated in his own verse more than a score of Thiruvalluvar's incomparable epigrams.

Considering the mass and the quality of Beschi's work his place in Tamil literature is assured, on the heights. Tamil prose has never been written in a simpler or clearer, manner reflecting every shade of abstruse sense and responsive to every change of mood, than when Bechi wielded it. As for the poetry, Caldwell, on the estimate of impartial native critics, assigns him 'the first rank among the Tamil poets of the second class' and proceeds. "The first rank comprises only three or at the most favour works,—the KURAL, THE CHINTAMANI, THE RAMAYANAM and THE NALADIYAR." No well-road critic of Tamil literature will accept this judgement. The Naladiyar has neither the beauty of

form nor the emotional glow of true poetry. Some of the lyrical gems in the Sangam collections, the Aham or Puram, for instance have a far better claim to be considered as genuine poetry, by their simplicity, their directness, and the universality of their themes, — love, war, heroism sport and friendship. The SILAPPADIKĀRAM (The story of the Anklet), which possesses all these merits in an eminent degree besides the architectonic quality of its story, will certainly be considered the finest work of imagination in Tamil. Then, and then only, come the CHINTAMANI and Kamban's Ramayana, brilliant, but overwrought, with many of the characteristics of great poetry but with none of its restraint. In the fervour of his bhakti Beschi finds his place with Nammālwar and Manikkavāsagar. In pressing poetry into the service of religion and metaphysics he recalls the Buddhist epic MANIMEKHALAI. In the purity and range of his diction, the variety and harmony of his verse, the splendour and truth of his descriptions, Beschi challenges comparison with Kamban and Thiruthakka-devar. No impartial critic who has read all the three will hesitate to place Beschi alongside of the Vaishnavite Bhakta and the Jaina ascetic. His poetry is as good as that of any poet subsequent to the Sangam epoch, far more true than that of the elegant versifiers who wrote Puranas in plenty, the best perhaps that any man ever wrote in a language not his mother tongue. Stephens, Beschi, Hanxleden — all three were Jesuits and poets : but Beschi's place is as much the more conspicuous as Tamil is more difficult than Konkani or Malayalam — the most difficult of Indian Languages after Sanskrit, and proud in her ancient literature and in the self-sufficiency of her vocabulary.

But it cannot be pretended that Beschi has had anything like justice done to him. His own contemporaries gave him the full measure of that romantic, semi-religious admiration that the Tamil world has always extended to its creative artists. Tradition has it that he was admitted as a member of the Sangam — which did not exist — and was allowed by his colleagues to add to his name the prefix

'great', *honoris causa*. The first generation of Englishmen who set themselves to the study of Tamil realised his value as a guide to the language. Thus Babington of the Madras Civil Service edited and translated the story of Guru Paramartha and the Grammar of Sen-Tamil. Ellis made a hobby of collecting manuscripts of Beschi's works. The Grammar of Kodum-Tamil was printed thrice in the first forty years of the last century. As recently as 1870 the Madras Government Press issued a dictionary 'based on that of Beschi'. The linguistic work of Beschi has suffered the fate of all pioneer attempts — its very effectiveness has been the cause of its partial effacement.

But the oblivion into which his poetry has fallen calls for an explanation. Dr. Pope demned as monotonous the whole Thembavani. The Tamilian has less excuse than the English savant.

But there is a faint hope of better things. Christian poets are to-day attracting more attention from Tamil scholars. The preparation of a book of selections from Beschi's poetical works is to be desired. That and the reprint of his linguistic works may facilitate the study of Tamil by foreign students. That again is a desideratum. For a language of such antiquity and with such abundance of literature of the first order, Tamil is barely known and little appreciated abroad. The revival of interest in Beschi may well be the spear-head of such a movement to make Tamil widely known.

Bharathi's Poems

DR. KAMIL ZVELEBIL

I

1. புதிய ஆத்திச்சூடி. This small work containing 110 aphorisms was composed by the poet in imitation of the didactic collection ஆத்திச்சூடி ascribed to the half-legendary old Tamil poetess ஔவையார்.[1] Bhārathi expressed his love and admiration for her work—which has become, in the course of time, actually a common treasure of Tamil people—in his own work several times, cf. his essay தமிழ் நாட்டு நாகரிகம்.

But this little collection of Bhārathi is not a mere imitation. Sometimes the poet does not tresspass against the form and contents of old traditional aphoristic literature (*e.g.* லீலை இவ்வுலகு), but more often he fills the old aphoristic form with new sense and new life. An introduction of 110 verses gives expression to the poet's noble syncretism, as we know it also from various other places of his prose, *cf.* the essay யாரை தொழுவது : பரம் பொருள் ஒன்றே, "there is only one highest Ens"; truth is everywhere, in all faiths. We must be most tolerant.

In this little collection the poet wants to expose the essence of various religious systems, the gist of their ethical teaching. Some of this 110 maxims express ideas typical only for Bhārathi, and some of his commands and interdictions respond even to the movements and wants to the time of their

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1 The author's feuilleton about this poetess appeared in Novy Orient, Prague, 1952/VII/, p. 12.

origin. Here are some typical examples of general aphorisms which belong to the ethical canon of classical Tamil civilization (in a truly pregnant way this ethics had been expressed by the திருக்குறள் and by ஔவையார்). 4. Giving is wealth, 48. Know that god art thou, 82. Worship the plough etc. When reading no. 38. Worship the sun, we remember, accidentally, the beginning of the I. Canto of சிலப்பதிகாரம் : "Praised be the Sun ஞாயிறு போற்றுதும் !"

The very beginning of this little collection, however, is characteristic for the poet's conviction that, first of all, two qualities are necessary for everyone to be able to help in building a great and happy future for "Mother India" : courage and industry. In many verses (let us remember only the admirable song ஜய பேரிகை "Drum of victory") and prose passages Bhārathi gives expression to his burning hate of two qualities choking all social and political progress of the Indian people : cowardice and sluggishness. And here we have the first maxim : அச்சந் தவிர் "Avoid fear" And then a series of aphorisms and saying expressing similar ideas : 3. Weariness is shameful, 19. Lassitude is bad, and further nos 5, 17, 36, 46. Some other maxims deal with the relation to work (19. கூடித் தொழில் செய which we would translate today with "Work collectively", 21. Do honour to manual work, 33. Work with purpose, 55. Spend the whole day working). There are other sayings which react upon the actual situation and express some claims of almost political and social nature (22. Withstand evil, 28. Destroy the destroyer, 30. Worship the hero,[2] 49. Love your country, 50. Venerate woman, 69. Strive for new things, 70. Don't leave the earth, 71. Be ever in quest of a greater thing, 110. Resist violence).

The language of this short collection is polished, classical, its lexical analysis proves the use of the old poetical expressions (மேழி "plough", சிறுவோர் "destroyer" etc.) ; in the sphere of morphology the poet prefers old forms, too (காலம் அழியேல் "Do not waste time", old prohibitive, etc.).

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2 We find in Bhārathi's work, not rarely, a sort of hero-worship, concerning especially Shivājī, Tilak and L. Lājpat Rāi.

This collection of 110 aphorisms is not, as a whole, a homogenous product, and so also our appraisement : we appreciate highly the motto of this collection—fearlessness and activity, or, better, fearless activity — this fundamental motive of all Bhārathi's work (and his own life) ; the more so as we know that in his time there had been tendencies to revive ascetic and monastic ideals, to forsake the world and its people. We appreciate highly these appeals for progress and these expressions of the poet's realistic attitude towards life. These ideas are much more plastically and emphatically proclaimed in the other two short collections, பாப்பாப் பாட்டு and முரசு.

II

2. பாப்பாப் பாட்டு is a collection of 16 stanzas (4 verses each) for children containing pithy and suggestive formulations of maxims and principles of life. This little collection is very important indeed ; it is, first of all, animated by a strong personal feeling, as it was written by the poet for his own younger daughter, பாப்பா *i.e.* Srimati N. Sakuntalā Bhārathi, living now in British North Borneo. I take the liberty to quote here from a letter sent to me by Srimati Thangammāl Bhārathi : "I must mention....an interesting incident connected with the origin of this particular poem. My sister Sakuntalā, when she was a babe, refused to obey her mother once, and when father came to know this he advised the child that she should obey her mother. Thus the very line தாய் சொன்ன சொல்லைத் தட்டாதே பாப்பா came out from his voice. Afterwards he wrote the whole piece advising the young ones in general. : "

This collection, full of deep, gentle feeling, national pride and ideas of equality and truthfulness, belongs to some of the best poetic collections for children in general.

In the very first lines the poet incites his little daughter to play in collective manner with other children (கூடி விளையாடு பாப்பா). Some of the verses are more or less nursery rhymes, discovering a gay, beautiful, variegated world ;

they picture, *e.g.*, the cow, giving milk, the bull, ploughing a rice-field, the birds, the dog—a friend of man..Even here, however, the poet's tendency is expressed : to teach the child to see animals and things with a friendly, kind and grateful/ இவை ஆதரிக்க வேணும். eye.

After inciting the child to be active all the day, either in work or in play (in st. 6), Bhārathi proclaims several general ethical maxims and principles, some of them very modern and highly recommendable, in stanzas 7—100, awakes national pride and patriotic feelings in the child (stanzas 11-14) and in the last eight verses he sums up all his maxims in a lapidary and brilliant form in the three fundamental laws of *equality, verity and love.* It is obvious that the whole collection has thematically a firm design and formally an equally firm structure. From stanzas 7-10 resounds, again, the motto of his புதிய ஆத்திசூடி : *courage and industry.*

Teaching the child to love its motherland and, first of all, the mother-tongue, he not only requests to respect and honour it, but, he encourages also to learn it : அதைத் தொழுது படித்திடடி..And through his love to தமிழ்த் திரு நாடு he gets at loving his India (in st. 12) which he sees as a single whole from the Himalayas to Cape Comerin.

The last two stanzas belong to the best verses Bhārathi has ever written :

சாதிகள் இல்லையடி பாப்பா ; — குலத்
தாழ்ச்சி உயர்ச்சி சொல்லல் பாவம்;
நீதி, உயர்ந்த மதி, கல்வி — அன்பு
நிறைய உடையவர்கள் மேலோர்.

உயிர்களிடத்தில் அன்பு வேணும் ; — தெய்வம்
உண்மை யென்று தானறிதல் வேணும் ;
வயிர முடைய நெஞ்சு வேணும் ; — இது
வாழும் முறைமையடி பாப்பா.

Here a verbal translation :

15. There are no castes, o Pāppā, it is a vice to say that people are inferior and superior by birth, wisdom, magnanimous behaviour and learning and fulness of love possess the exalted.

