ZEYLANICA

A STUDY OF THE PEOPLES AND LANGUAGES OF SRI LANKA



ASIFF HUSSEIN

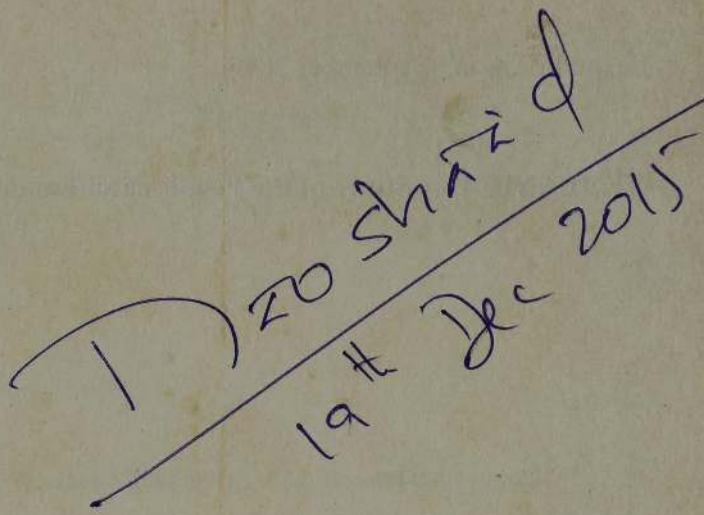
NEPTUNE PUBLICATIONS

ZEYLANICA, a study of the Peoples and Languages of Sri Lanka by Asiff Hussein is by far the most comprehensive study of the subject to date.

The author has employed a multi-disciplinary approach in this work to trace the origins of the races which have made Sri Lanka their home over the centuries and millennia, adducing evidence from historical geography, physical anthropology, archaeology, linguistics and even the exciting new science of genetics.

Also covered in this work are the various languages of these ethnic groups including their origins and their affinities and the manner in which they evolved over time to their present state.

The author has also dealt with the legendary people who are supposed to have once inhabited the country, including the Rakshasas, Yakkhas, Nagas and Nittavo.



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Asiff Hussein

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PREFACE

The present work is the second edition of Zeylanica. A Study of the Peoples and Languages of Sri Lanka which was first published in 2009.

It comprises of ten comprehensive chapters on the origins of Sri Lanka's peoples and languages including the Veddas, Sinhalese, Tamils, Moors, Malays, Memons, Portuguese and Dutch Burghers, Kaffirs and Ahikuntakas. It has also dealt with some legendary peoples who are believed to have inhabited Sri Lanka such as the Rākṣasas, Yakkhas, Nāgas and Nittāvo.

The work has adduced evidence from historical geography, physical anthropology, genetics, linguistics, archaeology and other disciplines to trace the origins of the numerous peoples who have made Sri Lanka their home over the centuries.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to all those who have helped make the publication of this work a reality. To the Publishers, Neptune Publications (Pvt) Ltd, the publishers of Info-Travel Sri Lanka, I extend my heartfelt thanks for all the support and co-operation they have given me throughout my dealings with them, and especially to its Managing Director Mr.Dinesh Kulatunga for his wholehearted support for this publication.

I also wish to thank Dr.Senarath Dissanayake, Director General, Department of Archaeology for his kind permission to reproduce the illustrations found in the publications Epigraphia Zeylanica, Inscriptions of Ceylon and Sigiri Graffiti in my work. My thanks also go to Dr. Nanda Wickremasinghe, Director, National Museums for kindly permitting me to publish the photographs of the artifacts housed in the Colombo and Dutch Period Museums and to Mr.Ranjith Hewage, Museum Keeper, Colombo Museum and Mr.R.D.K.Ramanayake of the Dutch Period Museum for all the assistance rendered in the course of photographing these artifacts. My thanks are also due to Dr.Saroja Wettasinghe, Director, National Archives for kindly permitting me to take some photographs of some valuable records housed in the Archives building in Colombo and to Mr.Albert Van den Belt of the Leiden University for the assistance rendered in this connection.

I also owe a word of thanks to Palinda De Silva (imagesofceylon.com) for the excellent photographs of Skeen & Co. and Scowen & Co. reproduced in this work and to Ms.Deloraine Brohier for kindly sharing with me her family photographs and Mr.A.Denis N. Fernando for readily consenting to reproduce in my work his map of Taprobane after Ptolemy.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The system of transliteration employed in the text, save for citations, is the standard method. Thus dots below letters represent retroflex sounds which are pronounced with the tip of the tongue striking the roof of the mouth further back than for dental sounds which are articulated by placing the tip of the tongue against the upper front teeth.

Among the other sounds transliterated here *c* represents the voiceless palato-alveolar affricate (as sounded in the English *church*) and *ś* the palatal sibilant (as sounded in English *show*). The lingual *ṣ* which will be found occurring in Sanskrit words is similar in pronunciation to the palatal *ś*. The *anusvara* is represented by *ṁ*, the velar nasal by *ṅ* and the palatal nasal by *ñ* as per the accepted method. Macrons placed over vowels represent long vowels. It is however thought unnecessary to so denote the long values of the *e* and *o* of Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit and the Modern Indo-Aryan Vernaculars of India in keeping with established practice. The short *e* and *o* does not seem to have existed in Sanskrit and does not, strictly speaking, exist in the Indian MIAVs. The *e* and *o* of Pali is of variable length-long before single consonants or at the end of a word and short before double consonants or consonant clusters.

The initial *c* occurring in certain Tamil words cited from various authorities may however not necessarily reflect the actual pronunciation, but rather be pronounced as *ś* or even *s*. Similarly, intervocalic *t* given by these authorities is pronounced as *d* and intervocalic *k* as *g* or a guttural *h*. This however may not apply to the older works such as those of the Sangam age which were probably written in the forms that faithfully represented the actual pronunciation at the time.

Geographical references to India refer to the historical India including those parts of the subcontinent today known as Pakistan and Bangladesh and may not necessarily be restricted to the region encompassed by the modern-day Indian Republic.

ABBREVIATIONS
(GENERAL, LANGUAGES, LITERATURE AND EPIGRAPHS)

GENERAL

A.C. – After Christ
A.H. – After Hijrat
B.C. – Before Christ
C. - Circa, around
Cf.- Confer, compare
Cl.- Classical
Coll.- Colloquial
Ed.-Edited e.g.-
exempli gratia, for example
fem.-feminine
fr.- from
ibid.-ibidem,in the same place
i.e.-id est, that is
lit.-literally
pl.-plural
pr.-probably
sg.-singular
* - hypothetical
> - becomes
< - is derived from

LANGUAGES

Alb – Albanian
AMg.-Ardha-Magadhi
AS- Anglo-Saxon
Ar.-Arabic
Arm. – Armenian
As.-Asokan
Av.-Avestan
B.-Bihārī
Bas.-Baśgalī
Bg.-Bengali
Br. – Brahui
Div.-Divehi
Dut.-Dutch
Gad. – Gadaba
Gaul. – Gaulish
Ger.-German
Gk.-Greek
Go. – Gondi
Goth.-Gothic
Guj.-Gujarātī
H.-Hindustānī (Hindī / Urdū)
Hitt. – Hittite
IA.- Indo-Aryan
IE – Indo-European
Ill-Illyrian
Ka.-Kannada
Kas.-Kāśmīrī
Kho.-Khōwār
Ko. – Kodagu
Kon.-Konda
Ku.-Kuwi
Kur.-Kurukh
L.-Latin
Lat.-Latvian
Lith.-Lithuanian
M.-Marāṭhi
Mal.-Malay
MIA-Middle Indo-Aryan
MIAV-Modern Indo Aryan-Vernacular
Myc.- Mycanaean Greek
OCS-Old Church Slavonic
OE-Old English
OHG-Old High German
Olc- Old Icelandic
OIr-Old Irish
OIA-Old Indo-Aryan
Oll.- Ollari

ON-Old Norse
O.Russ.-Old Russian
OW – Old Welsh
Os.-Ossetic
Pa. – Parji
PAn- Proto-Austronesian
PIE-Proto-Indo-European
Pol. – Polish
Russ.-Russian
Sinh.-Sinhala
Skt.-Sanskrit
SM-Standard Malay
SLPC-Sri Lankan Portuguese Creole
Sum. – Sumerian
Te.-Telugu
Tu. – Tulu
Wai.-Waigalī
O.Pruss.-Old Prussian
O.Sinh-Old Sinhala
Or.-Oriya
P.-Pāli
Pan.-Pañjābī
Pers.-Persian (Farsi)
Pkt.-Prakrit
Port.-Portuguese
Serb. – Serbo-Croatian
Sinh.Pkt.-Sinhala Prakrit
SLM-Sri Lanka Malay
SP- Standard Portuguese
Son.T.-Sona Tamil
T.-Tamil
Toch.-Tocharian
Ved.-Vedda
Wl.- Welsh

LITERATURE

AB- Aitareya Brahmana
Clp – Cilappatikāram
DAG - Dhampiyā Atuvā Gāṭapadaya
LSS – Lātyāyana Śrauta Sutra
MV – Mahāvaṁsa
SB – Śatapatha Brāhmana
SdR - Saddharma Ratnāvaliya
AV.- Atharva Veda
CV - Cūlavaṁsa
DV - Dīpavaṁsa
Mbh. - Mahābhārata
RV - Ṛg Veda
VP - Vaṁsatthappakāsini
YVM - Yalppana - Vaipava - Malai

EPIGRAPHS

Dh.- Dhauli inscription of Asoka
Jau.-Jaugaḍa inscription of Asoka
Man.- Mānsehra inscription of Asoka
Shb.- Shāhbāzgarhi inscription of Asoka
Gir.- Girnār inscription of Asoka
Ka.-Kālsi inscription of Asoka
Rup.- Rūpnāth inscription of Asoka
Sig.gr.- Sigiri graffiti

ABBREVIATIONS
(ARCHIVES, BOOKS, PERIODICALS, JOURNALS ETC.)

AA – Archiv für Anthropologie

AC – Ancient Ceylon

AI – Ancient India

AHU – Archivo Historico Ultramarino Lisbon

AJHG – American Journal of Human Genetics

AJP – American Journal of Philology

AJPA – American Journal of Physical Anthropology

AKBAW – Abhandlungen der Königlich Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften

AO – Acta Orientalia

ARGB – Archive für Rassen und Gesselschaft Biologie

AS – American Science

BBM – Bulletin of the British Museum

BEFEO- Bulletin de l' Ecole de Française d 'Extreme-Orient

BSGL – Boletim da Sociedade de Geograpraphia de Lisboa. Imprenca Nacional

BSLP – Bulletin de la Societe de Linguistique de Paris

BTVN – Bidragen de Taal-Land en Volkenkunde Van Nederlandsch Indie

CA – Current Anthropology

CALR – Ceylon Antiquary and Literary Register

CB – Current Biology

CDN – Ceylon Daily News

CHC–A Concise History of Ceylon.C.W. Nicholas and S.Paranavitana (1961)

CHJ – Ceylon Historical Journal

CJS – Ceylon Journal of Science

CLR – Ceylon Literary Register

DSMV – Dastur Sanjana Memorial Volume

EJHG – European Journal of Human Genetics

Enc. I – Encyclopaedia of Islam

EI– Epigraphia Indica

ESMSL – An Ethnological Survey of the Muslims of Sri Lanka (1986)

EZ – Epigraphia Zeylanica

FKHPLB – Festschrift Königlichen Hoheit dem Prinzregenten Luitpold von Bayern.

GR- Genome Research

HG – Human Genetics

IA – Indian Antiquary

IC - Indian Culture. Journal of the Indian Research Institute

IHQ – Indian Historical Quarterly

IIJ- Indo Iranian Journal

IJHG- International Journal of Human Genetics

IS – Islamic Studies

ISSJ – International Social Science Journal

JA – Journal Asiatique

JAOS – Journal of the American Oriental Society

JASB – Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal

J.Biosci - Journal of Biosciences

JBORS – Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society

JDBU – Journal of the Dutch Burgher Union of Ceylon

JIAS – Journal of the India Anthropological Society

JISPQS – Journal of the Indian Society for Prehistoric and Quaternary Studies

JMBRAS – Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society

JOI – Journal of the Oriental Institute (Baroda)

JOR- Journal of Oriental Research (Madras)

JRAI.GB&I – Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland; formerly Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland (JAI.GB & I)

JRASB – Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal

JRAS (Bom) – Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society. Bombay

JRAS.GB & I – Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland

JRAS. SL – Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka; formerly Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society. Ceylon Branch (JRAS. CB)

JSLA- Journal of the Sri Lanka Archives

LSI – Linguistic Survey of India . Ed. G.A.Grierson

MAIBL – Memoires de l 'Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres

MICHS – Souvenir of the Moors Islamic Cultural Home

MLR – Monthly Literary Register

MSZS – Münchener Studien Zur Sprachwissenschaft

MTBV – Mitteilungen des Thuringer Botanischen Vereins

NAWG – Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen

NG- Nature Genetics

PAC – Physical Anthropology of Ceylon. Howard Stoudt (1961)

PFICSTS–Proceedings First International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies (1966)

PFV – Paranavitana Felicitation Volume. 1965

PNAS – Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.USA

PPMAA – Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology

PTAIC – Proceedings of the Third All - India Conference. 1924

PTSAIOC – Proceedings and Transactions of the Sixth All–India Oriental Conference (1930) Published 1933

PRS- Proceedings of the Royal Society

RIA – Reallexicon der Indogermanische Altertumskunde

RKSV – Robert Knox's Sinhalese Vocabulary . D.W.Ferguson. JRAS. CB 1896. Based on the manuscripts of Dr. Robert Hooke (Secretary of the Royal Society from 1677 – 1682) relating to Sinhala vocables obtained from Robert Knox

RL – Revista Lusitana

SBAW- Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften

SBE – Sacred Books of the East Series. Ed. Max Muller

SCVRASSL – Sesquicentennial Commemorative Volume of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka (1995)

SESA – Standard Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa

SJCVUK – Silver Jubilee Commemoration Volume of the University of Kelaniya 1986

SKAWW – Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Win

SKBAW–Sitzungsberichte der Koniglich Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften

SLA-Sri Lanka Archives. Journal of the Sri Lanka National Archives

SLNA – Sri Lanka National Archives

SLJH –The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities

SLJSAS- Sri Lanka Journal of South Asian Studies

SO – Studia Orientalia. Societas Orientalis Fennica

SOAW–Sitzungsberichte der Osterreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften Wien

SPAW – Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin)

SPPFV – Sir Paul Pieris Felicitation Volume. 1956

SWA – Sitzungsberichte der Wiener Akademie

SZ – Spolia Zeylanica

TAPS-Transactions of the American Philosophical Society

TESL – Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London

UCHC–University of Ceylon History of Ceylon. Ed S.Paranavitana.1959

UCR – University of Ceylon Review

VIJ – Vishveshvaranand Indological Journal

WZKM – Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Morgenlandes

WZKS – Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Sudasiens

ZDMG – Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft

ZE–Zeitschrift für Ethnologie.Verhandlungen der Berliner Anthropologischen Gesellschaft

ZKM – Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes

ZVS – Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Sprachforschung

CHAPTER 1

LEGENDARY PEOPLES OF LANKA

The Rākṣasas

The Rākṣasas find mention as the inhabitants of Laṅkā in the ancient Hindu epic, the Rāmāyaṇa, which is ascribed to the first millennium B.C[1]. This work, composed by Vālmīki, is the oldest Indian epic known and relates the story of an Indian prince named Rāma portrayed as an incarnation of the Hindu god Viṣnu who invades Laṅkā in his quest for his beloved wife Sītā who had been captured by the Rākṣasa king Rāvaṇa. We will hereunder recapitulate the essence of the story as occurring in the Rāmāyaṇa.

The eldest son and heir apparent of Daśaratha, the Kṣatriya king who rules in Ayodhya, the capital of the Kosala Kingdom in northern India, Rāma is driven into a self imposed exile by the machinations of one of Dasaratha's wives, Kaikeyi and departing to the Daṇḍaka forest is joined by his faithful wife Sītā and loyal younger brother Lakṣmana. It happens that one day, a Rākṣasa woman Śurpanakhā, a sister of the mighty Rākṣasa King Rāvaṇa, having seen the handsome Rāma, becomes infatuated with him and seeks to seduce him. Rāma however does not respond to her charms and Śurpanakhā, becoming infuriated, charges at Sītā in a jealous rage, only to be overcome by Lakṣmana who severs her nose and ears. Śurpanakhā, thus scorned, complains to her brother Rāvaṇa who resolves to kill Rāma and have Sītā for himself. He then proceeds to capture Sīta, conveying her in his aerial chariot and confining her in his kingdom of Laṅkā. Sītā's fate is subsequently brought to the notice of Rāma by the mighty bird Jatayu who had tried to save her but is mortally wounded by Rāvaṇa. Rāma thus resolves to save Sītā and seeks the aid of the monkey king of Kiṣkindhā Sugrīva whose kingdom Rāma helped regain.

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[1] Hermann Jacobi (Das Rāmāyana.1893) thought that the original Rāmāyaṇa was pre-Buddhistic and originated before the 6th century B.C., probably around the 8th century B.C. His views were largely based on the socio-political conditions depicted in the Rāmāyana, the absence of any reference to the Buddha or Buddhism and dates of a full lunar eclipse supposed to be alluded to in the epic. H.D.Sankalia (The Rāmāyana in historical perspective.1982) has sought to show that the life depicted in the Rāmāyana is true of north India between the 1st-2nd centuries B.C. and the 5th century A.C. but has suggested that it may go back to the early iron age as indicated by references to *kālāyasa*, *krsnāyasa* and *ayasa* meaning 'iron'. Thus although the work in its present form must belong to between the 3rd century B.C.-4th century A.C., the events narrated in the epic might even well go back to around 1000 B.C. or more generally between 1500 B.C.-700 B.C. More recently, B.B.Lal (The two Indian epics vis-à-vis archaeology. Antiquity.1981) has concluded from archaeological data that there must have existed a traditional basic story coming down orally since the 7th century B.C. which was utilized by Vālmīki to compose his epic.

Hanuman, Sugrīva's general, with his monkey army, march southwards and find a great ocean stretching between them and Laṅkā. Hanuman, commanding his soldiers to remain where they are, expands his body to enormous proportions, and leaping across the great expanse of water alights upon the mountain Trikūta whence he beholds Laṅkā. He goes on to discover Sītā in Rāvaṇa's palace seated under an Asoka grove and guarded by hideous Rākṣasas, but is captured by Rāvaṇa, who initially attempts to kill him, but on learning that he is Rāma's ambassador, has his tail burnt instead. Hanuman, fleeing Laṅkā, conveys the news of Sītā's captivity to Rāma, who crosses over to Laṅkā by means of a bridge he builds over the ocean, and doing battle with Rāvaṇa, slays him and his Rākṣasa followers before finally rescuing Sītā. A brother of Rāvaṇa, Vibhīṣana, who had allied himself with Rāma, is thereafter consecrated king of Laṅkā.

The epic it appears is based on a recollection of an ancient conflict between the Aryans and the Dravidians, the former represented by Rāma and his Kṣatriya kinsfolk [2] and the latter by Rāvaṇa and his Rākṣasa followers [3]. Whether the stage of the conflict was in Sri Lanka or Peninsular or Central India is however a debatable point. With regard to the state of its civilization, the Rāmāyaṇa would have us believe that Laṅkā had reached a high level of

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[2] There can be little doubt that the heroes of the Rāmāyaṇa were of Aryan origin. The epic clearly states that Ayodhyā was full of Āryas and that its Sabhā consisted of Āryas. Rāma is addressed by his brothers as Ārya while he refers to his father as Pitṛ-Ārya. Likewise Hanumat addresses Sītā as Āryā, the feminine form of Ārya.

[3] It is not unlikely that the Rākṣasas were Dravidians. The Rāmāyaṇa describes them as *Anārya* or 'non-Aryan'. They are also described as being of an evil complexion like a black cloud. Their ruler Rāvaṇa is also said to have been dark in complexion like a rain cloud or a mountain of collyrium. He is said to have had a broad forehead, black hair, red eyes, strong arms and a wide chest, his body being stout as that of a bull. He was particularly distinguished by his dark complexion, for we find in a passage of the epic Supārśva telling his father Sampāti: "*I went to the Mahendra mountain in search of flesh and stood there, guarding the only passage to the ocean. Then I noticed a huge dark-complexioned man carrying a woman resplendent like the sun. I stopped him, but as he entreated me again and again, I allowed them to go. Later I learned that he was Rāvaṇa and that he was carrying the lamenting woman Sītā*". Rāvaṇa is also said to have worn a red garment and ear ornaments of smelt gold. He was apparently a Hindu or Saivite as he is said to have installed and worshipped a golden linga and had on his banner an image of Siva's bull. The physical characteristics of Rāvaṇa and his Rākṣasa subjects as well as his apparent Saivism and phallic worship tend to identify him as a Dravidian ruler. Also interesting is the fact that the appellation Rāvaṇa may well be a Sanskritised form of T.*Iraivan* 'lord', 'king' though at the same time we cannot be certain that the Tamil term itself has its origins in Rāvaṇa just as royal terms like the German *Kaiser* and Russian *Czar* have their origins in the Roman *Caesar*, the name originally borne by Julius Caesar. Yet even if this be the case, it only goes on to show the influence the personality of Rāvaṇa had on ancient Tamil culture and society, showing again that he was probably a Dravidian ruler.

development, for it tells us that Laṅkā abounds in chariots (*ratha sampūrnā*) and with horses and elephants (*vāji vārana sampūrnā*) and that it is encircled by a great rampart of gold inlaid with gems, corals, cat's eyes and pearls (*sauvarnah ca mahāms tasyāh prākāro duspradharsaṇah maṇi vidruma vaidūrya mukta vicarita antarah*).

Surprisingly, however, its inhabitants are described not as civilized humans, but as barbarous flesh-eating ogres, for we come across Hanuman telling Rāma: "The great Laṅkā was rejoiced and gayful, full of elephants in rut, abounding in chariots and inhabited by gangs of ogres (*prahrisṭā muditā laṅkā matta dvipa samākulāl mahatī ratha sampūrnā rakṣogaṇa samākulā*). The Rākṣasas are further described in the epic as having frightful shapes with some being prodigiously fat, others enormously tall and yet others dwarfish. The allusions to the Rākṣasas being cannibalistic may however simply be due to poetic sensationalism. Thus the Rākṣasas are termed *manuṣyādāh* and *rudhirāśanāh*. Two of their number, Virādha and Marica are said to live on the flesh of the sages while Candodari who is pregnant longs to consume the flesh of Sītā. We also find in one instance, Rāvaṇa himself threatening to have Sītā for his breakfast. It is nevertheless evident that they figure not as supernatural or non-human beings, but as humans. That they were deemed men is seen from the fact that Vibhīṣana who had deserted to the side of Rāma and his four Rākṣasa companions are described as men.

