

Sarajini



“தொண்டர் நாள் தொறுந் துதிசெய அருள் செய்
கேதீச்சரமது தானே.”

THIRUKETHEESWARAM PAPERS

COMPILED, EDITED & PUBLISHED

BY

SIR KANTHIAH VAITHIANATHAN

SECOND EDITION

Nett Proceeds of the Sale of this Publication will be
devoted to the Temple Building Fund.

1960

S. Sanyalini



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சைவ நீதி

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(சிவ புண்ணியத் தெளிவு)

மாதவர் மடங்க ளாதி வரதன் மந் திரங்க ளாதி
நாதமா மிலிங்க மாதி நளிநபுட் கரிணி யாதி
சேதமுற் றிடி ன்முன்போலச் செய்கின்றோர்க் குறும்பலந்தாள்
ஓதுமுன் செய்தோர் தம்மி ளாயிரங் குணித மோங்கும்.

(இ-ள்) பெரிய தவத்தோர் இருக்கின்ற மடங்கள் முதலானவைகளும், கடவுளுடைய கோவின் முதலானவைகளும், நாதமாகிய இலிங்கம் முதலானவைகளும், தாமரையையுடைய குளம் முதலானவைகளும் பழுதடைந்தால், அவைகளை முன்போலச் செய்கின்றவர்களுக்கு உண்டாகும் புண்ணியமானது, சொல்லப்பட்ட முன் அவைகளைச் செய்தவர்களுக்கு உண்டானதிலும் ஆயிரம் மடங்கு அதிகமாம். (எ-ம்)

The above verse lays it down that the Renovation of Temples, Madams and Theertha Tanks which have gone into disrepair, is a thousand times more meritorious an act than that of those who originally constructed them.

The corollary to this would be that it is a thousand times better to repair and re-consecrate an existing Temple than construct a new one.

The reason is obvious, though superficially enigmatic. This is Saiva Way. (சைவ நீதி).

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தொண்டர் பெருமை

“ஆரங் கண்டிகை ஆடையுங் கந்தையே
பாரம் ஈசன் பணியல தொன்றிலார்
ஈர அன்பினர் யாதுங் குறைவிலார்
வீரம் என்னால் விளம்புந் தகையதோ?”

(சேக்கிழார்)

வீரம் எத்தகையதென்பதை அம்பர் சுவாமிகள் சொல்லக்கேட்டுத்
தெளிக:

“வானந் துளங்கிலென் மண்கம்ப மாகிலென் மால்வரையும்
தானந் துளங்கித் தலைதடுமாறிலென் தண்கடலும்
மீனம் படிவென் விரிசுடர் வீழிலென் வேலைநஞ்சுண்(டு)
ஊன மொன்றில்லா ஒருவனுக் காட்பட்ட உத்தமர்க்கே”

(அம்பர்)

காரணம்? தொண்டர்களுக்கு யார் எத்தீமைகள் செய்யினும் அவற்
றால், அவர்களுக்கு “இன்பமே யெந்நானுந் துன்பமில்லை”:

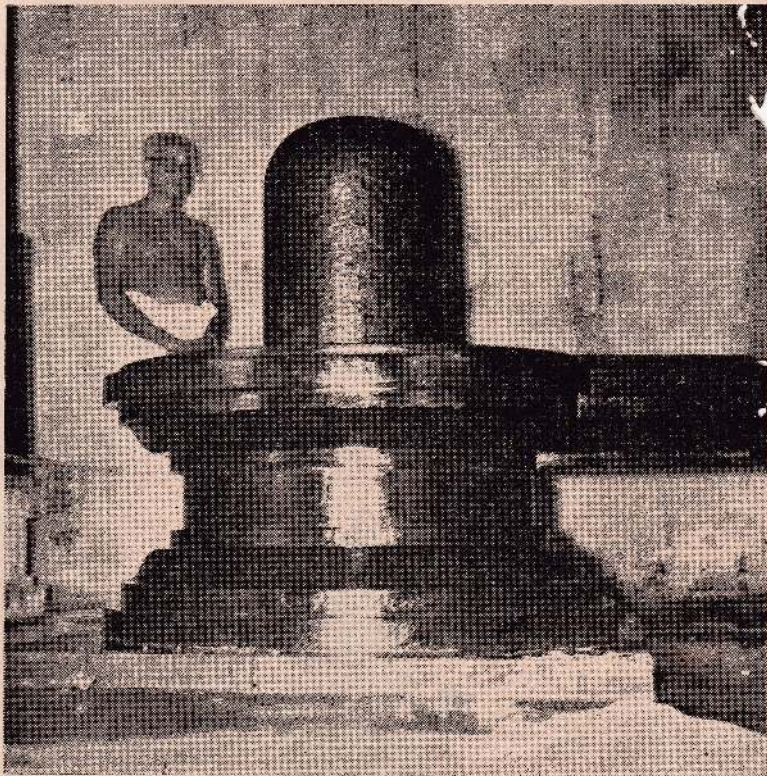
“மாசில் வீணையு மாலை மதியமும்
வீசு தென்றலும் வீங்கிள வேனிலும்
மூசு வண்டறை பொய்கையும் போன்றதே
ஈசன் எந்தை யிணையடி நீழலே”

(அம்பர்)

ஆகவே, கேதீச்சரத்தின் பெருமையும் தொண்டர் பெருமையே.

“தொண்டர் நாள்தொறுந் துதிசெய அருள்செய்
கேதீச்சர மதுதானே”

(சம்பந்தர்)



“ On Monday, 31st October, 1960, at 10 a. m., the Ancient Sivalingam, which has come down to us from time immemorial and which went underground for a while with the European invasions of Lanka, was enthroned with due ceremony in a specially constructed Mandapam in the Western Praharam. ”



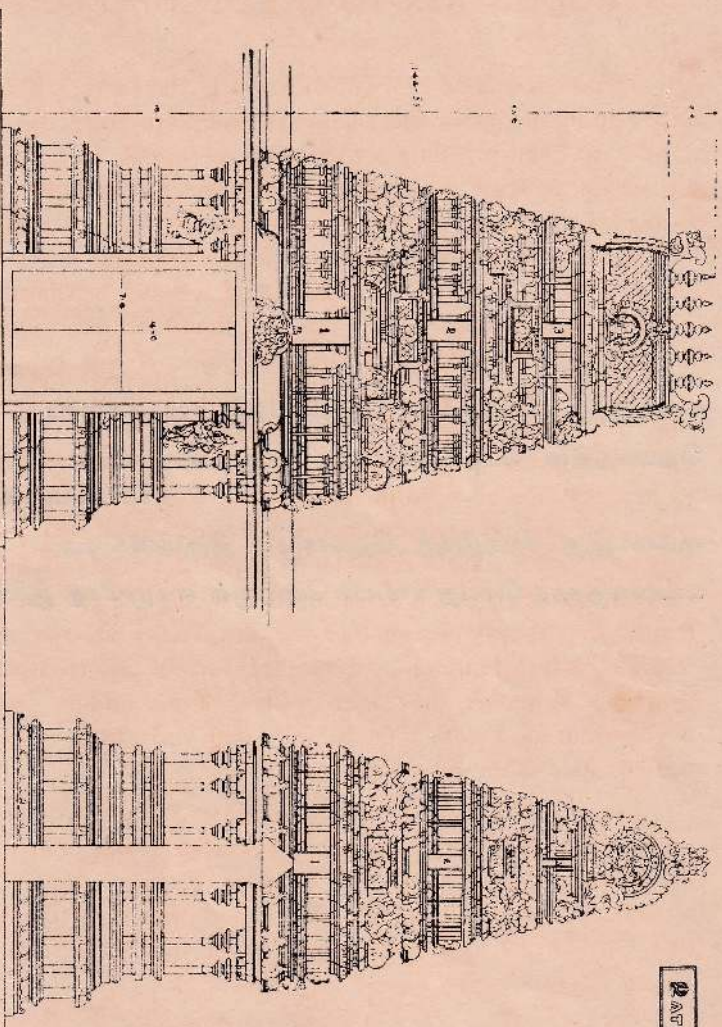
திருஞானசம்பந்தமூர்த்தி நாயனார்

பண்டு நால்வருக் கறமுறைத் தருளிப்பல் லுலகினி லுயிர்வாழ்க்கை
கண்ட நாதனார் கடலிடங் கைதொழக் காதலித் துறைகோரில்
வண்டு பன் செய மாமலர் பொறிந்மஞ்சை நடமிடு மாதோட்டந்
தொண்டர் நாடொறுந் துதிசெய வருள்செய்கே தீச்சர மதுதானே.



சுந்தரமூர்த்தி நாயனார்

ஏவரென விருவரென முக்கண்ணுடை. ழுர்த்தி
மாவின்கனி தூங்கும்பொழின் மாதோட்டநன் ளகரிற்
பாவம்வினை யறுப்பார் புவில் பாலாவினின் கரைமேல்
தேவன்னெனை யாள்வான்றிருக் கேதீசரத் தானே.



THREE STOREYED RAJA GOPURA
FRONT ELEVATION.

THREE STOREYED RAJA GOPURA
SIDE ELEVATION.

BY THE ARCHITECT
MR. H. H. WILSON
ARCHITECTS
MADRAS

சைவத்தின் மேற்சமயம் வேறிலையதிற் சார் சிவமாம்
தெய்வத்தின் மேற்றெய்வ மில்லெனு நான்மறைச்
செம்பொருள்வாய்
மைவைத்த சீர்த்திருத் தேவாரமும் திருவாசகமும்
உய்வைத்தாச் செய்த நால்வர் பொற்றூள் எம்முயிர்த் துணையே.

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EDITION

This is a humble effort to collect in one place and bring before the Hindu public and students of history and religion at large, as many as possible of the more important published religious articles and hymns, secular essays and other documents relating to Thiruketheeswaram Temple and the Mantota area in which the Temple is situated. In the present state of the absence of a critical scholarly analysis of archaeological, historical and traditional material available in Ceylon, it has been found desirable to leave on record everything practically in the form in which one has seen, read or heard about the subject. What has been recorded here is probably only a small portion of what there is. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the mass of mythological, traditional, archaeological and historical material that there is about this most ancient very highly venerated Temple of the Hindus will stimulate students of history and religion to get down to the job of sorting out the grain from the chaff.

To the pious Saivite, I can only say that I have approached every aspect of this subject with reverence and after much pious heart-searching. This is not an attempt at producing a Sthala Puranam. That will be a super-human task, particularly at the present age of critical inquiry. There is much in this little book to strengthen one's faith in the infinite Grace of Gouri Ambal Sametha Thiruketheeswaranathan and to make one stand in awe and reverence at the procession, through the ages, of mythology, tradition, travel stories, and historical faces, while God alone is. Who but HE could have been the ever-present willing witness behind the moving scene of the demolition more than once of the succession of Temples at this site and who but HE could have prompted and promoted again and again its rebuilding? The faith that cannot stand traveller's tales or historical facts may be blind faith and not founded on Realisation; such faith requires mending.

I make no apology for introducing some articles in English. I am only sorry that limitation of space and time has prevented the rendering in Tamil of all the English articles except the first which is in the nature of a bird's eye view of the whole scene. What is needed are two comprehensive volumes on Thiruketheeswaram, one in Tamil and the other in English. I pray that the present humble effort may be the fore-runner of those from abler hands.

“ Koddil ”

Thiruketheeswaram, April, 10, 1957.

K. Vaithianathan.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EDITION

The speed and enthusiasm with which the First Edition was taken up by the public has encouraged me to produce this Second Edition in English. By grace of Gowri Ambal Sametha Thiruketheeswaranathan, it has also been possible to realise the prayer in the last paragraph of the Introduction to the First Edition of the need for two books on Thiruketheeswaram, one in Tamil and the other in English. The Tamil version is being produced under different auspices which will appear simultaneously with this volume. It may be that this English version is not so comprehensive as it might have been, but that has been due to concentration, in the last two years, of the Restoration Society as well as the Editor on the actual work of re-constructing the Temple and its precincts and also to the unfortunate lack of enthusiasm for such study and research among our educated youth and teachers. It has, however, been possible to introduce into this Edition a comprehensive article on Saivaism from the first President of the Restoration Society and another on the Vanni District and the Vannias with Manthotai as the centre piece of this landscape and peoples. Moreover, the reader will find in this volume the story of the restoration work brought up to date and many more illustrations than in the First Edition.

I must express my indebtedness to the authors, printers and publishers of the various books and periodicals which have made the production of a fairly full Edition of these Papers. This humble effort is, however, still only a forerunner to the proper book on Thiruketheeswaram, which is yet to come from abler hands.

K. Vaithianathan.

“Koddil”

Thiruketheeswaram.
30th November, 1960.

**SRI - LA - SRI ARUMUGA NAVALAR,
THE HINDU REFORMER AND SAVANT, WROTE
IN OCTOBER 1872.**

Sri Lanka is lucky to possess two Siva Temples of which laudatory hymns have been sung by our saints. Saint Thirugnana Sambandamoorthy Nayanar sang in praise of the Lord of Trincomalee, while both he and Saint Sundaramoorthy Nayanar have sung in praise of the Lord of Thiruketheeswaram. Thiruketheeswaram, situated near Mannar in the Northern province is now in ruins and covered by jungle.

So many new temples keep coming up in different parts of Ceylon from time to time. Why are the Hindus of Ceylon not mindful of the greatest of their temples? If every Saivite in Ceylon contributes his mite to this cause what a big sum would accrue! If you would only heed my advice and complete re-building this Temple (Thiruketheeswaram) Lord Siva will shower his favours on you, out of the bounty of his infinite grace.

ஸ்ரீலக்ஷ்மி ஆறுமுகநாவலரவர்கள்

“ யாழ்ப்பாணச் சமயநிலை ” என்னும்
பிரசுரத்தில்

ஆங்கீரச ஹு ஐப்பசிமீ (1872) எழுதி
வெளியிட்டது.

“தேவாரம் பெற்ற சீவஸ்தலங்களுள் இரண்டு இவ்
விலங்கையில் உள்ளன. அவைகளுள் ஒன்றாகிய திருக்
கோணமலைக்குச் சம்பந்தமூர்த்தி நாயனார் திருப்பதிக
மொன்றிருக்கின்றது; மற்றொன்றாகிய திருக்கேதீச்சரத்
துக்குத் திருஞானசம்பந்தமூர்த்தி நாயனார் திருப்பதிக
மொன்றுஞ் சுந்தரமூர்த்தி நாயனார் திருப்பதிகமொன்றும்
இருக்கின்றன. இத் திருக்கேதீச்சரம் இவ்வடமாகாணத்
தின் கணுள்ள மன்னாருக்கு அதிசயப்பத்திலிருக்கின்ற
மாதோட்டத்தினுள்ளது. இத் திருக்கேதீச்சரம் அழிந்து
காடாகக்கிடக்கின்றதே! புதிது புதிதாக இவ்விலங்கை
யில் எத்தனையோ கோயில்கள் கட்டப்படுகின்றனவே!
நீங்கள் இந்த மகா ஸ்தலத்தைச் சிறிதும் நினையாத
தென்னையோ! இவ்விலங்கையிலுள்ள விபூதிதாரிகள்
எல்லாருஞ் சிறிது சிறிது உபகரிக்கினும் எத்துணைப்
பெருந்தொகைப் பொருள் சேர்ந்துவிடும்! இதை
நீங்கள் எல்லீருஞ் சிந்தித்து இத் திருப்பணியை நிறை
வேற்றுவிர்களாயின், அருட்கடலாகிய சீவபெருமான்
உங்களுக்கு அநுக்கிரகஞ் செய்வர்.”

திருச்சிற்றம்பலம்

THIRUKETHEESWARAM TEMPLE AND THE PORT OF MANTOTA *

—o—
KANTHIAH VAITHIANATHAN.

“Among the many revelations that Mohenjadaró and Harappa had in store for us none perhaps is more remarkable than this discovery that Saivaism has a history going back to the Chalcolithic or perhaps even further still and that it thus takes place as the most ancient living faith in the world.”

Sir John Marshall.

THE worship of Siva, as the Supreme, the Absolute, is the oldest and most wide-spread of all religions of antiquity. Tradition claims it to be as old as creation itself. Centuries before Himalayas rose and became the symbol of spiritual tradition, Siva cult was prevalent all over the vast Indo - African - Polyne-sian continent of which our little Ceylon formed also a part. Archaeological discoveries by Sir John Marshall in the Indus valley and George Febei and others in Malta, Madagascár and Crete, seem to indicate that nearly ten thousand years ago Siva was worshipped as Maha Deva—the great God—a form of proto-Saivaism. The seals found at Mohenja-Daro also depict the God as a deity with three faces—the Trinity ideal—possibly a version of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva of later date. The Trimugha (three-faced) Siva of 3,000 B. C., is of as much interest as the single - faced deity of the earlier seals.

* Contributed to the HINDU DHARMA of Ceylon University.