16. It is necessary to love / all / beings ;
it is necessary to know that God is truth in fact ;
it is necessary to have a heart that is adamant—
this is the rule of life, o Pāppā !

When analysing this little collection it is not necessary to inquire very deeply into the nature of its *formal structure,* which, in பாப்பாப் பாட்டு is not so important as *e.g.* in the brilliant lyrical poem குயில். But even from these verses for children it may be seen that the poet never neglects the form of his poems, that he knows that in verses for children more than elsewhere the form has its important function. And so we see, that side by side with the common எதுகை and other alliterations, consonances and assonances, there is, in some lines, a firm and regular inner sound-string, both of vowels and consonants.

Compare *e.g.* in the second stanza line 1 :

cinnan | ciru || kuruvi | pōlē - ni

where the vowel-sequence is

i a | i u || u u i | ō ē ī,

or in the same stanza in line 2 :

tirintu | parantu | vā pāppā

there is a consonant-sequence

t r n t | p r n t | v p pp,

interwoven with vowel-sequence

i u u | a u u | ā ā ā.

This is only a small instance of the regular sound-structure of the verses.

Important is the type of *language* used by the poet in this collection. It is natural in a collection which is determined for children to remember and sing in language that is simple, clear, chaste and sometimes almost colloquial (*e.g.* in stanzas 3, 5, 16 வேணும் is used instead of வேண்டும்) ; and, what is very interesting and important, there is the least possible ballast of Sanskrit words. In all the 16 stanzas there are only about 30 Sanskrit loans, and most of them are words quite usual and customary.

III

முரசு (Drum) is, undoubtedly, the best of Bhārathi's short collections. It was written most probably in 1914, at the end of the first period of Bhārathi's creative development ; the next year brings கண்ணன் பாட்டு a collection of quite different character, both in theme and form.

This poem of 31 stanzas might have for its motto the three ideas of equality, unity and love. The image of a drum is met with frequently in the poet's works (*cf.* ஐய பேரிகை). The introductory verses are a splendid sample of sound sequence and onomatopoeia ; when reading it, we actually hear short, regular, staccato drumming :

வெற்றி யெட்டுத் திக்கு மெட்டக்
கொட்டு முரசே.

The analysis of consonant — and vowel-structure reveals great regularity and a series of sound-formations, intervowen mutually in a firm pattern of sound sequence. So, *e.g.* in the second verse

(v t m | n r m || v lk | v nr)

we observe a single formation : v m nr || v v nr ; whereas in the 1st line.

(v rr | y tt || tt kk | m tt)

at least three consonant formations are observed :

1. v rr | y tt ‖ - - | - -
2. - - | - tt ‖ - - | - tt
3. - rr | - tt ‖ - kk | - tt

Similarly in line 4 :

(n tt | c kt ‖ v lk | v nr) 1. n - | c - ‖ v - | - ʌ
2. - tt | - kt ‖ - lk | - nr

Vowel formations :

First verse : (e i | e u ‖ i u | e a) 1. ei | - ‖ iu | -
(o u | u a | ē) 2. - | eu ‖ - | ea
1. ou | ua | -

2nd verse : (ē a | e u ‖ ā a | e u) 1. ēa | - - ‖ āā | - -
2. - - | e u ‖ - - | e u

The very rhythm of those introductory verses is inspired by Shiva's and Shakti's dance (*நெற்றிக்கண்ணனேடே.. நிர்த்தனஞ் செய்தாள்..சக்தி*). Bhārathi formulated quite clearly his philosophical ideas on prose in many places. His conception is essentially a sort of energetic monism. Durgā-Shakti is the manifest energy of Shiva, the substance of all. Important is the stressing of the energetic side of this conception, and the idea of an inner evolution of this manifest being ; from the actual and substantial unity of all existence follows the broad syncretic conception of the poet : in all religions and philosophies is a grain of truth, for god himself is truth (*தெய்வம் உண்மை*) and knowledge (*அறிவே சிவம்*) ; only the ways are different. From the conception of universal energy follows also Bhārathi's aversion to all quietism, his appeal to work, to be active and courageous, his respect for woman and his idea of *பாரத மாதா*. It is, however, necessary to avoid all flattening : his nationalism and radicalism, his revolutionary ideas are rooted in the socio-economic and political evolution of India in Bhārathi's time. But, this energetic shaktism did not interfere with his radical political ideas.

ஊருக்கு நல்லது சொல்வேன் — எனக்குண்மை தெரிந்
தது சொல்வேன். This famous line is the true principle of all Bhārathi's life and work ; if we analyse it profoundly and thoroughly it reveals its rich and important contents. To begin with, the poem is political in the very sense of this term, for the poet speaks to the polis (ஊருக்கு), to its people ; he has something to say (சொல்வேன்) and he wants to say it clearly, frankly, in solid and proper words (நல்லது). What does he want to say ? That, which he has found out to be the truth (உண்மை), he, the poet Bhārathi.

In stanzas 2-8 the poet deals with classes and castes. The key of this conception offers the 4th stanza : Bhārathi considers society as composed of four classes, which, after all, form only one (ஒன்றே) class of all men ; and if you do away with any of these four, the whole society and working community of men will be destroyed. Let us emphasize the fact that the poet distinguishes here strictly between the term "class, section, division" (வகுப்பு) and the term "caste" (சாதி) ; the first is for him a section based on division of labour : for example, பார்ப்பான் is he who knows பல வித்தை, செட்டி is he who sells பண்டங்கள். Nothing is more shameful than to do nothing, than to be a sluggard (தொழில் சோம்பலைப் போல் இழிவில்லை). Thus he understands a class-society as a harmonious cooperative body of producers, sellers and buyers, guardians and intelligentsia, all working together for a common aim.

In further stanzas (after describing an ideal family, the father of which is its bread-winner, the mother of which looks after children and household and the children of which obey their parents and live in mutual love) he deals with caste (சாதி). Those who maintain that there are high and low castes give impulse to constant struggles and conflicts ; it is no longer possible to observe the cruel rules of caste-system (சாதிக் கொடுமைகள்) ; on the contrary, it is absolutely necessary to sow the seeds of love in the community, to live in mutual support and to employ one's time with work (stanzas 7 and 8). In the 9th stanza the poet deals, with

the case of women : they have to be educated and trained in various professions ; only a few blockheads (சில புடாரி) can refuse education to women. For our poet woman is absolutely equal to man : in stanza 10 he expresses this idea of equality with an apt comparison : Do we allow to destroy our sight by removing one of our eyes ? It is the same with woman : she is one of a pair of eyes — and only a pair can see correctly.

In the next stanzas Bhārathi deals with religious problems ; here, his broad and tolerant syncretism manifests itself in verses reminding one of some poems by Sarojini Naidu:

> "The Brahmans worship fire—
> and turned to one direction the Mussulmans pray.
> In the church in front of a cross
> the Christians praying stand."

But the essence of life, the god is only one, and absurd are all struggles in his name. The religious development of Bhārathi is a chapter in itself. His conception of the world is perhaps very close to that of the Bengal reform movements, especially those of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda (he very often quotes them). But it is necessary to emphasize that his religious ideas had not been well-balanced, that they yielded to development ; in a period, *e.g.*, he is under strong influence of Aurabinda Ghose. But his religious ideas are closely connected also with his political development with roots deeply in the nationalist movement incited mainly by Tilak. Sometimes, the religious and political ideas in Bhārathi's work conflict with one another, and then only a historical analysis helps us to elucidate this conflict : the fundamental break in an organic evolution of his ideas is Bhārathi's forced retirement from political and social life to the isolation and loneliness of Puducceri....

In stanzas 14-17 the poet fights against racial discrimination ; the colour does not count at all ; the characters and deeds of the people differ from each other.

O sound, drum of equality :
Why, all live on this wide earth.
O sound, drum of victory :
It is a lie — all bars of caste : (18)

The poet then proceeds : if all empty and false divisions (வெறுஞ் சூதுப் பிரிவுகள்) are broken, there will be no grief and sorrow. "O roll and rumble, thou drum of love : all people are equal". These stanzas (18 19, 20) are connected very loosely in form, too, and they represent the first thematical culmination of the poem : in these verses culminate the ideas of equality, equality of castes, sexes, religions and races.

In further stanzas we meet another Bhārathi, as we know him from his prose : a sober realist, who sees things as they are. He maintains that there is enough nourishment for all in the wide world : only it has been wrongly distributed. All must work, all have to live by their work ; to rob the others of their respective share is shameful (23). It is absolutely inadmissible that the strong, the sound, the enterprising, the rich subjugate and devour (தின்று பிழைத்திடலா மோ) the weak, the ill, the poor (24). When reading these stanzas we remember the splendid song பாரத ஸமுதாயம் where, too,

மனித ருணவை மனிதர் பறிக்கும்
வழக்க மினி யுண்டோ ?

All forms of exploitation — of the poor by the rich, of the conquered nations by the imperialists, of the பறையர் and other "low" castes by the Brahmans, of women by men in India — all these forms of exploitation are condemned and rejected here.

Bhārathi discusses then the ideas which could be summed up under the title of noble and warm humanitarianism. It is, by the way, not out of place to show here that he attains his aim with the simplest and most current ideas of everyday family-life in clear and colloquial language : தம்பி சற்றே மெலிவானால் — அண்ணன் தானடிமை கொள்ளலாமோ ?

With the 27th stanza we approach the second thematical culmination of the poem, its finale.

பாருக்குள்ளே சமத்தன்மை — தொடர்
பற்றுஞ் சகோதரத் தன்மை
யாருக்குந் தீமை செய்யாது — புவி
யெங்கும் விடுதலை செய்யும்.

Equality in the world — and
to hold fast a chain of fraternity,
to do no harm to anybody — and everywhere
on the earth to give freedom.[3] (29)

And, again, it is necessary to feed all and to educate all (30) ; thou, o drum, sound and sound an appeal to love and unity of all people of this wide world (31). These words are not mere slogans and fine-sounding phrases. Bhārathi, whose political ideas (not exempt, naturally, from all foreign influence) are first of all, the expression of the first attack of a young, pugnacious, democratic, relatively progressive bourgeoisie in the first decade of our century, and the expression of consistently modified ideas of the "left", "orthodox" nationalists, does not stick to mere slogans, to mere verbal formulations. He fights with his word and deed. Liberté, égalité, fraternité — each of these words has, in Bhārathi's work, a deep and a broad meaning : equality breaks, before all, the system of castes, and it means equality between man and woman. Liberty, for him, is, first off all, social freedom, freedom for all to work and enjoy the fruit of their work (*cf.* the songs விடுதலை and தொழில்). And fraternity manifests itself quite concretely by the simple necessity that all shall work and all get food and shelter and education. முரசு belongs, in spite of a few verses carrying the ballast of old traditions and prejudices, to the best of modern Indian poetry. It is a revolutionary poem, a progressive work which wants to show the people the way to get at the goal — a happy and full life of all in India.