Before dealing at greater length with the epic, we will firstly consider its veracity, that is to say, whether the story is a mere figment of the imagination of a poet or an embellished narration of a real event that actually took place in ancient India. Most scholars today accept that the story of the Rāmāyaṇa is based upon an actual historical event that took place in ancient India, though it is widely acknowledged that poetic embellishment over the centuries has given the story handed down to us a very fabulous, almost mythical character. Indeed, it is not unlikely that its composer, the poet Vālmiki drew upon a loose body of floating oral narrative that circulated in his time, adding to it his own poetic embellishments to compose his lengthy epic narrative.

The fact however remains that his story was in all likelihood an actual historical event, which becomes evident from the style of the narrative, a contention which has, in more recent times, received support on archaeological grounds[4]. At the same time, however, sifting the embellishments from the

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[4] Lal (1981) has, on the grounds that the Bharadvāja Āśrama (the monastic retreat in Prayāga to which Rāma accompanied by his brother Lakṣmaṇa and wife Sītā resorted to in the beginning of their exile) occurring in the Rāmāyaṇa was deserted C.7th century B.C. and re-occupied only during the 4th-5th centuries A.C., concluded that there must have existed a traditional basic story referring to the site coming down orally since the 7th century B.C. which was utilized by Vālmīki to compose his epic. The other three sites mentioned in the epic, Ayodhyā, Śrngavērapura and

kernel of truth hidden in the epic becomes an arduous task for the scholar, though the basic story of the hero Rāma's quest for Sītā, his incursion into Laṅkā and his defeat of an inimical tribe who had taken his wife captive may well be based on an actual event that took place in the hoary past.

What presently concerns us however is the location of the Laṅkā of the Rāmāyaṇa. We will seek here to show that the Laṅkā of the epic may not necessarily refer to Sri Lanka as popularly believed, but may possibly refer to a place in the subcontinent inhabited by a non-Aryan people in bygone times. Among those scholars who have supported the view that the Laṅkā of the Rāmāyaṇa is in fact Sri Lanka is Ananda Guruge who in his erudite work on the epic [5] cited a number of reasons to prove his thesis. Among these he mentions that despite the fact that the Rāmāyaṇa itself has not been very popular in Sri Lanka, local tradition associates certain places with the incidents in the epic, namely, Sītāvaka and Sītā-Eliya which are said to owe their names to Sītā and other place-names like Kudā- and Maha-Rāvaṇa-Koṭuva. He also notes that Vibhīṣana (the brother of Rāvaṇa who succeeded him) is still worshipped as a tutelary god and that in the Mahāmāyūrī, a magical text of the Mahāyāna Buddhists translated into Chinese in the 4th century A.C., he is named as the deity of the island, i.e.Vibhīṣanas Tāmraparṇyām (Tāmraparni being a name of the island in Pre-Christian times, a corruption of which, Taprobane was employed in Greek literature and even by the Cartographer Ptolemy to refer to Sri Lanka).

He also refers to the fact that the oldest historical tradition of the country, incorporated in the two chronicles Dīpavaṁsa and Mahāvaṁsa mention a city called Laṅkāpura which was peopled by Yakkhas whose king was killed by the Aryan Prince Vijaya with the aid of Kuveṇi, the authenticity of the name of the city being further borne out by the fact that these chronicles do not show any familiarity with the Rāmāyaṇa or its story. He also refers to the widespread belief that the narrow ridge of 22 miles out of which a number of islands project between Ramesvaram and Talaimannar is the causeway built by Rāma. That Laṅkā was an island in the ocean he argues is evident from the terms used in the epic to represent the surrounding waters, namely *sāgara* and *samudra*. He also notes that in the description of the southern direction by Sugriva an island of a hundred yojanas is mentioned though it is not named, although it is obviously Laṅkā (its name not being mentioned here so as to leave room for the adventures of Hanumat and his party in their search for Laṅkā), pointing out that the only island which appears to satisfy the geographical conditions

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Nandigrāma, were 'living' during Vālmīki's time, but not so Bhāradvāja Āśrama. Thus the story could not be a mere figment of his imagination.

[5] Society of the Rāmāyaṇa (1960 & 1991)

described in the passage is Sri Lanka. He also points out that the wars of Rāma are referred to in the epic as having taken place *pāre samudrasya* (Lit.beyond the ocean) and that although the expression may be explained literally, its identity with an old name of Sri Lanka *Palaesimundu* (*Pārasamudra*) cannot be altogether denied. He also observes that the epic refers to a mountain by the name of *Malaya* in Laṅkā known as *Laṅkāmalayasānuṣu* which he contends is a very important fact for the identification of Lanka with Sri Lanka because *Malaya* was exactly the name of the central hill country of Sri Lanka, having even been marked as such (in the form *Malaea*) by Ptolemy in his map of the country.

We will presently consider the evidence of Sri Lanka being the Laṅkā of the Rāmāyana, drawing upon historical texts and local legend, to show that the legendary realm mentioned in the epic may not necessarily refer to Sri Lanka. The country's primary historical source, the Mahāvaṁsa, a chronicle of Sinhalese royalty compiled by the monk Mahānāma C.5th century A.C. which traces the origins of the early Aryan settlements in the island following an Aryan invasion from Bengal around the 5th century B.C. does not know of the Rāmāyaṇa legend or the Rākṣasas being inhabitants of the island, though it mentions a pre-Aryan folk known as the Yakkhas who are nevertheless distinct from the Rākṣasas [6] and whom we may identify with the ancestors of the country's aboriginal inhabitants – the Veddas. Although a slightly earlier chronicle, the Dīpavaṁsa does mention the Rakkhasas (the Pāli form of the Sanskrit Rākṣasa) inhabiting Lankā in the time of the Buddha, it lumps them with other evidently mythical or non-human beings such as Bhūtas (ghosts) and Piśācas (Flesh-eating demons) [7].

Indeed, the only significant historical work that seeks to connect the Rākṣasas of yore with the island is the Yālppāna-Vaipava-Mālai, a fairly reliable history of the Kingdom of Jaffna compiled by one Mayilvakanan in the early part of the 18th century from earlier sources such as the Vaiyapadal and Kailaya-Malai. Here too it merely states that it is related in the itihasas and puranas that the Rakshasas held Lanka during the first three yugas of the world. It adds that tradition has it that Vibhisana who received the kingdom from Rāma, the conqueror of Rāvaṇa, continued to reign up to and during the

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[6] This is evident from the Rāmāyaṇa itself where the Yakṣas are called a tribe of little energy (*alpavīrya*) who could not stand firmly before Vaiśravaṇa, a Rākṣasa.

[7] The fact is that even in modern Sinhala, *rakusā* (a derivative of the Skt.*rākṣasa* and Pkt.*rakkhasa*) means a 'malevolent demon', for instance, the *diya-rakusā* or 'water-demon' who is believed to take the lives of humans while they are bathing in rivers or other water bodies, showing that they were perceived in traditional Sinhalese culture not as humans, but as mythical or supernatural beings. Such beliefs are even reflected in mediaval Sinhalese literature like in the 13th century Pūjāvaliya where we find the expression *diya-rakussaku-sē* (Like a Water-demon).

early part of the present yuga and that when Vibhisana was taken up to heaven, the Rakshasas quit Lanka from fear of foreign subjugation.

The narrative then goes on to relate the story of Vijaya, the lawless son of Singabahu, a Ksatriya of Banga who reigned as King of Lada about two thousand four hundred years ago. This story, needless to say, is none other than that of the foundation of the Sinhalese nation by Prince Vijaya as related in the Mahāvaṁsa. What is interesting however is that the YVM clearly states that following the death of Rāvaṇa's successor Vibhisana, the Rākṣasas quit Lanka from fear of foreign domination which is probably an attempt to explain the absence of Rākṣasas in the island. Also interesting is the statement in the YVM that at the time of Vijaya's arrival in the island, Lanka was a great wilderness inhabited only by the Vedar and wild animals. The Vedar meaning 'hunters' in Tamil no doubt refers to the Veddas, the country's aboriginal inhabitants.

Local folk legends however associate a number of places with the Rāmāyana story, suggesting that Sri Lanka is the Laṅkā of the epic. Many are the local place-names associated with the Rāmāyana legend. Many of these are found in the Central Province, particularly Nuwara Eliya District. Thus Rāvaṇa is said to have had his abode in Laggala (Probably originally Lak-gala or 'Laṅkā Rock'), a protrusion at the eastern extremity of the Knuckles Mountains. Sītā following her capture is said to have been taken to Guru-ulu-pota, now known as Sītā-koṭuva (Sita's fortress). Rāvaṇa's pleasure garden where Sītā was kept is believed to have been situated in a valley near Hakgala or Bandarawela. Sītā was thereafter housed in a cave at Sītā-eliya (Sita's plain) where a temple, the Sītā Eliya kovil near the Hakgala Botanical Gardens, now exists. It is believed that it was here that Sītā prayed for Rāma to rescue her while she was in captivity. Rāvana Cave (in the vicinity of Älla not far from Bandarawela) is said to have been the place where Rāvaṇa hid Sītā, having moved her thence upon hearing of the approach of Rāma and his army. The great battle between Rāma and Rāvaṇa is said to have taken place at Yudhaganapitiya (Battle-ground), north of Nuwara Eliya in the Matale District while it was from Dunuvila (Arrow Pond) that Rāma shot the arrow that killed Rāvaṇa at Hakgala (meaning Jaw-rock, the belief being that it came to be so-called because Hanuman carried the rock from the Himalayas in his jaw) which served as a watchtower for the demon king [8].

Among the other places associated with the Rāmāyaṇa legend are Ritigal Kanda in the Nuwara Kalaviya district, south east of Anuradhapura and Rummas Kanda (modern Buona Vista) in the Galle district. It is said that it

[8] See for instance Travel Sri Lanka. Ed.Richard Boyle. Dec.2004

was from Ritigal Kanda that Hanuman jumped across to India to carry the joyful message that he had discovered Sītā in Laṅkā. When Lakṣmana was wounded and a medicinal herb was required for his cure, Hanuman was sent to the Himalayas to fetch it; on the way the name and nature of the plant escaped his memory, whereupon he snapped a portion of the Himalayas and brought it twisted in his tail and asked Rāma to seek for the herb himself. Buona Vista is that portion of the mountain and valuable medicinal herbs are still said to be found there [9].

Folk legends, and especially those current in more recent times, are however not a very reliable source of historical information, even though they may relate to place-names, since it is possible that legends such as these centred on place-names could have arisen in much later times, in this case after the Rāmāyaṇa epic had gained some currency locally and local folk had come to believe that the Laṅkā of the epic referred to their country. This could have led some of them to identify certain places which seemed to fit the story with the events mentioned in the epic, either by connecting existing place-names with the incidents related in the epic or even by giving certain places new names connected with the legend.

That these place-names cannot be of any great antiquity is seen from the fact that the names of Rāvaṇa and Sītā occurring in them exist as they are and have not been subjected to phonetic changes which they should have undergone had they been of any great antiquity. If indeed these names had existed from the pre-Christian or even the early Christian period, they should not be existing in their present form, but rather in forms such as Rōṇa for Rāvaṇa and Iva or Iya for Sītā, which is however nowhere attested, showing that they are of rather late origin [10]. The only exception to this is perhaps Laggala, the name of a

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[9] Sinhalese Folklore Notes. Arthur Perera (1917)

[10] That place-and personal-names too have been subjected to phonetic change in Sinhala is borne out by a number of instances. Consider for example the case of the place-name Situlpavva in Hambantota District believed to have been founded by King Kāvantissa in the 2nd century B.C. Inscriptions in situ describe it as Citalapavata Vihara while in the Pāli Mahāvaṁsa it is called Cittalapabbata. Also consider the personal name Doti occurring in the Kumbukvava Pillar inscription of Dappula IV (10th century) which has it that the female attendants to be employed at the water-vessel of a foot-trough at a stone image house should be recruited from among the descendants of the lineage of a Jain among named Doti (*Doti himisur nuvaṭā*), the name Doti being the mediaeval Sinhala equivalent of an earlier Jotiya, the name of a Niganṭha or Jaina monk who lived in Anuradhapura about the 4th century B.C. who finds mention in the Mahāvaṁsa. Here we find that just as the Pāli term Niganṭha is rendered as Nuvaṭā, the name Jotiya is rendered as Doti showing that even personal names that had been remembered over time had been subjected to the phonetic changes that characterised Sinhala over the ages. There exists a rare Elu (Pure Sinhala) form *Ravuḷu* for *Rāvaṇa* (Sālalihini Sandeśśa) which however does not figure in any local place-name.

region between Matale Pallesiya Pattuva and the Mahaväli river which seems to have derived from an earlier Lak-gala and is probably the same region described in the sequel to the Mahāvaṁsa, the Cūlavaṁsa, as the Laṅkā mountains in which was situated the village Ranambura to which Prince Parakkamabāhu betook himself. The story of Rāma and Sītā was evidently known to the Sinhalese of mediaeval times and indeed appears to have been quite popular [11] showing that the Rāmāyaṇa could have influenced the popular imagination.

The fact that there exists a land bridge, a 30-mile chain of limestone shoals, coral reefs and shifting sandbanks known as Adam's bridge connecting the island of Mannar in North Western Sri Lanka to Ramesvaram off the south eastern coast of Tamil Nadu in India, has also lent some credence to the view that Sri Lanka is indeed the Laṅkā of the Rāmāyaṇa, despite the fact that this bridge is not man-made, but rather a natural formation. Adam's bridge is only about 10 metres at its deepest with considerable stretches of the approximately 40 km wide strait within wading depth, and it is likely that at one time it did constitute a land bridge between peninsular India and northern Sri Lanka which could be traversed by humans and perhaps even animals. The last remaining land link between the two countries however seems to have disappeared long before the events related in the epic could have taken place [12].

We will now examine the various passages of the epic which relate to Laṅkā and consider whether the description fits Sri Lanka or some locality in the subcontinent. But before we do so let us first attempt to trace the etymology of

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[11] In the Cūlavaṁsa, the sequel to the Mahāvaṁsa, we read of Prince Parakkamabāhu (12th century) in his desire to unite the country reflecting on the story of the Rāmāyaṇa and the courage of Rāma who slew Rāvaṇa. Mediaeval Sinhala poetry also contains allusions to the story showing that it was quite popular among the masses. Thus the 14th century Mayura Sandēśaya refers to King Rāma's beloved Sītā (*piya ram raja sītāvan lesini*) while the 15th century Guttila Kāvyaya by Vättäve has it: *ruduru guṇa dasagiv saṅdā, pasiṅdu vū lesa ram radā* (Just as King Rāma became famous because of the barbaric ten-headed one (i.e. Rāvaṇa). The Girā Sandēśaya of about the same period has it: *pera tama tamunugat rāmā sītā katā tepalan* (One who relates the stories of Rāma and Sītā learned long ago).

[12] S.U. Deraniyagala (The Prehistory of Sri Lanka. 1992) contends on tectonic grounds and glacio-eustatic evidence that the final submergence of the land link between southern India and northern Sri Lanka would have occurred at a date somewhat later than 7000 BP (C.5050 B.C.) when the mainland was severed from Sri Lanka by the post-glacial rise in sea level. It probably could not have existed after 4500 B.P. (C.2550 B.C.) since the tiger which was once widely distributed in the subcontinent is first attested on the seals of the Indus Valley of this period and its absence in Sri Lanka suggests that such a land bridge could certainly not have existed after 2500 B.C.

the term Laṅkā and place it in its proper context. The term *Laṅkā* it is possible derives from or is related to T.*ilaṅkāi* 'An inlet or island, an inlet formed in a river'[13]. Indeed there exist a number of islands in the Krishna-Godavari delta of Andhra Pradesh with names ending in – laṅkā, e.g.Bobbar-Laṅkā (Guntur District), Gudivaka-Laṅkā (West Godavari District) and Nagaya-Laṅkā (Krishna District)[14].

With regard to the geographical position of Laṅkā, we find in the Rāmāyaṇa, Hanuman telling Rāma that Laṅkā is situated on the other side of the ocean which is difficult to access (*sthitā pāre samudrasya dūra pārasya*). It is surrounded by water and built on a mountain (*na adeyam pārvatam*). Although

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[13] A Comprehensive Tamil and English Dictionary. M.Winslow (1862)

[14] With regard to the etymology of this term, it is possibly of Dravidian origin. Indeed, it is quite possible that *laṅkā* literally means 'something that has risen or jutting out', in other words 'an island' or 'islet'. It is even possible that it is related to the Skt.*linga* 'phallus' which seems to have derived from the Proto-Dravidian **niṅg* or **neg* 'to rise', 'become erect' (Cf.T.*niva* 'to rise', 'be elevated', Ka.*nege* 'to rise', 'go upward', Tu.*negiyuni* 'to rise, 'come up'. Incidentally Sinhala, an Indo-Aryan language has a form *naginna* 'to rise' which is closer to the Dravidian form than the Pali *laṅgheti*). This would suggest that the form *laṅkā* could well have derived from a Dravidian form such as *naṅkā* which is also supported by the fact that Proto-Dravidian seems to have had no word initial *l* (See Comparative Dravidian Phonology. K.Zvelebil.1970). This may also explain why in Tamil, Sri Lanka or any inlet or island for that matter is called *ilaṅkāi* (pronounced *ilaṅgāi*) with an initial *i* . If this indeed be the case, however, we would have to assume that the Tamil appellation itself has borrowed from Sanskrit despite its ultimately having Dravidian roots. Interestingly the change *n>l* (if we are to suppose that the term has its origins in a Dravidian form with an initial *n* that was adopted into Sanskrit with an initial *l*) is attested in the Austro-Asiatic speeches of Eastern India. Indeed, Austro-Asiatic speakers are known to be rather erratic in the use of the initial *l* and *n*, suggesting that the early speakers of this form treated *l* and *n* indifferently. W.Carey has in his Grammar of the Bengali language observed that the natives of Bengal (who are to a large extent descended from Austro-Asiatics) do not distinguish between *n* and *l* while Dr.M.Shahidullah (Munda affinities of Bengal.PTSAIOC 1930. 1933) has noticed a number of resemblances between Bengali and the Austro-Asiatic Munda languages including the interchange between *l* and *n*. What is also interesting is that the Eastern Indo-Aryan tongues have even turned forms derived from Old Indo Aryan *n* into *l*, as seen in Old Bengali *lāngā* and Oriya *laṅghā* 'naked' (Skt.*nagna*) and Maithili *lauchuā* 'ceremony of cutting the bride's nails' (Skt.*nakhaccheda* 'nail cutting'). Such Austro-Asiatic languages would have had a greater distribution in former times and it is perhaps not too far-fetched to suppose that the term was introduced into Sanskrit through the medium of Austro-Asiatic speakers in India, perhaps even a tribe hostile to the ancient Dravidians who lived in their midst and who were on a friendly footing with the indo-Aryans who would have offered them a military alliance or some other material benefit. It is quite possible that the Vānaras who are supposed to have assisted Rāma in his quest for Sīta may well represent such a tribe. Alternatively we may have to settle for a Munda origin of the term *Laṅkā* which may explain why Tamil when it adopted the term turned it into *Ilaṅkāi* as it originally had no word intial *l*. This feature of adding an initial vowel known as prothesis is a very common feature of loanwords in many languages.

the sea surrounding Lanka is called the abode of Varuna (*varuna vāsam*) implying that it is an ocean, it is also said to be inhabited by fierce alligators and crocodiles (*canda nakra graham*). In fact this ocean is called the abode of alligators (*sāgaro makarālayah*). Laṅkā is further described in the epic as being on top of the middle peak of the Trikūṭa mountain on the bank of the southern ocean (*dakṣiṇas-yodadhestire trikūṭo nāma parvatah, śikhare lasya śailasya madhya membudassannibhe śa kunairapi duṣprāpe laṅkacchinnacaturdiśi trimśadyo janavitirṇā svarnaprākāratoraṇā*).

What we could infer from these references is that Laṅkā was built on a mountain and surrounded by an expanse of water. Laṅkā here figures not as an island, but as a city built atop a mountain which was surrounded by water. Whether this expanse of water was an ocean is disputable, since it is said to be infested with fierce alligators and crocodiles which more suits the description of a lagoon or a moat. Besides, the Sanskrit term *sāgara* which the epic employs to describe the waterbody surrounding Laṅkā, could also mean a 'river' or 'stream' and not merely 'ocean' (Mbh). In fact, a derivative of the term, *sāyara*, is used in some MIAVs in the sense of 'lake', 'pond'. Indeed, it is quite possible that the Laṅkā described in the epic was a large fortified town or city surrounded by a moat.

Another indication as to the geographical character of Laṅkā is provided in the episode concerning the construction of the bridge to Laṅkā which is narrated in some detail. Thus Nala, a monkey said to have been born of Visvakarma is said to have undertaken to build the monumental bridge in the middle of the ocean (*mahāsetum madhye nada nadīpateh*). This is done by the army of monkeys who break rocks and trees, dragging them towards the sea and filling the ocean with all types of trees such as Sāla and Aśvakarna, Arjuna and Bilva. On the first day 14 yojanas of bridge is built and on the second day 20 yojanas. On the third day 21 yojanas and on the fourth day 22 yojanas. Finally, on the fifth day, 23 yojanas of bridge is built up to the other shore. Thus over a hundred yojanas of bridge, amounting to 400 or 800 miles, depending on how we take a yojana, is said to have been built in just five days, which would be a technological impossibility even in this modern age. It is however not impossible to suppose a bridge made of stone and trees being built over a moat or river, though in such a context, we would have to disregard the immense length traditionally ascribed to the bridge.

In fact, H.D.Sankalia [15] has argued that the Nala-setu occurring in the epic was not a fantastic bridge measuring one hundred yojanas in length built by Nala but only a narrow pipe or channel-like passage to cross the sāgara

[15] Rāmāyana. Myth or Reality? (1973)

meaning only a large lake. Nimaldhav Sen [16] suggested that Nala-Setu may simply mean 'a bridge constructed with reed (-like trees)'. In fact, the Rāmāyana actually states that various kinds of trees (including Sāla) were used for constructing the bridge.

Further, there does not seem to exist any hill or mountain in peninsular India that fits the description of Mahendra to which the Vānara army marched in their bid to conquer Lanka and which was situated opposite Lanka, being separated from it by the sea. If we are to take Laṅkā as Sri Lanka, then it should have referred to a mountain on the southern fringe of India. There is however no such mountain or high ground touched by sea water in this part of India. Furthermore, the epic would have us believe that the *Rāma Setu* or the bridge constructed by Rāma and the Vānara army was north to south whereas Adam's bridge is west to east. Moreover according to the epic, the *Rāma Setu* was a 100 yojanas long, which may be anywhere between 400-800 miles whereas Adam's Bridge is only about 30 miles.