Two Siva Saints, Thirugnanasambanda Moorthy Nayanar (VIIth Century A. D.) and Sundara - Moorthy Nayanar (IXth Century A. D.) while singing of the glories of the Lord of Thiruketheeswaram describe the great and good port of Mantota (Mathitha in Mahawamsa) as a haven for innumerable large ships, the city itself possessing several storied buildings and the land around it rich in cultivations of all sorts—orchards, flower gardens, fields, etc. The good port of Mantota stood at the mouth of a great river, Palavi, in which “mountainous waves kept rising and falling”. In the southern bank of the river were built the piers and warehouses—the village still called Vankalai (Vankam - ships and Kalai - Collecting place or station) and on the northern bank the Temple, Thiruketheeswaram, and administrative and rich residential buildings - refer to the modern village names ; Maligaithidal (high ground of palaces), Papamodai (area for priests) Kovil Kulam (the tank feeding the Temple lands), etc. Thiruketheeswaram and Vankalai are nearly four miles apart as the crow flies, which shows the width and importance of the estuary of the river, Palavi, as it was then.

Sea traffic in ancient times came via the Arabian Sea from Egypt, Mesopotamia, Palestine, Greece, Rome. It was the south-west monsoon which they feared, from the blasts of which the port of Mantota afforded shelter being protected by Mannar Island a few miles to the south and the coral reefs of Adam's bridge (Ramar Inai). The passage between Mannar Island and the mainland of Lanka was then unobstructed and the currents driven in opposite directions according to season by the North-east and South-west winds kept this passage clear of silt for ocean-going vessels to navigate the channel in either direction. How did the deep Mannar Channel become a boggy marsh, the great port of Mantota get blocked by sand dunes, the waves-driven estuary of the

good Palavi river a mere ditch and the surrounding lands a sandy waste? The Palavi in its palmy days was the outlet for Matale waters via the Malwattu Oya and other natural water-ways of that extensive basin. Malwattu Oya changed its bed, shifting southwards in its lower reaches passing Madawachchi area. This is also the considered opinion of the Russian Professor who was in Ceylon recently investigating the scientific basis of the proposed Malwattu Oya Irrigation Scheme. The diversion of Malwattu Oya away from the Giants Tank area into Aruvi Aru flowing to the sea many miles south of Mannar Island completed the dwindling of the perennial Palavi river into a dry bed except during the rains. The wide Estuary of Palavi began to get silted up and the process was accelerated when the Mannar Channel was blocked effectively by the two causeways for the modern motor and Rail Roads to Mannar Island. When Mannar Island was connected to the mainland, Talaimanar and not Mantota became the nearest port to India. Moreover, since the time of Parakrama Bahu and the advent later of the Portuguese, the port of Kayts (Urkavat-turai—the port for protection of the country) gained importance as the port of the North which was previously served by Mantota.

In the glorious days of Mantota, for over two millenia before XIth Century A. D., it served as a port not only between India and Lanka but also for much entreport trade in south Indian Commodities for transhipment to the west and to China. The Temple of Thiruketheeswaram rivalled the glories of Rameswaram on the Indian side. But Thiruketheeswaram standing in the direct line of invading armies from India to Ceylon, which was more often the case than in the reverse direction, suffered many vicissitudes which its sister, Rameswaram, escaped. The fortunes of Thiruketheeswaram

rose and fell with the fortunes of the Tamil people in the Wann and indirectly in the Peninsula. When the Cholas reigned over Lanka from Polonnaruwa (two centuries at least after the last of great Saiva Saints, Sundarar,) Mantota and Thiruketheeswaram reached their zenith in temporal status (it was even renamed Raja - rajeswaram), which rapidly declined with the change in political conditions. Parakramabahu the Great had a soft corner for the Jaffna peninsula, himself having hailed from the Royal family then at Singai Nagar there. For a period during the reign of Sundara Pandyan I (1251 A. D. —1280 A. D.), vide Chidamparam inscription, Thiruketheeswaram received Royal favour and was rebuilt in late Pandyan Architectural style (evidence available in the stones found now at Temple site). Perhaps, during the time of one of his successors, Sadavarman Vira Pandyan, who claims in his inscriptions of Kudumiya Malai that he scored a great victory over the King of Lanka, extracted tribute from him and inscribed the double fish emblem and the flag of Pandyan in Konamalai (Trincomalee), Thiruketheeswaram too received royal attentions, unless Sadawarman went straight to Trincomalee by sea as the Pandyan were a great sea - faring people.

When the Portuguese arrived in the northern waters, circa 1540 (1505 Lorenza de Almeyda visited Galle, Lopey Soarez third Viceroy of Judas led expedition to Colombo 1517, Lope de Brito arrived at the Pearl Banks of Arripoo (near Mannar 1520), Thiruketheeswaram was still a great centre of Hindu worship. Let us turn to Emerson Tennent :

“It was not till the year 1617, that they the Portuguese took forcible possession of Jaffna, and having deposed the last sovereign of the Malabar dynasty, assumed the direct government of the country. Jaffna had long been coveted by them, less from any capabilities

which it presented for extending their commerce than for the security it gave to their settlements in the richer districts of the south; and apparently for the opportunity which it presented of displaying their missionary zeal in a region insusceptible of political resistance. Their first attempts to reduce this part of the Island had been made in 1544, when an expedition, fitted out to plunder the Hindu temples on the south coast of the Dekkan, summoned the chief of the Peninsula either to submit and become tributary to Portugal, or to prepare to encounter the marauding fleet. He chose the former alternative, and agreed to pay 4000 ducats yearly. In the same year such numbers of the inhabitants of Mannar embraced Christianity at the hands of the Roman Catholic missionaries under the direction of St. Francis Xavier, that Raja of Jaffnapatam sought to exterminate apostacy by the slaughter of six hundred of the new converts. The heresy, however, reached his own palace; his eldest son embraced the new faith, and was put to death in consequence; the second fled to Goa to escape his father's resentment.

“John III directed the Viceroy of India “to take a slow and secure but severe revenge” for these excesses. In 1560, the Viceroy of India, Don Constantine de Braganza, fitted out another armament against Jaffna on the double plea that the persecution of the Christians had been renewed at Mannar and that the reigning sovereign had usurped the rights of his elder brother, the fugitive at Goa. De Couto has devoted the Seventh Decade of his History of India, to a pompous description of this sacred war, in which the bishop of Cochin accompanied the

fleet along with the Viceroy, erected an altar on the shore, and in the presence of the invading army inaugurated the assault on the city by the celebration of a mass, the announcement of a plenary indulgence for all who might fall, and of a general absolution for all who might fall in the cause of the Cross. The assault was successful but disastrous; many fidalgos were slain by the cannon of the enemy, the city was taken, the palace consumed, and the King in his extremity, being forced to make terms with the conquerors, was permitted to retain his sovereignty on condition of his disclosing the place of concealment of the treasures taken from Kandy and Cotta by Tribula Banda, son-in-law of Bhuwaneka VII and father of Don Juan Dharma Pala. He was to pay in addition a sum of 80,000 cruzadoes, and surrender the Island of Mannar to the Portuguese, who forthwith occupied and fortified it."

"In 1591 and 1604, fresh expeditions were sent out from Goa, to punish the King of Jaffna for assisting the Singhalese chiefs in their opposition to the Portuguese, but on each occasion a ready submission on the part of the weaker power sufficed to avert the threatened danger. The determination, however, had been already taken to assert the claim of Portugal to the Jaffna territories, and the consummation was only postponed as a matter of convenience. In 1617, under the vice-royalty of Constantine de Saa Norona, an expedition was directed against Jaffna; the city was captured with circumstances of singular barbarity. The King was carried captive to Goa, and there executed; his nephew, the last

of the Malabar princes, having resigned his claim to the crown, and entered a convent of Franciscans, his inheritance was formally incorporated with the dominions of Portugal."

In this maelstrom of historical events during Portuguese times, Thiruketheeswaram played a big part, though not so directly mentioned by Emerson Tennent. To the Portuguese who had set about to plunder the rich Hindu Temples of the Deccan, Thiruketheeswaram was even an easier prey than Kannya Kumari and Thiruchendur on the opposite Indian coast, which they succeeded in plundering (the reason for their failure at Rameswaram must have been due to the strong defence of it put up by the Ramnad Princes who were hereditary guardians of that shrine and Sethu). The conversion of the people of Mannar Island was preceded by the plunder of Thiruketheeswaram, whose very stones were subsequently used in the construction of the Mannar Fort. The feeble effort made by the King of Jaffna to avenge the crime on Thiruketheeswaram was magnified into a massacre. Subsequent events are in keeping with moral and religious outlook of that time. The fact to remember, however, is that with the fall of Thiruketheeswaram the Tamil Kingdom of Lanka ceased to exist and the Tamil people lost their independence.

Tradition has it that Ravana, the King of Lanka, was a devotee of Koneswaram and his father-in-law, Mayan, is said to have built the ancient temple at Thiruketheeswaram. Rama, who built the Sivan temple at Rameshwaram, on his way back to Ayodhya from Lanka, is reputed to have worshipped Lord Siva at Thiruketheeswaram as well. According to tradition, Arjuna, the hero of Mahabaratha and the kinsman and disciple of Lord Krishna, also visited

Thiruketheeswaram in the course of his pilgrimage to the South. It is said that it was during those travels that he met the Naga Princess, Alli Arasani, who ruled over the region adjoining Mantota. Some ruins on the mainland south of Mannar Island are today pointed out as the forts of Alli.

According to Buddhist literature, the place was known as Mahatittha from third century B. C. If, as claimed by certain scholars in accord with tradition, Rama, Agastyar and Arjuna crossed over to Lanka through this harbour at Mantota, it may be surmised that Prince Vijaya too and his party came by the same route. If so, the Sivan Temple at which Upatissa, the Brahmin priest, who accompanied Vijaya, is said to have performed Poojah cannot be any other shrine than Thiruketheeswaram itself. The Yalppana Vaipava Malai, a record of historical traditions prepared by Mailvagana Pulavar, a Jaffna poet, for the Dutch Governor of Jaffna in 1736, states :

“Prince Vijaya, soon after he landed on the shores of Ceylon in the sixth century B. C. caused to be rebuilt the Temple of Thiruketheeswaram, which had long been in ruins.”

The prosperity of Mantota during the times of Saiva Saints is in keeping with the description in the Sinhalese work, Raja Ratnakara, as regards the suzerainty of the Tamils in what was then the most populated parts of Ceylon during the ninth and tenth centuries.

The first attempt to restore the Thiruketheeswaram Temple was made in 1872 by the great Hindu reformer, Sri La Sri Arumuga Navalar ; but his efforts met with no immediate success on account of the apathy of the Saivites and the opposition from the Christians of that period. Fourteen years after his death, his dream was fulfilled when

the jungle land, in extent about 40 acres, was bought by the Saivites of Jaffna at an auction sale held at Jaffna Kachcheri on 13.12.1893 by Sir William Twynam, C. C. S., Government Agent, who has also left in his Administration Report some permanent record of the past glory of Thiruketheswaram Temple.

An authentic record of the conditions of this ancient temple site immediately before any restoration work was commenced may be gleaned from a paper read by Mr. W. J. Boake, C. C. S., on November 7, 1887, entitled "Thiruketheswaram, Mahatirtha, Matoddam or Mantoddai" (*See Royal Asiatic Society Journal, Volume No. 35*).

"Nothing remains above ground of this ancient city except a few fragments of sculptured figures, broken tiles, bricks and pieces of pottery. Its site extremely overgrown by low dense jungle, the only large trees being a few tanaku and boabab. Indications may still be seen of the old streets, and there are two or three old wells. The foundations of a brick building, somewhere about the centre of the hill, on which I believe the greater part of the city stood, are pointed out as those of the palace, and the entrance of the Temple is said to have been near the old well."

Mr. P. Ramanathan (later, Sir Ponnambalam) who was present at the meeting, contradicted a part of this report and added an illuminating comment, particularly, on the Hindu aspect of the site. He also said that the sites of old buildings were not part of a secular city but were all appurtenances of the Temple and that the population of the area were office-bearers, devotees and workers of the Temple.

One significant characteristic of the area which Mr. Boake and the earlier British observers overlooked was the presence of a double moat round the so-called "citadel", which it is now clear, contained a sea water barrier outside and a fresh water protection (which was not accessible to any casual invader) inside, which must have formed a strong defence of the property of a rich temple such as it was.

The original site of the main Temple, which had been razed to the ground was traced in June 1894 from the clue afforded by the old Chola well on the Temple land, the Sivalingam which was in worship in pre-Portuguese period, a Nandi (seated Bull image) and a Ganesha image near the foundations of the old temple then under dust. There is evidence in the records of Rameshwaram that at the request of the Ceylon Hindus a celebrated Sivalingam which had come from Benares was handed over for installation at Thiruketheeswaram, which is the Moorthy now in worship at the Holy of Holies (Athimoolam). A small temple was constructed and consecrated exactly on the Ancient site on 28th June, 1903. (*See the Jaffna Hindu Organ of the day for description of the ceremony.*)

The present shrines of Swami and Ambal on a more pretentious scale were subsequently constructed at the instance of some Hindu public servants of Jaffna who were stationed at Mannar after the first World War. It too had gone into disrepair by the passage of time and was renovated in August 1952 and Kumbabishekam ceremony performed under the auspices of the Thiruketheeswaram Temple Restoration Society, which had its beginnings at a meeting of the Hindus in Colombo on October 19, 1948. This enabled the poojas and worship to be continued uninterrupted, for the time being, in the central Shrines while the work of reconstruction

With:

went on with the nine prahara shrines, Entrance Gate (Raja Gopuram), Thirumathil (inner boundary wall) and various side Mandapams. The plans for the new Temple and the lay-out of the grounds were prepared on traditional lines by best available religious and architectural talent of South India. In the North-eastern Courtyard of the Outer Weedi (Front Terrace) there will be the 'Utsava Mandapam' (Vasantha Mandapam) and other attendant buildings surrounded by an outer wall. Outside the outer wall come the Ther (Car) Weedi, which will have wide open areas all round to accommodate a large concourse of devotees. The surrounding lands have been laid out with still further weedies, with intersecting roads to provide for flower gardens, parks and groves, madams and chatirams, and residences for priests, devotees and temple servants. A Gurukulam (Training School for Temple priests), a Theological College for higher Religious Studies and retreats for Rishis have been given places in the Plan. The Gurukulam has already materialised. A Women's Welfare Centre with accommodation for an Orphanage is also under construction on the road to the Temple.

On Monday, 31st October, 1960 at 10 a. m., before a large and representative gathering of Hindus of both India and Ceylon, the Ancient Sivalingam, which has come down to us from time immemorial and which went underground for a while with the European invasions of Lanka, was enthroned with due ceremony in a specially constructed Mandapam in the Western Praharam. The opportunity of this Kumbabishekam was taken to instal Vinayagar, Subramanar, Nadeswarar, and Chandeswarar in their respective new shrines in the inner Praharam.

A Temple Bell, 4' 0" in diameter cast in pure copper and tin only and accurately tuned to Note 'E', in a well-known Foundry in London, is already on the high seas on

its way to Thiruketheeswaram. Its nett weight is 1 ton, 3 cwts., 1 qr., 26 lbs. and nett overall size 50"×50"×50". The gross assembly weighs about 2 tons. A suitable Belfry for it is under construction. It is hoped that for 1960 Thiruvemba, it will call, from a height of about 75 ft. above mean sea level, the Hindus for many miles round in Mannar district to wake up and pray, Thirupallieluchchi.

The Thiruketheeswaram Temple Restoration Society, which has completed ten years of existence, has achieved much, which a Hindu devotee can only realise by a visit to the Temple. There is a good motorable, metalled and tarred road right to the door step and a number of Madams to cater to the convenience of the pilgrims. Besides the sacred Palavi Aru—for ceremonial bathing (with a bathing ghat recently constructed with cement concrete steps) there is a pipe borne water supply for all purposes. An electric installation, a sub-Post Office with telephone facilities, shops and a regular bus service from Mannar meet all ordinary requirements of devotees.

It is the bounden duty of every Hindu in Lanka to visit Thiruketheeswaram, the lasting symbol in this country of his religion, his culture and his language, at least once in his life time.

‘தொண்டர் நாள் தொழுந் துதிசெய அருள்செய்கே தீச்சர மதுதானே’

“ Koddil ”

Thiruketheeswaram.
30th November, 1960.

**Mr. P. COOMARASWAMY'S LETTER DATED
15TH NOVEMBER 1893, ADDRESSED TO
S. NAGALINGAM Esq., JAFFNA.**

Colombo 15th November 1893.

My dear Mr. Nagalingam,

I had an interview with the Governor yesterday and urged strongly our claim for the Tirukkeditchchuram land. He says that during his regime no free grant should be made of lands to any religionists. He also said that the Roman Catholics had also urged their claims to this very land. He further said that he hoped that the Hindus would become the purchasers. It now remains for you to form a committee in Jaffna and collect subscriptions **at once**, so far as I am personally concerned I shall be glad to give my subscription. But I am afraid that you cannot expect any subscriptions from the Hindu residents in Colombo as there is already here your agent to collect subscriptions for your school.