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[3] Here it is interesting to note some neologisms created by the poet : சகோதரத்தன்மை "fraternity" and சமத்தன்மை "equality".

In this short collection Bhārathi succeeds also in uniting the form and contents perfectly. The basis of the formal structure of the whole collection are two principles :

1. the initial alliterative "rhyme" according to the scheme *aabb* ;
2. the எதுகை according to the scheme *abac.*

Cf. stanza 13 :

yārum..	1.	y —	2. *yārum..*
yāvinum..		y —	— —
pārukkullē..		p —	*pārukkullē..*
parpala..		p —	— —

Side by side with this regular scheme there is a very complicated pattern of various consonant and vowel-strings and sequence, very happily intervowen. The rhythm is based on a strictly regular alternation of verses of eight and ten syllables each.

The language of this collection is very near to that of தேசிய கீதங்கள் and of other of Bhārathi's political and nationalistic poetry. The main characteristic of those patriotic songs are the lapidary simplicity, brevity, terseness and pithiness of their language. About 1915-16 there comes a change in the development of the poetical diction of Bhārathi : it becomes more polished, full-sounding, metaphorical, brilliant, but, at the same time, rich beyond measure and too dazzling and ornamental in some stanzas of குயில் and கண்ணன் பாட்டு. In முரசு — a poem which is distinctly political — the poet addresses the people, all people of his beloved தமிழ் நாடு. The type of the language used is masterly adaptation to this social determination of the poem.

Castes in South India : The Problem of Their Origin

M. AROKIASWAMI M. A., PH. D.

SIR GEORGE BIRDWOOD, a careful student of Indian society wrote that "so long as the Hindus hold to the caste system, India will be India ; but from the day they break from it, there will be no more India".[1] Whatever the views one may have about the advantages and disadvantages of the system there could be no doubt that it forms a clearly distinguishing feature of Indian culture.

How did this system originate? This is a question that has exercised many minds for a long time. The general impression however remains that the Āryans introduced caste system into India. While this is not the entire truth of the matter it is certain that the system was in a large measure a natural growth arising out of the Indian genius and basic conception of division of labour. When the Āryans entered the north of India there were already distinctions among themselves based on the natural capacities and aptitudes of the individuals. Those who were interested in religious matters and were conversant with the forms and technicalities of religion were one section ; the fighters were another; those who satisfied the economic needs of the people were a third class. Thus the three traditional Indian castes, the Brāhman, the Kshtriyā, and the Vaisyā were formed. The

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1 Birdwood ; *Industrial Communities.*

Sudrā was apparently not one outside them but those who belonged to a class of people who were engaged in menial services. The aliens, the dāsiyus, as the Aryans called those outside their fold became the untouchables, the 'outcastes', as they are expressly called to this day.

In the south of India people lived in large numbers also long before the Āryan invasion. The so-called Dravidians were the sons of the soil and native to South India. It was from here that they filled the whole of India and even beyond. Tamil literature bearing on early times does not however refer to many castes in South India. An old verse, whose author is unknown, has it :

"துடிவன், மறவன், கடம்பன், பறையன்
என்று இந்நாள் கல்லது குடியுமில்லை",

which would imply that the drummer (beater on the 'thudi'), the 'Maravā' or the fighter, the 'Kadamban' or the man living on hill-tops and the 'Paraiyan' (another kind of drummer) were the only ancient castes in this region. The *Tolkāppiyam*, which depicts the state of society at least seven centuries before the Christian era mentions only the shepherds (āyar) and the vedar (hunters) as among the prominent castes :

"ஆயர் வேட்டுவர் ஆடுஉத் திணைப்பெயர்"[2]

Thus there is clear indication here that as people developed and with them their functions in life different castes seem to have risen. It is noteworthy that in the beginning even these new castes were getting known by their functions rather than by any other differentia. Thus the same ancient Tamil grammar to which reference has been made earlier mentions four other castes which are distinct professions, the *arivar* (men of knowledge, who became later known as 'Brahmans'), *ulavar* (those who plouged the land, who became later the 'Vellalas'), the *arasar* (those who ruled, equivalent to the northern 'Kshtriyā) and the *vanigar* (Traders).[3]

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2 Tolkappiyam ; *agatinai*, 21.

3 Ibid ; *Puratinai*, 20.

In the process of development of castes in South India the general impression even among students of South Indian society is that the Brahman from the north played the most prominent role and that he set up a social system akin to what obtained in the north. It is to this that I have referred as being not the whole truth earlier in this paper, because while there is no definite mention of the incoming of the Brahmans from the north in any of our early records, Naccinarkiniyar, the well-known and learned commentator of the *Tolkappiyam* mentions definitely the coming of Vellālā and Kshtiryā families into the south from the north of India. The passage occurs in his comment to the *payiram* or preface of the great grammar ; and the reference is to the incoming of the sage Agastiyā—the preceptor of the sage of the *Tolkappiyam* :—

> "All the gods having gathered on the Mount Meru, the mount went down with their weight, and the South rose up, whereupon they chose Agastiyar as the right man to be in the south to redress it balance. The gods requesting Agastiya, he was soon on his way to the south, when he entered into Dwaraka and took along with him 18 kings and 18 families of vels and Aruvalar of the progeny of the 'high crowned Lord who measured the earth' gave them homes, having destroyed forests.....bound Ravana from mischief and having prevented the Rakshasas from coming there, settled himself on the Pothiyil (hills)."

The point to be further noted is that this entry of the 'kings' and the 'vellālās' to which reference is made here took place at the time and along with the so-called invasion of the Āryans. Besides the general view that Agastiyā "represents and stands for the concrete symbol of the adventurous spirit of the early Āryans",[4] the reference in the comment above cited to Agastiyā binding Rāvanā from mischief clearly indicates that as early as the time of Naccinarkiniyar the view was accepted that the Agastiyan advent into the south typified the entry of the Āryans into that region. Hence it has to be maintained that when we speak of the Āryan invasion

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[4] Ganguly ; Quarterly Journal of Mythic Society, XVII, 170.

of the south we have to understand by it not merely the incoming of the Brahmans but also of other castes of which three at least must be specially mentioned, namely the Kshtriya, the Vellālā and the Aruvālar.

It is not possible to define who are meant by the term, 'aruvālar'. Possibly they were sheep-grazers. The *Pattinappalai,* however, depicts them in alliance with the Irukkuvēls, who were a prominent Vellālā family of the period.[5] We are thus sure that the Kshtriyas and the Vellālās also entered into the south from north India. They too might have been Āryans or perhaps Dravidians who had migrated to the north. The evolution of the caste system as it is found in South India to-day was therefore a result of all these peoples working together during a long number of years ; and during all this period it was the quality and the nature of the function of the individual that determined his caste, until at least the eighteen castes of South India became definitely stratified.

Thus we have the famous couplet in the *Kural,*

"அந்தணர் என்போர் அறவோர் மற்றெவ்வுயிர்க்கும்
செந்தண்மை பூண்டொ முகலான்"[6]

which emphasises quality as the criterion by which to distinguish the Brahman from the rest. There was no hard and fast rule dividing the various castes in the beginning. We have examples of Brahmans marrying into Vellālā families ; and the example of the Brahman poet, Kapilar, calling the daughters of the Vellālā chieftain Pāri as his own and his getting them married to a Brahman must be instructive in this connection. Numerous vellālās ruled as powerful chieftains all through the Sangam period and there is a doubt that even the Kings of the three ruling houses the Colā, Pāndyā and the Cerā were themselves Vellālās. Of this much at least we are sure that great kings of these houses, like Karikālā the Colā and Ceran Senguttuvan married the daughters of Vellālā families like the Nānkur Vēl and Alumbil Vēl.

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5 "தொல்லருவாளர் தொழிற் கேட்ப
இருங்கோ வேண்மான் மருங்குசாய",
See *Pattinappalai,* lines 274-282; also the *Maduraikāñji,* line 55 and the comment thereon.

6 Tirukural, III, 10.

As the Vellālās showed a tendency to rise high in the social scale the lower castes also were making an attempt in the same direction. The common lines,

"கள்ளர் மறவர் கனத்தால் அகமுடையர்
மெல்ல மெல்ல வந்து வெள்ளாளர் ஆவார்"

bear a meaning and they would not have gained currency, if they did not portray the true situation. At the same time the Vellālā became the progenitor of numerous other castes each of which became disignated by a different name according to its occupation. Thus we have the Vellān-Chettis, who from being cultivators became traders, Vellān-Mudalis etc.

In yet another way even barbers and dhobies and even the drummer (paraiyar) evolved from the same Vellālā caste. In the Kongu country of ancient times comprising the modern districts of Salem and Coimbatore we have a group of castes designated as Kongu-barber, Kongu-dhoby, and Kongu-paraiya, who are none else but Vellālās. It would appear that when Āditya Colā colonised this tract of South India with numerous Vellālā families from the Colā country the Vedar seem to have been most powerful in the region ; and far from helping the new comers and cooperating with them forbade their dhobies and barbers to serve them. As a result of this the Vellālās had to shift for themselves, and this led on to the formation of the castes of the barber and the dhoby from among themselves to serve their needs. Tradition still kept alive in this part of South India bears evidence to this and the Kongu barber particularly is now held in esteem as against the Vettuva (Veduva) barber, who comes from the line of barbers who were serving the Vedar of old. The chuckler or leather worker is a later-day introduction into the Tamil country from the Andhra desa ; he still talks Telugu and is considered as inferior to the Paraiya. The Nāidus, the Okkiliyar, and the Tottiyans are also later introduction from the empire of Vijayanagar.

History of Tamil Language and Literature

BY

S. VAIYAPURI PILLAI

BEGINNING TO 300 A.D.

THE oldest representative of the Dravidian group of languages is Tamil. The other languages belonging to this group are Telugu, Kannada, Malayālam, Gondi, Kolami, Kui, Kurukh, Malto and Brāhui. Tamil and Telugu in the east of the Deccan and Kannada and Malayālam in the west form one compact block.

Tamil language is a composite texture of three elements *viz.*, the Munda, the Dravidian and the Āryan, the Dravidian elements predominating. The Sabara dialect of Munda, it is said, is mixed up with Dravidian.[1] Instances of words of Āryan and Dravidian origins may easily occur to one's mind. A comparative vocabulary of the Munda dialects, the Dravidian and the Āryan languages is bound to throw much light in distinguishing these several elements.