That Rāvaṇa's Laṅkā could not have been Sri Lanka is also suggested by the geographical data of the ancient Indians. Alberuni alias Abū Raihān in his great work on India [17] in dealing with the Inhabitable Earth according to the Hindus for which he has relied on Hindu sources such as the Saṁhitā of Varāmihira gives as names of countries in the south, Laṅkā, the cupola of the earth, and that country anciently known as Siṁhala (the name by which Sri Lanka was known in the olden days), suggesting that these two countries were distinct. This view is corroborated by the Bṛhat Saṁhitā, which in enumerating the names of the countries in the south of India from left to right begins with Laṅkā and ends with Siṁhala.

Alberuni also notes that Hindus say that Laṅkā is between the two ends of the inhabitable world and without latitude, where Rāvaṇa the demon fortified himself when he had carried off the wife of Rāma. Alberuni goes on to say that no sailor who has traversed the ocean round the place which is ascribed to Laṅkā, and has traveled in that direction, has ever given such an account of it as tallies with the traditions of the Hindus, or resembles them, namely, that Laṅkā is a castle of the demons in the form of a labyrhinthine fortress, thirty yojanas above the earth with its length from east to west being hundred yojanas and its breadth from north to south being same as the height of 30 yojanas.

He nevertheless goes on to infer that the Laṅkā of the Hindus is identical with the clove country Langa which from his description of silent trading

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[16] Sankalia and Rāmāyana Studies. JISPQS.1989

[17] Alberuni's India. About A.D.1030. Trans. Edward Sachau (1910)

gathered from the reports of sailors appears to be Sri Lanka. He adds that the people with whom this trade is carried on are demons according to some, savage men according to others, and suggests that cannibalism takes place here since it is said that when perchance a merchant is left behind on this island, there is no more trace found of him. All this leads him to the belief that the Lanka of the Hindus is identical with the clove country Langa, though he admits that their descriptions do not tally.

Monier Monier-Williams in his Sanskrit-English Dictionary (1899) notes that according to some accounts, Laṅkā "was much larger than the island of Ceylon is at present, or was even distinct from it, the first meridian of longitude which passed through Ujjayinī being supposed also to pass through Laṅkā". Indeed, ancient Indian astrological works such as the Sūryasiddhānta (C.4th-6th century) clearly mention that the meridian passing through Avanti (Ujjayinī) also passes through Laṅkā below Ujjayinī. The relevant passage states that the meridian passing through Ujjayini is "situated upon the line which passes through the haunt of the demons (*rākṣasa*) and the mountain which is the seat of the gods (i.e.Mount Meru which was considered as a sort of North Pole). Similarly, Bhāskara, the author of the Siddhānta Śiromaṇi (12th century) states that "the line which, passing through Lanka and Ujjayinī, and touching the region of the Kurukṣetra goes through Meru- that line is by the wise regarded as the central meridian (*madhyarekhā*) of the earth". Now, Ujjayinī, we know is 23 ° 10' N latitude and 75° 47' E longitude east of Greenwich, suggesting clearly that the Laṅkā of these classical writers was about 400 miles from the western most point of Sri Lanka.

What is also interesting is that Laṅkā was considered as being situated on the equator, 23 degrees south of Ujjayinī by scholars such as Āryabhatta, author of the Āryabhatiya. This has led some to conclude that Laṅkā was an 'imaginary island' that had the longitude of Ujjain, but a zero latitude[18] . Bhāskarāchārya calls Laṅkā Nirsharadesha as it was according to him situated in the 0° N Lat. Sri Lanka however is located 7 ° or 8 ° above the equator and it is postulated that the ancient Laṅkā was to the south of present Sri Lanka in the 0° of modern geographers. Being in 0° latitude might suggest two things, that either it was South West or South East of Sri Lanka. If we are to take it to be to the South West of Sri Lanka it could be in the vicinity of the Maldivian atolls of Addu and Suvadivu. If to the South East of Sri Lanka, it could be, as argued by those like N.S.Adhikari [19] that Laṅkā was in present-day Sumatra, for counting

[18] Handbuch der Orientalistik. The Calendrical Systems of Mainland South-East Asia.J.C.Eade (1995)

[19] Lanka of Ravana.JRAS.Bombay.1917-18

about 7° or 8° to the south of the present Lanka, we reach the zone of 0° in which Sumatra is situated. Among his other arguments are that to the south (or rather the south east) of Mahendra (a hill situated opposite Laṅkā across the ocean to which the Vānara army resorted prior to embarking on their conquest of Rāvaṇa's kingdom) is Sumatra and that the appellation Malaydipa (On which according to some Hindu sources Laṅkā was situated) included Sumatra in the olden days.

Also noteworthy is the information provided in the Vāyupurāna which asserts that Laṅkā was distinct from Jambudīpa (India) and that to its south were six other dīpas including Malayadīpa where on the top of trikūtaparvat, Laṅkā was situated. This Malayadīpa on which Laṅkā was situated V.H.Vader [20] has sought to show was in the Maldives. There was also apparently a reminiscence among the Tamils that in former times, the land had extended further south, and that a mountain called Kumarikkadu and a large tract of country watered by the river Pahruli had existed south of Cape Comorin. It is believed that following a violent eruption of the sea, the mountain Kumarikkodu and the whole of the country through which the Pahruli flowed disappeared [21].

A relatively late Sinhalese work, the Rājāvaliya composed about the 16th or 17th century, also mentions a large land mass that once existed between Tūttukuḍi (Tuticorin in South Eastern India) and North Western Sri Lanka which was subsequently submerged by the sea. Says the chronicle: "In former times there was no sea between Tūttukuḍi and Lanka; but there stood the city of Ravana. Be it known that by his wickedness, his fortress, 25 palaces and 400,000 streets, were all overwhelmed by the sea". It also says that in the Dvāpara age of the world, on account of the wickedness of Ravana, his fortress, 25 palaces and 400,000 streets situated between Mannar and Tūttukuḍi, were submerged by the sea. This tradition was also found among the Tamils of northern Sri Lanka, for Gamini Punchihewa[22] records a tradition prevailing in the Jaffna peninsula that Ravana's fortresses lie buried in the sea between Mannar and Thuththikodi.

Others have sought to locate Rāvana's Laṅkā on a now submerged island to the South or South East of Sri Lanka, for instance, Daniel John [23] who placed

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[20] Situation of Rāvaṇa's Laṅkā on the equator. IHQ.1926

[21] Kalit-tokai and Cilappatikāram

[22] Vignettes of far-off things (1997)

[23] Rāvaṇa's Lanka. Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.1939-1940

it 'on an island in the midst of the sea off the southern or southeastern coast of the island of Ceylon', a contention which finds support in Hindu tradition which held that the hill called Trikūṭa on which Laṅkā was situated was South East of Trincomalee and was swallowed up by the sea [24]. Winslow (1862) gives *Ilaṅkāi* as 'The fort of Ravana supposed to have been south east of Trincomalee and swallowed up by the sea'. Sinhalese folklore too held that it was off southern or south-eastern Sri Lanka that Rāvaṇa's fort was situated. Says Perera (1917): "*Râvanâ Kotte, the stronghold of Râvanâ (King of the Rakshas) – was off Kirinda in the Hambantota District and is now submerged. The Great Basses are what is left of this city;the golden twilight seen there on an evening is the reflection of the brazen roofs of the submerged city*". Likewise Punchihewa (1997) records a tradition prevailing in the Southern Ruhuna country that Ravana's mighty empire existed between Kirinda and Potuvil on the South East Coast. "*There are two islets marked in the map of Sri Lanka as Maha Ravana Kottuwa and Kuda Ravana Kottuwa. These names in English are called Great Basses and Little Basses where stands a light house. Myth tells us that these islets called Maha Ravana Kottuwa and Kuda Ravana Kottuwa had been Ravana's original maritime empire which stood as a great bulwark for his southern coast territory*".

The idea of a submerged Lanka is also found in ancient Tamil tradition where it is decribed as a lost realm like Atlantis inhabited by a very dark folk. In the Skanda Purānam, we find a passage Ilankai Vil Padalam dealing with the submersion of Lanka: "*As sky-touching Ilanka went down into the sea, sinking where it stood, some of the women whose garments were blood-stained, rose out all wet, their bodies exposed, as spots upon the virile red moon. Others of the black Avanar women, falling into the bright sea, when their wet robes becoming loose entirely fell off and were lost, wandered about with white-toothed faces and black forms, blocking and hiding the glistening waters like toads*" [25].

This theory of a submerged island of Laṅkā off Sri Lanka though seemingly far-fetched cannot be proven or disproven like the Atlantis of Greek legend given the present state of knowledge. It nevertheless remains a remote possibility given the folk references to it and the fact that geological cataclysms of this nature are known to occur in the region, such as was seen in the recent Tsunami disaster of December 26, 2004 which left in its wake a trail of death and destruction. That such a cataclysm could have submerged an entire island or landmass in times gone by therefore remains a possibility.

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[24] See Ancient Indian Historical Tradition. F.E.Pargiter (1922)

[25] Trans. The Taprobanian. Feb.1887

However, many modern-day scholars believe that the Laṅkā of the Rāmāyaṇa was not Sri Lanka or anywhere near it but someplace in India, more specifically Central India, though Southern India may also fit the description. Madhav Kibe [26] was the first to propound the theory that Rāvaṇa's Laṅkā was situated in Central India, namely on the "now inaccessible peak of Amaraṇṭaka" in the region of the Vindhya mountain. This theory he largely based upon the mention in the epic of the regions to which Sugrīva, the Vānara king directed his subjects to search for Sītā. Kibe points out that Hanuman in his quest for Sītā came to the Vindhya mountain where he was informed by Jatāyu's brother Sampāti that "at a distance of a full hundred yōjanas from here, in the midst of the ocean, lies the beautiful city of Lanka". Taking a yōjana as four miles gathered from internal evidence, he argues that Laṅkā was situated close to Pampā (a lake near Govindagaḍa in former Reva state). In other words, it must have been situated near the modern Amarakaṇṭaka. He also pointed out that the neighbouring Gonds amongst whom there was a sub-caste called Rāvaṇavaṁśi, regarded themselves as descendants of Rāvaṇa, indicating their habitation there in former times.

A Central Indian location for Laṅkā was also argued for by Paramasiva Iyer [27]. Iyer attempted to identify Laṅkā with the hill near the village Indrāṇā about 18 miles north of Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh. According to this view, Indrāṇā hill which was surrounded by the river Hiran on three sides was the Trikūta of the epic (upon which Lanka was situated) and appeared as an island when the Hiran spread out as a shallow lake all round the hill. The theory was supported by H.D.Sankalia in his two noteworthy contributions to the topic, namely, Rāmāyana. Myth or Reality (1973) and The Rāmāyana in historical perspective (1982). According to Sankalia, the events described in the Rāmāyana probably took place in a limited area in North Central India, from Ayodhya on the River Sarayu, south to Allahabad (Prayag), west to Chitrakut and southwest to what was a forested area north of the River Narmada. At any rate, he contends that the author of the Rāmāyana does not seem to have been acquainted with South India or the region to the south of the Narmada, a contention supported by the absence of Sāla (Shorea robusta) trees in that part of India. This is particularly relevant since the epic tells us that the bridge to Laṅkā was built with trees such as Sāla and if we are to take the site of such construction to have been in the extreme south of peninsular India as traditional legend would have us believe, then we certainly cannot accept that

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[26] Rawana's Lanka discovered. Proceedings and Transactions of the First Oriental Conference. Poona.1919. elaborated further in Rāvaṇa's Laṅkā located in Central India.IHQ.1928

[27] Rāmāyana and Laṅkā (1940)

Laṅkā was located to the south of peninsular India. The epic also records that the bridge was composed of stone, but no such rocks have been found in the vicinity of Ramesvaram where there is nothing but sand dunes known as teris. Sankalia would have us believe that as Sanskritization spread the Rāmāyana southwards, so the text's geographical area expanded as well so that with time places all over India came to be associated with episodes in the epic. Sankalia believed that Rāvaṇa was a Gond, a Dravidian-speaking tribe of Central India and his views are supported by the fact that the Gonds formerly held wide sway in the region. In fact, Jabalpur, today a major city in India, was ruled by the Gonds during the mediaeval period. Indeed so pervasive was their presence in the region that even the Moghul army found it difficult to conquer the kingdom which was only taken with the defeat of the Gond queen Rāni Durgāvati.

There are also other grounds for supposing that Rāvaṇa's Laṅkā was in the region of Central-Southern India and that his followers were ancient Dravidians who may have been ancestral or related to the Kūis, a primitive Dravidian-speaking folk. This is suggested by Srinivasa Iyengar's [28] contentions which seek to connect Dravidian goddess worship with the guardian goddess of Rāvaṇa's capital. Observing that the most primitive Dravidian dialect we have is the Kūi spoken in the hill tracts between the Central Provinces and the Northern Circars and contending that the speakers of this dialect preserve ancient customs which the more civilized of the Dravidians have outgrown, he cites Ramadas Pantulu of Jeypore (Vizagapatam Agency) who had lived among the Kūi for many years and who has this to say: "*Every Kūi village has, at its entrance, a goddess by name 'Niśān Pennu'. It is represented by a round oval-shaped stone of about 6 to 9 inches in height and it is installed under a tree at the gate. That it may not be interfered with by men or animals, it is covered by a heap of stones. It is believed that if this stone is broken or removed from its place, or in any way injured some evil would befall the village. The villagers make offerings of fowls, goats, buffaloes, cows or pigs to this goddess, on every festive occasion*". This fact, says Iyengar, is discernible behind Vālmīki's poetic account of Hanuman's encounter with Laṅkā, the guardian goddess of Rāvana's capital when she was vanquished by him. She is said to have been the invincible protectress of the city and the self-existent lord is said to have told her: "*When thou shalt be vanquished by the valiant monkey, know that danger will overtake the Rākṣasas*". "Even today" he adds "every South Indian village possesses a border-goddess, ellaiyamman, worshipped chiefly by the lower orders but

[28] History of the Tamils from the earliest times to 600 A.D. (1929)

treated by the higher castes as one of the innumerable manifestations of Durgā, the supreme mother-goddess".

Other evidence cited in favour of a Dravidian, or rather Kūi origin for the Rākṣasas is the episode concerning Rāvaṇa's being followed to battle by beings who had faces of tigers, stags etc who he believes to have been Rākṣasa soldiers wearing masks resembling the faces of animals, a stratagem used to instill fear in their enemies during battle and whom he seeks to connect to a custom existing among Kūi tribesmen of wearing masks of the heads of wild animals or bison or stag horns on their heads, a custom which apparently was originally intended for wars, and which was later adopted as a means of amusement in dances. This is also suggested by another similarity between the Rākṣasas and the folk of the Agency tracts of the Vizagapatam districts, namely the description in the Rāmāyana of a *dāru-parvatam* (a hillock of felled trees) which Hanuman found among the pleasure-spots on entering the city, which he seeks to connect with the felled trees stored as fuel in the form of hillocks or towers which is a common sight in this agency. As the rains pour so abundantly in these hills, such stacks become a necessity as a provision against the season, when it is not possible to secure a piece of dry wood. As it was after the rains that Hanuman went to Laṅkā, it is contended that it is no wonder that the Vānara spy saw such structures within the precincts of Rāvana's abode.

D.P.Mishra [29] provides supporting evidence, citing the fact that the Rākṣasas were 'eaters of human flesh' which he connects to the erstwhile Koi Gond practice of cannibalism, and the Rākṣasa form of marriage which comprisedthe abduction of women (Sītā was abducted by Rāvaṇa) which he connects to the Koi Gond practice of marriage by capture, which in later times evolved into a more refined form with the consent of the girl concerned sought before the marriage could take place.

It is also possible that Rāvaṇa's Laṅkā would have been situated someplace in the vicinity of the Godavari district. As seen earlier, islands in the Godāvari river are known as Laṅkā and it is perhaps not too far-fetched to suppose that Rāvaṇa's Laṅkā was situated on such an island or islands. In fact, folk legend of the Godāvari region does suggest that the events related in the Rāmāyaṇa took place in that district. Such is the case with the Kōyās of Rēkāpalli Taluk of Godāvari district who believe that much of the incidents narrated in the epic took place in their district.

According to this Dravidian legend, Parnaśālā on the banks of the Godāvari was the scene of Sītā's abduction by Rāvana. The famous bird Jaṭāyulu on hearing Sītā's cries of distress, hastened to the rescue and confronted Rāvaṇa's

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[29] The Search for Lanka (1985)

chariot on the site of Dummāguram, upon which a terrible battle ensued with so much dust that the place was afterwards called Dummā (dust) guram (village). In the struggle, Rāvaṇa's chariot-wheels grazed the top of the hill on the opposite side of the river and the hill has ever since been called Rādhapuguṭṭā (from *rādhapu* 'chariot' and *guṭṭā* 'hill'). Rāvaṇa, despairing of victory by fair means thereafter schemed and conquered Jaṭāyulu who fell mortally wounded, its two wings falling down near the village which was called Rēkāpalli (fr.*rēkā* 'wing' and *palli* 'village'). Rāma, having met Sugrīva, learnt that Rāvana was living on a well known hill in the gorge some distance below Rēkāpalli, whereupon he proceeded to rescue his wife [30].

In fact, Mishra (1985) has even attempted to pinpoint the exact location of Laṅkā in the mouth of the Godāvari river based on ancient historical accounts like the Vāyu Purāna. According to the purāna Trikūṭa upon which Laṅkā was situated was in the Malaya-dvīpa. The purāna describes the Malaya-dvīpa as having a population predominantly of *Mlecchas* (Barbarians or Non-Aryans) and gold mines and a mountain called Malaya with Mahendra as one of the peaks. The famous Trikūṭa mountain is also said to be situated on this island and the great city of Laṅkā founded on one of its slopes. He then proceeds to show that Malaya is a Dravidian word derived from *malei* 'hill' and that the Malaya mountains are those that lie to the south west of Orissa while the hills of Vizagapattam and Ganjam are also well known by that name and the Eastern Ghats on the left bank of the Godāvari also called Malaya. To further validate his argument he notes that the aboriginals of this part are mostly Oraons and Sabaras (connecting them to the Mlecchas mentioned in the Purāna) and in the beds of many rivers of this region gold has been found (which agrees with the description in the Purāna of gold mines).

Such descriptions, he avers, lead us to the triangular delta of the mouth of the river Godāvari, which is triangular (*trikūṭa*) and an island (*dvīpa* 'on whose two sides water flows') and also called Laṅkā. He points out that with the currents of the Vāśiṣṭhi Godāvari and Gautami Godāvari on two sides and the vast Bay of Bengal on the third side, this triangular island takes the shape of a *trikūṭa* and that on its riverward side the city of Laṅkā may well have been situated. He also observes that once through the hills, the river opens out and forms a series of broad reaches dotted with low alluvial islands known as Laṅkās, which he takes to be the Setu or bridge of Rāma. As further evidence, he gives the Sonpur plates of Kumāra Someśvaradeva which show that Sonpur in Orissa was once called Paschima-Laṅkā or Western Laṅkā, making the

[30] See Rāmāyana legend in tribal languages.H.L.Shukla in A Critical Inventory of Rāmāyana Studies.K.Krishnamoorthy (1991)

island in the mouth of the Godāvari as Pūrva or Laṅkā proper, and also brings our attention to a rock in the bed of Mahānadī within a stone's throw from the palace of the Mahārāja of Sonpur being known as Laṅkāvartaka in the Mahada copperplates of Yogeśvaradevavarman. He notes that such names like Paschima Laṅkā or Laṅkāvartaka could not have come into vogue unless on its east there was Laṅkā proper situated in the triangular island of the river Godāvari.

Mishra adds that the only objection that can be raised against his location of Laṅkā in the mouth of the Godāvari might be that the alluvial delta has only sea level while Laṅkā is said to have been on the high Trikūṭa mountain. He counters that the forceful current of the Godāvari has transformed the rocky appearance of the island into an alluvial bed, which is probable as the Eastern Ghats are now and then hit by cyclones. He also notes that even now, new islands are constantly formed and old islands modified in the bed of the river Godāvari, the islands liable to these changes being called Laṅkās.

Attempts have also been made to connect the Rāmāyaṇa story with the archaeological record of India. For instance, we have the well known Indian historian Romila Thapar who has suggested that since the Rākṣasas are concentrated in the Vindhyas, they may perhaps be identified with the chalcolithic cultures of India of the 2nd and early 1st millennium B.C. She also speculates that the descriptions of the wealth of Lanka might be 'a vague memory of the rich-cities of the Bronze-age past' [31].

These chalcolithic cultures probably peopled by folk of Dravidian origin were apparently quite advanced. It has been found that although the architecture of the chalcolithic cultures of India consisted mainly of wattle and daub structures, they show incipient settlement planning, impressive multi-roomed houses made of semi-dressed stones and mud-bricks and even defence architecture like ramparts and moats [32].

Copper hoards found in such sites comprise a variety of objects like flat axes, double-edged axes, bar celts, hooked spear-heads, antennae-hilted swords, harpoons with barbs and anthropomorphic figures. It has been observed that these objects are very heavy and unwieldy and do not appear to have had any utilitarian function, most of them probably being objects of rituals which may perhaps be connected to the practice of worshipping metal tools and weapons by the Gonds of Central India [33].

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[31] Cited in The Sanskrit Epics. J.L.Brockington (1998)

[32] See Prehistoric human colonization of India. V.N.Misra.J.Biosci.Nov.2001

[33] Ibid

The Yakkhas

The ancient Sinhalese chronicle, the Mahāvaṁsa compiled by the monk Mahānāma C.5th century A.C. refers to a pre-Aryan people who inhabited Sri Lanka whom it terms the Yakkhas (fem.Yakkhinī) . These Yakkhas, we will attempt to show below, were none other than the country's aboriginal inhabitants, represented today by the Veddas, a people of Australoid or Austro-Asiatic stock.

Before we proceed to deal with the narrative at greater length, however, let us consider what the term *Yakkha* (fem.*Yakkhini*) actually denoted. *Yakkha* we know is the Pāli or Prakritic form of the Sanskrit *Yakṣa* which in Vedic times appears to have denoted some sort of supernatural being or spirit. These spirits were evidently held in awe and fear, for we find the ancient Indo-Aryans invoking their gods in the Rg Veda not to be allowed to encounter a *Yakṣa*.