At a meeting of the Sub Committee of the Legislative Council on the Budget, I brought for discussion the Jaffna Friend-in-need Society; after a great deal of trouble Sir Noel Walker at last agreed to consider one of my proposals viz: that the Society's accounts should be audited by the Auditor General.

I was privately informed by an official (and I shall thank you to keep this strictly private) that the Government are aware that the reforms required should be granted, but that so long as Mr. Twynam is at Jaffna, nothing could be done.

By the way, the Governor wished to know how the Markets Ordinance is working at Jaffna.

Yours truly,
P. COOMARASWAMY.

KEY TO PLATE NO. 2.

STRUCTURES SHOWN ON THE PLAN.

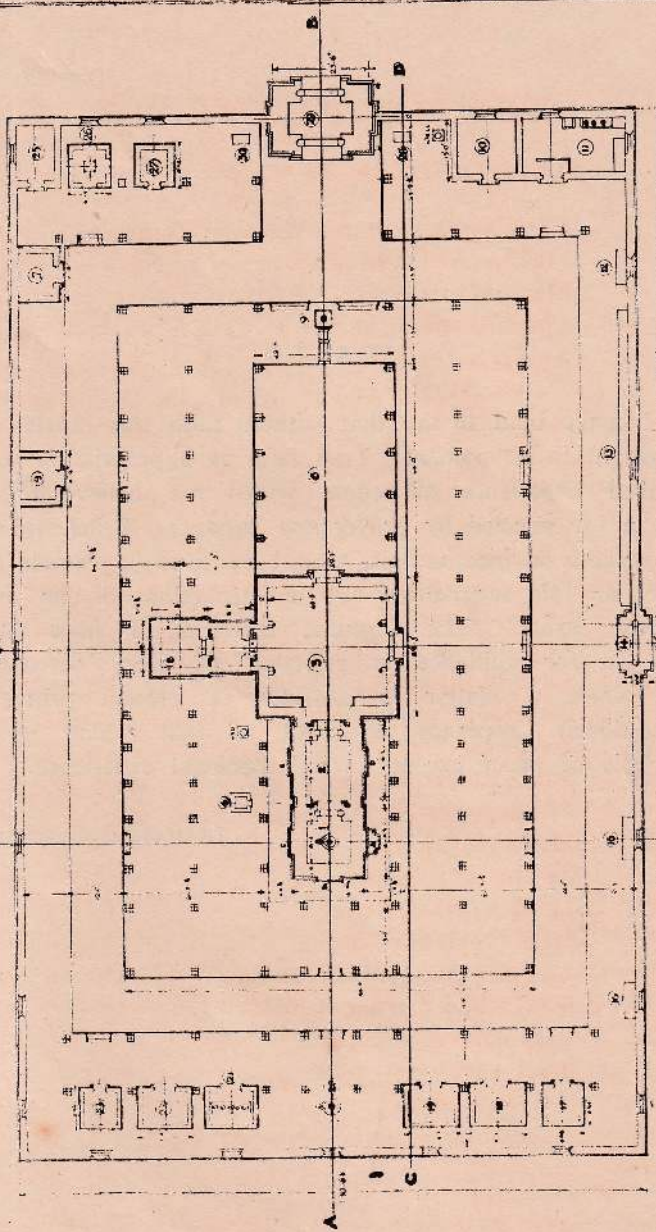
- 1 Garbhagraha--Thiruketheeswaranather
- 2 Mukha (Artha) Mantapam
- 3 Maha Mantapam
- 4 Chandikeswarar Shrine
- 5 Ambal Shrine
- 6 Nirutha Mantabam
- 7 Nadarajar Shrine
- 8 Palliyarai
- 9 Nandi, Pelipeedam and Dhuvarasthampam
- 10 Store Room
- 11 Baga Salai
- 12 Pathigam Padiya Sambanthamoorthy Nayanar
- 13 63 Nayanmar
- 14 Ambal Sannathi South Entrance
- 15 Samayachariyarka!
- 16 Pathigam Padiya Sunderamoorthy Nayanar
- 17 Vinayakar Shrine
- 18 Somaskander Shrine
- 19 Maha Vishnu Shrine
- 20 Maha Lingam
- 21 Pancha Linga Shrine
- 22 Maha Lakshmi Shrine
- 23 Sri Subramaniyar Shrine
- 24 Alankara Mantapam Kuradu
- 25 Jewel Room (Strong Room)
- 26 Yaga Salai
- 27 Bhairava Shrine
- 28 Suriyan Kuradu
- 29 Three Storeyed Raja Gopuram
- 30 Santhiran

Note:— Structures on the second Prakaram not shown on Plate 2.

PROPOSED TEMPLE IN TWO PRAKARAS FOR SRI GOURI AMBAL SAMETA TIRUKETHEE SIVARANATH
TIRUKETHEESWARANI CEYLON.

PLANS Nos. 202

SCALE: 1" = 10 FEET.



PLAN AT BASEMENT LEVEL (SHOWING THE DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED IMMEDIATE CONSTRUCTION) *See opposite page*

M. SELLARAJU & PARTNERS,
MADHAYANATHA STREET,
CONSULTING & PRACTISING ARCHITECTS,
MADRAS, INDIA.

FAITH

I make bold to say that without faith this world come to naught in a moment. True faith is appropriation of the reasoned experience of people whom we believe to have lived a life purified by prayer and penance. Belief, therefore, in prophets or incarnations, who have lived in remote ages, is not an idle superstition but a satisfaction of an inmost spiritual want. The formula, therefore, I have humbly suggested for guidance is rejection of every demand for faith where a matter is capable of present proof, and unquestioned acceptance on faith of that which is itself incapable of proof except through personal experience.

MAHATMA GANDHI.

GLORIES OF SHAIVAISM

(This is from a small treatise* of the same name written by the late Mr. S. Shivapadasundaram, B. A., who was the first President of Thiruketheeswaram Temple Restoration Society and who laid the foundation for Thirugnanasambandar Madam and took a great deal of interest in the early stages of planning the restoration work. He worked untiringly in the cause of Shaivaism and wrote many books to explain its precepts and philosophy to young and old. Glories of Shaivaism, written in English, is his 'last will and testament' not only to the Shaiva world but to the wider circle of all thinkers. His interpretations of the old texts are often original and hence of interest to modern students.

Part I comprises an extensive summary in his own words of the first chapter which explains Shaiva philosophy; Part II is a brief review of some of the Saiva practices as he saw them, as much as possible in the words of the text.—K. V.)

PART I

SHAIVAISM

SHAIVAISM is the religion of those who accept the authority of the Vedas and the Shivagamas and regard them as having been revealed by God.

The Vedas are intended for all; but the Shivagamas are meant only for the spiritually minded. All the four Vedas are still in existence. But most of the Shivagamas have disappeared. They were in existence in the time of Arulnandi Shivam, who had studied all of them and was hence called Sakalagama Panditer. Fortunately for us, he has included in his *magnum opus*, the Shivagnana Siddhiar, the essence of the most

*The original treatise was published in 1954 by Saiva Prakasa Press, Jaffna, priced at Rs. 1/50.

of the Agamas. The commentators of this book mention seventeen Shivagamas, which contain teachings identical with the more important teachings in Siddhiar. This shows that those Agamas existed in the times of these commentators. Besides Siddhiar, we have the Shivagnana Bodham, which is a portion of the Rourava Shivagama and is believed to be its essence. This was rendered into Tamil with a short commentary by Meikandar. These two Tamil books give us the philosophical portion (the Gnana Padam) of the Agamas. There are twelve other works in Tamil which supplement these, and form with them what are called the fourteen Siddhanta Shastras. Of these, Irupa Irupathoo was written by Arulnandi Shivam himself; seven or eight others were written by his disciple's disciple, Umapathi Shivam. Thirumantram of Tirumular, believed to have been written more than two thousand years ago, also contains Shaiva philosophy. These fifteen works seem to be able to take the place of philosophical portion of the Shivagamas.

Shaiva philosophy posits a God and only one God. Besides positing God, it also gives reasons in support of it.

The Universe as a whole undergoes change. For every change there must be a cause. Therefore, there must be a cause for the change in the Universe. This cause must be something different from the Universe. That which causes this is called God.

But it may be argued that it is the nature of the Universe to undergo change and that an outside cause is not necessary. But change cannot be the nature of a thing; for first of all, we do not find anything which is changed by itself. Everything remains as it is unless it is subjected to an outside agency. Water remains water and does not become

ice unless it is cooled by something else. Secondly, if it is the nature of a thing to change, we must find everything changing continually, and at random, and without reference to anything else. We should not even be surprised if automatically a man suddenly changes into a pillar. Thirdly, if changing should be the nature of a thing, it loses its identity and is no longer that thing but a different one. So change cannot be said to be the quality of a thing. For example, if one of the right angles of a square changes into an acute angle it is no longer a square but a rhombus, and we never find a square becoming a rhombus by itself. Therefore, change cannot be the nature of a thing; the change in the Universe as a whole cannot be due to its nature. It must be caused by something which is not the Universe, and that which causes this, is God.

Changes take place not only in the inorganic Universe. At one time, this earth had been part of the sun. It must have been a burning mass at the time of separation. Life was impossible in that burning mass. But we see life now, and this is a change; not merely life, but life of such marvellous development as man; not merely man, but men of such wonderful intelligence as Einstein and Ramanujam. It is a tremendous change from lifelessness to the intelligence of Einstein, and the change must have been caused by something which is all-knowing and which Shaivism calls God.....

The science of ethics has miserably failed in its attempt to discover a basis for discriminating right from wrong. Every ethical theory put forward by ethics has been found to be slippery..... An atheist is not bound to have any regard for morals. The existence of God and of His revelation must be postulated for the acceptance of moral laws. Siddhar says "The true dharma is Shiva's Law".....

But there are those who very comfortably say "I have no need for God. I have a conscience, which tells me what is right and what is wrong. I will endeavour to obey it." But, conscience is a myth. What a man calls conscience is nothing other than the decision of his intellect, based on his ideals, knowledge etc. There have been persons who at one time hated bribery, but later became ardent votaries of it. So putting in terms of conscience, at one time their conscience disapproved bribery, and at another time approved it. Orthodox meat-eaters have become orthodox vegetarians i. e. at one time their conscience approved meat-eating and at another time condemned it. Again, we see the conscience of one man approving murder for political purposes and the conscience of another man abhorring it. We thus see that conscience differs in the same man from time, and in different persons at the same time. Conscience is therefore altogether undependable. Morality can depend only on religion, and the existence of God has to be admitted for the maintenance of moral life.

Having thus demonstrated the need for the belief in the existence of God, our philosophy says that there can be only one God. We first arrived at the existence of God in our attempt to explain the change the Universe undergoes. God is thus the wielder of the Universe. There cannot be two beings each independently controlling the Universe. So the Veda says, "There is only one God; but sages call Him by different names."*

The next teaching of Shaivism is that we are all souls and that souls are realities. A reality cannot come out of

*Uma, Vinayaka, Subramania are different names of Shiva, indicating different aspects of him.

nothing, and a reality which is not composite is eternal. The soul is not composite and is therefore eternal.

But there are those who deny the existence of the soul and regard the body as the individual. They hold that thinking is done by the nervous system in the brain. But nerves are mere chemical products and are therefore non-intelligent. If a man frequently repeats "7 times 12 is 84" this truth will come to him whenever he wishes to know what 7 times 12 is. But intricate mathematical problems cannot be solved by such habit formations. There must, therefore, be something other than the body to do work of this kind. Shaiva philosophy says that which does this is the soul.

But another class of philosophers say that the solution of problems can be done by the mind and the existence of the soul does not follow from this. In answer to this Shaiva philosophy says that the mind is only a tool and not the agent. We control our minds in several ways. When the mind is prone to be idle, we sometimes press it to do the work in hand. When it starts a wrong act as a reflex, we mend it. The mind is thus only a tool and not the agent. The agent is what our philosophy calls the soul. Mind and body are its tools.

We also see that our knowledge is very limited. There are phenomena which even the greatest scientist is still unable to explain. We are therefore not omniscient. But, when we see men possessing varying amounts of knowledge, the jungledweller having a drop of knowledge, an ordinary graduate a well of knowledge, a professor a sea of knowledge and a Raman an ocean of knowledge, we have a right to infer that the soul is capable of the omniscience. Since men are

actually not omniscient, there must be something which keeps down its omniscience. Our philosophy calls this Anava.

The next teaching of our philosophy is regarding the Ultimate cause of the inanimate Universe. There was a time when atoms were regarded as the ultimate cause of the physical Universe. But Siddhiar says that atoms cannot be the ultimate cause because they are themselves composed of other things. The ultimate cause must be a non-composite thing, which our philosophy calls Maya.

The soul gains full knowledge by the gradual lifting of the anavic veil. This it can do only by experience. When a soul finds itself in a situation which is altogether new, it is unable to adjust itself correctly and does wrong. It suffers in consequence and discovers some mistake in the adjustment. The next time it finds itself in a similar situation, it corrects the mistake and makes a better adjustment. But even this adjustment may not be quite correct and it suffers in consequence. It thus discovers some other mistake. This discovery of mistakes is a permanent addition to the knowledge of the soul. To put this in philosophic language, we perform acts which are called Karma, and experience the fruits of the Karma, which gives us additional knowledge. The attainment of such knowledge means slightly lifting of the anavic veil. It must be remembered that only acts which have a moral bearing are called Karma in our philosophy. Acts like solving mathematical problems and spinning cotton thread are not Karma in the philosophic sense and are referred to in this book as actions. Secondly, the knowledge obtained by experiencing the fruits of Karma is absolute knowledge unlike knowledge obtained through the intellect, such as scientific knowledge. A man may be an ocean of scientific knowledge and yet be inferior in spiritual knowledge to an illiterate jungle-dweller.

Our experiences are the result of three factors. One of these is our past Karma called prarabdha. The second is that portion of the Karma of the present birth called drishta agamya, the third is our exertion or toil. The effects of these cannot cancel one another but may counter-act one another. For example, suppose as the result of prarabdha, my house is burning and as a result of a good drishta Karma, a large number of people may just then appear on the scene, say, in a wedding procession and put out the fire immediately. In this case the drishta Karma, counteracts prarabdha. On the other hand, if the house is reduced to ashes, I can rebuild it with the money that I earned by hard labour. In symbolic language, if our experience is denoted by y , our drishta Agamya by x , our toil by z and prarabdha by c , we find that $y = x + z + c$. This shows that the more drishta agamya we perform, the more we labour hard, the more pleasant will be our experience in this world. Our philosophy thus gives a strong stimulus to hard work.

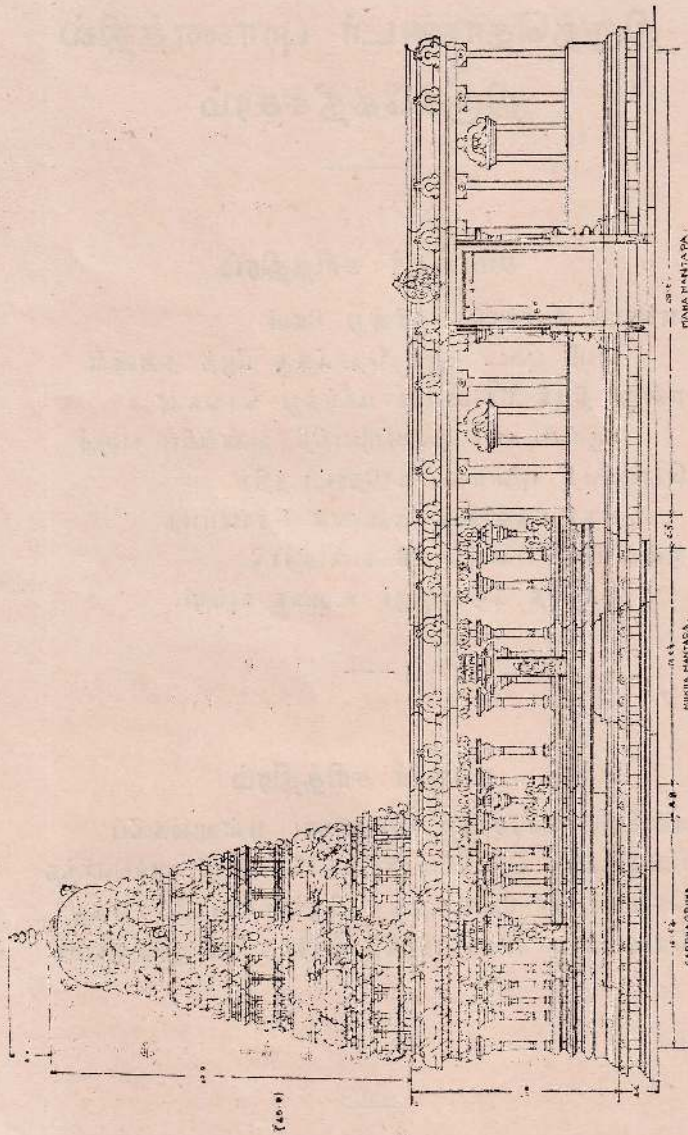
Whereas, *pain is the consequence of wrong Karma, pleasure is the consequence of right Karma. This is the Law of Karma.* While pain gives right understanding, pleasure confirms it. These consequences of Karma do not all reach the soul immediately after it is performed. The law is administered by God, and the pain or pleasure corresponding to a Karma is given to the soul at a time when its experience will give it the maximum benefit. If it reaches the soul in the birth in which it is committed it is called dhrishtam, if in some subsequent birth, it is called adhrishtam; and if partly in some other birth and partly in some other birth, it is called dhrishta-dhrishtam. Everything that we get, whether wealth or poverty, loss or gain, health or disease, is the fruit either of our action or our Karma. We cannot get anything except as the fruit of

some action or Karma. People pray to God for certain things. If they ever get them, it is according to the law of Karma or as a reward for labour but not in consequence of their prayer. No one gets anything from God for mere begging.