The northern groups of people, like the Gōnds, speaking the Dravidian tongues are of a very low culture. They live next to the Munda-speaking aborigines. The Dravidians of the south on the other hand, are highly cultured and their languages have given rise to refined literatures, probably under

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1 Elements of the Science of Language, Calcutta University, 1951, p. 213.

the influences of Sanskrit literature. "Telugu Literature", says J. Bloch, 'is not earlier than the year 1000 ; the oldest Kannada text dates from about 500 ; Tamil literature is doubtless older.' He also adds that all the Dravidian alphabets are derived from alphabets of Northern India of the fourth or fifth century A.D. The origin of the Dravidian alphabets may be accepted but the date of the script so far as Tamil is concerned may be questioned. The Brāhmi inscriptions found in Tamil areas (Madurai and Tirunelveli) are in Tamil language and are assignable to third or second century B.C. In the early Sangam period the word 'nūl'[2] occurs in the sense of 'technical treatise' and names were inscribed on memorial stones.[3] Moreover we know that the Tamilian civilization was such as to command the respect of Emperor Asoka. Megasthenes and Kātyāyana may be cited to show that the Tamilian dynasties were well-known at least about the fourth century B.C., if not earlier. We do not know when these dynasties came into existence.[4] With such a civilization and with ruling dynasties of such high antiquity, we may not be far wrong if we assume that the Brāhmi script was adopted for literary purposes in Tamil about the first or second century B.C. and assign the beginnings of written Tamil literature to the same period. Earlier than this, there must have been oral literature traditionally handed down from generation to generation for some centuries.

But the beginnings of Tamil language must be far earlier. Attempts have been made to prove the antiquity of Tamil on linguistic grounds. For instance, Ktesias (401 B.C.) describes an odorous oil produced from an Indian tree having flowers like the laurel which the Greeks called 'murōrōda', but which in India was called 'kārpion'. Dr. Caldwell[5] is inclined to identify this Indian word with the Tamil-Mala-

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[2] *E.g.* Nedunalvādai, 1. 76 ; Madurai-k-Kanji, 1. 645, Siru-pan. 1. 230.

[3] Puram 260, 264.

[4] *Cf.* Parimelalagar, on Kural 955, Comm.

[5] *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages 1913* edn. pp. 89-91. The word does not occur in ancient or mediaeval Tamil.

yālam *Karuppa* or *Karuva* (cinnamon) and comes to the conclusion that we have here the earliest Dravidian word quoted by the Greeks. But *Karuva* [5-a] is a recent word in Tamil and bears the very suspicious appearance of being of a foreign origin. 'Karuppa' is unknown in Tamil, unless it is assumed to be a corruption of *karuppu* and there is no warrant for this assumption. Two other words much relied upon by Caldwell are the Hebrew words *tuki* for peacock and *ahalim* (aloe) occurring respectively in the Hebrew Bible in the passages corresponding to 'For the king Solomon (c. 1000 B.C.) had at sea a navy of Tharsish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes and peacocks, and I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon.[6] "*Tuki*" meaning peacock, has been sought to be traced to the Tamil *tokai*. No doubt the word bears this sense even in the earliest Tamil literature.[7] But it had not this meaning in the first instance. Its earliest meaning was only 'tail' in general.[8] In the sister languages of the Dravidian group, the word has only this meaning of 'tail'. Later, it acquired, by restriction of usage, the specific sense of peacock's tail and then, by figure of speech, the sense of peacock, as noted above and, later still by constant poetic simile, its meaning was extended to beautiful woman as in 'Tōkaipākarkku'.[9] Thus the respective words in Tamil and Hebrew do not agree in their primary meaning and the etymology itself is not free from doubt. The Hebrew and Tamil word might be from the word Latin, to-ga. Then again Hebrew *ahalim* is considered to be from the Tamil *agil*. But the Tamil word is of a later date than Skt. *agaru*, and Caldwell himself admits the possibility of connection between the Hebrew and the Sanskrit word. He suggests also that the word might be derived from the Tamil *alagu*. But Alagu itself is a rare word in ancient Tamil and

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5-a Rev. H. Gundert derives the word Karappu (Karuva), in his Malayālam Dictionary, from Ar. qarfah and gives the meaning Herodot's Karphea (Karpūram). This seems the most satisfactory derivation.

6 I Kings 10, 22; Proverbs VII, 17.

7 Ainkurunuru 297, Kuruntogai 26.

8 *Aham*, 13, 122.

9 Kamban: Tiruvavatāra. 10.

does but occur twice in the earliest literature.[10] It is not found in other Dravidian languages. Probably it is connected with Skt. 'laghu' meaning beautiful. Apart from geographical names adopted by Greek writers, *arisi* (rice) seems to be the only Tamil word borrowed by the Greeks. But here also we cannot shut our eyes to the possibility of *arisi* or its earlier form '*ari*' being of Sanskrit origin (vrihi).[11] Caldwell's statement that the Malayālam word *ari* is a corruption is clearly wrong, as it is found in the earliest Tamil literature,[12] and in Kannada and Tulu. Even if the Greek word Oryza be ultimately proved to be of Tamil origin, the date of its borrowing is not ascertainable.

Some scholars have persuaded themselves that the inscribed seals from the Indus valley support the high antiquity of Tamil. But as Patrick Carleton [13] has observed 'neither Prof. Langdon nor any other responsible authority has ventured to decide in what language the inscriptions are written, still less to offer a translation.' [14]

Leaving such speculations on pre-history, and turning our attention to literature, we may note at once that the date of the Brāhmi inscriptions gives us a limit beyond which it may not be possible to go. It must be borne in mind that literature can thrive only when the art of writing has come into general practice among the learned. So we have to conclude that there was no written Tamil literature in the accepted sense of the term, before the third century B.C., if the date generally assigned to the Brāhmi inscriptions is correct. It should also be remembered that the Brāhmi script in Tamil inscriptions is in its formative stage.

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[10] Perum-pān. 1. 252. It gains in frequency as time passes on. Tolkāppiyar gives this word.

[11] Przyluski, *Nom Du Riz, Etudes Asiatiques.*

[12] *Malaipadu-kadām*, 1. 180.

[13] Buried Empires: Edwin Arnold & Co., 1944, p. 141. Indus Civilisation by Ernest Mackay, 2nd edition.

[14] Piggott: Prehistoric India (1950) pp. 178-181.

As regards the script itself it goes back, according to G. Buhler, to a semitic origin[15] and its characters are found in Phoenician inscriptions. Probably it was introduced into India about 800 B.C., by merchants. It must have been, for a long time, used entirely for commercial purposes, correspondence, calculations etc. Later on it began to be used also for the minutes of embassies, proclamations etc. in the Royal Chanceries, and the kings must have employed learned persons for such purposes. These men adapted the foreign alphabet more and more to the needs of Indian phonetics and out of the 22 semitic characters, elaborated a complete alphabet of 44 letters of Sanskrit as the oldest inscriptions already show it. In the Buddhist canon completed about 240 B.C., there are sufficient proofs of an acquaintance with the art of writing and its extensive use at that time.[16] There seems to be a consensus of opinion among scholars that the Āryans came to South India about 700 B.C. In the Tamil land, it is only the Buddhists and the Jains who first used this script for the Tamil language and we may legitimately infer that they introduced it just as they had found it in vogue among their communities in the North. With the exception of sounds peculiar to Northern languages, the alphabetic arrangement is identical both in Sanskrit and in Tamil; for the sounds peculiar to Tamil, like the short e and o, the letters for their long sounds are used with some modifications. This shows clearly that the alphabetic system from which the Tamil language adopted its alphabet must be lacking in short e and o and this is exactly the case with Sanskrit. For these reasons we have to conclude that the Tamil alphabet is of northern origin. The script was in all probability used for recording literary productions (mainly religious) in Sanskrit and Pāli, about the third or fourth cent. B.C. For literary works in Tamil (mainly secular), it was adopted probably about first or second B.C. Though the

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15 The Old Testament and Modern Study: Edited by Rowbey. Clarendon Press. pp. 270-1. Available evidence seems to show that all the alphabets of the world are traceable to one source.—Frederick Bodomer: The Loom of Language p. 49.

16 Winternitz, H.I.L. pp. 31-40.

Tamil vatteluttu is held by some to be of indigenous origin, experts agree that the Asokan script is the mother of all Indian scripts.

But tradition says that there existed three Tamil Sangams or Academies in which Tamil literary works were 'heard' and assessed, the first academy lasting for 4440 years, the second for 3700 and the third for 1850. Altogether these three Sangams lasted for 9990 years. Since scholars hold that the last phase of the third Sangam was coeval with the beginning of the Christian Era, the first Sangam, according to this tradition, must have come into existence about B.C. 10,000 ! This tradition is recorded in the commentary of Iraiyanār Ahapporul, written perhaps about the 13th century A.D. Gods also are said to have participated in the deliberations of the first Sangam. We may leave such fables alone and seek for historical truth elsewhere.

In this traditional account, a certain poet, Muranjiyūr Mudi Nāgarāyar is said to have been a member of the first Academy. To this poet is ascribed the second stanza of Puranānūru, (which contains some of the earliest of Tamil poems) in which a Chēra King is said to have fed impartially both the contending armies of the Mahābhārata battle. It is argued from this that the poet, the academy and the king were all contemporaneous with the Great battle which is believed to have taken place at the beginning of the Kaliyuga, *i.e.* 3102 B.C. Hence Tamil literature, the protagonists of this view say, must have had its beginnings anterior to 3102 B.C. But not even the most extensive redaction of the great epic in Sanskrit contains this story about the Chēra monarch. The Tamil poem is in fact just a eulogy on the benevolence of the king and nothing more. A Chōla king also claims to have been the head of the commissariat department in this Bharata war.[17] The Pāndyas claimed to be the descendants of Pāndavas, Arjuna marrying Chitrāngada the Pāndya princess. These stories should not be taken seriously. Says

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[17] Kalingattupparani 181.

Winternitz[18] 'Indian Kings were just as fond of tracing their ancestry back to those who fought in the Bharata battle as European princes were anxious to prove their descent from the heroes of the Trojan war.[18-a] I consider it as entirely contrary to historical criticism to draw chronological conclusions ...,from this fiction.'

References in Tamil literature have also been pressed into service to prove its high antiquity. One such instance occurs in Nachchinārkkiniyar's commentary on *nānmarai* in the prefatory verse to *Tolkāppiyam*. He says that *Tolkāppiyam* was written long before Vyāsa classified the Vedas into four great collections! A second instance is furnished by the stanzas[19] which refer to the *Mōriyas* and the *Nandas* as well as to the *Kōsar* and *Mōhūr*. These references discussed by me fully elsewhere,[20] give no support for a date anterior to the Christian era for the extant Sangam literature.