A.Hillebrandt[34] suggests that the word *Yakṣa* may be connected to Vedic *yakṣ* in *pra- yakṣ* 'to honour', while Prof. A.B.Keith[35] regards it to be connected with the Sanskritic root *yaj* 'to worship'. The term may therefore mean a being worthy of worship or offerings. Rhys Davids [36] traces the term to Skt.*yakṣ* 'to move quickly' and perhaps 'swift creatures, changing their abode quickly and at will' while O.H.De A.Wijesekera [37] suggests that it is not improbable that *yakṣ* whence *yakṣa* is derived, is an obsolete root originally meaning 'to rush after', 'hunt', 'injure' which is probably related to OHG *jagôn* as has been suggested by Grassmann and supported by Max Müller [38]. This, he says, may have developed in the Ṛg Veda the sense of 'stirring' or 'moving' (as a living being) and notes that whatever the original sense may have been, it appears likely that the word meant something like 'mysterious or flashing thing'. Indeed, its Pali form *Yakkha* not infrequently occurs in Buddhist literature such as the Jatakas and denotes a spirit of some sort. These beings known as *Yakṣas* or *Yakkhas* figure as both benevolent and malevolent spirits in the three ancient Indian religious traditions, viz. The Brahmanical,

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[34] Vedisch Yakṣa, in Festgabe Richard Garbe (1927)

[35] Personal Communication to Ananda Coomaraswamy.Addenda to Yakṣas, part I, Yakṣas, part II (1931)

[36] Pali-English Dictionary (1905)

[37] Buddhist and Vedic Studies (1994)

[38] Vedic Hymns.SBE.Vol.XXXII

Buddhist and Jaina[39] . Ananda Coomaraswamy [40] holds the Yakṣa cult to be a "phase of non-and pre-Aryan Indian 'animism'".

The Mahāvaṁsa narrative concerning the Yakkhas (which relates to the period C.600-400 B.C.) may be recapitulated as follows: The Aryan prince Vijaya and his 700 followers from the country of Lāḷa in Eastern India arrive in Laṅkā and encounter the god Uppalavanna in the guise of a wandering ascetic seated at the foot of a tree. This being who has been entrusted the protection of Laṅkā by the Lord of the Gods Sakka informs Vijaya and his party that they are in the island of Lanka and that there are no human beings here and that there will not be any danger to them. Having said thus, he sprinkles them with water from his water pot, ties a thread on their hands and disappears. A Yakkhinī servant appears in the form of a bitch and is followed by one of Vijaya's followers, even though forbidden by the prince. He then encounters the Yakkhinī Kuveṇi seated at the foot of a tree and is captured by her, being bound by her magical power. The Yakkhinī, unable to devour him on account of the power of the protective thread hurls him into a chasm. The same is done with the rest of Vijaya's followers. Vijaya, suspecting danger, encounters Kuveṇi and having seized her by her hair, raises his sword and demands that his followers be given. The Yakkhinī frightened, begs for her life and accedes to his demands. Kuveṇi being pleased with Vijaya assumes the form of a sixteen year old and adorned in all ornaments, approaches the prince. Vijaya, looking forward to future benefit, cohabits with her. At night, Vijaya hears music and the sound of singing and asks Kuveṇi about the noise.The Yakkhinī, who conceives the idea of bestowing kingship on Vijaya and eliminating the Yakkhas as she fears that they would kill her on account of enabling human beings to settle, informs him that a seven-day feast is in progress in the Yakkha city Sirīsavatthu to celebrate the marriage of its chief to a princess of Laṅkānagara and instigates him to slay the Yakkhas. With the help of Kuveṇi's magical power, Vijaya destroys the invisible Yakkhas and attires himself with the regalia of their king. Having passed a few days there, Vijaya departs to Tambapanni and having built a city, lives with the Yakkhini, surrounded by his ministers. With the passage of time, he has a son and daughter by Kuveṇi. Vijaya's ministers, having founded settlements in different parts of the country urge Vijaya to be consecrated in kingship. Vijaya however refuses to be anointed without a Kṣatriya consort. A princess from the Pandya country of South India is obtained for the prince, who in turn repudiates Kuveṇi. Kuveṇi, taking the children with her departs to Laṅkāpura

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[39] Yakṣa worship in early Jaina literature.Dr.U.P.Shah . JOI(B) Sep.1953

[40] Yakṣas (1928)

where she is killed by a violent Yakkha who takes her for a spy. The children, fleeing, depart to the Sumana mountain or Adam's peak and having grown up, live with one another and give rise to the *Pulindas* or Veddas.

We will now seek to show that the Yakkhas of old are none other than the ancestors of the present-day Veddas. Indeed, there exists internal evidence in the MV itself connecting the ancient Yakkhas with the Veddas. According to the MV, Vijaya's children by Kuveni[41], having departed to Sumanakūta (modern Samanola ,i.e. Adam's peak) lived with one another and bringing up sons and daughters dwelt in Malaya (the country's mountainous central region) with the king's leave. It adds "From these are sprung the Pulinda". The term Pulinda is considered to be synonymous with Vedda [42]. The MV's statement connecting the Pulindas with Malaya is significant as we know that Ratnapura district (where Adam's peak is situated) was very probably inhabited by the Veddas in the not too distant past [43]. Furthermore, in the Sumanakūṭa – Vaṇṇanā, a 13th century Pāli poem on Adam's Peak by Vēdēha Thēra we find the following being mentioned as the haunts of the Yakkhas at the time of the supposed first visit of Gotama Buddha to Sri Lanka:

Rammē tadā ratanadīpa-varamhi laṅkā-lokabhidhāna-harikaṇḍaka-yakkhadāsē-ōdumbarē sumanakūṭaka-taṇḍuleyyē sēlēsu māragiri-missaka-riṭṭha-nāmē ye' ñňe pi santi girayō vana-rāmaṇeyyā gaṅgā nadī gir-guhā

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[41] According to the Mahāvaṁsa –ṭīkā (commentary to the Mahāvaṁsa),Vijaya's children by Kuveṇi were named Jīvahattha and Dipellā.

[42] A 15th century vocabulary of Sinhala synonyms, the Nāmāvaliya, gives *puliňdu* as a synonym for Vedda: *Vädī,mal, puliňdu,vanasara* (*nam Väddaṇa*).

[43] It is very likely that in former times, the ancestors of the Veddas occupied the Sabaragamuva region, especially its forested tracts like the Sinharaja forest. John Bailey (An Account of the Wild Tribes of the Veddas of Ceylon. TESL.1863) has shown that the former existence of the Veddas may be traced in the toponymy of Sabaragamuva. This includes *Vädda-gala* (Vedda rock), *Vädda -äla* (Vedda canal), *Vädda -vatta* (Vedda garden) and *Vädda-kumbura* (Vedda field) in the Ratnapura district. The place-name *Sabaragamuva* or *Habaragamuva* literally means 'village of the *Sabaras*', *Sabara* being a generic term for aboriginal peoples. In early Sanskrit literature (eg. Aitareya Brahmana), the term *Sabara* denoted a Dasyu folk, probably of Austro-Asiatic affinities. It is quite likely as held by Sarat Chandra Roy (The Mundas and their country) that in the olden days, *Savara* (< *Sabara*) denoted Munda peoples in general . Says Bailey: "It is traditional throughout Saffragam that once Vaeddas predominated over the Sinhalese in that district, and that, as the latter gained ground, the former withdrew towards Bintenne and Welassa". Nandadeva Wijesekera (Veddas in transition. 1964) also mentions that a Vedda element may be observed among the population in and around the environs of Väddagala. At least one family name suggesting a connection with the Veddas, Väddagē was known in the Ratnapura district (Wijesekera. 1964).

sikatā talā ca tatthāvasanti rabhasā pharusātiruddā pāṇātipāta-niratā saṭha-kūṭa-yakkhā

(At the time, the Yakkhas who were wicked, abusive, very cruel, and cunning, and who were continuously engaged in taking away animal life, haunted the mountains Laṅkā (Lag-gala), Lōka (Log-gala), Harikaṇḍaka (Hirikaḍa), Yakkhadāsa (Yakdessā-gala), Ōdumbara (Dimbulā-gala), Sumana-kūṭa (Adam's Peak), Māragiri (Māragala), Missaka (Mihintale), Ariṭṭha (Riṭigala) and such other rocks which grace the woods and (they haunted also) rivers and streams, rock-caves and sandy plains of the delightful island of gems).

We find that many of these places until fairly recent times constituted the habitations of the Veddas, again suggesting a connection between the Veddas and the Yakkhas of old.

That the Veddas are identical with the Yakkhas of yore is also suggested by the Yālppāna Vaipava Mālai, a history of the Jaffna Kingdom composed by Mayilvakanan, an 18th century Tamil writer who has drawn much of his information from earlier sources. The work has it that before the coming of Vijaya, a Ksatriya from Bengal, over 2000 years ago, Lanka was a great wilderness inhabited only by the Vedar and wild animals. Now, it is evident that the Tamil term Vedar which literally means 'hunters' is meant to denote the Veddas, the pre-Aryan inhabitants of the country.

Another indication of the Vedda affinities of the Yakkhas is suggested by the traditional Vedda form of worship which has centred round the propitiation of spirits known as *Yaku* (sg.*Yakā*). This term is a loan from Sinhala and is derived from the Old Indo-Aryan *Yakṣa* (as occurring in Sanskrit) through a Middle Indo-Aryan or Prakritic form such as *Yakkha* (as found in Pali). With Sinhalese influence being pronounced since very early times, it is likely that the original Vedda term for their ancestral spirits has been superseded by the Sinhala *Yaku*. It is also significant that whereas the modern Sinhala term *Yaku* has more or less acquired the sense of malefic spirits [44], the Vedda *Yaku* as

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[44] In Sinhalese folklore, the *yakā* (fem.*yakinni*) denote a class of supernatural beings similar to the jinns of Arab and Islamic belief. For instance, there is Rīri Yakā or the 'Blood Devil' who is so called because of his particular fondness for blood and because it is popularly believed that he is the cause of all disorders in the blood stream. Everything about him is said to have some association with blood. He is red in colour, dresses in red garments and all that is offered to him have the adjective 'red' before them, i.e., baked or fried food and blood. He is said to inhabit junctions and cemeteries and to reveal himself specially at mid-night or dusk. There are also believed to be Yakinnis or she-devils such as Mōhini who is conceived of as a lascivious seductress who inhabits watery places, half-clad and exposing her voluptuous body to men in order to entice them. Often she would come with a child in her arms asking a lonely traveler at night to hold the child for a moment until she tightens her loose clothes. If any male is foolish enough to fall to her enticements, she would cause his death (See Folklore of Sri Lanka.Nandasena Ratnapala. 1991).

occurring in the form *Nā-Yaku* (lit. kin –spirits) appears to have preserved the older sense of 'spirits'. The appellation *Yakka* or *Yaka* would have been applied by the early Aryan Sinhalese settlers to denote those aboriginals given to spirit worship –a practice which survived among the Veddas until recent times and still does in a more or less corrupted form [45].

Another factor that suggests a link between the Veddas and Yakkhas of yore is the similarity of their trading practices, namely, the practice of 'silent trading'. The Chinese Buddhist traveller Fa-Xian (early 5th century A.C) mentions that the merchants of various countries carried on a silent trade with the 'spirits' of the island. He says: "when the trafficking was taking place, the spirits did not show themselves. They simply set forth their precious commodities, with labels of the price attached to them; while the merchants made their purchases according to the price; and took the things away" [46]. It is very evident here that Fa-Xian's 'spirits' (rendered as *guishén* in his text) refers to none other than the Yakkhas of yore . Later writers such as Fernao de

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[45]According to Vedda belief, the spirit of every dead man, woman and child becomes a *Yakā* within a few days of death (Notes on recent work among the Veddas.C.G.Seligmann.JRAS.CB.1908). The most important spirit in Vedda belief was evidently Kande Yaka, "the Yaka of Kande Wanniya, a celebrated hunter who lived many generations ago and whose assistance is invoked for good hunting" (The Veddas.Charles and Brenda Seligman.1911). Besides being of especial assistance in the chase, Kande Yaka was considered to be a sort of 'Lord of the Dead' (Seligmann. 1908). The Seligmanns (1911) note that Kande Yaka is often associated with Bilindi Yaka, the Yaka of his younger brother Bilindi. Gale Yaka, another prominent Yaka, was invoked for success when gathering honey. Amongst the other prominent Yakas were Bambura Yaka, Indigolla Yaka and Pata Yaka (ibid). Female ancestral spirits were known as *Maha Yakino* (sg. *Yakinī*), the chief of whom was Maha Kiriammā. These *Maha yakino* were associated with hilltops and were believed to send sickness and were also invoked to cure the same. They were also believed to sometimes steal children (Seligmanns. 1911). There existed a special ceremony among the Veddas known as the *Nä-yaku* ceremony which was undertaken with the object of enabling the dead man to become a *Nä-yaku* and was performed a few days after death. In its simplest form as performed by the jungle Veddas, it comprised of the Shaman dancing round an offering of yams and water, or merely round an implanted arrow, chanting the invocation *ma miya, ma miya ma deya, topang koyitetti mittigan yanda* (My departed one, my departed one, my god ! Where art thou wandering ?). The offerings for the ceremony usually consisted of cooked rice, coconut milk and betel leaves placed on a rice pounder or tripod. Round this the Shaman held a ceremonial arrow dance, invoking the spirits including that of the dead man, starting with the salutation *Ayu bowa Ayu bowa* (Lit.long life, long life) and then telling him to come back and take rice and honey and betel before making an appeal to show them the sambhur and spotted deer and allow their four-footed ones (i.e.dogs) to catch iguanas (See Far-off things. R.L.Spittel.1933)

[46] A record of Buddhist Kingdoms. Trans. James Legge (1886)

Queyroz [47] and Robert Knox [48] mention the secret barter of flesh for weapons by the Veddas . It is therefore likely that the Yakkha practice of silent trading has continued among the Veddas, which again suggests a close connection between the two.

A connection between the Veddas and the Yakkhas of old is also suggested by onomastics or a consideration of personal names. We find in the commentary to the MV, the Mahāvaṁsa-Ṭīkā, the name of the bride from Laṅkānagara who was to be espoused to the Yakkha chief of Sirīsavatthu being given as Polamittā and her mother as Goṇḍā. Such non-Aryan-sounding names were until very recent times borne by the Veddas E.g. Gōbā and Kundā [49].

Although it is true that the MV constantly seeks to attribute to the Yakkhas, non-human, supernatural qualities, the balance of evidence suggests that they were in fact human beings, though very much different from the early Aryan settlers in both physical type and culture . The MV tells us that when Kuveṇi was contemplating bertraying the Yakkhas to Vijaya, she was thinking to herself: "All the Yakkhas should be killed as they would kill me on account of enabling human beings to settle (*manussāvāsakāranā*)" which would suggest that the Yakkhas were deemed non-human beings. Further in relating Vijaya's repudiation of Kuveṇi in favour of a Ksatriya princess from South India it quotes him as saying to her: "Depart now, dear one, leaving the two children behind .Humans are ever in fear of non-human beings", implying that the Yakkha woman was non-human . The MV also alludes to Kuveṇi assuming the form of a beautiful sixteen year old and her Yakkhinī servant appearing in the form of a bitch .The MV says that when Kuveṇi advised Vijaya to kill the Yakkhas at the seven-day wedding feast alluded to earlier Vijaya asked "How shall I kill them who are invisible?", to which Kuveṇi replies "I shall make a noise there and , by that signal, you strike. By my power ,the weapon will fall on them" The MV says that hearing this, Vijaya complied and destroyed the Yakkhas.

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[47] Conquista Temporal e Espiritual de Ceylao (1687)

[48] An Historical Relation of the Island Ceylon (1681)

[49] See Wijesekera (1964)

All this would seem to suggest that the Yakkhas were some sort of non – human beings [50], a belief reflected even in later epigraphs such as the Dambulla Rock inscription of Nissanka Malla (12th century) which refers to the race of King Vijaya who made Laṅkā a habitation for man by extirpating the Yakṣas (*Yakṣa praḷaya koṭā laṁkāva manuṣyavāsa kaḷa vijaya-rāja-paramparā*).

However, there are strong indications supporting the view that they were actually human. Firstly, we have the evidence of the Mahāvaṁsa where Vijaya is said to have sired two children by his Yakkha mistress Kuveṇi, showing that the Yakkhini could not have been non-human. Besides, when Vijaya seized Kuveṇi with her hair and raised his sword threatening to kill her and demanding that his followers be given, she is said to have been frightened and begged for her life, saying, "Lord, spare my life. I shall give you a kingdom and I shall do for you a woman's service and anything else you wish". Now it is well known that fear is not an attribute of the Yakkhas, yet the Yakkha woman Kuveṇi here shows fear. If this so-called Yakkhini was indeed a

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[50] It would appear that in ancient Indo-Aryan discourse, non-Aryans were at times considered non-human which would explain why they were often referred to in derogatory terms. The Indo-Aryans who considered themselves the progeny of Manu (Man or more appropriately the Aryan man) called themselves *manuṣya* (Born of Manu, or in other words, human) while *amānuṣa* (Lit.non-human) would have simply meant non-Aryan. Such motifs often occur in ancient literature and not just in India. In the Rāmāyaṇa for instance, we find what appears to be an aboriginal tribe being called Vānaras (Lit.monkeys) and attributed simian or non-human characteristics. These folk were probably described as such either after their physical characters such as dark skin, beardless faces and lean appearance or after a totem they possessed. Thus we find Sīta expressing her astonishment at the alliance between men and Vānaras while Rāvana reckons Rāma to be the only man in the enemy army, despite there being a host of Vānaras who comprised the army.We also find the Vānaras being described as having tails. In yet another passage, we come across Vālin (The monkey-king and brother and foe of Sugrīva whom Rāma had pledged to dispose of in exchange for the latter's assistance in finding his abducted wife) blaming Rāma for killing him who is only a wild animal living on fruit and roots (*vanacarā mṛgā mūla phalāśinah*) upon which Rāma gives as his excuse for not challenging him first, that the royal practice of hunting permits the killing of animals, implying that the Vānaras were deemed as animals by the poet or sought to be portrayed as such by him despite the fact that they figure in much of the rest of the narrative as a tribe or race of men capable of thinking, talking and fighting. Many are those who have argued that the Vānaras were an Austro-Asiatic tribe, among them G.Ramdas (Aboriginal Tribes in the Rāmāyana. Man in India.1925) who contends that the Vānaras were the Savaras of Ganjam, one of whose tribes is called Arsi (Monkey) by themselves and Lambo Lanjiya (Long-tailed) by the Oriyas. M.V.Kibe (Cultural descendants of Ravana of Lanka. Kane Felicitation Volume.1941) has likewise sought to identify the vānaras with Austric tribes such as the Sabars and Korkus. It has also been claimed that the Vānaras of the Rāmāyana may well represent tribes such as the Oraons of Chota Nagpur who are known to have identified themselves as the Vānaras of the epic (See Rāmāyana legend in tribal languages.H.L.Shukla in A Critical Inventory of Rāmāyana Studies. K.Krishnamoorthy.1991).

supernatural spirit, she could well have got out of Vijaya's grasp. Indeed, divested of the fanciful elements that pervade the narrative, the Yakkhas appear to be very much human and not supernatural beings.

Nevertheless, there appears to have existed a belief among the later generations that the Yakkhas of yore were non-human and like the Yaksas of Indian lore and literature, possessed of supernatural powers. The Vijayan migration is said to be pictorially represented in the Ajanta frescoes which depicts a fierce combat going on between the attacking force and the inhabitants of the country who are all shown as female demons, with flowing light coloured hair, long curved teeth and pendant breasts [51].

It is possible that by the 5th century A.C., when the Mahāvaṁsa was being compiled by Mahānāma, the Yakkhas mentioned in the source from which he drew his information (the Sīhalatthakathā) were perceived not as human ,but as supernatural beings. Parallel cases are not lacking elsewhere. For instance, the Rākṣasas and Piśācas who occur as blood –sucking and flesh-eating demons in Vedic literature (Rg and Atharva Vedas) are believed by some to have been actual cannibalistic tribes whom the ancient Aryans encountered at the time of their conquests in the subcontinent. It has also been shown that the Ogres of Germanic folklore were to a significant extent representative of ancient tribal folk[52].

There is also reason to believe that in the olden days much myth and mystery surrounded the aboriginal natives of the island, with such serious charges as cannibalism being levelled against them. It seems that fantastic tales of a race of Yakkhinīs enticing merchants to the island and then devouring them were rife in the olden days as suggested by the Valāhassa Jātaka. According to the Jātaka, a race of Yakkhinīs who lived in Sirīsavatthu in the island of Lanka were in the habit of enticing into their city merchants ship-wrecked on the coast and then devouring them. The Divyāvadāna (a Sanskrit work assigned to the 3rd or 4th century A.C.) also relates a somewhat similar legend. The MV alludes to Kuveṇi herself being a party to such crimes when it alleges that she showed Vijaya "many different things such as rice, which were in the ships of merchants who had been devoured". Such tales would have perhaps been circulated by interested parties engaged in trade with the aboriginal folk so as to deter others who might have been a potential threat to their commercial interests.

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[51] See Paintings in the Cave-Temples of Ajanta. J.Griffiths (1896)

[52]. See Teutonic mythology. Jacob Grimm (1883)

This is not to say that these tales were not altogether without any factual foundation since the Vedda practice of biting a piece of dried human liver (obtained from victims who had dared transgress Vedda territory) when provoked beyond a reasonable limit which continued until fairly recent times, could have given rise to such a belief. We would therefore have to attribute much of the fictitious portions pertaining to the Yakkhas in the Mahāvaṁsa to literary embellishment.

There can be little doubt that these Yakkhas were a race of humans whom the early Aryan settlers encountered in the island. However , an important matter that needs to be addressed is how is it that the chronicle attributes to the Yakkhas an advanced state of culture and material development while their supposed descendants, the Veddas were until fairly recently a primitive hunter-gatherer folk. According to the MV the Yakkhas possessed two cities, Sirīsavatthu and Laṅkānagara and indulged in music and singing. The chronicle also alludes to Kuveṇi "spinning like a woman-hermit" before she met Vijaya and a seven-day marriage feast to celebrate the espousal of a Yakkha chief to a princess.

All this would indicate that the Yakkhas were a fairly settled and civilized people who had reached a sufficient level of economic development so as to engage in more aesthetic activities. This does not necessarily mean that retrogression from a high state of culture to a lower one has taken place. It would rather appear that the MV refers to a portion of the ancient Yakkhas who had reached a greater degree of culture and material development than their wilder kin, the ancestors of the present-day Veddas. We would therefore have to agree with Henry Parker [53] who holds that "in very early times a great part of the race had reached a much more advanced state of culture than the wilder members of it whose more or less isolated life either as hunters ,or as hunters-villagers, did not in many cases induce them to feel any desire to participate in it".