One of the greatest glories of Shaivaism is that it offers godliness to each and every soul without exception. Godliness cannot be attained, in a single birth. We do not know the soul though we are ourselves souls; and we know next to nothing of God. Our spiritual knowledge is thus very poor. We also know that our spiritual progress in this birth is almost negligible, It thus follows that we must take several births before we can become godly.

To summarise Shaiva philosophy:—There is one God. There are many souls. Their ability to know is hindered by Anava. This hindrance is gradually removed by their performing of Karma and experiencing its fruits. The law of Karma is “pain is the consequence of wrong doing, and pleasure is the consequence of right doing”. Every soul without exception will ultimately attain divine bliss. This requires several births. The doctrine of rebirth is one of the characteristics of Shaiva philosophy. The anavic veil varies in hardness from soul to soul, which explains, not only inequality in the present situations of souls, but also in the time taken by them to attain divinity. Millions of souls have already attained it and millions are left who will attain it in future.

The evolution of the soul takes place in the mere presence of God. This consists of five elements. One of these is the soul taking a body so that it may perform Karma and get rid of the anavic barrier. This element is called creation (படைத்தல்). The body that the soul takes is such as will be



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திருத்தொண்டர் புராணத்தில் திருக்கேதீச்சரம்

சம்பந்தர் சரித்திரம்

அந்நகரி லமர்ந்தங்க ணினிது மேன்
யாழி புடை சூழ்ந் தொலிக்கு மீழ்ந் தன்னின்
மன்னு திருக் கோணமலை மகிழ்ந்து செங்கண்
மழவிடையார் தமைப்போற்றி வணங்கிப் பாடிச்
சென்னிமதி புனைமாட மாதோட்டத்திற்
நிருக் கேதீச்சரத் தண்ணல் செய்யபாத
முன்னிமிகப் பணிந்தேத்தி யன்பரோடு
முடிவாத கிறிபெற்றார் உவகை யுற்றார்.

சுந்தரர் சரித்திரம்

மன்னுமீரா மேச்சரத்து மாமணியை முள்வணங்கிப்
பன்னுநமீழ்ந் தொடைசாத்திப் பால்கின்றார் பார்பணிந்
சென்னியர்மா தோட்டத்துத் திருக்கேதீச்சரஞ் சார்ந்து
சொன்மலர்மா லீகன் சாத்திந் தூரத்தே தொழுதெழுந்தார்.

fit to experience that portion of its past Karma called prarabdha* The body will be maintained till the whole prarabdha is exhausted. This element is called maintenance (காத்தல்). When prarabdha is exhausted the body is destroyed. This is called dissolution (அழித்தல்). The weakening of the anavic grip that took place during that life is called suppression (மறைத்தல்). The granting of divine bliss on the total removal of the Anavic barrier is called liberation (அருளல்). God's presence in virtue of which the soul undergoes evolution is called His Shakti. That which performs the first four acts is called the Adishakti (ஆதிசக்தி) or Tirodhana (திரோதான) Shakti, and that which performs the fifth act is called Arul Shakti. The two Shaktis are really one but are given different names during the performance of different acts. Anava, Maya and Karma are called Malams or Pasams.....

We shall now try to find out the elements in the concepts of God, Soul and Malam. As these are not material things, they have no form.† God is an eternally knowing thing and is hence called Chit. He has therefore no need to think. He does not see things in parts as we do. He is all Love and this infinite Love leads the infinite souls to liberation. Since there is no one more powerful than He to produce any change in Him, He is changeless. Being changeless and being perfect, He is the highest reality and is hence called Sat. In His presence, the soul dwindles to nothing, as the light of a glow-worm does in sunlight. The Soul is therefore said to be Asat on this account. But,

*Prarabdha is that part of past Karma which is experienced in a particular birth.

†God is said to have appeared to saints in certain forms. These are forms made to appear to them by his Arul, or rather they are forms of his Arul is everywhere present, but assumes certain forms at certain times, just as sea water sometimes assumes the form of an iceberg.

as Malam is non-intelligent and inanimate, the soul is Sat compared to it and Malam is regarded as Asat. So the soul is Sat - Asat.

According to Shaiva philosophy, the whole Universe obeys God's law, and everything that takes place is in accord with it. Since God is good, His law is good, and every phenomenon in the Universe must be good. There are several religions in this world, each of which is followed by a large number of people. Since it is God's law which places a person in a particular religion, that religion is the best for him for the time being. If he changes his religion, the new religion is the best for him for the time being. Shaiva philosophy has therefore no regular programme for proselytism. This is another glory of Shaivism. Shaivism regards the various religions as the rungs of ladder, the topmost of which reaches the feet of God, Divine bliss. Says Siddhiar, "A soul follows alien religions, then enters those allied to Shaivism, plods through the path of Smritis, enters the heaven of Ashrams, practises rare Tapas, learns rare Vidyas, studies the Vedas and the right kind of Puranas and realises the truths of the Upanishads. It will then reach the Saiva Siddhanta. There, it practises Charya, Kriya and Yoga,* and attains Gnana through which it reaches the Feet of Shiva."

Another corollary of the rule of the Universe by God's Law is that whether in this world or elsewhere there is nothing which is not good. That is, there is no evil; neither is there anywhere any suffering, usually called misery, which is not productive of goods to the soul in this world or elsewhere. He is all good, all knowing, all powerful. It is therefore impossible for either evil or misery to find a place anywhere. It is out of ignorance that we regard good as

* See page 42, 49 & 50 for explanation of these terms.

evil, and a salutary life as misery. But there are religions which are based on the existence of misery, and which try to find the means of evading misery. They collapse on the discovery of the non-existence of misery.

Misery is suffering which is harmful to us. But there is no suffering which is really harmful. On the other hand, suffering is the result of wrong Karma and is a means of increasing our true knowledge and of weakening Anava. It is therefore of great value to the soul and ought to be welcomed. Secondly, it is altogether untrue that suffering is Universal. With most people, life in this world is on the whole rather pleasant. Sufferings come to them only occasionally. A few, no doubt, suffer more than others, and even of these few, most people get used to it and hardly ever feel it keenly. Fortunately for us, our philosophy presents no such false conceptions and keeps us always happy.....

The Shaiva religion begins where all other religions end. To enter the Shaiva religion, one must possess ethical transcendence (புவினை ஒப்பு), anavic decadence, (மலபரி பாகம்) and spiritual illumination (சுத்தி திபாதம்). He must have been a master of righteousness, which has become a second nature in him. As a concomitant of this mastery, his Anava must have become fairly impotent. He sees that God is the only reality which concerns him and ignores other souls. By ignoring them, he gives up all thoughts of service or disservice to them. At a much earlier stage, he gave up disservice to them; now he gives up service also. This is called ethical transcendence. Actually, he does not give up service to other souls. He renders them service not as service to them but as service to God.

Ethical transcendence and anavic decadence are attended by special spiritual illumination. This qualifies him for entry

into Shaivism. He gains admission to it by receiving Samaya Dheeksha. This section of Shaivism is called charya. Here he renders bodily service in temples and performs pooja to one of the morphous images of Shiva. This service gives him further spiritual illumination and qualifies him for Vissha Dheeksha which places him in the Kriya section and then in the Yoga section. These lead him to abundance of spiritual illumination, in which he sees the shadow of an identity of himself with God. Service to God is inconsistent with a feeling of identity with him. He therefore gives up service to him. This is called religious transcendence (சிவ வினா ஒப்பு) because he regards serving God to be no better than not serving Him. He then gets the last Dheeksha the Nirvana Dheeksha, and enters the final section of Shaivism, called Gnanam. Here he gets complete deliverance from Anava (முத்தி), gets full spiritual illumination (சிவஞானம்) and becomes one with God.

PART II

The Sacred Books of Shaivaites :

The Vedas and the Shaiva Agamas are regarded by Shaivites as God-given. These contain truths which cannot be reached by the human intellect and are therefore believed to have come from God. Our saints such as Thirumular, Manickavachagar, the Devarakarar and Arulnandhi have said that these works come from God.

As the Vedas are the authoritative works of several other religions also, and all have the right to read them, they are still in existence and have gone even to Europe and America. But the Shaivagamas, held sacred only by the Shaivites and accessible only to those who have had the final Dheeksha have been less fortunate. Most of them seem

to have disappeared within the last two centuries. Sivagnana Munivar who lived about two hundred years ago, refers to the Shaivagamas in his commentaries, but does not complain of the loss of any of them. English education attracted the best of intellects during the last one hundred years and left none to study the Shaivagamas which must therefore, have either been thrown away or eaten by white ants.

Fortunately for us the Kryia portion of the Agamas are safe in the hands of our priests, and Gnana portion has been handed to us in Tamil by our Tamil saints. Thirumular who seems to have lived more than two thousand years ago has given us in his Tirumantram some portions of the Gnana section of the Shaivagamas. Shivagnanabodham which is a portion of the Rourava Agama* and also its essence was taught by the Paramacharia to Manickavachagar about fifteen centuries ago. He reproduced some teachings of Shivagnanabodham in his Thiruvachakam. Paranjothimunivar taught the same Sivagnanabodham to Meihandhadevar and asked him to translate it into Tamil; in obedience to his Guru's order, Meihandhadevar translated it into Tamil and added some notes. It has thus been possible for us to have in Tamil the Shivagnanabodham which is the essence of the Shaivagamas. Meihandhadevar taught this to his disciple Arulnandhi Shivam and asked him to expand Shivagnanabodham into a comprehensive Agamic work. Arulnandhi Shivam, therefore, enlarged it by introducing a good deal of matter taken from the Agamas and named it Shivagnanasiddhiar. Commentators of Shivagnanasiddhiar refer to seventeen Shai-vagamas which contain truths identical with some of these found in Siddhiar. Arulnandhi supplemented Siddhiar by Irupa-irupahtoo. Our Agamas are thus safe in our own language

* Many Scholars do not accept this origin of Shivagnanabodham.—K. V.

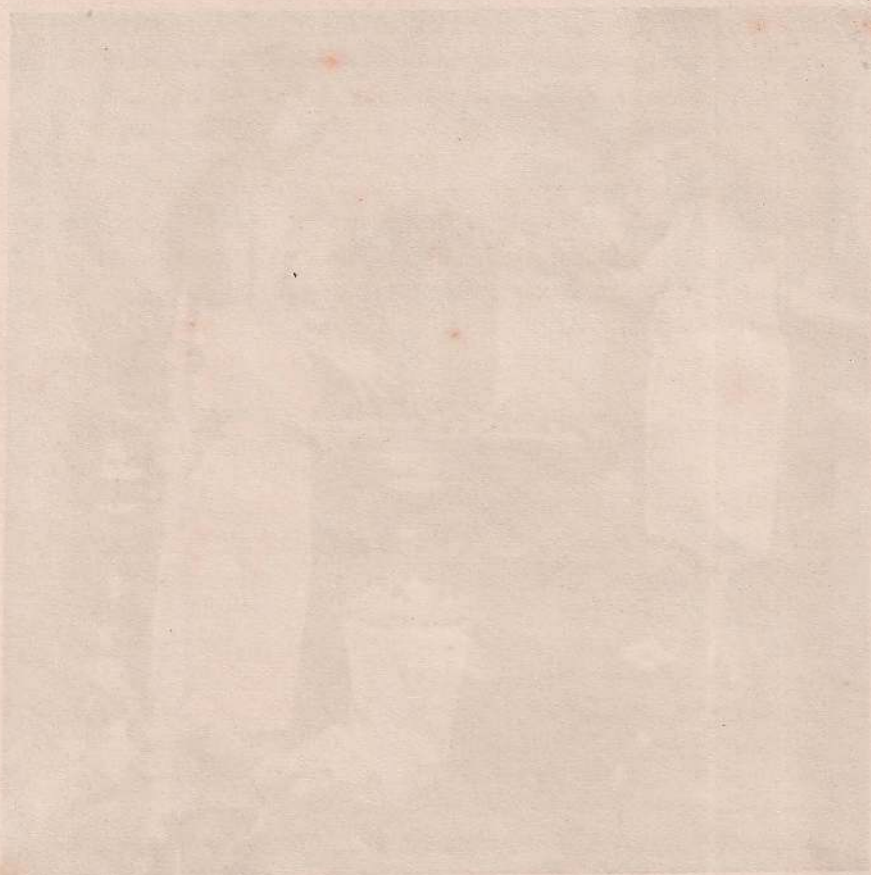
in the works of Meihandar and Arulnandiar. Agamic truths are also found in Devaram. Arulnandhi Sivam's disciple's disciple, Umapathi Sivam, is said to have written eight works such as Shivapragasam and Thiruvardupayan which contain some Agamic truths. Three saints who preceded Meihandar wrote Tiruvunthiar, Tirukalitupadiar and Unmaivilakkam. These fourteen works are now called Meihanda shashtrams. To these may be added Shivadharmothram and Sadashivarupam of which the former is derived from Sravakta Agama and the latter is a translation of a portion of Vatula Agama.

Next in order of time come the Devarams. These were the compositions of Appar, Sambandar and Sundarar and are more voluminous than Thiruvachagam. An anonymous sage has given the headings dealt with by the twenty-five pathigams selected by him, which form the Agasthiar Thevara Thiraddu. Whether other pathikams also speak of a particular philosophic topic we are not in a position to say. Even these surface meanings are of great value to us. But infinitely more valuable than philosophic truths and surface truth is the Grace of God present in them. This is available to every devout singer whether literate or illiterate. It heals him. Just as a patient who does not know the properties or even the names of the ingredients of a medicine is fully benefitted, so a singer who knows neither the philosophic nor the surface meaning of a hymn gets the benefit.

No Shaivite can justify his birth as a Shaivite if he has not studied at least ten pathikams of Thiruvachagam or Devaram; and a Shaivite can be proud of himself if he has studied the whole of Thiruvachagam or about fifty pathikams of Devaram. There are some other saints also, like Pattanathar and Thayumanavar whose hymns are held sacred.



BRAHAMA SRI KUMARASWAMY KURUKKAL OF ATCHUVELY
(our consulting chief priest)
performing a Sanga - Abishekam to
MAHALINGA MOORTHY.



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Worship consists of five steps or elements. The first of these is the freedom from feelings towards things of this world; the second is spiritual contemplation; the third is adoration; the fourth is the offering of mantric flowers and the fifth is the purification of the mind leading to a virtuous life.

In the worship of Parashakti, we contemplate not only God but ourselves also. It is Parashakti, which dwells in us and eventually unites us with God. We cannot therefore think of Her without introducing ourselves. Parashakti is His Love and the thought of Love must include two things. It is therefore essential that in this worship we give a place to ourselves too. This place cannot get beyond the thought of our being the loved ones of Hers. She is the giver of endless bliss which is of greater value to us than mother's milk is to the child. She is, at present, our refuge. She is with us and joins us with God.

In the third form of worship, even the universe cannot be ignored. In this, we contemplate the Adishakti which frees us from the rest of the universe viz. Anava, Karma and Maya. Anava has blinded us, does not allow us to see the truth and has practically taken possession of us. It is Adishakti which is trying to give us sight, to show us the truth and liberate us from Anava. Shivagnanabodham and Siddhiar conjure up the metaphor that the soul is under the influence of savages and believes itself to be a savage; but God in his endless Mercy and at the proper time tells the soul that he is His child and takes it away from savage influences.

The Charya form of worship consists in rendering bodily service in temples, service to devotees and poojah to any one of the well defined images as those of Maheswara,

Vinayaka and Subrahmanya. In the Kriya grade the love is manifested in poojah to the Shiva Lingam. Those in the Charya grade can also worship the Shiva Lingam but cannot perform the poojah. Worship in the Yoga grade is self-control and purely mental. In these three grades the worshipper regards God as different from himself and uses images for worship. In the fourth grade, the worshipper identifies himself with God and finally becomes one with Him, which is the ultimate goal.