One other reference has been made much of by some Tamil scholars.[21] In the prefatory stanza of *Tolkāppiyam* the oldest extant Tamil grammar, Tolkāppiyar, its author, is referred to as one thoroughly versed in *Aindram*. As Aindram is deemed to be one of the pre-Pāninian systems and as Pānini is generally assigned to B.C. 4th century, it is argued that Tolkāppiyar must have composed his great work at least in the 5th century B.C. There must have been a considerable body of Tamil literature before Tolkāppiyar and this literature must be of far greater antiquity. True; but the argument is reared on wrong premises.[22] Aindra was not the name of any particular work, but the name of a grammatical system ascribed to the god Indra.[23] It is pre-Pāninian; but

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18 H.I.L. Vol. I p. 523 fn. 2.

18-a *Cf.* Rapson, *Cambridge History* 1 p. 307.

19 Puram. 175; Aham. 69, 251, 281.

20 Ilakkiya Deepam: pp. 131-144.

21 Tamil Studies: M. Srinivāsa Iyengār.

22 For a full discussion of the subject, see Tamil-chudar-manigal pp. 27-39.

23 Belvelkar: Systems of Sanskrit Grammar p. 11.

the name 'Aindra' itself is *post*-Pāninian and Pānini does not mention it. The *Aindra* system continued to exist long after Pānini, and it was followed by the Jainas and some others. *Kātantra*, variously assigned to third or 4th century A.D.[24] is a representative of the system. Consequently any reference to Aindra is no proof for a pre-Pāninian date. Even supposing that the name Aindra were pre-Pāninian, there is nothing to prevent a later author from mentioning the Aindra and making use of it in his work. The highly technical and artificial system of Pānini could not be adapted for Tamil, a language of an altogether different genius.

Contrary to the above view, a reference in Puranā-nūru has been urged by a scholar, in support of a *late* date, 10th century A.D. for the earliest of the extant works of Tamil literature. In st. 201 of this collection, Kapilar says of Irungō-vēl that he is a chieftain of the family of Vēlir whose progenitor, forty-nine generations before, made his advent out of the sacrificial pit of a northern sage and ruled Dvāraka. This tradition refers to the origin of the Solanki Rajputs. An inscription of Yuvarāja II of the Kālachuri dynasty mentions a similar tradition. About the origin of the Chalukyas also, a similar tradition is recorded. There are also other records of the tradition.[25] The conflicting versions of this wide-spread tradition render its evidence of doubtful value. In the same *Puram* stanza and in the next (202), its hero is called 'Pulikattimāl', meaning 'the great one who vanquished a tiger'. This reminds us of the usual origin given for the term 'Hoysala'. We can only say that this evidences the existence of the tradition in the 6th century A.D. But to accept the 10th cent. theory, on this basis is to throw over-board the entire history and development of Tamil language and literature. This theory may be dismissed as summarily as that of the three Sangams.

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[24] Keith, *Sanskrit Literature* p. 431.

[25] Indian Antiquary, VII, 74; Bombay Gazetteer IV 339; Ep. Ind. XV p. 106; Epigraphia Carnatica, Hassan 65 and 66.

It is only the Greek writers of the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D. who furnish us with reliable data for fixing the antiquity of Tamil literature. Of these, the earliest was Strabo, an Asiatic Greek who wrote his Geography in the first quarter of the first century A.D. Mention is made by him of an embassy sent to Augustus on his accession by an important king, called Pōrus by some, and Pāndian by others.[26] Critics incline with good reason to the view that it must be Pōrus, a generic name with Greek writers for an Indian King. But Strabo had to rely for his information about India mainly upon previous writers. The few bold sailors who went as far as the mouth of the Ganges and who could give information were ignorant men, ill-qualified to describe what they had seen. Pliny the Elder set to work at his encylopaedic Natural History and completed it in the year 77 A.D. The sixth book of this history contains a valuable description of Ceylon and an interesting account of a voyage to the Indian coast. He tells us that passengers preferred to embark at Barake in the Pāndya country, rather than at Muziris on account of pirates.[27] Barake was the port for the pepper trade, Kottonāra (Kuttanad) being the centre of the pepper area. To about the same time (C. 80 A.D.) belongs the Periplus Maris Erythraei.

All these works give us an idea of the trade of the Tamil country with the west which agrees substantially with the indications on the same subject in the early Tamil poems. There are ten references to Yavanas in this early literature. An *Aham* stanza (149) mentions the flourishing Musiri where the Yavanas[28] come in their finely-shaped vessels loaded with gold specie and return freighted with pepper. These vessels entering rapidly in good numbers are said to agitate to foam the waters of the great river Chulli. Another stanza (57)

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26 Rawlinson: India and the Western World, pp. 107-108.

27 Rawlinson, *op. cit.* pp. 111-112.

28 Some scholars have expressed the view that the references to Yavana merchants might be in regard to Arab or Persian merchants. But the corroboration comes from Greek sources, which puts this view entirely out of court.

from the same collection describes this Musiri as a sea-port. A *Puram* stanza (343) says that the pepper heaped in house-yards in Musiri are put in bags and these bags make the *sea-board* groan with their weight. Further it says that the gold (specie) which the sea-going vessels bring are taken ashore by the small crafts plying in backwaters. Another port which we find mentioned in these works is Tondi (GK. Tyndis) and there are as many as 24 references to it. In all these references, however, we do not gain any historical information except that it was a flourishing sea-port (mun-turai : Kurun. 128) belonging to the Chēras on the West Coast.

The references to Musiri, it should be noted, are in the present tense and we may legitimately infer that the poets who mention it in their poems lived at a period when that famous sea-port became commercially important and was consequently much frequented by Yavana merchants. Southern ports including this Musiri became the centre of commercial activity only after the discovery of the monsoons by Hippalus in c. 45 A.D. The Periplus was written about 80 A.D.[29] The Yavana trade declined about the beginning of 3rd century A.D. Considering the fact that the literary references to Musiri tally very much with what the Periplus has to say about this ancient port, the conclusion is forced upon us that the poets who made these references lived between 100 A.D. and 250 A.D. Another important fact also confirms this. Ptolemy (d. 150 A.D.) knew of Āy and his mountainous country. This chieftain is praised in more than fifteen stanzas of Puranānūru. No doubt the limit is only approximate but this is as near the truth as we can ever hope to reach.

This conclusion is strengthened by a recorded tradition. The *Silappadikāram,* one of the *pancha kāvyas,* says that when King Senguttuvan, a celebrated king of the Sangam period had raised a temple to Kannagi, made grants of lands etc., to the deity and arranged for her daily *puja,* he

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[29] It is fairly certain that the Periplus was written between 80 and 90 A.D. and nearer 80 than 90 ; Rawlinson p. 106 f.n.

went round the temple and stood at its entrance paying obeisance. Then Gajabāhu of Ceylon and other kings prayed in the presence of the great king (Senguttuvan) that the goddess might be pleased to sanctify with her presence the festivals which they would be conducting in her honour in their own capitals. Of course the prayer was granted.[30] This tradition makes Senguttuvan a contemporary of King Gajabāhu of Ceylon, presumably the first of this name. According to Geiger, this king ruled from A.D. 171 to 193. Hence Senguttuvan who, according to Padirruppattu (V) ruled for 55 years, may be roughly assigned to 170-226 A.D. He was the grandson of Udiyan-Sēralātan and calculating at the average of 25 years per ruler, the latter must have lived c. 130 A.D. we may be reasonably certain that the chronological conclusion reached above is historically sound and no poet of Sangam Age could have been earlier than the second century A.D. But we are as yet far from the beginning of Tamil literature.

The earliest strata of Tamil literature now known to us contain several grammatical terms and also several conventionalised literary usages which argue an earlier period when linguistic investigations and speculations were rife and when grammatical notions and categories were defined. For instance, one of the earliest poets who has sung about Udiyan-Sēralātan, mentioned above says that Duryodhana and his brothers wore the golden flower tumbai, and fought against the Pāndavas (Puranānūru 2). Here we have evidence of a well-established literary convention. This shows that such conventions had been settled at a period far earlier than the date of the poet. Another instance : One early poet Kapilar has sung a centum of poems on love-themes of Kurinji (Ainkurunūru III) and a long poem Kurinji-p-pāttu on the same theme. Another poet has sung Mullai-p-pāttu. These show that the five-fold classification and the naming of tinais, the

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30 *Silap.* XXX ll. 151-164. This Kāvya, though it has no claim to historicity may be taken (in this particular) to embody a genuine tradition. Its Urai-peru-Katturai, (3) mentions that Gaja-bāhu only *heard* about the sacrificial offering to Kannagi. This variation is significant.

particular love aspect to be dealt with in each tinai and other relevant matters had all been settled long prior to Kapilar. These are all conventions. Purely grammatical terms also are found used by these early poets. For instance, the term 'Uyartinai' occurs in st. 224 of Kurrundogai. It is well-known that in Tamil, nouns are divided into '*class noble and hors classe*' in the phraseology of Prof. Jules Bloch, answering respectively to *uyartinai* and *ahrinai*.

These instances are sufficient to prove the existence of earlier works embodying the conventions and treating of the subject-matter which belong properly to the province of grammar. It might be said that the Tolkāppiyam would answer the purpose. Tolkāppiyar's definition of tumbai does not tally with the use of the term in the instance above noted. So, the author of Puranānūru 2 must have had some other grammar in view. Moreover Tolkāppiyar must be assigned to a later date as already indicated and these poets must have preceded him *at least* by about three centuries. It may also be pointed out that Tolkāppiyar himself refers in a general way to several grammarians and none of their works are now extant. Very probably, the early Sangam poets had these grammars for their guidance. We must allow ample time for this grammatical literature to spring up and develop. About a century perhaps, may be necessary for this.

These grammatical treatises again imply a vast amount of literature upon which they can base their rules and conventions. Even if we allow two centuries for this literature to develop, we shall have to place the beginnings of Tamil literature about the second century B.C. One other fact also must be borne in mind. The style, the diction and the metrical perfection of the Sangam poems require for their development a considerably long period. At a rough computation, we may put this period of development as two or three centuries from the date of the earliest Sangam poems.

Looking beyond these long centuries, we get a glimpse of a period when the Brāhmi inscriptions were in vogue. They show the Tamil script in its early stage and from this stage

upto its full development and its adoption for literary purposes, the above estimate allows sufficient interval: Development in language, script and literature must have been going on at a rapid pace. Powerful influences must have been at work during this period as evidenced by the Brāhmi inscriptions themselves. The words Kutumbika, Illa etc., and the circumstances in which the inscriptions were written tell their own tale. Contact with Sanskrit and Prākrit languages and literatures, with adjacent countries like Ceylon, and with the Buddhist and the Jaina religions must have been largely instrumental in shaping the Tamil mind. The continuous influx of people from the North must also have had its influence. Thus the even tenor of the life of the ancient Tamilian was ruffled and invigorated, a desire was created in him to emulate Sanskrit and Prākrit literature. The religious and moral side of the ancient Tamilian was given a new turn by the influences noted above. But the secular side, especially in the lower strata of the ancient Tamilian Society, remained uninfluenced and it went on very much as before. The earliest literature would have necessarily its root deep in the native soil of the Tamils and this literature must have been in verse. For in the literatures transmitted to us, poetry is found in every country to precede prose.