It would thus appear that the early Aryan settlers and their descendants absorbed the more civilized portions of these Yakkhas who in turn adopted Aryan speech and culture. It was probably such assimilation, followed by intermarriage and miscegenation that gave rise to the present-day Sinhalese race, a contention also supported by the available physical anthropological evidence . It is only natural to suppose that a higher, dominant, more advanced and complex culture absorbs or assimilates those members and elements of a lower culture, and the ancient Aryan Sinhalese culture would have been far superior to contemporaneous Yakkha culture as is suggested by the adoption of Aryan speech and culture on the part of the Veddas.

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[53] Ancient Ceylon (1909)

The Dīpavaṁsa, a smaller but slightly earlier work than the Mahāvaṁsa ascribed to the late 4th or early 5th century A.C. has it that the Buddha, having seen with his Buddha-eye the most excellent Laṅkādipa which was covered with great forests and full of frightful, blood-thirsty Yakkhas, resolved to people it with men. Having risen into the air, he came hither from Jambudīpa (India) and gathering thick clouds containing thousands of rain drops he sent rain, cold winds and darkness and upon being asked for warmth by the Yakkhas thus affected, he produced a fierce, burning heat which caused them to flee in all directions. The Buddha, who saw the frightened Yakkhas, resolved to give them the whole old island of Giri not far from Lanka and drawing the island toward himself he joined the two islands, whereupon the eager Yakkhas ran to Giridīpa like thirsty people in summer to a river, after which the Buddha restored the island to its former place.

A later work, the Rājāvaliya assigned to the 16th or 17th century, has it that the Buddha on the day he attained Buddhahood while residing in Vēḷuvanārāma in the city of Rajagaha saw with his eyes Laṅkā being inhabited by demons. On the ninth month after he had attained Buddhahood he ascended the sky and visited Laṅkā on a Poya day under the asterism Pusa, and coming to Mahiyangana he stood in the air and obtained permission from the demons to plant his scepter. Causing a thick darkness and forcing rays of light, white, red and blue, to emanate from his body, he created a mass of fire. When the demons gathered together on a seashore, terrified, he caused Yak-giri island to be brought, and putting the demons on to it, willed that it should return to its former place. This however was not the end of these demons, for the chronicle, in the episode dealing with Prince Vijaya, refers to the demons who had concealed themselves in the middle of the Tammänna forest on the day the demons were banished to Yakgiri island and notes that they had removed to Laggala and Loggala (*edā yakun yaggiri divayinaṭa äriya dā itiri vuṇu yakku tammännā vanaya sāṅgavī siṭa laggala loggala unnāha*). Indeed, it was on the same day that Vijaya had encountered Kuveṇi, that at night, a she-demon who resided at Loggala was to be married to a demon who resided at Laggala or in the words of the chronicle: *Laggala yakuṭa loggala yakinnak genena maṅgula.* It was this wedding party that Vijaya and his warriors attacked, deluging Srīvatpura with their blood.

It is pertinent here to point out that if one takes a linguistic map, we would find that in many parts of Asia, speakers of primitive languages being represented as islands in a sea of later languages, occupying hilly or forest terrain in contrast to the speakers of the newer languages who tend to occupy lower terrains and more fertile valleys. This would suggest a gradual retreat of speakers of aboriginal languages into less accessible and indeed lesser endowed and therefore less sought regions such as forests of mountains. The

DV's reference to the Yakkhas being banished to Giri-dīpa (Lit.Mountain-Island) may merely be an allegory for the drift of the aboriginal people towards inhospitable mountainous terrain and caves following the gradual encroachment of Aryan-speaking peoples into the plains and river valleys. It is pertinent here to cite what the Seligmanns (1911) have to say in their description of the path to the Vedda country. Observing that from the Ballangala or look-out rock one could gaze upon the ancient dagaba of Mahiyangana and the flat land spread out, they tell us: "Here flows the Mahaweli ganga, soon to be hidden in the great sea of forest-clad lowland stretching away to the north, from which rise Kokagalla and other hills, the traditional homes of the Veddas, like rocky islands in the distance".

Indeed, there is considerable evidence to show that the period of conflict between the Yakkha aboriginals and the Aryan-speaking invaders was short-lived, for not long after the Vijayan invasion we find the two peoples enjoying amicable relations, especially during the reign of king Paṇḍukābhaya (C. 4th - 3rd century B.C.) and afterwards. For instance, we have the evidence of the Mahāvaṁsa, especially those passages relating to the reign of king Paṇḍukābhaya, the grandson of Vijaya's nephew and successor, Paṇḍuvāsudeva. The MV relates how a Yakkhini named Cetiyā living in the Dhumarakkha mountain helped king Paṇḍukābhaya defeat his uncles and so acquire kingship by her wise counsel. This narrative however occurs couched in fantastic language, such as for instance when it describes the Yakkhini as being mare-faced (*valava-mukha*). Senarat Paranavitana [54] was led to connect her with Assamukhī (lit .horse-faced) who seems to have been the centre of a popular cult in North India at the time of the rise of Buddhism. Assamukhi occurs as a fairy god-mother to the Bodhisattva in the Padakusalamanavaka Jātaka and it is possible that the author of the Mahāvaṁsa had been influenced by the Jātakas in this connection. But this does not necessarily mean that the entire story is mythical, for divested of its fanciful elements, the narrative suggests that the king had been actually aided by a Vedda chieftainess or prominent lady in his campaign for sovereignty.

This is also corroborated by the MV account of the Yakkhas named Cittarāja and Kāḷavela .The MV states that following the defeat of his uncles, king Paṇḍukābhaya who had *Yakkhas* and *Bhūtas* for friends, enjoyed his fortune together with the Yakkhas Kāḷavela and Citta "who were visible". The allusion to these Yakkhas being visible (in bodily form) suggests that they were human, and not at all divine or supernatural .These Yakkhas seem to have enjoyed a high status for the MV states that at the time of festivals, Paṇḍukābhaya was seated with Cittarāja on equal seats. This would suggest that not only had

[54] Pre – Buddhist religious beliefs in Ceylon. JRAS. CB (1929)

conciliation of the Yakkhas taken place, but that this concord between Yakkha and Sinhalese had been attached so much importance as to be symbolically demonstrated in public. Parker (1909) opines that Kāḷavela and Cittarāja were aboriginal chieftains whom the king treated with special honour, as a matter of policy, to reconcile them. The Dīpavaṁsa (an anonymous Pali work assigned to the 4th –5th century A.C.) merely states that Pakuṇḍa (Paṇḍukābhaya) enjoyed sovereignty over both men and Yakkhas, and though lacking in details, appears to corroborate the MV account.

This tradition of co-operation between the Yakkha aboriginals and the early Aryan settlers continued among their respective descendants, the Veddas and the Sinhalese. Ancient epigraphic evidence for instance suggests a close relationship between the Sinhalese and Veddas. In an ancient Brahmi inscription in Old Sinhala found at Situlpavuva (C.3rd century B.C.-1st century A.C.), we are told that the cave of the chief (*parumaka*) Milaka Pusa, son of the chief Naga had been given to the Sangha. In another ancient inscription at Kosavakanda we learn that Kati, the consort of king Gamani Abaya had founded the *Vihara* of Milaka-Tisa. This term Milaka is evidently connected to P.*milakkha* and Skt. *mleccha* 'barbarian' but appears to have had no derogatory connotation in the local context. It very likely refers to the Veddas. As S. Paranavitana [55] notes: " It is possible that the autochtones of the island are meant by this term. If so, these names are evidence of the fact that the aborigines of the island adopted the language and customs of the invading Aryans, came to occupy high positions in society, and that in course of time, the two coalesced to form one people".

[55] Inscriptions of Ceylon. Vol. 1.(1970)

The Nāgas

Whether a race known as Nāgas actually inhabited Sri Lanka in ancient times remains a yet unsettled anthropological problem. The Nāgas find mention in the first chapter of the Mahāvaṁsa in connection with the Buddha's supposed visits to Sri Lanka, the veracity of which is highly doubtful.

According to the MV the Buddha visited Nāgadīpa in order to settle a dispute between the two Nāga kings Mahodara and Culodara, He is also said to have visited the Kalyāni country on the invitation of the Nāga king Maniakkhika and preached the Buddhist doctrine. A similar account occurs in the DV. Although the Nāgas figure in the chronicles in a highly mythical context, there have been attempts to identify them as a historical race and connect them to the Dravidians [56]. We will hereunder subject this thesis to some critical examination and show the untenability of this supposition.

We will however first consider whether the Nāgas were a mythical or a real people taking into consideration the Indic tradition relating to them as reflected in Hindu and Buddhist literature which is little doubt the source of the Nāga legends that found expression in local literature.

The Sanskritic and Prakritic term *Nāga* applied to snakes and particularly cobras (as seen in its reflexes such as Hindi *nāg* and Sinhala *nayā*) may perhaps have a Proto- Indo-European origin, namely in a three-headed, six-eyed serpent (*$*ng^{w}hi$*) said to have figured in Proto-Indo-European mythology [57]. Be it as it may, the appellation itself gives us no indication whatsoever where we could identify a particular race of men with it since it simply denotes a serpent or a species of it.

The Nāgas figure prominently in ancient Indian epic literature as well as in Buddhist literature. In the great Indian epic, the Mahābhārata compiled by Vyāsa we learn of a liaison between Arjuna, a Pāndava prince and Ulūpī, the daughter of the Nāga King, while in the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki we are told of Hanumant in his quest for Sīta coming across in the harem of Rāvana "Nāga maidens with fair hips and faces resembling the full moon".

The Buddhist Jātaka stories which probably came into circulation shortly after the death of the Buddha C.5th century B.C also contain some interesting references to the Nāgas. For instance, in the Bhūridatta Jātaka which has the

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[56] See The Untold Story of Ancient Tamils in Sri Lanka. Chelvadurai Manogaran (2000). E.J.Wayland in his Outline of the Stone Age of Ceylon (SZ.Oct.1919) held that "*the Nagas were a Dravidian people who found their way to Ceylon before the Aryans arrived. Their chief stronghold appears to have been in the north of the island*".

[57] See The Horse, the Wheel and Language. How Bronze-age riders from the Eurasian steppes shaped the modern world. David Anthony. 2008)

widow of the Nāga tribe winning the love of the exiled prince of Benares by whom she bares a daughter who eventually goes on to marry the serpent king.

The Nāgas are also credited with the establishment of dynastic houses, for instance, the royal dynasty of Kashmir which was asserted to descend from the Nāga Kārkoṭa (Rājatarangini) while in later times, the rulers of the neighbouring principality of Bhadarvah (later a district of Jammu-Kashmir) claimed descent from the serpent king Vasuki who was regarded as the guardian deity of the country. The Gond chiefs of the Central Provinces also claimed descent from the Nāgavaṁśa or Nāga clan [58]. Accounts such as these which refer to Human-Nāga liaisons or descent from Nāgas appear to imply that the Nāgas were a race of men. Indeed there are varying theories as to whether the Nāgas of Indian lore were mythical beings or had their origins from a race of men.

There can nevertheless be little doubt that much of the legends concerning the Nāgas in Indian literature are of a fabulous and mythical character. In the Mbh, the Nāgas are said to be sons of Kadru (the Tawny One) whose husband, the sage Kāśyapa, granted her a boon, that she may become the mother of a thousand Nāgas. In course of time she brought forth a thousand eggs which were carefully guarded in vessels of liquid and when five hundred years had elapsed, these came forth. In another episode in the same epic, we read of the Nāgas departing to their abode, the womb of the sea, but having been taken near the sun by Garuda, get scorched by the heat, whereupon the snake mother Kadru implores Indra as the god of rain and thunder, who overcasts the sky with masses of dark-coloured thunder clouds which let loose abundant water, thereby relieving the Nāgas.

The other references to the Nāgas in the epic are no less fabulous. Take for instance the episode of Takṣaka, the Nāga king, making off with the ear-rings of the Brahman Uttanka in the form of a naked mendicant, but upon being seized by the Brahman assumes his real shape and enters a large hole in the earth, where he goes to his own abode – the world of snakes. Uttanka, having entered it, beholds the world of snakes – unbounded, filled with hundreds of palaces, pavilions, turrets and pinnacles, and there he extols the Nāgas thus: "They that have Airāvata for their King – the snakes, shining forth in battle – are like unto thunder clouds impelled by lightening – attended wind. Being fair-shaped and multiform and wearing variegated ear-rings withal, they glow in the upper sky like the sun – those scions of Airāvata". We also learn of Takṣaka assuming the form of a black-eyed, copper-coloured little worm in a fruit given to King Parikṣit, the ruler of Hastināpura, and eventually seizing

[58] See Indian Serpent-lore. Jean Phillippe Vogel (1926)

him and enveloping him in his coils, and roaring with a mighty sound, biting him, after which the Nāga was seen moving through the air, and drawing, as it were, a red line in the sky. The poison of the serpent is said to have enveloped with fire the palace which broke forth in flames, while the king fell, as if stricken by lightening.

In the Buddhist Jātaka tales too we find the Nāgas figuring as fabulous beings, but more in the nature of serpents than a race of men. In the Uraga Jātaka, we find the Bodhisattva in the form of a hermit bringing about a reconciliation between a Nāga and its winged adversary, a Suparna. We also hear of snake charmers who by means of magic spells (mantra) exercise power over Nāgas as in the Champeyya and Bhūridatta Jātakas where we find the Bodhisattva being caught by a snake charmer who makes him dance to gain money. In the Jarudapāna Jātaka we learn of a Nāga King who had his dwelling beneath an old disused waterless well getting angry with some merchants digging deep into it in a quest for treasure. The Nāga, having become furious at the damage to his palace caused by the falling of clods and earth, slays them with the breath of his nostrils. In the Kharaputta Jātaka we come across a Nāga maid insatiate in pleasures who had been entrusted to protect a king by her Nāga lord, quitting her human shape upon seeing a water snake and making love to it. In the Sankhapala Jataka we hear of a Nāga King captured by a gang of low caste men who carry him to their home to consume his flesh, but on the way is rescued by a householder from Mithila whom the grateful serpent king entertains a year in the Nāgaloka.

The serpentine character of the Nāgas is also evident in the story of the Buddha's life such as that recorded in the Mahāvagga of the Vinaya Pitaka, where we find the Buddha, after having attained enlightenment, being sheltered from a rain storm by the serpent king Mucalinda who envelops the body of the Buddha seven times with his coils and keeps his hood spread over the Buddha's head. The fanciful elements contained in these accounts make it rather difficult to interpret the Nāgas as a historical people.

The representation of the Nāgas in ancient Indian pictorial art also suggests that they were no more than mythical or supernatural beings in the form of snakes. The Nāgas are often depicted in the Ajanta Cave frescoes in animal shape, or in anthropomorphic form, canopied by a hood of seven serpent heads, or are of the mermaid type, with the upper part of the body being human, and the lower part from the hips downward, animal. In Buddhist temple art, the Nāgas are shown as five-headed serpents while the Nāgarajas or serpent kings are shown in human form with a five-fold snake crest surmounting their head-dress or surrounding their heads. The Nāgis are shown

in hybrid form in which the upper part of a human body ends in the coils of a snake [59].

Among those who believe that they were a class of mythical beings are Prof.Hermann Oldenberg who avers that the Nāgas belong to that class of demoniacal beings who often appear in human form, such as werewolves and swan-maidens. Says Oldenberg: "The conception of a substantial unity between animal and man, which during the Vedic period is met with only in certain survivals, finds an expression in the belief in beings like were-wolves. Presumably the "tiger men" belong to this class, and certainly do the Nāgas, which seem to be men, but in reality are snakes"[60]. We also have Hendrik Kern [61] who holds on the basis of legends connecting the Nāgas with power over the element of water, that the Nāgas are essentially water spirits.

Thus Kern would have us believe that the Nāgas are personified forces of nature, which in the first instance are snake-like coiling rain clouds emitting flashes of lightning – the serpents of the sky- the water so produced being transported into the lakes and pools of earth in the form of winding rivers and rivulets, finally to be confounded with real poisonous snakes. This theory finds some support from Indian legend according to which Nāgas haunt lakes, ponds and sources of rivers and are perceived as givers of rain who if roused to anger send down destructive hail-stones [62].

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[59] See Vogel (1926)

[60] Die Religion des Veda (1917)

[61] Over den Vermoedelijken Oorsprong der Nāga Vereening. BTVN. 1916

[62] Many are the Indian myths and legends which connect the Nāgas to water and waterways. In the MBh for instance the ocean is called the abode of the Nāgas. We are also told in the epic how Arjuna, the Pāndava Prince was seduced by Ulūpī, the daughter of the Nāga King Kauravya who drew him into the water when he descended into the Ganges river. Other indications of the aqueous nature of the Nāgas is seen when Arjuna addresses Ulūpī as 'Creature of the Waters' and when she as a gift to him for fulfilling her desire grants him the power of being invincible in water and having power over all creatures of the water. This would suggest that Ulūpī was conceived of as a sort of water nymph. We are further told in the episode concerning King Janamejaya's sacrifice of the Nāgas in the same epic, of some Nāgas proposing the following plan to frustrate the sacrifice: "Let us change ourselves into thunder clouds and quench the sacrificial fire by means of showers of rain". Later works also suggest an intimate connection between the Nāgas and rainwater, among them the Kalpastāna of Suśruta which records that the famous lords of the Nāgas headed by Vasuki incessantly cause thunder and rain. In like manner, the Sinhalese chronicle Mahāvaṁsa tells us that in the time of Asoka, the thera Majjhantika was sent to Kashmir and Gandhāra to convert the people to Buddhism, whereupon the Nāga Rāja Aravala, in order to terrify him, caused a violent storm with rain, thunder and lightening. The Kashmiri chronicle, the Rājatarangini also suggests a close connection between the two such as in the account of the Nāga of the great Vular lake. Similarly in the Ghatāsana Jātaka we hear of

On the other hand are those like C.F.Oldham [63] who contends that the Nāgas were originally not serpents, but non-Aryan peoples who claimed descent from the sun and who had as their totem the hooded serpent. These hotile serpent tribes, he believes, were the enemies of the Aryans, both the Ahuras and the Devas from a very early period, even before the separation of these two branches of the Aryan family. In support, he alludes to the Vendidad, an ancient scripture of the Iranian Aryans, according to which the appearance of a mighty serpent created by Angra Mainyu was one of the causes of the migrations of the Aryans from the Airyāna Vaejo (Lit. 'The Aryan Seed' or cradle-land of the Aryans). He avers that this serpent might have been identical with, or belonged to the same race as Azi dahāka, who, according to the Bundahis and Zamyad Yast overthrew and killed Yima. The title Azi-dahāka (lit. the devouring serpent) he notes, was held afterwards by a long succession of rulers, a dynasty which lasted a thousand years and ended with Bevārāsp who was overthrown by Feridūn. He further notes that according to the Shāhnāma of Firdausi, the serpents attending upon Zahāk (a term derived from Azi dahāka and probably a member of that dynasty) required to be fed daily the brains of human victims and the blacksmith Gavah, when it fell to the lot of his sons to be sacrificed, raised an insurrection of which Feridun took advantage. The cause of the revolt, as suggested by Firdausi, was the King's encouragement of the cruel rites and human sacrifices connected with serpent worship.

Oldham thinks it possible that the Azi of the Zend Avesta and the Ahi of the Ṛg Veda (who figures as a foe of the Aryan war god Indra), both cognate terms, represent chiefs of a widely spread sun-worshipping people whose emblem was the many-headed serpent. He notes that the Azi of the Avesta is said to have had three heads and six eyes (Aban and Zamyad Yasts) while in the RV it is said that Indra humbled and subjugated the loud-shouting dāsa with six eyes and three heads. To these he also connects Ahi Deva, a demigod worshipped in Pre-Islamic Kashmir who finds mention in the Kashmiri chronicle Rājatarangini.

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the Nāga king Chanḍa having as his abode a lake. We also find in the Bhūridatta Jātaka, the Nāga mother saying to her royal husband "My children are of a watery nature". Also interesting is the fact that in the Kashmiri language springs are known as Nāga, perhaps reflecting an old belief of the Nāgas being water-spirits.

[63] The Sun and the Serpent (1905)

As for the Nāgas of India, Oldham holds that the term was merely an appellation used by Brahmanical writers to distinguish those who venerated the Nāga or hooded serpent and does not appear to have been a tribal name since the term has Indo-European antecedents to which the English term snake is also related. He argues that Takṣaśilā, the Taxila of the Greeks, was the chief city of the Nāga people in the north of India and that Takṣaka was one of their chiefs. Particularly interesting is his attempt to show that the great serpent sacrifice of King Janamejaya mentioned in the Mahābhārata was a mass sacrifice of Nāga prisoners of war. According to the epic, Janamejaya, the Pāndava ruler of Hastināpura, to avenge the death of his father Parikṣit who had been slain by the 'Lord of Snakes' Takṣaka and at the instigation of the Brahman Uttanka, instituted a great serpent sacrifice in which he sought to destroy all the offspring of Kadru, the serpent mother (*sarpamātr*). Oldham would have us believe that it was it was on his return from a raid into the country of Takṣaśilā that Janamejaya held his serpent sacrifice, the victims on this occasion being the Nāga prisoners taken in the raid, who were burned alive, with Brahmanical rites. He also believes that Rāvana, King of Lanka, though called in the Rāmāyana a Rākṣasa, was the ruler of a Nāga colony and notes that the ten heads ascribed to Ravana were, no doubt, those of the protecting serpents forming the canopy over his head, as a Nāga Raja. As for the Nāga demigods of heaven who figure in Brahmanical writings as celestial serpents, he believes them to be the deified ancestral chiefs of the Nāga people on earth.

These Nāga people he identifies with those folk bearing the tribal name Takha. Indeed it is quite possible that the Nāga race which figures so prominently in Indian mythology and folklore originally denoted the ancestors of Oldham's Takhas. The appellation Takha is evidently derived from Takshaka, a prominent serpent-deity whose worship was especially prominent in Kashmir, and it is possible that the ancient Indo-Aryans denoted this folk as Nāgas due to their reverence of the hooded serpent [64] .

Among others who believe that the Nāgas were a race of men may be mentioned Sanujit Ghose [65] who observes that it is remarkable that almost all of the generic names of the serpents in Vedic times have derived from the tribal names of the Hunas and other Turanian races. "Nāgas" he says "was a corruption of Hiungnu, the original name of the Huns". The home of the Nāgas in ancient times he believes to have been in Turkistan and holds that a branch

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[64] The Nāgas. A contribution to the history of serpent-worship. C.F.Oldham JRAS.GB &I (1901)

[65] Legend of Ram (2004)

of them, the Takchakas stood for the Tocharis, the Takuir Mongols who lived in Tocharistan or Bactria, after whom the whole country was called Turkistan.