Places of Worship :

The home and the temple are the usual places of worship. To a religious man, any place is good enough for worship. Such a man has said, "Think of the Feet of Shiva at all times whether lying, sitting, standing, or walking." With most people, worship at home is short and simple. Immediately after a wash they devote a few minutes to worship. Some sing a few sacred songs. Some others repeat a mantram a hundred times with their minds fixed on God. Some others perform Sandhya Vandanam, which includes the above two items also. A few perform poojah which takes a long time. Just before each meal, most people utter a short prayer. The common practice is to wash the face and hands and to wear Thiru-Neeru with a few repetitions of some mantram. A good many contemplate God on going to bed and on rising from bed.

In the temple, the mind gets most attuned to worship during the poojah which is attended by elevating associations. The temple is equipped with everything necessary for worship and is as superior to the home in the facilities for worship as a school is to home for study.

Of the poojah performed in temples, the most important items are bathing the image (abishekam) and adorning it, making

offerings (naivedyam), waving of lights, offering of flowers and leaves. We bathe God with milk, ghee etc. which symbolise our love, we offer rice and fruits which symbolise the surrender of our mind. Incense and light are intended for the illumination of the soul by Shivagnanam. Of these two, incense is intended to suppress Anava and the light is intended to be the gift of spiritual illumination. The flowers and leaves that we offer are our piety. The camphor light that is waved indicates our becoming one with God. Adoration consists of praises which are generally songs sung by Saints as they are endowed with mystic powers. Worship thus consists of showering our love on God, of fixing the mind on Him, of suppressing Anava, of getting spiritual illumination and thus endeavouring to become one with Him. Love and Gnanam radiate from the image, destroy anavic power and give us bliss and spiritual knowledge. The last item in worship is the most glorious part of it. The worshipper offers to God the fruits of his worship. Since worship is a Karma, it is bound to give the worshipper its fruits, which would be most salutary to him. But the worshipper does not worship for the sake of any reward. He worships God because his love for Him impelled him to worship Him. He worships God for his personal satisfaction, to satisfy his burning desire to worship Him. He would not, therefore, accept any reward for the worship.

But there are others who are not prepared to give up the reward. At the end of the poojah, they even offer worship to Saint Chandeswarar to obtain through him the reward for their poojah. This reward is spiritual illumination or Gnanam. A third class of worshippers have particular object in view and according to the Puranas they can, of course, gain their objects.

Panchaksharam :

The highest glory of Shaivism is the Panchaksharam. Unlike the Sacred Ashes and the temple, it is not available to all. A Shaivite can get it only from a Guru, at a dheeksha. Dheeksha is a ceremony in which Gnanam is given and Malam is destroyed by the Guru. This word is a compound of da (to give) and kshi (to destroy). The Gnanam that is given is the Panchaksharam which literally means five letters. These five letters contain the whole universe of true knowledge. Umapati Shivam says, "The Agamas, the Vedas and other works containing ultimate truths form the five letters." Those who study these five letters will see for themselves the truth of Umapati Shivam's words.

The five letters include (1) Shiva (2) His Grace which unites the soul with Him (3) the soul (4) His Grace which wears out the influence of Malam and (5) the Malam itself. Thus, the Panchaksharam include God, the animate and inanimate universe. Malam includes Anava, Maya and Karma. Panchaksharam not only includes all entities but also shows the relationship in which they stand. The evolution of the soul, its past, present and future are all very clearly pictured in it. The five letters may be arranged in two ways. In one of these, the first letter is the suppressor of Malam and in the other, the first letter is Shiva. The former is intended for those who are worldly-minded. If they meditate on it they will gradually give up worldly-mindedness and become Godly-minded. They will be entitled thereafter to contemplate the second form. The second form leads the Godly-minded to One-ness with God and is hence called Mukti-Panchaksharam. In these two forms of Panchaksharam we see at a glance our essential nature, our own errors, the futility of wallowing in mere worldliness and our reluctance to approach the sparkling, healing and transparent spring

(God's Grace) which is ever with us. The Panchaksharam is really glorious to behold.

The contemplation of Panchaksharam does not end in beholding its glories. It is an image of God and, like other images, acts on the soul. The soul's reactions to it are similar to those that occur during the worship of other images. Besides, it is a power by itself, Mantra - Shakti. To the contemplator, it gives the power to protect himself from the inroads of Anava. The word mantra itself means that which protects those who contemplate it.

The contemplation of Panchaksharam gives a philosophy, a religion and a way of life which could take the contemplation very close to the ultimate goal of Mukti (liberation)

Shaiva Life and Popular Shaivism:

In the last two chapters he sketches the true Shaivite life as an ideal one and contrasts it with the popular beliefs and practices which are false.

A Shaivite is a worshipper of Shiva, the supreme God. The Shaivite must therefore lead a life consonant with the greatness of the God he worships. He has a dignity to maintain. Appar Swami gives a complete picture of Saiva life in a single stanza. He says "we are not bound in fealty to any one; we are not afraid of death; we are free from the torments of hell, any hypocrisy is foreign to us; we are self-respecting; we know no suffering; we bow to nobody; we are ever happy; we know no pain; we are the eternal servants of Him who wears a white earring, who is not subject to any one and Who is the giver of all good". Since we are the eternal servants of Shankara (the giver of bliss),

who is not a servant of any one, we cannot be servants of any one else. Since death comes as a release from this body, when it has become unfit for habitation, we would rather welcome death than fear it. As servants of God, we occupy the highest place in the world and would decline any position offered to us. Says Manickavachagar, "I would decline even the positions occupied by Indra, Vishnu and Bramah."

As to popular Shaivism, Mr. Shivapada Sundaram says, "Popular Shaivism is the religion of those who have no idea of the content of the Shaiva Shastras. Their knowledge of religion consists of Puranic stories and of the religious beliefs current in their midst. They worship God, gods, men, women, giants, devils etc. Most of them wear sacred ashes, attend temple worship and observe fasts without knowing their inner meaning. Their conception of God ranges from that of the Creator of the Universe to that of a doll. Several of these think that the events of their lives in this world are written on their skulls. They concentrate on birth after death and are therefore, keen on performing post-mortem ceremonies. They have great belief in omens and in the chirping of lizards. They are devotees of astrology, which causes them endless suffering.

The misfortune of the ordinary Shaivite is his ignorance of Shaivism. He is a sheep. He says and does what men of his type say and do. Everything novel appeals to him. He has no safe means of distinguishing right from wrong.

At one time there were two distinct religions in Thamilagam. One of these is Shaivism which was the religion of the cultured class. The other was a combination of human worship and devil worship. The Annamar and Nachchimar were men and women of high rank whom their

dependants adored while alive, and worshipped after death. Kaththavirayar was a giant. Madan, Karuppan, Veeran and Periathambiran were devils. The Vairavar of the unrefined class is a preternatural being. A crude form of Kali worship is also practised by this class. These are all beyond the pale of Shaivaism. In the course of time, these two classes of people mixed up, with the result that the ignorant section of the refined class and the more fortunate section of the unrefined class became worshippers of God as well as man and devil." He criticises strongly the worship of Kannaki as a Shakti or even as an incarnation. "The worship of this extraneous being was imposed on the whole of Ceylon by a Sinhalese ruler. Kannaki worship would have been given up on the death of the king who imposed it on them, if it were not for the fact that men of our own religion had been officiating in Kannaki temples!"

He deplores nominal Shaivites who are content to wear sacred ashes mechanically without getting "dheeksha". He comments cynically: "Very few go to temple daily. A fairly good number go once a week, on Mondays or on Fridays. The others attend temples when situations compel them. If a child falls ill, either the father or the mother goes to temple to beg God to cure the child's illness. This request may assume one of three forms (1) It may be a mere request. (2) The request may be accompanied by a gift such as a special pooja or archana. (3) It may also be made with the promise of a gift if the prayer is granted But they must have known to their cost that very often they did not get what they prayed for. They also know that the whole world, including atheists are getting a great many things they desire, without any appeal to God..... God gives only those things which the worshipper actually

needs and which can ultimately help his spiritual progress.....”

“The offer of gifts to God in return for the granting of requests is based on the gross misunderstanding of the attributes of God. First of all, God is perfect and has no needs. He therefore has no need for the gifts of those who make requests. Secondly, He has neither likes nor dislikes. So gifts cannot please him. They also think that God can be flattered by special poojas but that if His dues are not paid He gets displeased and does them harm. These men bring God down to the level of third-rate men.”

He condemns the profane manner in which festivals are held in temples with nautch dances and other amusements. Belief in astrology, sunyam (invoking devil's influence), etc., he regards as degrading and not part of religion. Finally, he appeals :

“Popular Shaivaism must go. Religious education must come. It must reach both young and old. It can easily reach those fortunate youngsters who are studying in Shaivite schools and state schools. Shaivite societies ought to carry religious knowledge to Shaiva children studying in schools of alien faiths. They must also find means of taking the light of religion to the grown-ups. Then alone can Shaivaism shine in all its glory.”



A KUMBABISHEKAM SCENE

Sri Nataraja Moorthy with Ambal and Saint Manickavasagar about to receive Abishekam.

அப்பர் சுவாமிகள் திருத்தாண்டகத்தில் திருக்கேதீச்சரம்.

பூதியணி பொன்னிறத்தர் பூண்நூலர்
பொங்கரவர் சங்கரர் வெண் குழையோர் காதர்
கேதீச்சர மேவினார் கேதாரத்தார்
கெடில வடவதிகை வீரட்டத்தார்
மாதுயரந் தீர்த்தென்னை ய்யயக்கொண்டார்
மழபாடிமேய மழுவாளனார்
வேதிகுடியுளார் மீயச்சூரார்
வீழி மிழலையே மேவினாரே.



திருநாவுக்கரசு நாயனார்

திருவாசகத்தில் திருக்கேதீச்சரம்

“ ஏர்தருமேழ் உலகேத்த எவ்வுருவுந் தன்னுருவாம்
ஆர்கலிகூழ் தென்னிலங்கை அழகமர்வண் டோதரிக்குப்
பேரருளின் பமளித்த பெருந்துறை மேயபிராணைச்
சீரியவா யாற்குயிலே தென்பாண்டி நாடனைக்கூவாய் ”

எனக் குயிற்பத்திலும்,

“ வந்திமை யோர்கள் வணங்கியேத்த மாக்கரு ணைக்கட லாயடியார்
பந்தனை விண்டற நல்குமெங்கள் பரமன் பெருந்துறை ஆதியந்நாள்
உந்து திரைக்கட லைக்கடந்தன் றேங்கு மதிலிலங் கைஅதனிற்
பந்தனை மெல்வீர லாட்கருளும் பரிசறி வாரெம் பிரானுவாரே ”



மாணிக்கவாசக சுவாமிகள்

எனத் திருவார்த்தையிலும் கூறியபடி மண்டோதரி யின் பொருட்டு நிகழ்த்திய திருவிளையாடல் திருக் கேதீச்சரத்திற்குள் நிகழ்ந்திருத்தல் வேண்டுமென வும் அவளுடைய தந்தையாகிய மயன் வாழ்ந்த இடம் மாந்தோட்டமெனவும் சரித்திர ஆராய்ச்சி யறிஞர் ஸ்ரீமான் வ. குமாரசாமிப்பிள்ளையவர்கள் குறிப்பிட்டிருக்கின்றார்கள். இஃது உண்மையாயின் திருக்கேதீச்சரத்தின் தொன்மையும் பெருமையும் எத்தகையனவென யூகித்துக்கொள்ளலாம்.

JAMBUKOLA (Near KANKESANTURAI)

AND

MAHATITTHA (MANTOTA)

AS

PORTS OF ANCIENT CEYLON.

BY B. J. PERERA.

(This is an extract from an Article entitled, "The Foreign Trade and Commerce of Ancient Ceylon-I. The Ports of Ancient Ceylon" contributed by Mr. B. J. Perera to Vol. I. No. 2, of The Ceylon Historical Journal, January, 1952.

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The ports of ancient Ceylon played an important role both in the foreign trade of the Island and in the inter-oceanic commerce between the East and West. Being situated in the middle of the Indian Ocean and to the extreme south of the Indian Peninsula, Ceylon enjoyed a strategic position commanding the sea-routes that linked one side of the ocean with the other. The fleets of Chinese junks carrying silks and ceramic ware to trading stations on the East African coast, and the Arabian vessels which carried the spices of the East Indies to European marts had of necessity to touch at these ports which lay conveniently half-way.

The accounts of Ceylon by foreign traders and travellers on whom we usually have to depend for our information on the foreign trade of the Island in ancient times, have hardly mentioned these ports, and whatever references we get in them are hardly sufficient to construct a connected story of

their development. Fortunately however there is a wealth of references in the Pali chronicles and in Sinhalese literature, which supplemented here and there by inscriptions, enable us to gain a glimpse of these ports, their development and organisation.

Jambukola and Mahatittha are the two ports most frequently mentioned in the *Mahavamsa* in its account of the earliest period of the Island's history. It is not possible to determine when exactly these ports came into use, but considering their position in relation to India, we may presume that they were in use long before the Aryan colonisation of the Island. The *Jatakas* contain a number of references to voyages to Ceylon by North Indian merchants. But none of these works mention by name any of the ports at which they landed. From the account of a voyage given in the *Valahassa Jataka* we may presume that at least one of these ports was situated on the north-western coast of the Island.

Jambukola, identified as the modern Kankesanturai, served as the port to North India especially to Tamralipti in Bengal which in its turn served as the port for Ceylon. In the pre-Christian era it was used exclusively for communications with Bengal with which Ceylon was at that time so intimately connected. It was from this port that the envoys of King Devanampiyatissa set out for the Court of Emperor Asoka. It was also at this port that the sapling of the Sacred Bo-tree was landed. From a reference in the *Mahavamsa* we know that it was connected with Anuradhapura by a highway. "King Devanampiyatissa did cause the whole of the road from the northern gate even to Jambukola to be made ready." After the time of King Devanampiyatissa, Jambukola appears to have declined in

importance. The distance of Jambukola from Anuradhapura is twice the distance of Mannar from Anuradhapura, and therefore Mannar gave better access to the capital than Jambukola. Jambukola is however occasionally mentioned in the Pali commentaries and Sinhalese works as the port of embarkation and landing for voyages of a religious nature. Perhaps the Jambukola Vihare built at the site where the Sacred Bo-tree was landed in the Island was specially venerated and included in the itinerary of Buddhist devotees both from Ceylon and India.

Mahatittha is the first port to be mentioned by name in the *Mahavamsa*. It was at this port that the wives for Vijaya and his followers landed from South India. An analysis of the references show that this port was used chiefly for contact with South India. Its close proximity to South India and to the Sinhalese capital Anuradhapura made it an important port from the earliest period of Ceylon history. Since the major exports of Ceylon were all royal monopolies the port nearest to the capital would have become the chief port of the Island.

Although Mahatittha is first mentioned in connection with the landing of Vijaya's second wife there is no doubt that it was used as a port by the Tamils long before the Aryan settlement in Ceylon. The existence of the temple of Thiruketheeswaram the origin of which is not covered by any existing records is an indication of the antiquity of this port. Indeed Mahatittha is the only port in the Island which can be called a buried city. Today the site of the port presents a vast mount of piled up ruins on which coins and beads are laid bare by every shower of rain. The site of the ancient town itself appears to have covered an area of about 300 acres. One of its main roads recently excavated is almost 40 ft. wide.

The ruins of Roman pottery, coins and articles of foreign origin found here, are the first definite evidence to prove that Mahatittha was a great port in the early centuries of the Christian era. Next we have the references in the *Sangam* Literature of the Tamils which describe Mahatittha as a great port. Mahatittha played an important role in the political history of the Island. Almost every invading Tamil army landed at this port, and the invaders could always count on the large colony of Tamils settled there for help.

Although Mahatittha was generally used for intercourse with South India there are a few instances of voyages from North India to this port. When the Tooth Relic was brought to Ceylon in the 4th century the Kalinga Prince who brought it landed at this port. The Pali *Dathavamsa* does not mention this port by name but merely calls it the Lankapattana. Perhaps its author was averse to give this port, which had such strong Hindu elements the honour of being the spot where the sacred paladium was landed. Also it is interesting to note that the *Daladavamsa* written about the 12th century uses the most disparaging terms in its reference to the port.

Since Mahatittha was the port for South India there was a strong South Indian element here. Besides the ancient temple of Thiruketheeswaram whose origins are veiled in the mists of antiquity there was also another temple named Rajaraja Isvarattu Mahadeva, so called after the Chola conqueror of Ceylon of the 11th century. When the Kalinga Prince bearing the Tooth Relic landed at this port it was at a Hindu temple that he took shelter for the night. The importance attached to this temple by the Cholas is seen by the change of the name Mahatittha to Raja - raja - puram

during the period of their occupation of the northern part of the Island. A Chola inscription mentions still another temple named Tiruviramisvaram Udaiyar at this port. Mahatittha was also held in veneration by the Sinhalese and it was considered a heinous crime to slaughter cattle here. Mannar naturally was also centre of internal trade. We have an reference in the *Saddharmalankaraya* to a trader of this port going to the interior of the country for the purpose of trade.