The Tamil literature in its beginnings must for ever remain a matter for speculation. During the first decade of the present century, a small work (of about ten pages of demy 16mo) bearing the title Sengōnrarai-celavu appeared in print, claiming to be a production of the First Tamil Sangam and it was said to have been composed in tāppulippā metre! The spurious nature of the work was soon found out and no responsible scholar took any serious notice of it. The commentary on Iraiyanār Ahapporul has, in its description of the literary activities of the first two Sangams, mentioned a number of works which are mere names. The semi-mythical character of the account puts these works beyond the pale of historical investigation. Again Adiyārkku-

nallār in his commentary on Silappadikāram[30-a] has given us the names of a few works. But these are works treating of the same subject-matter as Bharata Nātya Sāstra and apparently they are of late origin. However, Tolkāppiyar is of some help in this connection. He mentions certain genre or types of literary composition, of which we have no representative at present. His commentators are hard put to find examples and no writer, since his time, has mentioned these types barring grammarians who have transmitted faithfully what they had learnt from his work. Of such genre I may mention '*angadam*', a kind of lampoon, *pisi*, a kind of riddle-poem and *pannatti*[31] whose nature is not now known. There must have also been a number of works in Ahaval metre ending in consonants like n etc. similar to the Silappadikāram and the Manimēkalai, works embodying stories of ancient times known as 'tonmai' and works in mixed prose and verse. Tolkāppiyar speaks of translations also; but we are not vouchsafed any information as regards the language from which the translations were made. Probably he is referring to Sanskrit and Prākrit languages. Even these types mentioned by Tolkāppiyar are of an advanced nature. The primitive Tamil literature remains a mystery as much as ever and our guesses must follow in general the line of origin and development of literature all over the world.

The earliest Tamil literature now extant consists of anthologies of short lyrics and of longer poems. It is usual to count the lyrical anthologies as eight known as *Ettu-t-togai* and it is also usual to count the longer poems as ten, collected under the name of *Pattu-p-pāttu*. These names occur in the ancient commentary on *Nannūl* (s.v. 387) of about the 14th century. Pērāsiriyar (c. 14th century) one of the

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30-a V. S. Iyer's 5th edn. p. 6.

31 This may be either Pannatti (Skt. Prajnapti) or Päinna (Skt. Prakīrna) of the Jaina Prakrit works.

commentators on Tolkāppiyam refers to these collections simply as Togai and Pāttu[32] respectively. The eight anthologies are :

1. Narrinai
2. Kurundogai
3. Ainguru-nūru
4. Padirru-p-pattu
5. Paripādal
6. Kalittogai
7. Ahanānūru and
8. Puranānūru

Of these the first three, the sixth and the seventh collections treat of love-themes technically known as '*aham*', in its several aspects. Such love-aspects, '*tinais*' have been classified into five sections, viz., *kurinji* or pre-marital love, *marudam* or post-martial love, *mullai* or the patient suffering of the wife during her lord's separation in eager expectancy of his return, *neidal* or the lamentations of the lovers in separation and *pālai* or the separation of lovers and the consequent anguish. The fourth and the eighth have for the subjects non-love themes, technically called '*puram*', which includes heroism in war, liberality, just rule, praises of gods and of men. The fifth in the series, *viz.*, Paripādal partakes of the nature of both, some songs in praise of gods, others in depiction of love.

The ten longer poems are :

1. Murugārruppadai
2. Porunar-ārruppadai
3. Siru-pān-ārruppadai
4. Perum-pān-ārruppadai
5. Mullai-p-pāttu
6. Maduraikkānji
7. Nedunalvādai
8. Kurinjippāttu
9. Pattinappālai and
10. Malaipadu-kadām

Of these the first four and the last poem belong to the class known as ārruppadai which is described below. The fifth, the seventh, the eighth and the ninth are essentially love-poems. The sixth is a benedictory poem.

The 5th and the 6th anthologies, Paripādal and Kalittogai consist of poems written at a later period and so also Murugārruppadai the first of the longer poems is a late pro-

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32 Comm. Seyyuliyal, 50, 80.

duction. There are very strong grounds for this conclusion which will be set forth later. They have no sort of claim to be considered among the earliest literature of the Tamils. Though these anthologies and the longer poems were *compiled* at a later period, I have listed them all here simply for the purpose of facilitating references in the standard editions now available.

Another point also may be noted. These poems are generally called Sangam poems and the collections are called Sangam anthologies. We shall adopt this nomenclature. But there is a clear distinction between the Sangam poems and the Sangam anthologies. Chronologically the poems are much earlier and the anthologies could have been compiled only later. We must bear this distinction in mind and never lose sight of it. In the earliest period with which we are now dealing, we are concerned only with the Sangam *poems* and *not* with the anthologies.

Leaving out of account the poems of the two anthologies, the Murugārruppadai, the invocatory stanzas and the padigams in Padirruppattu which are all of a later date, the earliest literature, including fragments, consists of 2186 poems distributed over six anthologies and one collection of longer poems. They contain in all about 26,350 lines.

The total number of poets who composed these poems can only be approximately given. The tradition embodied in the commentary of Iraiyanār Ahapporul mentions the total as 449. But the Sanga Ilakkiyam (Samājam edition, 1940) counts as many as 473. Naturally this aggregate excludes the anonymous authors of the 88 poems (13 in Aham, 10 in Kurundogai, 56 in Narrinai, 5 in Paddirruppattu and 14 in Puranānūru) and includes the 35 poets who are named after some significant expression occurring in their poems. In the present state of our knowledge, even the Samājam total has to be taken as merely an approximation. Curiously enough, this number comes near the traditional number which might after all be correct. Most probably the scholar who recorded the tradition computed the total from the manuscripts of Sangam works available in his days. We have suspected that the Paripādal, the invocatory stanzas at the beginning of most of the Sangam collections, the Kalittogai and the

Murugārruppadai, do not belong to the early Sangam period. The last two works may be left out of account, since they are wrongly attributed to poets of the early Sangam. So if we omit from the Sangam numbering the 14 poets, 13 of the Paripādal and Perundēvanār of Bhāratam fame, the author of the invocatory stanzas, the total comes to 459.[32-a] This is still nearer the traditional number and lends weight to my views that the Paripādal etc. belong to a later date.

It has been noted above that 35 poets are named after some significant expressions used by them. For instance, a poet bears the name Kangul vellattār (lit. he of the night-flood) and the expression kangul-vellam is found in his poem. This device of naming poets occurs in Sanskrit anthologies also.[33]

32-a On a closer examination, I find now that the traditional number is correct.

33 Sloka 1255 of *Subhāshitāvali* is ascribed to a poet of the name 'Dagdhamarana' and this phrase occurs in the sloka itself. Other instances are 'Nidrādaridra' (sloka 1362), Karnikāramankha (sloka 1660) etc.

In studying the names of Sangam Poets the following from the Sacred Books of the Buddhists, Vol. II, pp. 193-196 may be noted.

There were 8 modes of naming in use in early times in India.

1. A nickname arising out of some personal peculiarity. Such are Lambakànna (Hanging-eared).
2. A personal names, called in Pali the Mula-nama. Such are Tissa, (after the lucky star of that name) Nanda or Ananda (Joy), Abhaya (Fearless).
3. The name of the Gotra or gens, what we should call a surname or family name. Kasyapa, Koundinya, Bharadvaja.
4. The name of the clan, called in Pali kula-nama, such as Licchavi, Malla, etc.
5. The name of the mother, with putra (son) added to it. Such as Sari-putta (the more usual name by which the famous disciple Upatissa is called).

N.B. The name of the father is never used in this way, and that the mother's name is never a personal name ; but always taken either from the clan, or from the family, to which she belonged.

6. The name of the position in society, or the occupation, of the person addressed. Such are Brahmana, gahapati, etc.
7. A mere general term of courtesy or respect, not containing any special application to the person addressed — such as ayye.
8. Lastly there is the local name. Eg. Gaya-Kassapa.

P. V. Kane's History of Dharmasastra, Vol. II, Part I pp. 238-254 may be consulted with advantage. See also Nannul—276.

Pāri-magalir (Pari's daughters) are mentioned as the authors of stanza 112 of *Puram*. A parallel instance is found in sloka 2227 of Subhāshitāvali which is ascribed to Kaviputrau (lit. the two sons of a poet.). There are also other common features worth studying.

Returning to our subject, it may be possible by a close and diligent study of the poems to place these 449 poets in their chronological order. There are internal evidences and also the names of kings and patrons on whom most of the *Puranānūru* poems and some of the other anthologies have been composed. Padirruppattu devotes itself entirely to Chēra Kings. All these may be of great help in constructing this chronology. An attempt has been made in this direction by Mr. K. N. Sivarāja Pillai formerly of the Madras University.

A fresh independent enquiry is necessary to settle this matter finally. Here a general idea of the Tamil language and its vocabulary at this period might be given. We have mentioned already the several contacts which threw open the Tamil countries to the cultural influences of the north in an ever-increasing measure. A detailed description of a yāga performance in Puram 166 and frequent references to Vedic gods in Puram (*e.g.* 16, 23), Padirruppattu (*e.g.* 11) and other early collections furnish evidence of the spread of the Vedic religion among the Tamils. Buddhists[34] were also propagating their religion in the

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[34] South India as a centre of Pāli Buddhism by B. C. Law (Dr. S. K. Aiyangar's Commemoration volume pp. 239-245) : Nāgārjuni Konda inscriptions prove that there was a mahavihāra for Buddhist recluses coming from different countries among which Damila is mentioned. These Buddhists were Thēravādins. Gandhavamsa says (J.P.T.S. 1886 pp. 66-67) that Kānchipura was one of the main centres of Pāli Buddhism of Thēravāda. Madurai also (Madhurasutta pattana) is mentioned as the place where Buddhaghōsa and Buddhamitta lived for sometime, before the former repaired to Kānchipura. Buddhaghōsa was a native of Tirunelvēli region. Uraga-pura (modern Uraiyur in the Tiruchināpalli District) was the birthplace of Buddhadatta who lived in the village of Bhūtamangala near 'the flourishing inland port of Kavēripattana.' Buddhaghōsa and Buddhadatta were contemporaries

Tamil countries, among others, and tried to give a new lease of life to Buddhism in the South, where it was originally preached by the missionaries sent by Emperor Asoka. Some poets bear Buddhist names, *e.g.* Ilambōdhiyār, Thēradaran, Siru-ven-thēraiyār etc. Jainism supplied a new religious force which was for some centuries a powerful rival to Hinduism in the South. Jaina mythology is found in Puram 175 and in Aham 59. Thus the Tamil land became a fertile nursery and the several religions noted above throve in friendly rivalry.