Another notable proponent of the theory of a Mongolian origin of the Nāgas was C.Rasanayagam [66] who has based his contentions on an obscure passage where Jambulus (an Ethiopian captive who was sent out to sea and who appears to have reached Sri Lanka before the beginning of the Christian era) referring to the inhabitants of the islands on the Northern or Northwestern coast of Sri Lanka states that they "had no hair other than on their heads, eyebrows and chins" which he takes as affording clear proof of the Mongolian descent of the Nāgas. These Nāgas, he believes, developed into sea pirates, living by plundering and robbing unwary merchants. In this connection he cites Kṣemendra, a 10th century Kashmiri poet who relates that in the reign of King Asoka, certain Indian merchants who traded with distant lands, came to his court and informed him of their ruin brought about by the depradation of sea-faring pirates called Nāgas who destroyed their ships and plundered their treasure.

Waruno Mahdi [67] has sought to show that the Nāgas were an Austronesian or Malayo-Polynesian people who had penetrated the coastal areas of southern and eastern India in ancient times. Among the records he cites in this connection is the Buddhist treatise Bodhisattvāvadāna Kalpalatā of Kṣemendra (C.10th century) which has preserved reports from the time of King Asoka of serious depradations against maritime trade in the Gulf of Bengal by Nāga sea pirates. This he avers suggests a connection of the Nāgas with the freebooting sea people (Orang laut) in the seas in and around West Malayo-Indonesia who are very ancient and already mentioned in early Chinese accounts of the region. He also cites the Mahabharata where the ocean is said to be Nāgānām ālayam 'abode of the Nāgas' once again suggesting that the Nāgas were a maritime people. He further argues that the cult of the divine or sacred serpent which is widely distributed among Austronesian peoples could have led to the use of the term Nāga for them.

Mahdi elaborating on his theory points out that an indigenous sacred serpent cult has been found in Sumatra and parts of Kalimantan, manifesting itself in the notion of a divine snake referred to in Malay as Ular Sanian (lit. Snake which is a venerable god). The cult of the sacred serpent is also said to be the principal element in the indigenous religion of Alor in the east of the lesser

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[66] Ancient Jaffna (1926)

[67] Linguistic and philological data towards a chronology of Austronesian activity in India and Sri Lanka. Archaelogy and Language I. Language Change and Cultural Transfornation. Ed.Roger Blench & Mathew Sprigs. 1999)

Sunda islands. He therefore concludes that the snake cult not only dominates the origin myth and religion of the apparently autochthonous population, but seems not to be shared by late-coming and technologically more advanced populations, thus making its introduction from India or elsewhere seem very unlikely.

He also cites Tamil literature, namely, the Cilappatikāram which describes the Eyinar as the most lawless of the Nāga tribes, and whose chief occupations were cattle rustling, pillage and murder and who reportedly worshipped Kali, slaughtering buffaloes at her shrine. He points out that the buffalo sacrifice is one of the most widespread and persistent rituals in mainland and insular Southeast Asia, surviving religious conversion to Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam and in places where it has retained much of its original pagan character. E.g. among the Toraja of Sulawesi or the Ifugao of Luzon where it is a relatively gory performance. He also notes that in some areas of South India, stone monuments depict the serpent deity as half-snake, half woman, and points out that the female gender of the divine serpent, atypical in Vedic and Buddhist tradition, is a fundamental feature of early Austronesian cosmology. He also believes that the Austronesian Nāgas perhaps contributed substantially to the bloodthirsty character of the cult of Kāli (which may have had a different origin), judging from the description of the murderous inclinations of the Eyinar which could be compared with the well known head-hunting traditions of early Austronesians, expressed in the protoform * *kaiau* 'headhunting'.

G.A. Grierson [68] suggests that the Nāgas, who according to Kashmiri mythology were the inhabitants of the Happy valley before the arrival of the Pisachas "and after whom every mountain spring in Kashmir is named" may have been akin to the inhabitants of Hunza and Nāgar who speak a non-Aryan, non-Dravidian language known as Burushaskī.

This is not to say that there are no other candidates who may be identified with this legendary race. The term Nāga survives in such place-names like Choṭā-Nāgpūr (lit. little Nāga city) in Eastern India and it is not impossible that a race known as Nāgas did exist in the region in ancient times. Edward Dalton [69] refers to a folk known as the Nāgbansi or Nāga clan (Skt. Nāga-vaṁsa) who inhabited Jashpūr, Udaipūr and Sirgūja. They are said to have possessed Mongoloid traits and had a tradition that they came from Choṭā-Nāgpūr. The Cheros of Shāhābād and Bihar district who also possessed a Mongolian physiognomy called themselves Nāgbansis. Dalton however

[68] LSI. Vol. VIII, Pt. 11 (1919).

[69] Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal (1872).

identifies the Nāgas of the Mahābhārata with another tribal group, the Nāgesars, who share common cultural practices (performance of triennial animal sacrifices) with the two earlier mentioned peoples.

We could nevertheless safely exclude from consideration the Nāgas, a Mongoloid people speaking Tibeto-Burman languages living in Nāgaland in northeastern India (a region bounded by the Indian states of Manipur on the south, Arunachal Pradesh on the north, Assam on the west and by Myanmar on the east). The ethnonym Nāga given to this folk by outsiders apparently derives from a form such as Assamese Noga meaning 'naked' which had in turn derived from Sanskrit *nagna*, a contention supported by Ptolemy who has given the term *Nangalogai* (which appears to be a Prakritic form of the Sanskritic *nagna* 'naked' and *loka* 'people) as the name of a tribe inhabiting Eastern India, in the vicinity of Assam.

This folk were probably so called as they were for the most part naked or semi-naked when European colonialism here commenced with the British. Indeed it is well known that complete nudity or a paucity of clothing was a characteristic of certain Nāga tribes until fairly recent times [70]. It is therefore probable that the term Nāga applied to this folk originally meant 'naked' and is not connected to the Nāga of ancient lore and literature.

The Nāgas as we have seen earlier have been sought to be identified with the Dravidians. Much of this is evidently based on the belief that the ancient Dravidians were serpent worshippers and that they were called Nāgas on account of this. This view is however questionable given the fact that Nāga worship has not figured very prominently in Tamil religious life and at any rate has not been peculiar to the Dravidians. The worship of the *Nāga* or hooded serpent (i.e. cobra) has been widely practiced in many parts of the Indian subcontinent and is not unique to South India. Although it is true that Nāga worship was originally a distinctly non-Aryan form of worship as it does not find mention in the earliest religious scriptures of the Indo-Aryans (as for instance, the Rg Veda), in later times it appears to have gained some currency among Aryan folk as well. Nāga temples are to this day found in various parts of northern India such as Allahabad (ancient Prayāga) and Benares, great centres of orthodox Brahmanism.

Besides, there is reason to believe that it was not in peninsular India, but in Pre-Islamic Kashmir that Nāga worship occupied the foremost place in ancient times. The Nāga there appears to have occupied a very prominent place; the Vular lake and Ver-Nag being some of the landmarks associated with Nāga

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[70] See Notes on the wild tribes inhabiting the so-called Nāga hills. R.G. Woodthorpe. JAI .G.B &1 (1881). Also Die Nackten Nāgas. Christoph Von Fürer-Haimendorf (1939)

legends. The village of Zevan is said to have been a major centre of Nāga (Takshaka) worship [71] . The Kashmiri chronicler Kalhana (12th century A.C.) mentions an annual festival held in honour of the serpent king in his Rājatarangini, while another ancient Kashmiri work, the Nilamatpurāna (C.6th or seventh century) gives a long account of Nāga divinities and makes mention of some festivals particularly connected with the worship of Nāgas. Thus Nila, the lord of the Nāgas is said to have been worshipped on the festival of the first fall of snow. He and other Nāgas were also propitiated on Amanjaripuja which took place in the month of Chaitra (April). In fact the work records the names of the principal Nāgas once worshipped in Kashmir, which amounts to over five hundred. The Mahāvaṁsa, in dealing with the conversion of various nations to Buddhism, alludes to the people of Kasmira (Kashmir) offering homage to the Nāga king Aravaḷa who is spoken of here as a supernatural being.

That the cult or remnants of it even survived after Hindu rule in the valley is borne out by Abul Fazl, the author of the Akbar Nama and Ain-i-Akbari who records that there were 700 places of worship here where there were carved images of snakes. Oldham (1901) has noted that in his day, Nāga worship survived in the mountainous country bordering upon Kashmir, and especially in the tract lying between the Chenāb and Rāvi rivers. He notes that here, the serpent-gods Sesha,Vāsuki, Bāsdeo and Takshaka as well as other lesser known Nāgas were still worshipped with their ancient rites . He observes that the cobra was, and is, held sacred amongst these people and that according to tradition, the killing of one of these serpents in the olden days entailed the heaviest penalties. He however notes that the Nāga temples are not dedicated to the serpent, but to the Nāga rājas, the ancient rulers of the race, who are worshipped in human form.

We may perhaps have to agree with Kaul Bamzai [72] when he avers that before the Indo-Aryan migration, the predominant cult of Kashmir was animism manifested by Nāga or serpent worship. Bamzai contends that such adoration "has not ceased even till now" and that it is manifested "in the respect and sanctity that is attached to Nāgas or springs in the valley". "Nāgas or tutelary deities" he adds "are supposed to reside in the springs and lakes and from early times considerable importance has been attached to their worship". Although it is certain that Islamic influence has done away with much of these beliefs, it is quite possible that remnants of it may still survive in certain remote areas.

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[71] Vogel (1926).

[72] Culture and political history of Kashmir (1994)

Although there exist terms connected to Nāga denoting certain groups of South India, these are not racial appellations, but rather the names of septs or sub-divisions of different castes. For instance *Nāg*, *Nāga*, *Nāgasa* or *Nāgeswara* which occur as the names of septs or *gotras* of various classes in Ganjam and Vizagapatam such as the Aiyarakula, Bhondāri, Bhumia, Dōmb, Gadaba, Konda Dora, Mēdara, Nāgarālu, Poroja , Rōna and Sāmantiya. The members of the Nāgabonso sept of Odiya are also known to have claimed to be descendants of Nāgamuni, the serpent rishi. Nāga is further said to be a gōtra or sept of Kurnis and Toreyas, of whom the latter, at their weddings, worship at termite hills which are often the home of cobras [73].

Perhaps the only South Indian community that could be reasonably identified with the Nāgas of yore are the Nāyars, a Dravidian –speaking military caste of Kerala amongst whom remnants of serpent worship have survived. Henry Parker [74] suggested that "the Nāgas who occupied Northern Ceylon long before the arrival of the Gangetic settlers were actual Indian immigrants and were an offshoot of the Nāyars of Southern India". This view is lent support by K.M. Panikkar [75] who suggests that the Nāyar were a community with a serpent totem and derives the term Nāyar from Nāgar or serpent-men. The belief that the Nāyars have taken their name from the Nāgas also appears to be supported by the peculiar type of hair knot at the top of the head borne by Nayar men [76] and the coiffure of Nayar women in the olden days which resembled the hood of a cobra [77] .

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[73] Castes and Tribes of Southern India. Edgar Thurston. Vol. V (1909).

[74] Ancient Ceylon (1909)

[75] Some aspects of Nayar life. JRAI. G.B & I (1918).

[76] P.T.Srinivasa Iyengar in his History of the Tamils (1929) has an interesting observation to make in this connection. Noting that Nāga worship prevails on a large scale in Malabar and that the term Nāyar, the name of the principal tribe of Malabar has perhaps to be derived from Nāgar has this to say: " We may suppose that the ancient Nāgas of South India grew, like other ancient South Indians, a whole head of hair, and, I believe that as the imitation even of gods is the sincerest form of flattery, the worshippers of the serpent combed their hair, gathered it up to the top of the head and knotted it so that the knot stood up, making the face of the worshipper look like the expanded hood of a cobra. I have seen men in South India whose hair is dressed in this style and I guess that the ancient Nāgas to make their head look like that of their god. This perhaps explains why when shaving was introduced among such people, the top knot was left intact, because wearing it was too old, and hence too sacred, a custom to be given up. As the Nairs have kept up this style of hair-dressing to this day, they are probably the modern representatives of the ancient Nāgas".

[77] This is evident from the photographs of Nāyar women reproduced in Thurston. Vol.V.1909

However, there is no sound evidence to show that a race known as Nāgas ever existed in Sri Lanka. Mention of the Nāgas in the MV is mainly confined to what appears to be a mythical stratum pervading the early part of the chronicle, namely, the first chapter which is concerned with the Buddha's supposed visits to Nāgadīpa and Kalyāni, the veracity of which is highly doubtful. The relevant chapter states that the Buddha visited Nāgadīpa in order to settle a dispute between the two Nāga kings, Mahodara and Culodara over a gem-set throne. In this episode eighty crores of Nāgas of the sea and the land are said to have been converted to Buddhism. The Buddha is also stated to have visited the Kalyani country on the invitation of the Nāga king Maniakkhika and preached the Buddhist doctrine. Such allusions as the Buddha being seated in mid-air over the battlefield and calling forth dread darkness over the Nāgas suggest them to be mere fable. Besides, there is no reliable evidence to show that the Buddha ever visited Sri Lanka.

The fourteenth chapter of the MV in dealing with the conversion of the island to Buddhism by Mahinda, also alludes to such beings as Devas, Nāgas and Supannas being converted to Buddhism. The Nāgas also figure in a typically mythical context in the episode narrating the conveyance of the Bodhi sapling to Sri Lanka by Sanghamitta (C. 3rd century B.C). Here, the Nāgas are said to have resorted to supernatural powers to capture the Bo sapling during the course of its voyage to Sri Lanka. Such allusions as to their being great snakes who are frightened by Sanghamitta who assumes the form of a Supanna also attest to their mythical character. The Nāgas also figure in the MV in that part dealing with the enshrining of the Buddha's relics by Duṭṭhagāmani (C.2nd century B.C.) again in a typically mythical context. In all these passages the Nāgas occur as typically supernatural beings and not as real living beings as in the case of the so-called Yakkhas.

Besides, unlike the Yakkhas, they do not figure in the Vijayan episode which deals with the establishment of Aryan settlements in the island. The Vijayan episode, it should be pointed out is the earliest reliable historically recorded event pertaining to the island and the absence of any mention of the Nāgas-if indeed they ever existed in ancient Lanka-is significant. There do exist a few scattered references to the Nāgas inhabiting Sri Lanka in ancient times, but these were probably circulated after the fable of the Buddha and the Nāgas had gained currency in the country. For instance we have Fa-Xian who visited the island C.413 A.C. who says: "The country originally was without people. There just were spirits and dragons living here. Merchants of various countries carried on trade (with them)" (*Qi guó běn rēnmīn, zhèng yǒu guishén jí lóng jū zhī, zhū guó shāngrén gòng shiyì*). Fa-Xian's 'dragons' (*lóng*) little doubt meant the Nāgas who were perceived as serpents by his informants. What this shows however is that even in such early times, the Nāgas were perceived not

as humans, but as a race of serpents. All this would suggest that a race of humans known as Nāgas never really existed in Sri Lanka and that they belonged more to the realm of myth than reality.

In the Jātaka tales (e.g. Campeyya Jātaka).the Nāgas occur as decidedly non-human beings endowed with supernatural powers and it is likely that this is exactly how they were perceived by the early chroniclers-a race of supernatural beings who were made out to be votaries of the Buddha in order to edify the Buddhist clergy and laity and not real living beings as was the case with the Yakkhas.

At any rate, there is no reliable evidence to connect Sri Lankan Tamil folk with the ancient Nāga race. Manogaran (2000) believed the Nāgas of the MV to be ancient Tamils, drawing his conclusions on Ptolemy's 2nd century A.C. map of Taprobane which he supposes indicates Nāgadīpa in the northern part of the island, the areal extent of which corresponds to the area settled by present-day Tamils. The fact that the Dravidian peoples have engaged in Nāga or serpent worship and possess patronymics prefixed with Nāga (eg. Nāgarajah, Nāgaratnam, Nāganathan, Nāgalingam, and Nāgendra) have also been cited in favour of a Dravidian origin for this legendary race.

The widespread belief that the Nāgadipa of the MV is identical with the Jaffna peninsula is however open to serious doubt. Claudius Ptolemy's map of Taprobane (Sri Lanka) C. 150 A.C. redrawn by A. Denis N. Fernando [78] using the co-ordinates (meridiens and parallels) provided by Ptolemy, indicates Nāgadibi (Nāgadīpa) as a vast area in the eastern part of the island between the rivers Phasis fluvius (Mahavali ganga) and Ganges fluvius (Gal oya). The Jaffna peninsula on the other hand is described by Ptolemy as 'post qu est boreu promotorium' or the northernmost promontory. Nāgadiba civitas occurring in Ptolemy's map has been shown to be in the vicinity of Eravur [79], in the eastern part of the island. That Nāgadīpa meant the eastern part of the island is also suggested by a list of Vihares in the Uva Province given by Herbert White [80] where we come across in the Bintenne Division a vihara known as Nāgadīpē alias Wihārēgoḍa.

This is supported by the fact that the Old Indo-Aryan term *dvīpa* from which the Pāli *dīpa* and Sinhala *diva* derive does not necessarily mean an island, but may also denote a land between two rivers. In fact, the word (derived by Pānini as *dvi* 'two' and *ap* 'water') appears to have primarily meant a land

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[78] Ancient maps of Sri Lanka-as a primary source of information for the study of human settlements and political boundaries. JRAS. SL. 1986/87

[79] A study in locating places in ancient maps. A.D.N. Fernando. SCVRASSL (1995)

[80] Manual of the Province of Uva (1893)

having water (not sea) on two (and not all) of its sides, similar to the Hindustani *doab* (lit. two waters), a sense which would have been retained in Old Sinhala. In Pāli, *Nāga* may also signify an elephant or ironwood (*Messua ferrea*) tree.

Thus it is possible that Nāgadīpa may have meant 'land (between two rivers) of elephants' as the region would have abounded in elephants at the time. Consider for instance *Nāga vana* 'a forest inhabited by elephants' occurring in the Dhammapada. It could also have meant 'land (between two rivers) of ironwood trees'. For instance take the classical Sinhala name for India *Jambudīpa* (Sinh. *Dambadiva*) 'Island (or land between two rivers) of Jambu trees'.

The term Nāga occurring in the names of some Tamil folk is also not of much significance, since we know that even the Brahmans of India possessed patronymics such as Nāga [81]. Besides, unlike the Brahman term, the Tamil terms occur as adjectival forms (Cf. *Nāgarajah* 'Nāga king', *Nāgendra* 'lord of the Nāgas' and *Nāgalingam* 'Nāga phallus') which further invalidates the claim to Nāga descent. There is also evidence to show that *Naga* (the Old Sinhala equivalent of the Pali *Nāga*) existed as a personal name among the ancient Sinhalese. The name, common among chiefs and others in the ancient Brahmi inscriptions in Sinhala Prakrit (C. 3rd century B.C.-1st century A.C.) is comparable to other common names like *Abaya*, *Data*, *Mita*, *Tisa* and *Uti* (all of which are Indo-Aryan) occurring in similar inscriptions. The name *Naga* (The Old Sinhala form of Pali *Nāga*) is found used for Royalty, chieftains and even householders in the Pre-Christian Brahmi inscriptions in Sinhala Prakrit assigned to C.3rd century B.C.-1st century B.C. One such inscription in Periya-Puliyankulama has it: *Rajha-Naga-jhita rahja-Uti-jhaya Abi-Anuradi ca rajha-Uti karapita śe ima lena catu-diśaśa śagaya* (Princess Abi Anuradi daughter of King Naga and wife of King Uttiya, and King Uttiya caused this cave to be established). Another inscription from Mihintale has it: *Parumaka-Naga-puta-Asaliya lene agata-anagata-catudisika-sagaye* (The cave of Asali, son of the chief Naga is given to the Sangha of the four quarters, present and absent). Another from Vessagiri has it: *Gapati-Naga-puta-Tiśaha lene śagaśa* (The cave of Tisa, son of the householder Nāga is given to the Sangha).

The appellation *Nāga* occurring in the names of some Sinhalese kings in the MV are also no more than personal names. Consider *Khallāṭa-Nāga* 'Nāga the bald-headed'(C. 2nd century B.C.), *Cora-Nāga* 'Nāga the bandit' (C. 1st century B.C.) and *Mahalla-Nāga* 'Nāga the aged' (C. 2nd century A.C.) . King Maha-Nāga (6th century A.C.) whose name means 'the great Nāga', far from

[81] See EI. Vol. XII.

being connected to the so-called Nāgas, was a scion of the Moriya dynasty, an early mediaeval dynasty that ruled the country and possibly connected to the North-East Indian Mauryan clan to which emperor Asoka belonged. Besides, Iḷa-Nāga (C. 1st century A.C.), another Sinhalese monarch, is described as a Kṣatriya in the MV showing that he could not have been connected to the Dravidians. That this appellation *Nāga* was borne by a Nāga dynasty of kings as supposed by some is also untenable when we take into consideration the onomastics in the MV. For example, Mahalla-Nāga's son was named Bhātika Tissa. Bhātika Tissa's younger brother Kanittha Tissa's sons were named Khujja-Nāga and Kuñca-Nāga. Siri-Nāga's son was named Tissa while Tissa's younger brother was named Abhaya-Nāga. All this suffices to show that Nāga was a mere personal name and not a dynastic one.

That the Dravidians were not well established in ancient Lanka and remained a distinct race may be inferred from the ancient Brahmi inscriptions in Old Sinhala (C. 3rd century B.C.-1st century A.C) where we find the Dravidians or Tamils (*Dameḍa*) being distinguished from the rest of the people. Consider for instance such descriptions as *Dameḍa gahapatika* 'Tamil householders' and *Dameḍa vanijha* 'Tamil merchant' occurring in such inscriptions. Even in much later times, the Tamils were distinguished as a separate people, for we find in the 10th century Iripinniyāva, Pillar inscription Tamil (*demeḷ*) labourers being mentioned separately from their Sinhalese (*heḷ*) counterparts. We also come across a reference to Tamil villages and lands (*Demeḷ-gam-bim*) in the Anurādhapura Slab inscription of Mahinda IV assigned to about the same period.

The testimony of the ancient Sinhalese chronicle, the Mahāvaṁsa also is that the Dravidians were foreign to the country since in the earliest references to them, relating to the period C. 2nd century B.C., they merely figure as traders or invaders. This is also supported by the fact that the Tamil term for the country, *Īlam* may be derived from the Pkt. *Sīhaḷa* or Skt. *Siṁhala* [82] the name given to the island by the Sinhalese. Besides, there is no evidence to show that Dravidian speech ever significantly influenced the Aryan speech of the Sinhalese, whether in vocabulary or grammar, prior to the mediaeval period, which it would have if the Dravidians constituted an important or numerically significant portion of the ancient population of the island. In fact, there exists no evidence to show that the Tamils ever formed a significant part of the Sri Lankan population, whether in the north or elsewhere, during ancient times. As shown by K.Indrapala [83], intensive Tamil settlement in the north probably did

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[82] See the University of Madras Tamil Lexicon.Vol.1(1925)

[83] Early Tamil Settlements in Ceylon. JRAS. CB (1969)

not begin until the 13th century when Tamil emigrants from South India migrated to the island with the definite aim of settlement.