Judging from the regular references to this port in literary works belonging to different periods we may infer that it continued to be the chief port for Raja-rata up to the end of the 12th century. There is not the least doubt that the great emporium of trade referred to by Cosmas was Mahatittha. The testimony of Cosmas relating to the importance of Mahatittha is attested by finds of different types and forms of pottery from Rome, Arabia and China. Sundaramurthi Nayanar, the Hindu hymnist of the 6th century mentions it as a port with many ships. The *Hudud Al Alam* written about the year 982 A. D. states "there is a large city called Muvaz; it is situated at the extremity which lies towards Hindustan. Whatever this Island produces is carried to that city and therefrom to the cities of the world."

In the 12th century King Parakrama Bahu I assembled many ships at Mahatittha to launch an invasion of the Pandya Kingdom. King Nissanka Malla in one of his inscriptions claims to have built an alms-hall at Mhatittha. This indicates the continued importance of this port in the 12th Century inspite of the transfer of the capital from Anuradhapura to Polonnaruwa. The port also figures in the campaigns of the King Parakrama Bahu II and is referred to as an stronghold of the Tamils. One of the latest

references to it is found in an ancient glossary to the *Sasadavata* where it is mentioned as the landing place of a South Indian army. By the 15th century however, Mahatittha appears to have ceased to be an important port. The *Kokila Sandesa* written in the reign of King Parakrama Bahu VI in the 15th century in giving an description of the important places along the western coast of the Island hardly refers to Mahatittha. The rise of Colombo as the chief port of Ceylon after the abandonment of Raja - rata and the shifting of the capital to Jayavardenapura - Kotte contributed to the decline of Mahatittha which had been the most important port of Ceylon for fifteen centuries. There appears to have been a revival of the port in the years prior to the arrival of the Portuguese for Queyroz gives Mantota in the list of the ports of the Island. In fact Mantota is given as one of the kinglets into which the Island was divided on the arrival of the Portuguese.

Among the lesser ports mentioned in the chronicles was Uratota (modern Kayts). This port appears to have been frequented by foreign merchants. An inscription found at Nainativu mentions this port. It is also mentioned in the *Pujavaliya* as one of the places fortified by Magha the Kalingan invader in the 12th century.

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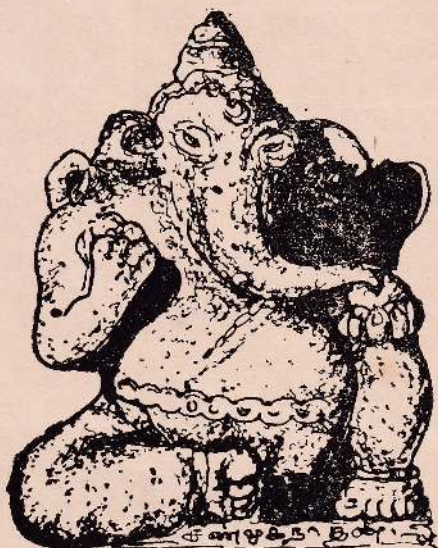
Trincomalee was another port of the *Mahavamsa* period. The chronicle states that Panduvasdeva landed at the mouth of the Mahakandara river. The commentary on the *Mahavamsa* gives Gokanna as the name of the spot where he landed. Although Geiger suggests that the Mahakandara river was a stream to the north of Mahatittha, it is clear from the account of the commentary that the Mahakandara river was none other than the Mahaveliganga. Later on in the same

chapter the *Mahavamsa* states that Baddhakaccayana landed at Gonagamaka. Neither Geiger nor Malalasekera in his *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names* has identified this place. There is no doubt that the Gokanna of the earlier passage and Gonagamaka refer to the same place. Gona and Gokanna in Sinhalese and Pali respectively mean "deer". Thus it is clear that the commentary has given the Pali and Sinhalese forms of the same name in two different places in the same chapter. The identification of Gonagamaka or Gokanna with the present Trincomalee is not difficult. The name Trincomalee consists of three different words. "Tiru" and "Malai" in Tamil mean "holy" and "hill" respectively, and "Kona" is none other than the Tamil rendering of the Sinhalese "gona." The *Vayu Purana* refers to this port. Like Mahatittha on the western coast Trincomalee appears to have been a centre of Hinduism. King Mahasena built a Buddhist vihare here after first destroying a Hindu devale which existed on the spot. Other references in the *Culavamsa* connects this place with magic. An inscription of Jatavarmen Vira Pandya claims that this king planted the Pandya flag with the double fish emblem on Konamalai.

Pallavavanka, identified with Palvakki by Codrington was the port from which Parakrama Bahu launched his invasion of Burma in the 12th century. Since the term "Vanka" can be applied to a bay in Sinhalese, Codrington's identification of this port with Palvakki which is situated in a bay appears to be correct. Although this is the only reference to Pallavavanka, there is no doubt that this was a port of some importance as it would not have been used as a base for an invasion if it did not already have the facilities for the launching of an invasion.

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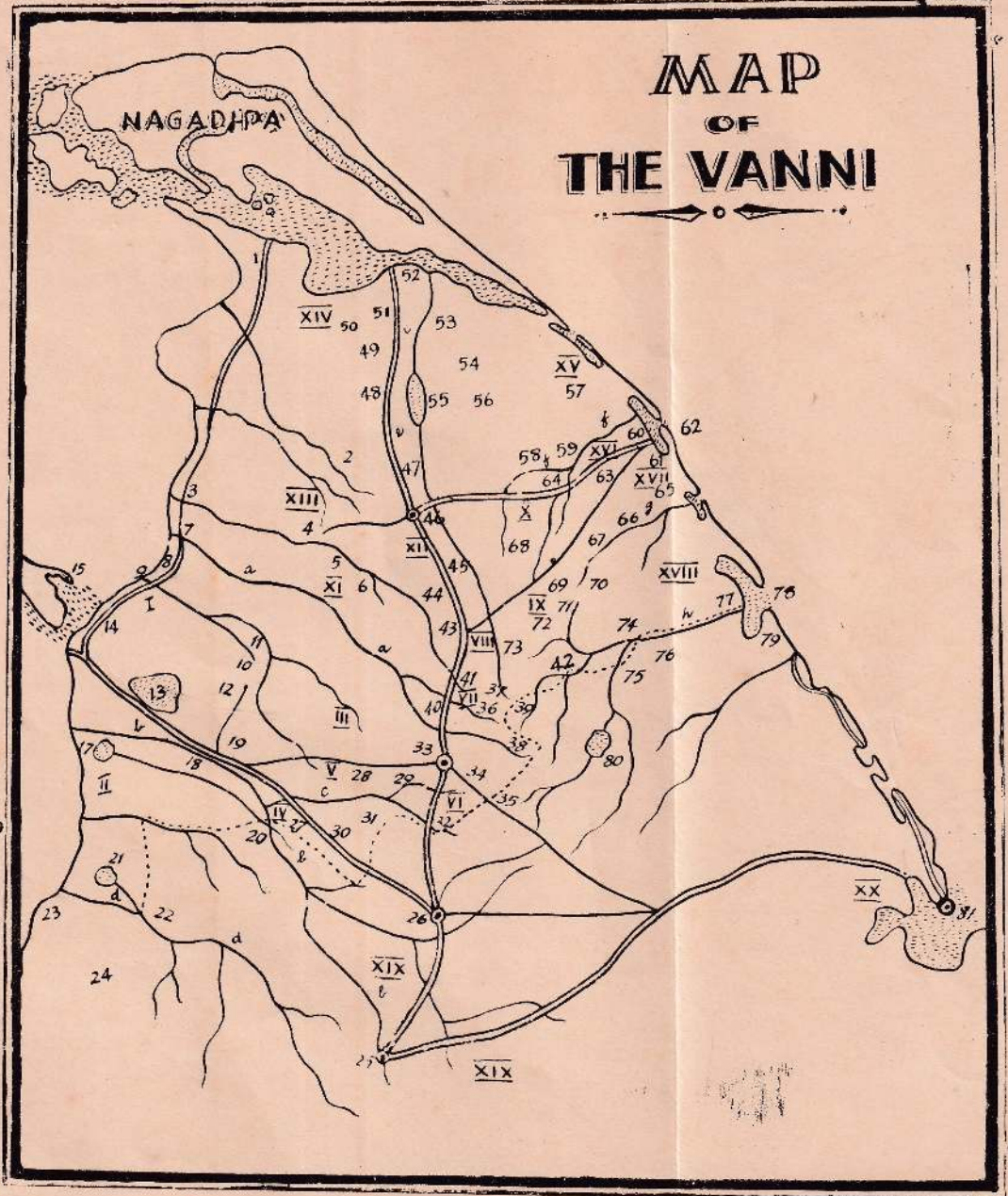
We have very little information on the internal organization of these ports. An inscription at the Vishnu Devale at Dondra belonging to King Parakrama Bahu II gives interesting information on the administration of the port. An inscription found at Godavaya datable to the 1st or 2nd century refers to the grant of the taxes collected there to the vibare at the place. An inscription from Mahatittha refers to royal offices in charge of the collection of taxes at this port. The Nandiya Vastu of the *Saddharmalankaraya* states that the king appointed a royal official for the collection of taxes at Mahatittha. Besides the collection of taxes these officials may have been charged with the welfare of the foreign merchants arriving at this port. According to Cosmas when Sopatrus the Roman merchant arrived at this port he was received and conducted to the king by the custom house officials. The more important ports were cosmopolitan places with communities of Arabs, Jews, Romans, Persians, Chinese and Indians. These foreigners were well treated by the king and were allowed to practice their religion without let or hindrance. Abu-Zaid refers to the religious tolerance of the king and to the settlements of Jews and Manicheans. Sometimes there was thuggery at the port and the kings were not always able to keep these unlawful elements in check. Abu Zaid describes in detail the manner in which the rich merchants were kidnapped by Indian robbers in the market place.....



Sketch drawn by S. Sanmuganathan, Assistant Archaeological Commissioner, of the image of Pillaiyar found at the Temple site probably of Pallava or earlier Period.

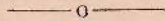


MAP OF THE VANNI



MAP
OF
THE VANNI

VANNI AND THE VANNIAS



(The following are extracts from a learned brochure of the same name by historian C. S. Navaratnam the author of "Tamils and Ceylon" strung together with Thiruketheeswaram as the centre piece—K. V.)

Geography :

Vanni was the name given to the northern country between the Jaffna Peninsula and the Nuwarakalawiya District. Before it acquired the name Vanni, it seems to have been known as "Adankapattu". It stretched from Trincomalee on the east to Mannar on the west and consisted of Tennamaravadi, Mulliyavalai, Karunaval Pattu, Panankamam, Perunkalai Pattu and Musali Pattu which included lands as far as Kudiramalai and a portion of Cheddikulam. The extent of the Vanni may be about 3000 square miles.

The coast that surround these districts rise gradually from the shore towards the interior. In the Mullaitivu District high rocks are found as at Kurunturmalai, Kumpakannanmalai and Otiyamalai. Though the coastal areas are sandy and saline, various types of very rich soil are found inland. Tunukkai is a region of black fertile soil of about sixteen square miles. The lands in the Vavunnikulam area, which are situated in the Mannar District and to the south of the Tunukkai Division, are the most fertile tracts in the Jaffna and Mannar districts. There are no mountains in the Vanni districts to ensure a perennial supply of water for the cultivation of crops, but fresh-water surface springs flow out at Mulliyavalai, Tannyuttu and at Kumarapuram.

There are many rain fed rivers in the Vanni which go dry during the dry season, but innumerable reservoirs make the area fertile and fit for cultivation in all seasons. Moreover,

well-planned Irrigation Schemes brought water into this area from the hills of the south—chief among them, still in use, are the Malwattu Oya and Padaviya Schemes.

Some of the pre-Christian tanks of the Vanni are the Giants' Tank, Vavunikulam and Pavatkulam. Tanks of the early Christian era are Periyakulam, Mamadu, Olumadu, Kanagarayankulam and Pandarakulam.

The Giants' Tank which no chronicle claims for any king of Ceylon is an old tank whose construction is lost in antiquity. Tradition ascribes the building of the tank to the Yakkas. Parker has attributed its construction to a pre-Christian era. The tank has a very long bund of 15 miles and covers an area of six thousand four hundred acres. A stone dam 90 feet thick was built across the river Aruvi Aru in order to divert the water to the tank by means of an excavated channel (Allavakka). In 1739 Governor Van Imhoff tried to restore the tank, but it proved too difficult and he had to abandon it. In 1897 the Public Works Department repaired the breaches in the bund and restored the ancient channel. The tank is now the fourth largest artificial lake in the world.

Another pre-Christian tank is Vavunikulam. It was in existence during the time of Dutugemunu. The construction of this tank is assigned to king Elala by Parker. Its original name was Pili Vapi because it was formed by raising a long embankment across the valley of a stream now known as Pali River.

Another pre-Christian tank is Pavatkulam which is of the same age as Vavunikulam. It has five valve-pits which is an uncommon feature among the tanks of Ceylon. It is one of those tanks that has no corresponding Sinhalese name. This fact alone indicates that Tamils from remote antiquity

have been the permanent inhabitants of those districts. King Elala could not have held sway over a people different from his own for a period of forty-four years, if there had not been a permanent Tamil population of sufficient strength to support him. The late Mr. H. W. Codrington wrote: "There was a steady stream of immigration from South India through the port of Mahatittha with the result that the neighbouring country became entirely Tamil. It is noteworthy that while many Sinhalese place names remain more or less disguised in the Jaffna Peninsula and in the Eastern Province, now Tamil, this is not the case in the country behind Mannar; there these names are fully Tamil".

We learn from the Mahavamsa that in the sixth century B. C., before the coming of Vijaya, Kandamadanam near Rameswaram was ruled by Culodara, a nephew of Mahodara, ruler of Nagadipa. It means that there was close intercourse between South India and North Ceylon. Considering the intimate connection that existed between the two countries, it is but likely that the Tamils, the nearest neighbours in the continental coasts who were already a prosperous seafaring people of south Asia, might have established trading centres in the Island as Matota and Kudiramalai in close proximity to the continent. When these ports grew in wealth and influence, the new settlers in order to meet the food problem of a growing population might have constructed stupendous tanks and irrigation works based on the models of their native country. To satisfy their spiritual needs they seem to have dedicated temples to Lord Siva at Thiruketheeswaram. It is therefore that we find the most ancient tanks in Ceylon situated in the north and in the north-western coasts of Ceylon that face South India.

Further, the Mahavamsa says that there was a Brahman chief engineer Jotiya in Anuradhapura in the reign of

Pandukabhaya. Mihintale Rock No. 2 inscription says: "According to the supply of water in the lake, the same shall be distributed to the lands of the Vihara in the manner formerly regulated by Tamils." The Tamils who were very early acquainted with tank building should have been the first builders of tanks in Ceylon and should have been the first to introduce the use of iron, for these stupendous irrigation schemes would not have been possible without iron tools.

Archaeology of the Vanni:

Vanni is the land of spectacular ruins of huge tanks and of breached bunds. Ruins of Hindu temples stand side by side with dilapidated dagobas. Sometimes on an embankment Lord Ganesha, the God of Learning and Wisdom, can be seen seated on a raised platform watching over the fertile plains below. In another spot in the jungle can be seen the statue of the Great Master silently reminding his devotees of the great Middle Path. Occasionally among such surroundings would stand the ruins of the proud residences of the Vanniya chiefs narrating their thrilling story of a thousand years of independence.

The western division of the Vanni (Mannar District) seems to have been once thickly populated, for there are many abandoned tanks and neglected water channels. Of the many ancient dams Kurinchakulam Tekkam on the Kal Aru and another Tekkam on the Per Aru are of importance.

The historic port of Matota with its celebrated temple of Thiruketheeswaram is in the above district. The antiquity of this port goes back beyond the beginnings of Ceylon history. The Portuguese to satisfy their religious zeal destroyed this venerable shrine. After their defeat in the first battle of Jaffna in 1560, they built a four-sided fort at Mannar overlooking the Strait to

ward off the attacks of the Tamils. It was later rebuilt by the Dutch.

A few miles south of Matota stands the village of Arippu on the Gulf of Mannar over-looking the pearl banks. Arippu meaning a sieve in Tamil derives its name from the sifting of pearls which was carried on there. Apart from its association with the pearl fishery it is remarkable for it is here that Robert Knox regained his freedom which he lost at Kottiyar in 1660. One mile south of this village are the ruins of a Dutch fort. A mile from this are the impressive ruins of the building which Frederick North, the first British Governor of Ceylon built to supervise the pearl fisheries.

Some stone pillars mark a shrine at Kombutukki between Vidattativu and Iluppaikadavai. Further north near Vellankulam is an Aiyandar temple with elephant as its vehicle (nandhi). Perhaps this may be the temple mentioned in Kokila Sandesa.