The adherents of these several religions brought in their special vocabulary and enriched the Tamil language. New tributaries were added to its stream and it swelled in content. The orthodox Hindus of the age, mainly Brāhmins were responsible for words[35] relating to their gods, religion, religious rites, religious beliefs, religious books, ethics and to their daily habits and customs. In addition to these, several common words[36] relating to the ordinary social life of a people were also contributed by them. These two classes of words taken directly from Sanskrit flowed into the main cur-

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and they flourished in the 5th century A.D. South India continued to be the centre of Pāli Buddhism as late as the 12th century A.D., a date to which Anuruddha (a Buddhist teacher of South India, according to the Talaing records) the celebrated author of the Abhidhammattha is assigned.

35 (*e.g.*) yūpam — puram 15, alliyam (Hallisa) — puram 33 ; avi (havis) — puram 377 ; āvuti (āhuti) — puram 99 ; vacciram (vajrāyudha) — puram 241 ; Kandam (skandha) — puram 52 ; Kanda (skandha) — puram 57, 93 ; Kauriyar (Kauravar) — puram 3 ; darumam (dharma) — puram 353 ; Tuvarai (Dvaraka) — puram 201 ; tūn (Sthūna) — puram 86 ; amarar — puram 99 ; vēdam — puram 6 ; pindam — puram 234 ; māyōn (māya) — puram 57 ; muttī (lit. three fires) — puram 2 ; munivar — puram 6, 43 ; bali — aham 166 ; deivam — aham 166 ; tittiyam (chitya) — aham 361 ; tulāi (tulasi) — padirru. 31 ; pūdam (bhūta) — puram 369 ; Catai (jatā) — puram 1 ; karakam — puram 1 ; tavam (tapas) — puram 1.

36 (*e.g.*) nīr — puram 1 ; Kalam (khala), padam (pada), tumbai (tumba), imayam — puram 2 ; nēmi, mukam — puram 3 ; Kān (kānana) — puram 5 ; kumari, ulakam — puram 6 ; cāpam (cāpa) , mā, valavan (vallabha) — puram 7 ; pōkam (bhoga) ; mandilam (mandala) — puram 8 ; Dandam (danda), amiltu (amirta), mallar (malla), silai (silā) — puram 10 ; mayil (mayura) — puram 116 ; pātini (pātinini) — puram 11.

rent of the language and enriched its contents. Next to Brāhmins, the Jains seem to have contributed most to our language. Their words also fall into the classes mentioned above, but with a notable difference. The words all of Prakrit forms were mostly in current colloquial use.[37]

The religious terms of the Jains did not pass into the main current, though they were used in late specialistic works such as Jīvakachintāmani, Sūlāmani, etc. The Buddhists also contributed to our language and their words were mainly of Pāli origin. It might be that several of these were of Prākrit descent also.[38]

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37 (*e.g.*) vannam, uru (rupa), Kanan (gana), ēmam (Kshēma) — puram 1 ; vali (bala), pāl (payas), andi (sandhi) — puram 2 ; murasam (muraja), nēem (snēha), sāndu (candana), ilakkam (lakshya) — puram 3 ; naman (saman), tēem (desa), nagar (nagara) — puram 6 ; iravu (rātri), mīn (mīna), payam (prayōjana) — puram 3 ; ūkkam (utsāha), tānai (sēna), malai (malaya) — puram 8 ; pārppanar (brāhmana), aran (charana) — puram 9 ; pāci (prāci), ūci (udīci) — puram 229.

38 (*e.g.*) attam (addha=road) — kurun 307 ; ahil (agalu=aloe wood) — kurun 339 ; ānai (ānā=order) — maduraik. 761 ; annai (annā=mother) — kurun 93 ; pandam (bhāndam=article, goods) — puram 102 ; cāti (cāti=jar) — perumpān 280 ; tōni (dōni=trough-shaped canoe with an outrigger to steady it) — puram 229 ; sūtu (jūto=gambling) ; kamuhu (kamuko=areca palm) — perum-pān 7 ; kannan (kanho=krishna) ; kanji (kanjikam=a sour rice-gruel) ; kaitai (kētaki=the tree *Pandanus Odorattissimus*) — kurun 304 ; kūtam (kūto=a sledge-hammer) — perumpān 438 ; pōtu (potu=ordinary, common) — puram 8 ; manaivi (manavi=woman) — puram 250 ; nānjil (nāngalam=plough) — puram 19 ; niyamam nigame=a market town) — madurai-k 365 ; ōram (ōrō=below, posterior, on this side) ; pakkam (pakkho=a wing, side etc.) — kurun. 129 ; uvamam (opamam=simile, comparison) — maduraik. 516 ; panniyam (panyam=ware, commodity) — maduraik. 506 ; palingu (phaliko=crystal, quartz) — kurinci 57 ; pāhal (phāggavo=a sort of pot-herb) — puram 16 ; panju (picu=cotton) — puram 116 ; pillai (pillako=child) — puram 380 ; pulu (pulavo=worm, maggot) ; sānam, sānai (sano=a grind-stone) ; seliyan (seliyo=a man of self-discipline) — puram 19 ; seyya (seyyo=better, excellent) ; tagaram (tagaram=the shrub *tabernae montana coronaria* and a fragrant powder obtained from it) — puram 132 ; kurinci 108 ; tāl (tālo=key) — nedunal 63 ; tālam (thālam=metal bowl, plate) — puram 120 ; tūmbu (timbo=a sort of water-vessel

Judging from the vocabulary contributed by these several religionists, we might conclude that Brāminism powerfully held the imagination of the people and was predominent in every walk of life. Next to this came Jainism and not far behind. The leaders of this religion mixed freely with the people, studied their language and became adepts in it. They laid great emphasis on moral principles, persuaded the people to become converts to their religion and were accommodative enough in several respects. The Buddhists led, in later times, perhaps a secluded life in caves and did not move freely with the people. Hence their religion never had any great influence in the Tamilian country. Probably this accounts for their comparative insignificance in South India.

Against this background lay scattered the several poetic pieces of the earliest times. They were secular, a good part of them praising kings and chieftains and subtly introducing religious elements to attract and influence the nobility of the land ; and the rest, dealing with love in all its aspects, to appeal to the literate among the masses.

We shall now try to settle roughly the period when these poems were composed and when their authors lived. For this purpose, we shall consider the longer poems included in the Pattuppāttu and also the two anthologies of : Padirruppattu and Ainguru-nrru. These two collections will receive our attention only on their chronological side.

Of the longer poems, the first is *Murugārru-p-padai*, consisting of 317 lines. Its author is a certain Nakkīrar. It serves perhaps as an invocatory poem for the collection. The second is *Porunarārru-p-padai* consisting of 248 lines. Its author is Mudattāmakkanniyar and the hero of the poem is Karikār-peru-valattān. The third is *Sirupānārruppadai* containing 269 lines. Its author is Nallūr Nattattanār and its hero is Nalliyiakkōdan. This poem refers to the seven

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with a spout) — puram 19 ; tūnam (thūna=pillar, column) — perumpān 316 ; tunnam (tunnam=suture, patch) — puram 136 ; valangu (valasiga=valanjetito use, resort to spend) — puram 252 ; varaku (varako=the bean *Phaseolus tribolus*) — puram 34.
— *Childrers : Pali Dictionary*

Vallals (patrons of learning) of the Sangam Age. The fourth poem is *Perumpānārruppadai* containing 500 lines. Its author is Kadiyalūr-urattiran-kannanār and its hero is Tondaimān-Ilandiraiyan. The fifth in the collection is *Mullai-p-pāttu* consisting of 103 lines. This is the shortest of the long poems. The author is Nappūdanār and he refers to mlechchhas (Yavanas) in lines 60-66. The sixth poem is Madurai-k-kānji containing 782 lines. This is the longest poem of the series. The author is Māngudimarudanār and the hero of the poem is Talaiyālankānattu-cheruvenra-Nedunjeliyan. Nannan is mentioned in lines 618 to 619 and Ōnam festival in l. 591. The seventh in this collection is *Nedunalvādai* consisting of 188 lines. Its author is Nakkīrar. The hero of the poem is the above-mentioned Nedunjeliyan himself. This poem also refers to mlechchhas (31 to 35). The eighth of the series is *Kurinji-p-pāttu.* It consists of 261 lines and its author is Kapilar. The colophon says that this poem was written to show the excellence of Tamil and Tamilian courtship to an Aryan king Pirahattan (Brahasta) by name. It may also be noted that the poet Kapilar is referred to by Nakkīrar in *Aham* 78 and 141. The ninth poem is *Pattina-p-pālai.* This consists of 301 lines. Its author is Kadiyalūr Uruttirankannanār and its hero is Karikār-peruvalattān. It is referred to in Kalingattu-p-parani (21) and also in an inscription of Tiruvellarai.[39] The tenth and last poem is *Malaipadukadām* consisting of 583 lines. Its author is Perunkausikanār of Perungunrūr in Iraniya-muttam. The hero of the poem is Nannan, son of Nannan.

Most of these poems belong to the class of composition known as 'ārrupadai'. A bard who has visited a patron and received bounty at his hands, returns home and on his way, he meets with another bard with his retinue, in a very poverty-stricken condition. He directs the latter to the patron, detailing the way which would lead to the patron's residence and narrating graphically the reception which he would get. Tolkāppiyar specifically mentions the varieties of this kind of poem. He gives no place to a poem like *Murugārruppadai* in which a bhakta (devotee) is directed to go to the several shrines of his chosen deity.

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[39] Sen Tamil, vol. 41, p. 214-216.