Besides, the Jaffna Tamil speech shares the phonetic peculiarities of the South Indian Tamil language with regard to the occurrence of surds or unvoiced plosives in initial, and sonants or voiced plosives in intervocalic position, indicating that Jaffna Tamil branched off from the South Indian parent speech sometime after the beginning of the 13th century.

The Niṭṭāvō

A recollection of the existence of a legendary race known as the Niṭṭāvō has been preserved in Vedda tradition, arousing some controversy as to the identity of this folk. This dwarfish race is believed to have lived in the Mahalenama region, now within the Yala East Intermediate Zone, as well as the Tamankaduva area.

Information pertaining to this lost race obtained from Vedda sources by Hugh Nevill [84] is given below: "*The Nittaewo were a cruel and savage race of men, rather dark, living in small communities at Lenama. They built platforms in trees, covered with a thatch of leaves, and in these they lived. They could neither speak Vaedda, Sinhalese or Tamil, but their language sounded like the Telegu of pilgrims to Kattragam. They attacked any intruding Vaeddas, and no Vaedda dare enter their district to hunt or collect honey. Many years ago the ancestors of the informants fought with these Nittaewo, and finally drove the remnant of them, men, women and children into a cavern. Before this they piled firewood, and kept up the fire for three days, after which the race became extinct, and their district a hunting ground of these Vaeddas*".

Sinhalese accounts of the legend obtained by Nevill (1886) from the inhabitants of Panama Pattu held that the Niṭṭāvō also had shaggy red hair and long claws. Vedda tradition however did not uphold this description which appears to have arisen out of confusion with an extinct species of red- haired brown bear (*ursus inornatus*). Nevill (ibid) notes: "*At the account of their shaggy red hair and long claws, the Vaeddas were much amused. They at once said the Sinhalese were confusing with the Nittaewo the rare sun bear, or Rahu walas, now extinct at Lenama, and unknown to the Sinhalese, except by vague gossip.*" [85]

According to the Vedda tradition recorded by Frederick Lewis [86], the Niṭṭāvō were about three feet tall, the females being shorter than the males. The legs of these people were hairy while their arms were short and their talon-like nails long and powerful. They walked erect, had no tails and were completely naked. Their prey consisted of small animals like the mouse deer, hare,

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[84] The Nittaewo of Ceylon. The Taprobanian. Feb. 1886.

[85] That such a species did exist has been established by Pucheron of the Museum of Natural History in Paris. See Notes mammalogiques . Revue et Magazin de Zoologie pure et applique (1855)

[86] Notes on an exploration in Eastern Uva, and Southern Panama Pattu. JRAS. CB. 1914

squirrel, iguana and tortoise. They lived in caves, hollow trees and crevices. Their speech was like the twittering of birds. They lived in gangs of 10 or 20 or more. The Niṭṭāvō are said to have lived two generations earlier so that we may have to assign the extermination of this race-if they ever did exist-to the early part of the nineteenth century, though it is quite possible that the event could have taken place earlier, such as during the latter part of the eighteenth century or even earlier given the tendency in folk memory to skip generations and ascribe events of an earlier period to somewhat later times.

R.L.Spittel [87] records of the Nittaewo: "*These, according to persistent tradition among the jungle folk of south-eastern Ceylon, were a race of savage, hairy, long-nailed dwarfs feared even by the Veddas. They are said to have lived on platforms on trees, and eaten, crocodiles, tortoises, oysters and crabs. On seeing a human being they attacked him and tore out his flesh with their long nails. They greatly feared the buffalo and the dog*". He says of their extermination: "*Long ago in the Leanama country, by the Kumbukkan Oya, where the last of them survived, the Veddas are said to have destroyed them by herding them into a rock cave, the mouth of which they piled with firewood and kept alight for three days*".

Accounts of the Niṭṭāvō suggest that they were largely found in the South Eastern part of the island, in Lenama, in the southern part of the Vedda country which extends from Bagura on the coast to the confines of the Kataragama hills inland. Some accounts also speak of the Niṭṭāvō as occurring in Tamankaduwa [88].

As for the appellation Niṭṭāvō, it is contended by Capt. A.T. Rambukwella [89] that the term may have been coined from '*niya-atha*,' 'one who possesses nails' as long nails appear to have been a distinguishing characteristic of this folk. Capt. Rambukwella's tracker Yahapathamy whose Vedda ancestors had lived in Mahalenama had suggested that the term Niṭṭāvō may have been derived from *niyapotu-aya* 'those with fingernails'.

This view however does not appear to be tenable since the appellation Niṭṭāvō contains a retroflex rather than the dental *t* [90] so that we would have to look elsewhere for the origin of the term. We therefore believe that the term in

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[87] Far-off Things (1933)

[88] Nittaewo-An unsolved problem of Ceylon. Loris. December. 1945

[89] The Nittaewo-The Legendary pygmies of Ceylon. JRAS. CB (1963)

[90] Sinhala authorities spell the term as *Niṭṭāvā* or *Niṭṭāvō* with a retroflex rather than a dental *t* (See for instance the Siṅhala Śabdakōṣaya ed.Punchibandara Sannasgala. 1986)

all probability meant 'the exterminated ones', having derived from the Sinhala *niṭṭāva*'end' which also occurs in the form *niṭṭā-venavā* 'to perish totally', 'to disappear finally', 'to be ended' which would reflect the common belief that the Niṭṭ̄āvō were completed wiped out by the Veddas. The term very likely derives from the Prakritic *niṭṭhā* and Sanskritic *niṣṭhā* which gives a similar meaning so that we can be certain that it was the Sinhala term that gave its name to this folk and not vice versa.

A number of theories have been propounded to explain the legend. Nevill (Feb.1886) connects the Niṭṭ̄āvō to the Niadis of South India (Cochin), a wandering out-caste race, and cites a number of socio-cultural similarities such as social organisation (their roving about in small companies), food habits (eating of tortoises) and arboreal dwellings. Nevill's hypothesis is highly conjectural and has not found much favour.

R.L.Spittel (1933) suggested a connection with the Negritoes, though he later revised this in favour of the extinct red-haired, chevronless brown bear (*ursus inornatus*. Sinh. *rahu valaha*) [91]. Spittel [92] who believed that the term *Niṭṭ̄āvō* was derived from *niyapothu-atho* 'long-nailed creatures' (given the Veddas' proclivity for circumlocutory jargon by which they named an animal by its prominent characteristic) argued that it could best apply to the sloth bear, particularly the smaller aggressive species of red-haired bear known as *rāhu valahā* which are said to have once abounded in the rocky jungles of Lenama. In support, he cited the traditions of their being heavily coated with hair, and their traveling in groups, which he contends could apply to sloth bears, especially she-bears with cubs or females in heat followed by males. As for the tradition that the Niṭṭ̄āvō walked like men, he notes that although the usual mode of progression is on all fours, the bears do assume the erect posture when reconnoitering the tree tops from the ground for honey combs and rear up on their hind feet when attacking a human being.

However as we have seen earlier, the etymology of the term *Niṭṭ̄āvō* deriving from *niyapotu-ātto* is a faulty one, as is the belief that the race had shaggy hair and long claws, for the original legend as preserved by the Veddas does not uphold this view. Osman Hill (1945) has suggested that the Niṭṭ̄āvō may have been an isolated species of *pithecanthropus* on the basis of the latter's anatomical structure and zoogeographical data while Rambukwella (1963) believes them to be a species of *Australopithecus*.

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[91] JRAS. CB (1963)

[92] Legend of the Nittaewo. Loris. June 1964

The ape-man theory however is a far-fetched one and has been soundly demolished by Spittel (1963).P.E.P.Deraniyagala [93] also came up with a far-fetched theory that as the Niṭṭāvō possessed short arms with short powerful hands, did not hybridize with the Veddas and were in a stone age culture phase, they might have been a race of homo neandertalensis, an extinct sopecies of stone age man possessing short powerful arms who did not hybridize with homo sapiens. He contends that as a result of micro-evolution homo neandertalensis existed as a number of distinct races in various countries, and also refers to a fossil human left brow ridge displaying certain neandertaloid characters which had been secured from a gem pit in Kuruwita, conjecturing that further specimens might eventually prove it to be "*the first known fragment of a Nittava*".

It is more likely as suggested by Nandadeva Wijesekera [94] that the Niṭṭāvō were a Negrito people. The Negrito people throughout appear as a simple, primitive, nomadic, hunting and food gathering folk possessing a very rudimentary culture and not even having reached a stone age stage [95]. They also appear to have been a widely dispersed race, and are like the Austro-Asiatic confined to the more remote corners of Southern Asia.

The members of this race include the Mincopies of the Andaman islands in the Bay of Bengal, the Semang of the Malayan peninsula (Perak), the Toala of Sulawesi and the Aeta of Northern Philippines (Luzon). The type is characterized by a very dark (deep brown or black) complexion, woolly (peppercorn or ulotrichi) hair, flat broad nose, thick lips and prognathous Jaws. They are also of exceptionally short stature and are very often brachycephalic or broad-headed unlike the Austro-Asiatics who are long-headed. The cephalic indices of the Andamanese and Aeta have been given as 82.90 and 83.49 respectively while their nasal indices have been given as 90 and 101.9 respectively. Their statures are given as 1,485 and 1,461 respectively [96].

Besides the earlier mentioned groups, traces of Negrito racial traits have also been found among the Irulas of the Wynad and some of the Rajmahal hill tribes of Eastern Bihar [97] and appears to have penetrated as far east as Assam

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[93] Some New Discoveries from the Lenama-Kudumbigala Dome. Ceylon Today. June 1963

[94] People of Ceylon (1949)

[95] Rassen-und Kulturgeschichte der Negrito-volker Sudost-Asiens. Dr.Walter Nippold (1936)

[96] The First Outlines of a Systematic Anthropology of Asia. Giuffrida-Ruggeri. Trans.from the Italian by H. Chakladar and revised by the author with additions (1921).

[97] Race movements and prehistoric culture. S.K. Chatterji. The history and culture of the Indian people. vol. I. Ed. R. C. Majumdar (1951).

[98] . The type also seems to have survived in Palāmau in the hilly tracts of South Bihar [99]. Nilakanta Sastri [100] notes that the occurrence of dwarfish woolly-haired individuals with more or less round heads among the Kadars of Perambikkulam and the Pulaiyans of the adjoining Annamalai hills in the extreme south of the peninsula may be taken to attest the influence of the early Negrito type. He also notes that designs on the bamboo combs of the Semangs, a Negrito people of Malaya, seem to be identical with those on the combs used by Kadar women, suggesting that originally the Kadars and the Semangs shared the same culture and possibly even belonged to the same ethnic group. Archaeological evidence also attests to the occurrence of an early Negrito type in India, noteworthy being the discovery in 1935 at Vadnagar in Baroda of a fossil skeleton of a pygmy man, thirty inches in height [101]. Dr.Nippold (1936) further holds that Negrito blood is also to be traced in Indo-China, a contention borne out by the fact that pockets of Negrito peoples have even been found in peninsular Siam in Chong and Na Wongse in Patalung Province [102]. The discovery in Palembong, Sumatra of Negritoid statuettes also appears to suggest that this type was formerly found in certain parts of the Indonesian archipelago as well [103].

The origins of this type, it is contended, was in Africa. The presence of the Negrito in the Philippines, the Andamans and elsewhere in the far southeast appeared at one time to be problematic as a very great physical space separated these peoples from their nearest supposed relatives, the Pygmies of Central Africa. It has been argued that if the Negrito indeed left Africa, he must have left traces of his passing in Arabia and India. Such traces, so far at least as the Indian coast lands are concerned do apparently exist according to Hrdlička (1926) in the Parganas (Northwest of Calcutta), in at least one area along the eastern coast, here and there among the Dravidians, and along larger parts of the western coast, more especially in the Malabar hills. This is believed by him to bring unmistakeable traces of the Negrito a long way farther to the

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[98] Negrito substratum in Assam . Man in India. December. 1927.

[99] Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal. Edward Dalton (1872)

[100] A History of South India. (1955)

[101] Sastri (1955)

[102] See Papers on the Ethnology & archaeology of the Malay Peninsula. Ivor Evans (1927)

[103] See Anthropological Studies in Southern Asia, Java, Australia and South Africa. Aleš Hrdlička (1926)

westward and so much nearer to Africa, making his derivation from that continent so much the more probable.

Be it as it may. It is evident that the Negritoes like the Austro-Asiatics have been widely scattered in Southern Asia. It is therefore possible that such a Negrito stock did find its way into Sri Lanka during some point in its history or pre-history. Indeed, it is very likely that the Negrito presence in South and South East Asia is very ancient despite the fact that it is only a very small number of these peoples that have survived up to modern times. Indeed, the great antiquity of their settlement in this part of the world is suggested by the fact that they are scattered in small groups over a very wide area.

This is further supported by the fact that they are found to have survived as small pockets in very isolated areas, suggesting that they either migrated to these regions to escape the incursions of later peoples or were driven to these rather inhospitable tracts by later, more physically and technologically advanced peoples. Some would have perished while others would have been absorbed in the later human tides that followed. Indeed, it is not unlikely as held by Chatterji (1951) that the Negritoes appear to have been suppressed and absorbed by other races which followed them, particularly the Proto-Australoids. He opines that such words as the Bengali and Oriya *badud, badadi* 'bat' may be due to Negrito influence. The cult of the ficus tree, associated with fertility and with the souls of the dead, may also be due to Negrito influence[104]. Interestingly we find in the Divehi language of the Maldive islands, which has branched off from Sinhala, the form *(rakis) boḍu* 'bat' which however appears not to have survived in Sinhala.

It is possible that some miscegenation had taken place between the Negritoes and certain sections of Veddas in distant times. Osman Hill [105] remarks that the Veddas of Tammankaduva "tend to have the scalp hair more closely coiled, so that it stands out from the head as a permanent curly mop,-a feature exhibited much more frequently in some of the South Indian Jungle tribes, such as the Kadars, which are known to be of Negrito type". Hill [106] also says: "A few individuals especially in Tammankaduwa show more evidence of a Negrito strain in their mops of coiled hair projecting radially from the scalp". The fact that such Negrito-like traits appear in the Veddas of Tammankaduva is

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[104] Census of India. Pt. 1 (1931). A.R.Brown (Andaman Islanders. 1922) says that in the North Andaman, there is a belief that souls of unborn children, before they are born, reside in Ficus Laccifera trees.

[105] The Physical Anthropology of the existing Veddas of Ceylon. Part 1, CJS. Anthropology.Vol.III, Part II (1941)

[106] Veddahs. A Living Relic of Primitive Man. Loris.June 1945

significant as it is held that the Niṭṭāvō inhabited the region. This would lend further support to our hypothesis that the Niṭṭāvō were probably a Negrito stock that had made its way into Sri Lanka during some remote period.

It is also possible that the Niṭṭāvō may be connected with a diminutive pygmy folk whose remains were discovered recently in the Luang Bua limestone cave in Flores Island east of Bali in the Indonesian archipelago. This folk who were distinguished by their remarkable small size (a little over a metre tall or 3.3 feet) have been nicknamed hobbits after the tiny creatures from J.R.R.Tolkiens 'Lord of the Rings' trilogy. There exists considerable dispute as to their status. The discoverers of the remains contend that they are another species of man distinct from Homo Sapiens or modern man and have named their find Homo Floresiensis or Flores Man [107].

This is however disputed by Prof. Teuku Jacob, Chief Palaeontologist of the Gadjah Mada University Java who contends that the Flores findings represent a diminutive modern human, a pygmy version of H. Sapiens. Prof.Jacob's arguments are supported by the recent discovery of a pygmy community living in close proximity to Liang Bua cave in the village of Rampasasa. Interestingly, Flores is also said to abound in tales of little hairy people about a metre tall whom villagers called Ebu Gogo (Lit.Grandmother who eats anything) as they are said to have eaten anything including human meat. The Ebu Gogo who are believed to have had long hair and longish arms and fingers, are said to have raided crops and even stolen and eaten a village infant. Following this incident, the villagers tossed a burning bale of grass into their cave which was at the foot of the local volcano, thereby driving them out. These hobbits are said to have been last seen heading west in the direction of Liang Bua. The last hobbit was apparently seen just before the village moved location, further from the volcano, not long before the Dutch colonists settled in that part of central Flores in the 19th century [108].

What is particularly interesting is how these folk legends resemble those relating to the Niṭṭāvō, with both sharing common elements such as diminutive stature (both being about three feet tall), hairy nature, long fingers or nails, tendency to live in caves and to attack or cannibalise other humans. Indeed, both legends also speak of their being smoked out or exterminated with fire or smoke in caves or caverns in times that are not very far apart, both evidently having taken place in the early part of the nineteenth century. Perhaps also

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[107] See A New small-bodied hominin from the late Pleistocene of Flores, Indonesia. P.Brown, T.Sutikna et al in the science journal Nature 28 Oct.2004.

[108] See Villagers speak of the small, hairy Ebu Gogo. Richard Roberts. The Daily Telegraph. 28th Oct.2004

related to the Flores finds are the fossils of small-bodied humans discovered in two caves, Ucheliungs and Omedokel in the Micronesian island of Palau in the Western Caroline Islands. These are believed to have inhabited the island between 1400 to 3000 years ago [109].

To these folk may also be connected the Menehunes of Hawaiian legend. This diminutive folk who are said to have been about two feet tall are said to have lived in caves and inhabited particularly the island of Kauai before the arrival of the Polynesians [110]. Whether all these peoples were actually related or belonged to a Negrito stock or had Negrito affinities we cannot say for certain. What we may surmise from the available evidence however is that all these folk seem to have been domiciled in small islands for a considerable period of time so that they could have been subjected to what is known as insular dwarfism where limited food supplies and lack of predators coupled with intensive inbreeding may over time lead to such peoples acquiring a smaller body mass. Whether this process affected the Niṭṭāvō we cannot say given the present state of knowledge though if it were indeed so we would have to assume that they were not originally a people domiciled in Sri Lanka, but had arrived from elsewhere, possibly from the east where islands conducive to the evolution of this type exists. The traditional location of the Niṭṭāvō in Tamankaduwa and the Eastern Yala region which is more towards eastern Sri Lanka rather than the western part of the island also supports such a view.

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[109] See Small-Bodied Humans from Palau, Micronesia. L.R.Berger, S.E.Churchill, B.De Klerk and R.L.Quinn. PLoS One, March 12, 2008

[110] See Hawaiian Mythology. Martha Beckwith (1970)

CHAPTER 2

THE VEDDAS, THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLE OF SRI LANKA AND THEIR SPEECH

The Veddas who constitute a numerically insignificant group of people today are the descendants of an aboriginal folk who made Sri Lanka their home several millennia ago. These folk are found in a few villages in the eastern hinterland of the dry lowlands such as Dambana in the Badulla District, Ratugala in the Monaragala District and Hennanigala in the Ampara District. They presently comprise of no more than a few thousand individuals though there is evidence to show that they comprised a significant population in the olden days and were more widely dispersed, occupying a significant tract of country, particularly in the interior of the country which included a good part of the Sabaragamuva Province.

Intermarriage with the Sinhalese who are the descendants of Indo-Aryan settlers has resulted in the decline of their numbers over the centuries and it is today only very few members of this community, if at all, who could claim to be pure Veddas. Nevertheless miscegenation or intermixture with the Sinhalese has resulted in the infusion of Vedda blood and characteristics in to a substantial portion of the modern-day Sinhalese who comprise the majority of the country so that the present-day Sinhalese community may be regarded as a mixed race constituted of both Indo-Aryan and Vedda racial elements.

1) The Origins and Affinities of the Veddas

Early man would have probably entered Sri Lanka from India by means of a land bridge that in former times connected the two countries, the remnants of which are today known as Adam's bridge. The Palk Straits separating Sri Lanka from India is only about 11 metres at its deepest and it is possible that a slight eustatic drop in sea level could have led to the emergence of a land bridge between these two countries which was then traversed by prehistoric man. The ancestors of Sri Lanka's aboriginal inhabitants, the Veddas, seem to have belonged to an early human group that found its way into the country and made it their domain. This folk evidently belonged to an Austro-Asiatic stock, a dark-skinned, long-headed, broad-nosed type with pronounced brow-ridges and a noticeable prognathism that seems to have evolved in a tropical habitat many millennia ago before migrating to the various parts of South and South East Asia which they presently occupy. These include the Hos, Mundas and Santals of Eastern India, the Sakai of the Malayan peninsula and the Australian aborigines, all of whom show physical affinities with the Veddas. That these groups are all closely related is also borne out by their primitive tribal lifestyle based on a hunter-gatherer mode of existence, which also suggests that they are probably the oldest inhabitants of the regions they presently occupy.

The same probably holds true of the Veddas who are known to have shared a very similar lifestyle with these other tribal groups. Indeed, until recent times, and still to some extent, the Veddas pursued a primitive lifestyle as hunter-gatherers - hunting wildlife and gathering the produce of the earth such as fruit. This is also reflected in the appellation given to the Veddas by the Sinhalese, *Väddā* (Pl.*Väddō*)which seems to have originally designated a hunter as it appears to have derived from the Old-Indo-Aryan term *Vyādha* 'one who pierces', hence a hunter with bow and arrow. An Old-Indo-Aryan base-form *Veddhar* 'piercer' has also been suggested[1]. The designation would imply that the Sinhalese have primarily perceived the Veddas as hunters. This is not surprising given the fact that the hunter-gatherer lifestyle of the Veddas has contrasted sharply with the settled agricultural life of the Sinhalese since very early times.

[1] An Etymological Glossary of the Sinhalese language. Wilhelm Geiger (1941)

According to F. Jagor [2] designations similar to *Väddā* (*Vedda, Veda, Beda, Bedan*, etc.) were widely used in India for a number of little native tribes not necessarily having the least connection with one another . It is possible that these terms, like the Sinhala *Väddā*, ultimately derive from Old-Indo-Aryan *Vyādha* or *Veddhar*. However at the same time, what must be borne in mind is that the term was never given to the Veddas by themselves, but one which the majority Sinhalese had given them. The Veddas have traditionally known themselves as *Vanniyalā-Āttō* 'those of the forest' which itself is of Sinhala origin and we cannot say what the appellation was with which they designated themselves in ancient times. Nevertheless what we can be fairly certain of is that the term Väddā is a Sinhalese term that denoted a hunter as borne out by the 13th century Saddharma-Ratnāvaliya composed by Dharmasēna which refers to a hunter of pigs named Cunda (*cunda nam hūruvāddā*). We also come across in the 14th century Saddharma Laṅkāraya of Dharmakīrti, a reference to hunters (*väddan*) who had gone hunting for deer (*muva daḍa gosin*) in the time of Kāvantissa, though we are not certain whether these hunters were Veddas or Sinhalese hunters.