There are ruins of buildings at Chinnachcheddikulam, Cheddikulam, Palampiddi and Venayankulam. Cheddikulam was the seat of Vanniya chiefs. Mr. J. P. Lewis basing his facts on some ancient Tamil manuscripts states that Viravarayan Chetty, a merchant of Madura together with some Paravars were wrecked off the western coasts of the Mannar District about A. C. 247. He and his followers later settled in Cheddikulam and constructed a "keni" known as Vavvalai and erected a temple to Lord Santhirasegaram about A. C. 289. The Muslims who are in the area claim to be the descendants of the Arab traders who first came to Mannar.

In Parangi Cheddikulam the numerous descendants of the Portuguese could be distinguished by their colour, but they wear the dress of the inhabitants of the area.

Madhu is one of the most famous places of pilgrimage. There is a tradition among the Catholics that the original home

of the statue at Madhu was Mantai and when the Dutch took possession of the town some Catholics carried with them the statue of Our Lady and emigrated to Marutha-Madhu which was then on the borders of the Kandyan territory and had a custom-house for the goods that came into the king's territories. Soon other Catholic emigrants from Jaffna took shelter in the Vanni. All these settlers lived under the patronage of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary. Later on, an annual festival was established in 1870 to be celebrated on the 2nd of July.

Traces of ancient roads from Anuradhapura to Matota and to Jaffna can be noticed in Kilakkumulai South. There is an ancient bridge at Olukkulam.

Panankamam was one of the celebrated headquarters of the Vanniya chieftains. In this Pattu there is an absence of Buddhist remains. It shows that Hindu Tamils have been in occupation of the district from time immemorial.

There are some ruins in the jungle north-west of Vavunikulam. It may possibly be the remains of a town. Hindu temples dedicated to Siva and Vishnu were found among these ruins by Mr. J. P. Lewis about seventy years ago.

In 1885 a very important event occurred at Mullaitivu where a labourer in a coconut estate discovered silver puranas numbering 51 plaques in a well whose sides were ringed with earthenware cylinders. The well was similar to the wells discovered at the Thiruketheeswaram temple site. This discovery reveals the antiquity of Dravidian settlements in this area.

According to an accepted tradition in Jaffna, Magadhese Buddhists sought shelter in Ceylon during the time of Prince Vijaya. As the Tamil Saivites were living in Matota and in Kudiramalai districts, Vijaya and his Buddhists founded the city Tammana Nuwara, down south near Puttalam. It is interesting

to note that the port of Puttalam in ancient days was called Kalyanaturai Mukam (port of marriage) for it seems to be the spot where Vijaya married Kuveni.

From the archaeology of the Northern Province we are led to infer that Ceylon was first colonized from South India and that a Dravidian culture existed in Ceylon long before the coming of Vijaya. We are on firm ground, when we say that the history of Ceylon first began in the north, and moved later to other parts of Ceylon.

Vanniyas:

Of the great Fire Races—Agnikulas that inhabited South India in ancient times, the Vanniya was an illustrious non-Aryan warrior tribe who claimed a regal descent to establish their superiority of birth. They may be acknowledged as the Rajputs of South India.

Various explanations could be given to the coming of the Vanniyas to Ceylon. Firstly that may be the remnants of those Tamil armies that were periodically brought to this country either by aspirants to the throne of Lanka or by invading princes and chiefs. The second is the one given by the Vaipava Malai, "In the reign of king Pandu about A. C. 436 a chief from India called Kulakodan came over and repaired certain shrines, and the king sent an army against him but after coming to an amicable arrangement Kulakodan completed his buildings at Trincomalee, and dedicated large tracts of land with their revenues to the use of these temples. He sent for Vanniyas to the coast of India and placed them over these tracts with strict orders to cultivate them for the benefit of the temple. There came a band of fifty nine families from Pandya country and they rapidly increased in numbers. Seven chieftains were selected from among the Vanniyas to exercise sovereign power, each within his own

territory." The descendants of these chieftains continued to exercise like power, and the territories over which they ruled came to be called Vanni. The people who inhabited these districts were known as Vanniyas.

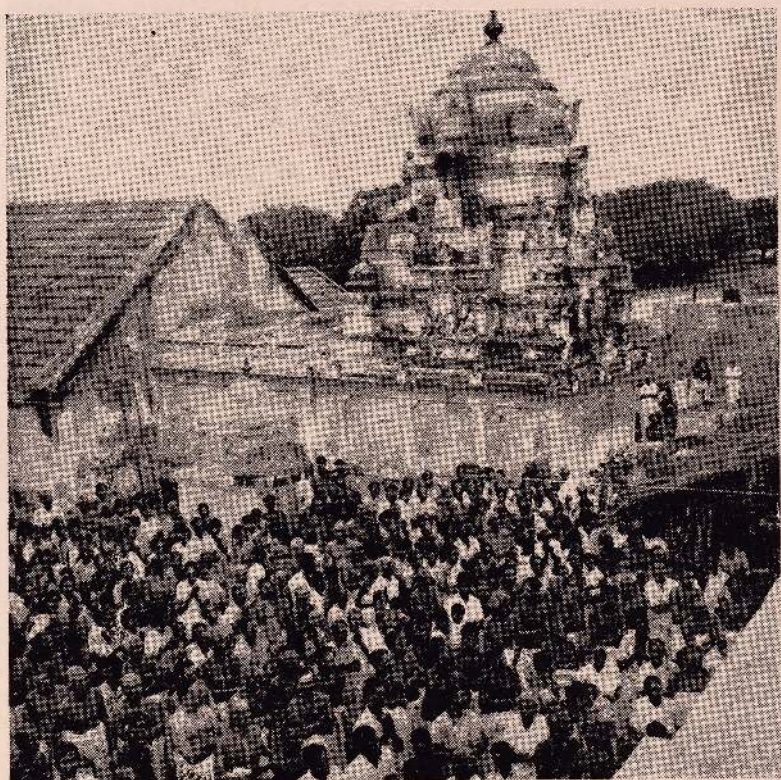
The Konesar Kalveddu, a memorable work endorses the statement of the Vaipava Malai. The Vaiya Padal though not a critical work gives the tradition of the peaceful colonization of the Vanni districts by the different tribes from South India.

In the Sinhalese chronicles the name Vanni had a greater application by the inclusion of the Nuwarakalawiya District also known as Maha Vanni. In later times the name Vanniya was adopted as a title of distinction for any Sinhalese, or Veddah, or Mukkuwa chieftain. When Vellalas assumed the chieftainship of a principality, they were known as Vanniyanar. Nachchiar was a respectful form of address for Vanni princesses. This is a corruption of Nayakiyar the feminine gender of Nayakanar.

Whatever may be the interpretation of the advent of the Vanniyas and the colonists that settled in the Vanni districts, it is a fact that the northern districts known as Uttaradesa in Sinhalese chronicles were inhabited by the Vanniyas from a very early date.

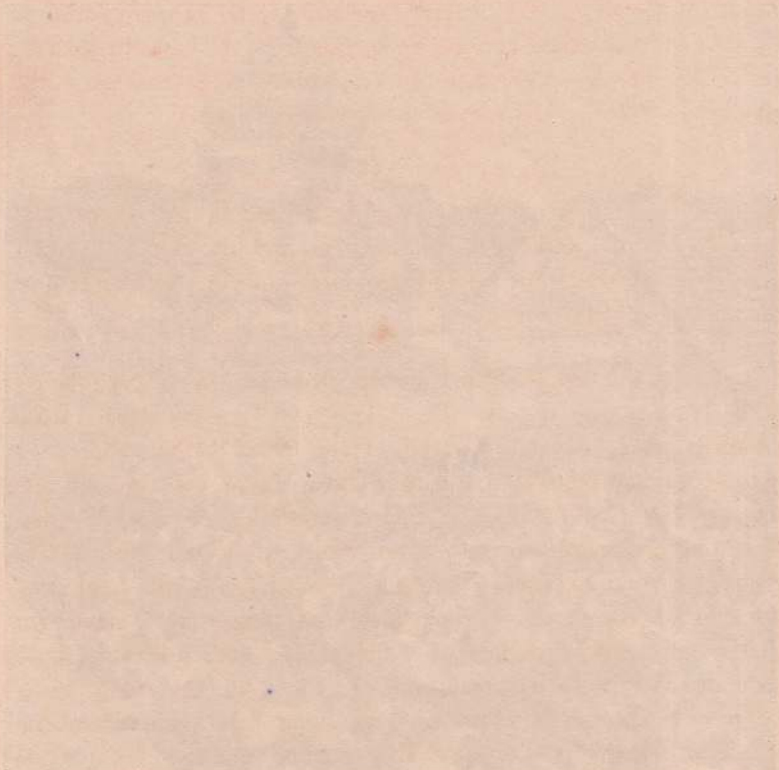
Deities of the Vanni:

Throughout the interior of Ceylon, Aiyandar (Tamil) or Aiyana (Sinh) is considered a forest god who guards travellers in the forests. He presides over tanks which are supposed to be under his special protection. He is worshipped by the villagers on all occasions in drought, in sickness and in all agricultural operations. When a tank fills and is about to spill, the elders in Sinhalese villages sometimes assemble and perform "Mutti Mangalaya" or the pot Ceremony to God Aiyana.



A KUMBABISHEKAM SCENE.

The devotees are watching a ceremony in the Subramaniam Shrine (not in the picture). The Vimanam in the background is over the existing shrine of Swami (Athimoolam). The little temple below is that of Chandeswarar in which a new image of Chandeswarar was installed on this occasion.



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The worship of this god seems to have been introduced from South India at a very early period. His proper name is "Kai-yanar" so called because he sprung from the hand of Vishnu. He is known as Ayyappan in Travancore. His emblem is the shepherd's crook. His seat is in the Western Ghats.

Temples dedicated to this deity are in many parts of the Vanni. One famous Aiyandar temple as mentioned earlier was between Mannar and Jaffna. The horse and the elephant are his vehicles. At Madampe where there is an ancient Aiyandar temple his steed is very prominent.

One of the first Buddhist shrines founded in Anuradhapura is the Isurumuniya rock temple. Before it was converted to a vihara it was a devale. Carved in the rock is the relief of a dignified personage seated in a royal pose. Some call this figure a warrior, but in all details the figure resembles the god Aiyandar. For in all images of this deity the figure is seated with elbow resting on a raised knee. Another peculiarity in the images of Aiyandar is the absence of the "kiridam" the conical headwear that usually adorns the images of the higher gods of the Hindu pantheon. In this representation of the god, the deity has a horse, the shepherd's crook, in his hand and below are the figures of elephants who probably are his vehicles. In a panel below is represented presumably his wife who carries a flower in her left hand. All these pointers clearly show that the figure is not a representation of a warrior but the image of Aiyandar.

The serpent-cult which was prevalent among the people of Malabar later became popular in Ceylon. The early Nagas built temples for its worship. Ruins of temples to the five-headed cobra are found at Matavuvaittakulam and at Kurunturkulam. The annual festival to Nagathambiran at Putur attracts many thousands of people from all parts of the Vanni.

In the cult of Pattini or Kannakai, the so-called guardian goddess of Ceylon, is more popular in the Island than in the country of its origin, India. She is the protector of the people from epidemics like small-pox, chicken-pox, etc. Though Pattini is a Hindu goddess from its inception, she is today venerated by the Sinhalese Buddhists with great pomp and ceremony.

To the ancient shrine of Vattappalai dedicated to this goddess many thousands of pilgrims congregate for the annual festival from all parts of the Tamil-speaking provinces. Another shrine to Kannakai is at Kunchu Parantan which is also a popular one.

Tradition ascribes that a temple for Kannakai was at Madhu before the coming of the Portuguese. The popularity of the "Lady of the Holy Rosary" among Hindus may possibly be attributed to the age-long veneration of Kannakai in that locality, for one mother cult has given place to another. This tradition is endorsed by Mr. Ievers in his "Manual of the North-Central Province", as follows: "St. Mary's Church at Madhu is considered by the Buddhists and a great many of the Tamil pilgrims who resort there as the Temple of Pattini - Amma (Amman Kovil)."

Allied to the worship of Kannakai the veneration of the seven virgins (Nachchimar) was also prevalent in the Vanni districts. The cult first originated in South India and later found its way to the Tamil areas of Ceylon. The ruins of temples to these deities are found at Mannakandal between Odduchuddan and Putukuddiruppu.

Lord Ganesha is the popular deity of the agricultural Vellalas, for he is the guardian of their crops. Ruins of temples dedicated to this God are found in almost all parts of the Vanni districts. He is venerated by the Sinhalese Buddhists who

worship him more for success in the material world than for spiritual light. Until very recently there was an image of Lord Ganesha in front of the Bo - tree at Anuradhapura to which it has been the practice of Sinhalese Buddhists to pay their homage with the offerings of milk - rice as the Tamil Hindus still do. He is supposed to be the heavenly guardian of the Bo - tree and of Anuradhapura.

Ancient shrines dedicated to the worship of Shiva are Thiruketheeswaram near Mannar, Thanthontryeeswaram at Odduchuddan and Asuvagiri near Kudiramalai. According to a South Indian inscription another temple to Shiva seems to have been at Matota by the name of Thiruvirameswara Udaiya Mahadevan Kovil. Other important shrines to Lord Shiva though not very ancient are Uruthirapuram, Kovil Kadu near Vavunikulam and Kachchilamadu. As mentioned earlier there was one temple at Cheddikulam founded in the third century A. C.

Even in ancient Anuradhapura, Siva worship was prevalent. When Devanampiya Tissa marked the boundaries of Anuradhapura he had to pass a shrine belonging to a Brahman. In 1893 the archaeological survey of Anuradhapura revealed the presence of temples to Lord Shiva in that ancient city. A coterie of Hindu shrines and appurtenant buildings were discovered between Jetawanarama and Wijayarama monastery. In two Shiva Devalas the granite lingams were unearthed "in situ". Major Forbes after visiting Anuradhapura in 1828 wrote: "The only place clear of jungle was in front of the Maha Vihara (great temple) where a shady tree occupied the centre of a square and a stone pillar, fourteen feet high, stood beside the figure of a bull cut in granite revolving on a point." Recently a large statue of Nataraja of the Pallava or earlier period was unearthed at Anuradhapura. All these

seem to be the remains of a shrine dedicated to Shiva. The stone pillar and the bull seems to be the flag-staff that is usually present in Saivite temples beside the "nandhi" (vehicle).

Besides these deities, the Vanniyas have been worshipping Vairavar, Vishnu and Kali. A great shrine to Kali was in Anuradhapura.

Thus it will be seen how from very early times the culture of South India influenced Ceylon and her people. The history of the Ceylon Tamils would be incomplete without the thrilling history of the Vanniyas who for more than a thousand years were the rulers of the Vanni districts and the custodians of all that are great in the Tamils and in their national culture.

EXCAVATIONS AT THIRUKETHEESWARAM

BY

S. Sanmuganathan, Conservation Assistant

(Appendix 1 of Report on the Archaeological Survey of Ceylon for 1950.)

Mantai in the Mannar District is the ancient Mahatitha (Sin; Matota), the principal sea-port of Ceylon when Anuradhapura was the capital of the Island. There are frequent references to Mahatitha in the chronicle that it was flourishing from the earliest historical period.

The walls and double moats of the ancient city can still be traced in the site.

Archaeological investigations were carried out on the site in 1887 by Boake and by A. M. Hocart in 1925 - 28. The results of Hocart's work could not be published in adequate form as he had to relinquish his post as Archaeological Commissioner due to ill-health in 1929.

The ancient Saiva shrine of Mahatitha called Thiruketeeswaram is referred to in Tamil devotional hymns dating from the 7th century A. D. The Pali Dathavamsa also testifies to the existence of a Brahmenical shrine at the site in ancient days.

Further excavations commenced in April 18th 1950, and is in progress. An ancient road almost forty feet wide from the Eastern gate is located. Running parallel to it is another ancient road narrower in width. On either side of these roads there are vestiges of buildings. The road from the eastern gate leads to a building, probably a temple of a later period. No definite date can be assigned to it until further investigations are carried out. However at this spot a "THIRTHAKAL" is found which fits into pieces that are lying around the modern temple. A damaged lingam, one of the largest found in Ceylon, is said to have been found in this spot some forty years ago. Further excavations at this site would reveal the nature and use of this building.

A pottery rimmed well or soakage pit and two stone lined wells have been located. The stone well 3'-0" in diameter has been successfully dug 32'-0" below the present surface up to water level. This has yielded some interesting pottery types and fauna bones which are receiving study.

Considerable types and forms of pottery from Rome, Arabia and China have also been found. Among them are Arretine pottery which should be a source for dating the strata.