From these details certain facts emerge. *Porunar-ārrup-padai* and *Pattinappālai* are sung in honour of Karikār-peru-valattān and the author of Pattina-p-pālai is also the author of Perumpān-ārru-p-padai. Hence these three works must have been composed at about the same time. *Madurai-k-kānji* and *Nedunalvādai* have been composed in praise of Nedunjeliyan of Talaiyālangānam fame. Hence these two works may be considered to have been composed by contemporary poets. The hero of the poem Malaipadukadām, Nannan's son Nannan, is referred to in *Madurai-k-kānji* (line 618-619). So this work also must be considered as slightly earlier than the above two works. Kapilar, the author of *Kurinji-p-pāttu* is, as we have seen, referred to by Nakkīrar in Aham 78 and so Kurinji-p-pāttu must have been composed earlier than *Nedunalvādai* and Madurai-k-kānji. There is no clue throwing any light on the relative date of *Mullai-p-pāttu*. Possibly, this poem is very close to *Nedunalvādai* in date, as both these works refer to the *mlechchhas*. The few parallel passages in these two works confirm this view. Sirupān-ārruppadai, as has already been mentioned, refers to all the seven Vallals in the past tense. These patrons of arts and letters have been praised by Paranar, Kapilar, Mudamōsiyār, Avvaiyār and others. We may take it that this poem *Sirupānārruppadai* was composed subsequent to the period when these poets flourished. It was most probably the last in the series of Pattupāttu poems, *Murugārruppadai* excepted. The following order covers the facts noted above :

I	1. *Porunar-ārrup-padai*	Mudattāmakkanniyār
	2. *Perumpān-ārrup-padai*	Uruttirankannanār
	3. *Pattinap-pālai*	- do -
	4. *Kurinji-p-pāttu*	Kapilar
II	5. *Malaipadukadām*	Perunkunrur-Perunkausikanār
	6. *Madurai-k-kānji*	Māngudi-marudanār
	7. *Nedunalvādai*	Nakkīrar
	8. *Mullai-p-pāttu*	Nappūtanār
III	9. *Sirupān-ārrup-padai*	Nallūr Nattattanār
IV	10. *Murug-ārrup-padai*	Nakkīrar (later)

In these groups, Nakkīrar, the author of *Nedunalvādai,* falls in the second. He refers in *Aham* 141 to Karikāl-valavan the hero of *Perumpān-ārrup-padai* of the first group. There is no evidence to show that these two were contemporaries. Hence Nakkīrar lived later than Karikāl-valavan. It also follows that Nedunjeliyan, the hero of Nakkīrar's poem *Nedunalvādai* was later than Karikāl-valavan. This is confirmed by the fact that none of the poets who have praised Karikāla have composed any poem on Nedunjeliyan.

The author of *Murugārru-p-padai* though he bears the name of Nakkīrar, was different from his namesake of the Sangam and lived far later than any of the poets so far mentioned. His date and other particulars is discussed by me elsewhere (See Ilakkiya Deepam, pp. 13-43).

The earlier Nakkīrar, the author of *Nedunalvādai* has given us some valuable clues as regards the probable date of his compositions. He refers to *rāsis* (Zodiacal constellations), and also distinctly says that the Sun beginning from Mēsha (Aries) travels through the successive *rāsis,* i.e. through each successive sign of the zodiac. The passage occurs in Nedunalvādai, (lines 160 to 162). A contemporary poet Kūdalūrkilār mentions, in *Puram* 229, *mēsha rāsi* with several other details, such as the fact that the nakshatra *Purvaphālguni* was on a particular day declining from the zenith at midnight. From the history of Hindu astronomy we might gather that the *rāsis* came into practical use only about 300 A.D. Mr. L. D. Swamikannu Pillai has examined the whole question in his *Indian Ephemeris* [40] and come to the conclusion that the 'early Indian literature (Sanskrit or Dravidian) before A.D. 300 does not refer to the signs of the Zodiac, to the movements of the planet or to planetary horoscopes, which are, as it were, the tripod of Astrology'. But on such questions the dating can only be approximate. Nakkīrar and his contemporaries (poets and kings) may be assigned to about 250 A.D. This is confirmed by several facts emerging from

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[40] Vol. I. part I, p. 496.

a study of contemporary poems. Nakkīrar himself, in the same *Nedunalvādai* gives details of an auspicious hour for laying the foundation of a palace, describing a sort of sun-dial. Architectural details, such as *garbha-griha* are also mentioned by him. Two contemporary poets, Nappūdanār and Nallanduvanār of Sangam period (to be distinguished from Āsiriyar Nallanduvanār of *Paripādal* and *Kalittogai*), make reference to water-clock under the name 'kannal',[41] which was probably a Roman import. Kannal, whose origin and derivation can hardly be made out now is perhaps connected with the Greek Khronos. So we may take it that the last of the Sangam poets *i.e.*, the poets of Nakkīrar epoch flourished about the end of the third century A.D.[42]

Now, Māngudi-marudan refers in his Madurai-k-kanji to Vadimbalambaninra-Pāndya (lines 60-61) and Palyāga-sālai-mudukudumi-p-Peruvaludi (l. 759) as two of the remote ancestors of Nedunjeliyan, the victor of Talaiyālangānam. Vadimbalamba-minra-Pāndyan is somewhat of a hazy figure and to him is attributed the first festival for the Sea-god and the digging of the Pahruliyāru. But Mudukudumi is a historical personage and he is praised in as many as 5 stanzas in Puram. He is also mentioned in the Vēlvikkudi grant.[43] A few generations may have elapsed between his time and that of Nedunjeliyan and it is within reason to count the number as five or six. This leads us to the conclusion that the earliest of the Pāndyas known to us definitely lived about the second century A.D. and that will also be the time when the earliest poets who have sung about this Pāndya lived. The Vēlvikudi grant also supports this conclusion by mentioning that Mudukudumi's grant was long enjoyed before the Kalabhras came (nīdubuktituiyttapin). After the Kalabhra interregnum, Kadungōn of the Pāndya line succeeds to the kingdom. Kadungōn's rule began about

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41 *Mullaip-pattu* line 57; *Aham* 43.

42 A Gangan Katti is mentioned in Aham, 44. He was not one of the Gangas of Mysore and so the date given here is not affected.

43 E. I. XVII; Peruntogai, 889.

600 A.D. Allowing 500 years for the long interval and the Kalabhra interregnum, we reach the beginning of the 2nd century A.D. when Mudukudumi may have flourished.

We shall take Padirru-p-pattu next. This consists of ten sections and we have lost the first and the last sections of this work. It deals with the Chēra dynasty. The first section was probably about Perunjōrru-Udiyan-Cēral and the last section, about Yānaikkatchey Māndaran-Cēral-Irumporai, the Elephant-eyed Chēra. A detailed study of the work yields us two genealogies. The first genealogy give us three generations of one Royal house and the second also covers three generations of another.

Senguttuvan, the hero of the fifth decade is the most famous of these Chēras. He was a contemporary of Gajabāhu I of Ceylon (see ante) and he ascended the throne probably about 200 A.D. We may count back at least two generations from him. This also gives us the first half of the second century A.D. as the date when the first tangible figure of a Chēra king emerges into history.

The poets who composed the sections of Padirruppattu are Kumattūr-kannanār, Pālai-kautamanār, Kāppiyārrukāppiyanār, Paranar, Kākkaipādiniyār-Nacchellaiyār, Kapilar, Arisil-kilār and Perungunrūr Kilār. Among these we find Paranar, and Kapilar. The former was the contemporary of Senguttuvan and the latter, the contemporary of Selvakkadungō-vāli-Ādan, who lived sometime later. Probably these poets lived between 150 and 250 A.D.

Ain-guru-nūru, was compiled by Pulatturai murriyakūdalūr-kilār under the royal patronage of the elephant-eyed Chēra mentioned above. This Chēra was taken in captivity by the Pāndya king Nedunjeliyan of Talaiyālangānam fame, and his death is bemoaned by the above poet in *Puram* 229. So the poets who composed the five centums of Aingurunūru must have all lived round about 275 A.D. The

poets are Ōram-bōgiar, Ammūvanār, Kapilar Ōdal-Āndaiyār and Pēyanār. Kapilar being one of them, these poets might be placed between A.D. 200-275.

Thus we are led to conclude that the poets of the early Sangam literature flourished from the second century A.D. to the end of the third century A.D. and that this was the genuine Sangam period.

A word about the Sangam poems. They are all in *ahaval* metre, the first in the long course of development of the Tamil metrical system. It is indigenous and has no parallel in Sanskrit, the blank verse in English being its nearest equivalent. The magnificent sweep of the longer poems in *Pattup-pāttu* is sometimes marred by obscurity of construction. In fact, the commentator, a scholiast of a very high order, often takes to devious ways in his explanation of several passages. But in shorter poems, the language is direct and forceful. Conciseness of expression, pregnancy of meaning, purity of diction and unity of thought are the main characteristics of these Sangam poems and the simplicity of the Tamilian taste compares very favourably with that of the ancient Greeks. The frigid conceits, and the pedantic professional exercises of grammarians which characterise the literature of a later period are entirely absent. On the other hand, simple humanity is mirrored in these crystal-clear utterances. Where emotions are stirred, they are severely restrained and the subdued expression which they give rise to are the most effective in literature. There is art, severe and simple ; but of artificiality there is very little trace.

Claims are sometimes made that the *Aham* poems, that is, poems of love, are the sole monopoly of the ancient Tamils. Sanskrit literature abounds in poems of this nature and indeed some of these poems are very ancient. I may refer to the famous *Hālā Sattasai.* It is a collection of 700 *gāthās* in the *Āryā* metre in *Mahārāshtri Prākrit* and it is ascribed to King Hālā. The situations portrayed in these *gāthās* are

very much like the Tamil *turai* given in the colophons. But love-poems are not confined to any one clime or country. It is said that during the time of Justinian, 'epigramatic' writing especially in its amatory department experienced a great revival at the hands of Agathias, the historican Paulus Silentiarius and their circle and their ingenious, but mannered productions were collected by Agathias into a new anthology.' The poems in our collections also do not escape the charge of being mannered productions. But the ancient Tamil poets can take credit for some of the loveliest utterences on erotic themes.

The value of these ancient poems, especially of the *Purananūru* and the *Padirrup-pattu* can hardly be exaggerated. They portray the life of the times. They give us glimpses of political and social conditions. They describe with exactitude, the religion, manners, customs, beliefs and superstitions of the time. They disclose a vivid picture of the esteem in which learning, literature and art were held by our ancients. They teach us a noble philosophy of life and conduct. They whisper to us sweetly and intimately about the domestic felicity of the ancient times. In short, they constitute a storehouse of facts bearing on ancient manners, customs and ideas and they are the influences which have contributed largely to mould the character and the literature of the later Tamils. Today they serve as beacon lights to guide modern poesy in the Tamil land. Above all, there is genuine poetry of a very high order which, in spite of the inevitable changes in our outlook and in our life, thrills our very being and makes us look back with pride and joy at the poetic achievements of the ancient Tamils.

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Edited and published by XAVIER S. THANI NAYAGAM M.A., M.LITT., S.T.D., Director, Tamil Literature Society, 52, New Colony, Tuticorin, South India.

Printed at the DE NOBILI PRESS, Madurai.