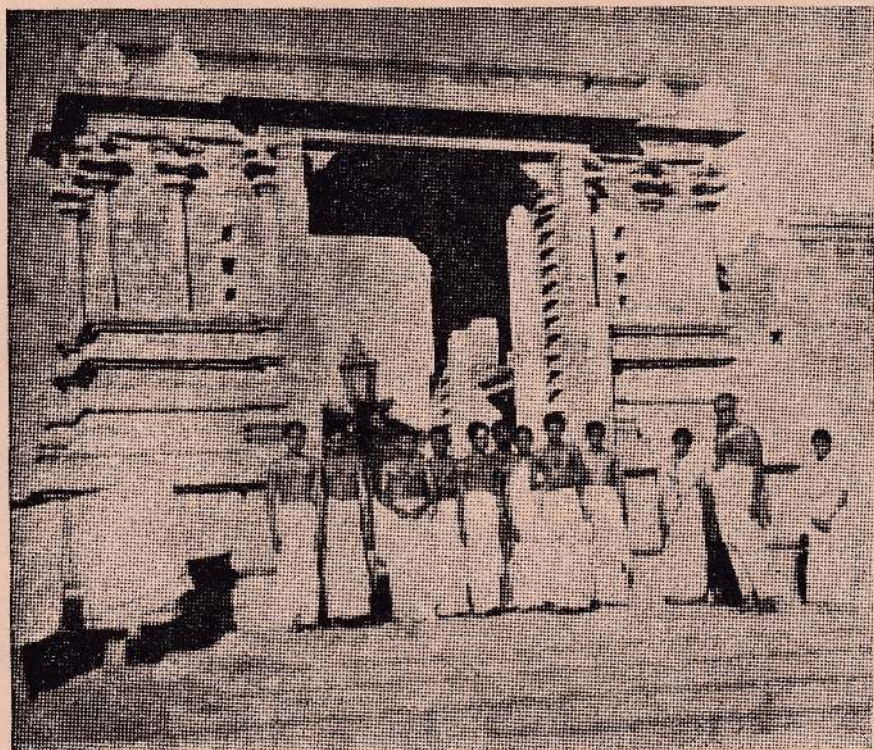
Outside the city walls some burials were located and excavated. One of these pits revealed a full skeleton in situ with associated pottery. Dr. P. K. Chanmugam, Professor of Anatomy of the University of Ceylon visited the site and exhumed the remains and brought it to the University for comparative study. Further skulls and bones from the neighbouring pits were also collected and sent to the University.

Beads of considerable variety have also been found. A systematised study of the pottery and small finds will take time for further investigations.

An object of great interest is a small toy ivory chariot drawn by four horses. It has two ten spoked wheels joined together with an axle and hub. The semi-circular basket or body acting as a guard on the front rests on the axle. The pole attached to the axle is in the centre between the two pairs of horses. At the end of the pole is a yoke which rests right across the neck connecting the four horses.

Owing to climatic conditions and lack of water, excavations will be terminated in the near future and continued next for further period of three months.

[The late Mr. S. Sanmuganathan, Assistant Archaeological Commissioner has done a great service to Hindu Culture by the successful way in which he has conducted the excavations at the Ancient Temple at Thiruketheeswaram, as is seen from the official report of the operations published above—K. V.]



RAJA GOPURAM

NEW ENTRANCE TO THE TEMPLE UNDER CONSTRUCTION,
WITH SOME UNDER-GRADUATES.

“ The Temple of Thiruketheeswaram rivalled the glories of Rameswaram on the Indian side. But Thiruketheeswaram standing in the direct line of invading armies from India to Ceylon, which was more often the case than in the reverse direction, suffered many vicissitudes which its sister, Rameswaram, escaped. The fortunes of Thiruketheeswaram rose and fell with the fortunes of the Tamil people in the Wanni and indirectly in the Peninsula.”

MANTOTA IN EARLY HISTORY AND LITERATURE

BY

Mudaliar C. Rasanayagam, C.C.S.

(This article comprises extracts and adaptations of passages from the author's book, "Ancient Jaffna."—K.V.)

According to the Mahavamsa, the Naga strongholds in the sixth century B. C. were at Nagadipa (Jaffna Peninsula) in the North and at Kalyani (Kelaniya) on the west coast of Ceylon. We are told in graphic words that when Mahodara was reigning at Nagadipa, his nephew Culodara at Kannavadamana mountain (Kandamadanam near Rameswaram) and his uncle Maniakkhika at Kalyani, a conflict arose between Mahodara and Culodara for a gem-set throne then in Nagadipa. While these two Naga kings, with their vast armies, were fighting for the possession of the throne, Buddha appeared on the scene, settled their dispute, claimed the throne, and, seating himself on it, he preached to them a sermon on reconciliation. As a result of this preaching eighty "kotis" (i. e. 800 million) of Nagas are said to have been converted to Buddhism. This was during the second visit of Buddha to Ceylon. From that time the gem-set throne became an object of worship and for several centuries attracted thousands of Buddhist pilgrims to Nagadipa.

The story of the conflict between the Naga kings and the intervention of Buddha as peacemaker is corroborated in every detail by Manimekalai, a Tamil epic, composed about the middle of the second century A. D. But whatever the historical value of the story itself, we are concerned only with its scene and its setting; and it is very probable that

Mani-pallavam, where the event is placed by the Tamil author, is identical with the Nagadipa of the Mahavamsa.

The Nagas, according to Mr. A. K. Muzumdar, were Thibeto-Burmans and were, about 4000 B. C., driven by some political disturbance from Central Asia into India through the North-Eastern gate. "Their muscular frame, yellow complexion, flat nose, small eyes, high cheek bones and scanty beard show that they originally belonged to the Mongoloid stock." Jambulus, a captive of Ethiopia who was sent out to sea, appears to have reached Ceylon before the beginning of the Christian era. He probably touched a port on the northern or north-western coast of Ceylon, for, in his writings, he has referred to the islands on that coast. He says that the people there "had no hair other than that on their heads, eyebrows and chins," thereby affording clear proof of the Mongolian descent of the Nagas. Whatever may be the time fixed by learned historians for the influx of the Aryans into India, it is now generally admitted that the Nagas preceded the Aryans. The latter found them already settled down in the northern parts of India, and it was perhaps due to these Aryan invasions that the Nagas were forced to seek fresh homes in the Dekkan, in South India and in Ceylon.

The poets of Ramayana and Mahabharatha make frequent references to Nagas in connection with Ceylon.

The Nagas were a prominent non-Aryan race in India and their names are preserved in various parts of the country, viz, Nagpur (Nagapuram), Nagarjuna Hills, Nagarcoil, Nagarcot, Nagapattinam, etc. Naga kings are constantly mentioned in historical records. The Buddhist records speak of Naga rulers in Kampilya and elsewhere. Nagadatta

and Nagasena are among the names of kings mentioned in the Allahabad pillar-inscription of Samudra Gupta. There is a Nagarjuna in the dynastic list of the Silaharas of Nepaul and of Kashmir. Nagavardhana was a nephew of the Chalukya king of Pulakesin II, and Nagabhata was a king of the Gurjaras about 800 A. D. Powerful Naga kings were ruling round Nagpur about the second and third centuries A. D. and intermarried among the Satavahanas and the Pallavas. Kings of Nagavamca, with the tiger crest and the snake banner, were ruling at Chakrakuta and at Boghavati of the Bastur State in the Central Provinces even after the eleventh century A. D. Several of their inscriptions have been found and published.

Megasthenes, who was the Grecian ambassador at the Court of Chandra Gupta wrote about 300 B. C., that Taprobane (Ceylon) was separated from the mainland (of India) by a river, and his statement indicates that, during his time, the Indian Peninsula extended further southwards, and that the sea which divided it from Ceylon was so narrow as to be called a river. Megasthenes having lived and written before the deluge which destroyed the greater part of Kelaniya, described in the Rajavali, it can be safely surmised that Kavadapuram and the 49 Tamil lands were engulfed at the same time as the western Naga kingdom of Ceylon - viz, during the reign of Kelani Tissa (about 250 B. C.). The third Tamil Sangam must have been formed at Madura sometime afterwards.

A large slice of the Naga kingdom in Ceylon was thus submerged, leaving only a small portion of Nagadipa—including the Jaffna Peninsula and the greater part of the Vannis, including the Punakari and Mannar districts, which appear to have been in a flourishing condition in those early days.

In Cirupanarrupadai, one of the ten idylls of the Sanga period, which describes certain conditions prevailing in the first or the second century A. D., a king called Nalliyakodan is panegyrised by a poet named Nattattanar. Nalliyakodan was one of several kings who ruled over Lanka (Ceylon), with his royal residence at Amur. On his way to this city, the poet had to pass through two of the other towns in his kingdom, namely, a fortified town on the sea coast which the commentator calls Eyilpattinam, and another town called Velur. From the fact that Nalliyakodan is mentioned as one of the kings of Lanka (Ceylon), and as a chief of the Oviyar, one of the Naga tribes of North Ceylon, and from the description of the towns themselves, one is led to surmise that the fortified town of Eyilpattinam was Mantai (Matota); that Amur was the Aakote of Ptolemy in Jafina, and that Velur which was between these two towns, was in all probability a village in the Punakari or the Vidattaltivu district, now known by some other name or covered by jungle.

According to tradition which finds full expression in Tamil works like Visva Puranam, Mantaippal and Vijaya Dharma Nadagam, Mantai was a town of remote antiquity and the place of origin of the five classes of artisans and of their chief, Visvakarma, the architect of the gods. These artisans did, in all probability, belong to the Naga tribe of Oviyar, who ruled at Mantai in ancient times. The power and greatness of these artisan rulers can be gauged when it is known that the earliest Yakkha kings of Ceylon found their wives among them. Padma Komalai, the queen of Sura Panma, the great Asura king of Ceylon, who fought against and was defeated and killed by Kanda Kumara, was the daughter of a Devakanmi (artisan). Mandodari, the chaste wife of Ravana, the hero of the Ramayana, was the daughter of Maya, who not only presented his son-in-law with an invincible weapon but also

built for him the beautiful city of Lankapura. Kubera, the uncle of Ravana, married Chitrareka, a daughter of another Devakanmi. These kings, among whose families the Yakkha kings of Ceylon found their queens, were supposed to have been the descendants of Visvakarma, the progenitor of the artisan tribe. The proximity of the kingdom of Mantai to Lankapura, the capital of the Yakkhas, made the royal connections between the rulers of the two kingdoms feasible. This is an instance of the historical truths that may be found concealed in the exaggerated traditional stories contained in the ancient Puranas. It is said that he (Visvakarma) built an iron fort at Mantai. This iron fort is referred to by Hiouen Thsang as one which had a high tower on the top of which some attractive women were kept to inveigle mariners into the harbour and to entertain them, while the Rakshasa (Naga) men attacked and plundered the ships. With the growth of the Indian sea-borne trade, a proportionate number of merchant vessels began to sail over the Indian seas. The Nagas of Mantai (Matota), whose stronghold was on the great highway of the merchant vessels which had to cross over to the Bay of Bengal from the Arabian Sea and vice versa, developed into sea-pirates and lived by plundering and robbing unwary merchants. Kshemendra, a Cashmerian poet of the tenth century, relates that, in the day, when the Emperor Asoka was reigning at Pataliputra, certain Indian merchants, who traded with the distant islands, came to his Court and "informed him of their losses and complete ruin brought about by the depredation of seafaring pirates called Nagas, who destroyed all their ships and plundered their treasure." Asoka issued "an edict inscribed on a copper plate, which was, however contemptuously set at nought by those for whom it was meant." It was only after he became a devout Buddhist that he was able to make the Nagas respect his edict. The Nagas, referred to in the above story, were evidently those about Mantai (Matota), and the early period of their piratical profession can also be seen from the same.

The iron fort, which is euphemistically called a magnetic mountain in Tamil works, was perhaps the source of the belief among the medieval Muhammedan writers that there was a magnetic mountain which drew towards it all the iron-clad ships in its neighbourhood and wrecked them, a belief which is graphically described in the Arabian Nights. The belief in the existence of an iron fort at Mantai is enhanced by the knowledge that about the same period (first century A. D.) there was a brass fort at Dwarka, a town in the ancient Yadava country to the north of Bombay.

The iron fort, which continued to be a great menace to the sea-faring trade of Ceylon, was destroyed, says the Chinese traveller Hiouen Thsang, by Vijaya. In all probability, however, it was destroyed by Karikala Chola the greatest of the early Chola kings, who in the first century A. D. conquered Ceylon and carried away a large number of captives to work on the banks of the Kaveri. It was perhaps after the destruction of this iron fort that he earned the sobriquet of "destroyer of the hanging fort," from several Sanga poets. It was also perhaps after the conquest of Ceylon that the chola king received the title of Chembiyan. The North-Western portion of Ceylon was first called 'Tamraparni,' a name which was later applied to the whole of Ceylon by the Greeks. As the word 'tamra' is equivalent to 'chembu' in Tamil, the conqueror of Tamraparni was in all likelihood, entitled to be called chembiyan. This surmise receives some confirmation from the fact that no king earlier than Karikala appears to have been called by that name.

The tradition connecting Mantai with Visvakarma and with artisans must have reached the ears of Pridham when he wrote that a colony of goldsmiths had settled down at Mantai in olden times. Mantai is referred to as a kingdom in ancient Tamil classics, and it appears that the ruler there was an artisan in the first or second century A. D.

Killi in whose reign the catastrophe befell Puhar or Kaveri-pumpattinam, removed his capital to Uraiyr and was present at the consecration of the temple built for the worship of Pattinikadavul by Senguttuva Cera with Gaja Bahu of Lanka, as described in the Epic of the Anklet (Chilappadikaram). Gaja Bahu reigned in Ceylon from 113 to 135 A. D. and, therefore, the destruction of Puhar must have been before this event. This transfer to the new capital is confirmed by Ptolemy who, writing about 150 A. D., calls Orthora (Uraiyr or Urantai) the capital of the Cholas. During the time of Killi, who is known by several honorific names, his brother Ilanko or Ilankilli, was the viceroy at Kanchi. Killi erected a Buddhist chaitya at Kanchi and also caused a grove and a tank to be made in imitation of those at the Island of Mani-pal'avam (Jaffna Peninsula). Thondai Mandalam, as a separate kingdom under the sovereignty of Tondaiman Ilantirayan must have come into existence about 150 or 175 A. D. He was the progenitor of the powerful dynasty of the Pallavas who reigned over an extensive kingdom on the eastern coast of India for several centuries. This Naga origin of the Pallavas is confirmed by the description given in the Velur-palayam plates that the first member of the family of the Pallavas acquired all the emblems of royalty on marrying the daughter of Lord of Serpents. The ruling dynasty of Tondaimandalam did in all probability, derive the name 'Pallava' from Mani-Pallavam, the native place of Ilantirayan's mother. Pallavam means in Tamil "a sprout" or 'the end of a bough' and, to observers sailing from India, the Peninsula would have appeared just like a sprout or growth on the mainland of Lanka. Some of the later Pallavas were called by surnames ending in 'ankura', a sanskrit word signifying 'a sprout', as will be seen in such names as Buddhankura Nayankura, Taranankura and Lalitankura.

In the second century A. D. the Nagas of North Ceylon grew powerful enough to become sovereigns of all Ceylon, as will be

seen from the names in the list of Ceylon kings taken from the Mahavamsa of that period.

It is also curious that about this time (200 A. D.), the Nagas of Central India also became very powerful, and one of their royal families, called the Chutu Nagas, took the place of the Satavahanas. The elder Pallava kings were contemporaries of the Chutus. They intermarried among them and eventually succeeded to the throne of the Chutus of the Naga race.

It seems clear, therefore, that a Naga kingdom existed in the north Ceylon continuously from the sixth century B. C. to the middle of the third century A. D. Its capital must have been either Kadiramalai (Kantarodai) in Jaffna or Matota. In these places there are piles of ruins yet to be excavated; and a Kantarodai in particular, where a number of Indian and Roman coins have been picked up even on the surface of the soil.

Bertolacci, a historian of the early nineteenth century says that, "Mantota was the capital of a Kingdom founded by the Brahmins who had almost all the northern part of Ceylon including Jaffna Patam. "But judging from the events described in the Mahavamsa and the Manimekalai it is more probable that the capital was at Kadiramalai and that Matota was only the chief port and seat of commerce, perhaps ruled by a chieftain under the paramount power of the king of Kadiramalai.

Thiruketheeswaram Temple Restoration Society

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OBJECTS

The objects of the Society include :

(a) the restoration and maintenance of Thiruketheeswaram Temple and its temporalities according to the tenets and ideals of Saivaism ;

(b) the construction and management of Thiruketheeswaram Temple and other temples for divine worship according to the tenets and ideals of Saivaism ;

(c) the establishment and management of Madams, Libraries, Reading Rooms and Schools ;

(d) the propagation, dissemination and advancement of Saiva religion.

An important idea underlying the objects of the Society is to restore Thiruketheeswaram as a religious, intellectual and cultural centre of importance in keeping with the historic rôle played by this ancient city in antiquity.

(*Society's Report for period 1948—1953.*)

S. Sarajini

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