Thus, it is likely that the Veddas have, since prehistoric times, been hunter-gatherers who were in pre-historic times spread over many parts of the island. This is suggested by the lithic assemblage of early man found in various parts of Sri Lanka. It is likely as contended by F Sarasin [3] that the lithic remains found in the island are representative of the direct ancestors of the Veddas, and that the distribution of the artifacts indicates that the entire island had been occupied by the Veddas at an earlier stage contrary to their present territory in the eastern hinterland of the dry lowlands. Sarasin believed that the arrival of the Sinhalese from India during the first millennium B.C. heralded the abrupt introduction of iron technology to Sri Lanka. Under the impact of this iron technology, he believes the Veddas to have regressed technologically from using a diversity of stone tool types to a single type of iron arrow and axe-head obtained by barter from the Sinhalese.

Sarasin's observations are interesting as it would suggest that the Veddas occupied a much larger area than their present distribution suggests. At present, there are said to be around 350 Vedda families comprising of around 1600 persons in villages like Dambana and Koṭabakiniya in the Badulla District of the Uva Province. Besides these

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[2] ZE (1879)

[3] Etude Critique Sur l'Age de la Pierre a Ceylon. L'Anthropologie (1926)

are found Vedda families in areas like Ratugala in the Monaragala District and Hennanigala in the Ampara District [4].

However, evidence gathered from historical sources indicate that the Veddas inhabited a much more larger area in the olden days. The Portuguese historian Fernao De Queyroz [5] says that the Bedas (Veddas) live between Vilaçem (Vellassa) and Batecalou (Batticaloa) and from thence to Triquilemale (Trincomalee) spreading as far as Jafanapataõ (Jaffna). Ryklof Van Goens, the Director General of the Dutch East India Company[6] observed that the Weddas were distributed "*along the high mountains of Canducarre (Sinhala for hill country, but here specifically the hills due south-southwest from Passara) and Passara in the East, and northward along the highlands of Bintenna as far as Matale, and up into the Mangul Corle, and thence to the north as far as the Wanny*".

It is very likely that in former times, the ancestors of the Veddas also occupied the Sabaragamuva region, especially its forested tracts like the Sinharaja forest. John Bailey [7] has shown that the former existence of the Veddas may be traced in the toponymy of Sabaragamuva. This includes *Vädda-gala* (Vedda rock), *Vädda -äla* (Vedda canal), *Vädda -vatta* (Vedda garden) and *Vädda-kumbura* (Vedda field) in the Ratnapura district. Says Bailey: "It is traditional throughout Saffragam that once Vaeddas predominated over the Sinhalese in that district, and that, as the latter gained ground, the former withdrew towards Bintenne and Welassa". Nandadeva Wijesekera [8] also mentions that a Vedda element may be observed among the population in and around the environs of Väddagala. At least one family name suggesting a connection with the Veddas, Väddagē was known in the Ratnapura district (Wijesekera. 1964).

Another region where Veddas seem to have been found until relatively recent times was the Matale District in the Central Province. The 17th century Mātale Kaḍaimpota makes reference to several localities inhabited by Veddas, namely, Hulaṅgamuva, Nikakoṭuva, Palāpatvala, Dombavelagama, Vallivela, Kavuḍupälälla, Nārangamuva, Nālanda, Dippiṭiya, Kandapalla, Galēvala, Mēlpiṭiya, Uḍugoḍa Kōralē Uḍasiyapattu

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[4] See Apē Vädi Parapura. Nihal Abesinha. Siḷumina. August 10, 2003

[5] Conquista Temporal e Espiritual de Ceylao (1687)

[6] Submission to the Governor General Joan Maetsuyker on 24th Sep.1675 (Published 1726)

[7] An Account of the Wild Tribes of the Veddas of Ceylon. TESL.1863

[8] Veddas in transition (1964)

and Pallesiya Pattu [9]. A.C.Lawrie [10] gives Himbiliyakada in Laggala Pallesiya Pattu of Matale East as being inhabited by the descendants of Veddo. He also says of Laggala Pallesiya Pattuwa: "Almost all inhabitants are descended from Veddo, especially in Hanwella, Kelanwela, Ranamure, Galgediwela, Maraka, Himbiliyakaka, Oggemuwa and Uduwelwala". He also gives Oggomuwa alias Yakgomuwa in Laggala Pallesiya Pattu of Matale East as being peopled by descendants of a Vedda named Okka [11].

Vedda folk also seem to have formerly lived in Kotmale. The 14th century Dambadeni Asna makes a reference to Veddas from the eight divisions of Kotmale (*Kotmalē aṭapiṭiyē väddō*). Vimal Ranatunga [12] has also cited considerable evidence from Sinhala folk tradition to show that Vedda folk formerly lived in Kotmale, in villages such as Arubbala in the Tispanē Kōraḷē.

More recently, R.L.Spittel [13] found Veddas living in scattered groups in the dense unhealthy jungles between the Mahaweli Ganga and the eastern littoral; in the vicinity of the isolated rocks that stud the wilderness Danigala, Nilgala, Henebedde, Galmede, Friar's Hood, Baron's Cap and Meeangola beyond Baron's Cap. He also found a few Veddas in the country between Vellaveli and Unichchai tank in Seerangamadu where he was told that not long ago the Veddas of Seerangamadu and Kovil Vannami –within a couple of miles of each other – were about fifty strong, though at the time of his visit only four small families remained.

II) Vedda racial characters

In scientific terms, a race may be defined as a human population whose members have in common certain hereditary biological characteristics that differentiate them from other human groups. These physical differences, though easily discernible, certainly do not suggest that humans differ much from one another in their genetic composition since outward physical differences are determined by alleles or variations of a small number of genes that affect these visible characteristics.

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[9] Kaḍaim pot vimarśanaya.H.A.P.Abeyawardana (1978)

[10] A Gazetteer of the Central Province of Ceylon. Vol.I (1896)

[11] A Gazetteer of the Central Province of Ceylon. Vol.II (1898)

[12] Kotmalē itihāsaya saha samāja toraturu (1994)

[13] Far-off things (1933)

That all human types belong to a single species (*Homo Sapiens*) and have originated from a common stock is a certainty as they all can successfully interbreed. This genetic similarity between human groups, however geographically distant they may be from one another, suggests that modern man is a relatively new species and has originated from a relatively small population several millennia ago. The outward variations in human populations which include skin colour, body shape, facial form and features and hair colour and texture all seem to have evolved as simple adaptations to the environment in which early man lived. Geographical isolation, combined with inbreeding and environmental factors has, in many instances, led to the emergence of a local group (i.e.a race) agreeing in a number of physical characteristics such as in stature, pigmentation, head and nose form.

However, although pigmentation, stature, nose form etc. are probably influenced by environmental effects, we would have to assume that races would have had to live under certain climatic conditions for a very long period before such characteristics could become fixed hereditary racial traits. Such factors as inbreeding and mutation would have played a prominent role in the determination of such characters. Besides, as suggested by A.C. Haddon and Hingston Quiggin [14] it is probable that the early human groups possessed a tendency to variability which was directed to some extent by geographical conditions and became fixed by isolation. As such, a distinct 'race' as an offshoot of a parent stock could come onto being in a geographically isolated area and expand to peripheral regions.

A study of physical anthropology would however also have to consider the two aspects of a people's physical character, viz. the genotype, which constitutes the fixed biological traits of an individual acquired from the moment of conception and the phenotype which is potentially variable, being the result of interaction between the genotype and the environment. This interaction has resulted in the acquisition of the visible physical traits that characterize humans today.

Although physical anthropology has been primarily concerned with the phenotype, mainly due to the difficulty of obtaining reliable information pertaining to the genotype due to its highly complex nature, there is reason to believe that the phenotype in itself can be employed –with due consideration given to environment factors, including nutrition –to ascertain the genotype of individuals. Environmental factors which include climate (including temperature, humidity and sunlight), altitude

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[14] In their revised, expanded edition of A.H.Keane's 1899 work Man. Past and Present (1920)

and nutrition appear to have played a significant role, not only in the making of the phenotype, but also in the determination of the genotype.

One of the most variable physical characteristics is of course stature. As shown by C.S. Coon [15] people living in limestone areas are not only taller than others, but also generally bigger and more robust, an inference which could also account for the greater average stature and larger body size of the inhabitants of Jaffna (who live on the limestone soils of the Jaffna peninsula) than those folk living in the alluvial soils of the coastal regions as suggested by the anthropometrical figures pertaining to stature given in the Physical Anthropology of Ceylon by Howard Stoudt (1961).

This only goes on to show how such a seemingly insignificant factor such as soil type (in this case heavy calcium content soils) could affect stature and general body build via water and food resources. Thus, nutritional factors could have a marked effect on the phenotype with the passage of time due to long-term adaptation to specialized diets on the part of an ancestral stock. Nevertheless this trait is very easily variable, even in a matter of one to two generations as is evident from the greater height of Japanese youth when compared to that of their parents or grandparents who lived in the 1950s or thereabouts, which is attributable to a change in diet with a greater variety of nutrients conducive to the growth of the human body.

Besides, there is evidence to show that physical build is also influenced by altitude. For instance, people living in the extremely cold regions of the Arctic and nearby regions such as the Inuit are known to have short, stout bodies adapted to retain heat as this type of body build tends to conserve heat through extra subcutaneous body fat in contrast to the people native to the hot, arid, equatorial savannas of Africa such as the Masai who have tall, slender bodies with long extremities adapted to dissipate heat. Here, we would find that these different peoples have evolved different mechanisms that contribute to increasing or decreasing the exchange of heat between the interior and exterior of the body given the fact that the temperature of the human body must remain close to 37 ° C or 98 ° F regardless of the external temperature where overheating or intense coldness could be injurious to the body, and may even cause death. Stature per se is therefore of relatively limited value for racial classificatory purposes, although it is possible that different racial groups possess different genetically-determined potential maximum statures and that variability of stature-due to environmental factors – takes place within these limits.

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[15] The mountains of giants. PPMAA(1950)

Other physical characteristics are also likely to have been influenced by environmental factors. It has been found that in places where the air is dry, the nasal aperture tends to be narrow and where it is damp the openings may be broader. Noses also tend to be narrow in cold than in hot climates, because of the heat exchange between the lungs and the inhaled air [16]. Thus, the narrow noses of Nordics inhabiting cold latitudes compared to the broad noses of peoples adapted to hotter climes such as Negroes indicate that the nasal index is affected by the environment, in this case, the temperature and moisture of the air breathed [17] .

As for skin colour, the differences between the fair-skinned and the dark – skinned is due to quantitative differences in the distribution of the pigment known as melanin, the greater the quantity of the pigment, the darker the complexion. The formation of such pigment in the dermis and epidermis is apparently due to the action of ultra-violet rays on the skin, which is especially pronounced in tropical regions where the intensity of ultra-violet radiation is greater than in other latitudes. This is why we commonly come across dark-skinned peoples in the regions of the equatorial belt and particularly in Africa. Thus we see that there exists a general coincidence between dark skin and the tropical habitat. Further, dark skin may also be seen as an adaptation affording protection against excessive intake of the ultra-violet rays of the tropical sun which may be injurious to fair-skinned people undergoing long exposure to it.

Those in colder climes and higher altitudes do not generally tend to be affected by this process as suggested by the studies of F.S. Hulse[18] . On the contrary, a lower level of skin pigment may have evolved among populations consuming a vitamin D-poor cereal-based diet in regions where sun exposure is low. This would allow for the absorption of Vitamin D vital for calcium formation into the body via the action of ultra-violet rays on the surface of the skin. Thus, it is concluded that lighter skin colour is probably determined by climate since it may provide a selective advantage in producing vitamin D at high latitudes.

This does not necessarily imply that the genotype with regard to skin colour will be invariably affected by continued exposure to hotter or colder climes through successive generations in the case of modern-day

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[16] Man's nasal index in relation to certain climatic conditions. A.Thomson and D.Buxton. JRAI.GB & I. 1923

[17] A re-survey of the morphology of the nose in relation to climate. A. Davies. JRAI. GB & I (1932)

[18] Some factors influencing the relative proportion of human racial stocks (1957).

human populations since such traits have already become fixed, but rather that the early human stocks had a general tendency to variability as suggested earlier. The same could perhaps be said of other hereditary traits. Having given here a brief outline of the acquisition and inheritance of racial characters in man, we will now turn our attention to the physical anthropology of the Veddas and their relationship to kindred Austro-Asiatic peoples.

The Veddas may be assigned to the Austro-Asiatic type, a human type generally characterized by a dark complexion, relatively high dolicocephaly (long headedness) and platyrhinity (broad nosedness), pronounced brow ridges, a slight prognathism, straight-wavy hair, medium-low stature and dark hair and eye pigmentation. The wilder or purer Veddas have preserved their original Austro –Asiatic traits to a remarkable extent due to their relative isolation from other populations. In fact, they are regarded by many to be the typical representatives of the Austro –Asiatic type, so much so that Veddid or Veddoid has been employed in a generic sense by many Anthropologists as synonymous with Austro –Asiatic. This type is commonly found in South and South East Asia, as well as Australia. The type is represented in the Indian subcontinent by the Munda-speaking peoples of Eastern India such as the Santāls, Mundās and Birhōrs of Choṭā Nāgpur, the Hos of Singbhum, the Bhūmij of Mānbhūm, the Korwā of Sirgūja and the Korkus of the Satpura and Mahadeo hills of Madhya Pradesh. Such aboriginal South Indian tribes like the Yanadis also likely belong to the group. It is also found in a fairly pure state among the Sakais of the Malayan peninsula and the Australian aborigines.

According to Paul Schebesta [19] the Bukidnons of Luzon and the Mangyans of Mindoro in the Philippines also belong to the Austro – Asiatic stock. There is also reason to believe that this type of man is also found in the Southern part of the Arabian Peninsula. The Mahra, a Muslim tribe living in the South Eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula, in a stretch of land along the coast of the Indian Ocean between Hadramawt and Uman, and in the hinterland belonging to that region are of brown complexion with black, often curly hair, and are believed to be of Veddoid stock [20]. However, this does not mean that the type is confined solely to these primitive peoples. There is reason to believe that the Austro – Asiatics have made a significant contribution to the making of the other

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[19] Menschen ohne geschichte. Eine Forschungsreise Zu den 'wild' –völkern der Philippinen und Malayas (1947)

[20] See Enc.I.Vol.VI.1991

modern-day human stocks of Southern Asia. For example, there is evidence to show that the Austro- Asiatic strain figures significantly among the lower and humbler classes and castes of India. As pointed out by Nilakanta Sastri [21] the Australoid element that forms the basis of South Indian jungle folk like the Malayans and Yeruvas has particularly entered into the composition of the so-called exterior castes [22]. Likewise, as we shall see shortly, the type has made a very important contribution to the making of the modern Sinhalese race.

As D.Buxton and T. Rice [23] note of the Austro- Asiatics : " On the evidence of the nasal index and other characters, it seems possible that this type, in its extreme form, is the remains of an early and specialized group of peoples adapted by their physique to a life under extreme tropical conditions". It is therefore likely that the Austro-Asiatic type evolved in a tropical habitat and expanded to the peripheral areas of South and South East Asia. This, coupled with the fact that those peoples categorized as Austro-Asiatic are found in close geographical proximity to one another suggests that they are genetically connected to each other and are not independent racial entities that have arisen due to the convergence of physical types under similar conditions [24].

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[21] A History of South India (1955)

[22] This is also corroborated by recent genetic studies which show that the paternally-inherited Y-Chromosome M95 lineage, a haplogroup borne by Austro-Asiatic speakers and believed to have originated with them is found in very high frequencies in the so-called low castes, suggesting a genetic affinity with the tribal populations and evocative of their tribal origins (See Genetic affinities among the lower castes and tribal groups of India: inference from Y-Chromosome and mitochondrial DNA. Ismail Thanseem et al. BMC Genetics. August 2006).

[23] Report on the human remains found at Kish. JRAI. GB & I (1931)

[24] Recent genetic studies have revealed for instance a close genetic affinity between tribal Indian and Australian populations, with regard to both paternally-inherited Y-chromosome (See Gene flow from the Indian Subcontinent to Australia:Evidence from the Y-Chromosome. A.J.Redd et al. CB.Vol.12, 2002) and maternally inherited mitochondrial DNA (See Mitochondrial DNA analysis reveals diverse histories of tribal populations from India. Richard Cordaux et al. EJHG. Vol.11.2003). A possible genetic marker of Austro-Asiatic is suspected in the Mitochondrial DNA Haplogroup M. HG-M is said to be very high in India (Overall 59.9 %) ranging from 18.5 % in Brahmins of Uttar Pradesh to 96.7 % among the Kota, showing that HG-M frequency is highest among tribal groups, particularly Austro-Asiatic tribals (See Ethnic India: A Genomic View, with Special Reference to Peopling and Structure. Analabha Basu et al. GR.Vol.13.2003). The findings further suggest that Austro-Asiatic tribals were the earliest inhabitants of India as they possess not only the highest frequencies of the ancient east-Asian mtDNA HG-M, but also exhibit the highest mtDNA HVSI (First hypervariable segment of mitochondrial DNA) nucleotide diversity. The authors of the study contend that the ancestors of the present-day Austro-Asiatic tribals

It has also been pointed out that the similarities between the indigenous domestic breed of Sri Lanka (Sinhala hound), the Kadar dog, the Tengar of Java, the New Guinea dog and the Dingo of Australia serve to highlight the fact that they could be derived from a common domestic stock which diffused with prehistoric man [25].

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in India entered the subcontinent through the northwestern corridor from out-of-Africa as they moved south of the Himalayas, or in the alternative through a southern exit route from Africa. However they also cite evidence to show that another ancestral Austro-Asiatic group had moved north of the Himalayas and settled in Southern China before entering India through the Northeast as suggested by the high frequencies of the Y haplogroup K found among the Austro-Asiatic groups of Eastern and Central India, a trait found also among peoples of Mongoloid extraction such as the Tibeto-Burmans of North-East India and the Han Chinese. This is an interesting observation, particularly since we know that a major Austro-Asiatic group, the Munda-speaking peoples of Eastern India show linguistic affinities with the Mon-Khmer of Indo-China, particularly in the area of agricultural terms as for instance in the term for rice where a Proto-Austro-Asiatic term **renko* has been reconstructed as attested in both Munda (Sora *ronko*, Garum *runk*, Kharia *rumkub* and the Santali, Ho and Korku terms 'to husk' respectively *rurun*, *ruun* and *rum*) and Mon-Khmer (Old Khmer *rańgo*, Sue *rańkao*, Khmu *reńko*), a form that possibly also gave rise to the Sinhala term for Indian corn (Zea mays) *iriñgu* which has no Aryan or Dravidian cognates. This may well connect the early Austro-Asiatics of Eastern India to the spread of rice cultivation. It is therefore not unlikely as contended by Peter Bellwood (First Farmers. The Origins of Agricultural societies. 2005) it were the Austro-Asiatic peoples such as the Mundas who introduced rice cultivation into NE India C.3000 B.C. Quite a number of late 3rd-2nd millennium B.C.finds of rice in Eastern India come from areas where Austro-Asiatic languages such as Munda are, or were spoken and it is surmised that towards the end of the 3rd millennium B.C. rice, including some domesticated varieties appeared among the small-scale Neolithic farming communities of the Central and eastern parts of the Ganges Valley, perhaps brought by communities of farmers speaking Proto-Munda languages expanding down the Brahmaputra Valley from a homeland in the region of Yunnan and northern Burma (See New Evidence for Early Rice Cultivation in South, Southeast and East Asia. Ian Glover and Charles Higham. The Origins and Spread of Agriculture and Pastoralism in Eurasia. Ed.David Harris.1996). What is particularly interesting is the fact that archaeobotanical evidence suggests that rice cultivation first began in the middle Yangzi Valley before expanding to the rest of South Asia (The origins and dispersal of rice cultivation. Charles Higham & Tracey Lu. Antiquity Dec.1998). Thus it is quite possible as suggested by the genetic evidence that the ancestral Austro-Asiatic group that had found its way to NE India had been settled earlier in Southern China. This however does not necessarily mean that the Veddas have derived from this source. They may have well derived from the earlier Austro-Asiatics who had entered India through the NW corridor of India or even perhaps a southern route out-of-Africa. It has been contended that HG-M originally arose in Eastern Africa. i.e. in Ethiopia, where it has been shown to exist in a rather early form. The virtual absence of the haplogroup in the Levant and its presence at high frequencies in the South Arabian Peninsula may well indicate the hypothesized exit route from Africa through eastern Africa along the coast towards Southeast Asia and Australia (See Genetic evidence of an early exit of homo sapiens sapiens from Africa through eastern Africa. L.Quintana-Murci et al. NG.Dec.1999).

[25] The Prehistory of Sri Lanka. S.U.Deraniyagala (1992)

There can be no doubt that the pure Vedda type is distinct from both the Aryan Sinhalese and the Dravidian Tamil. The pure Vedda skin colour is usually a dark chocolate brown and lighter skin such as that approaching light brown is suggestive of Sinhalese admixture. Nearly three centuries ago Francois Valentijn [26] described the Wedas as a wild forest people who were the oldest inhabitants of the country, black of colour and with burning eyes (*Zy zyn zwart van verwe, brandend van oogen*). Hugh Nevill [27] observed well over a century ago: "*The Vaeddas have two races inclined to be black, the Coast Vaeddas and the Uruwa Waruge clan. The Coast Vaeddas probably have their colour affected by the hot dry sandy tract they inhabit. I see no change beyond shade; it is brown deepened to black. The Uruwa clan, however, have a peculiar blue-black "bloom" over their skins, as a grape or a plum might*".

According to Charles and Brenda Seligmann [28] , the skin colour of Veddas "*vary from a deep brown-black, through various shades of bronze, in some of which a definite reddish tone can be detected, to a colour that can only be called yellowish – brown". They add: "A medium brown – black is perhaps the commonest*". W.C.Osman Hill [29] observes that the skin of the Veddas has a matt texture to a higher degree than is normal in other races and that the colour is typically dark chocolate-brown though some males are as black as negroes, even to the smooth margins of their lips. According to the Physical Anthropology (1961) the Veddas are darker-skinned than either the Sinhalese or the Tamils, with the great majority being described as dark-light brown and a large minority as dark brown. The Veddas measured in the survey (134 individuals from Badulla and Anuradhapura) showed as many as 70.9 percent in the dark-light brown category and 21.6 in the dark brown category. Of the total number of Sinhalese measured (612), 30.1 percent had light-light brown skin, 24.2 percent had light brown skin, 37.9 percent had dark-light brown skin and 7.4 percent had dark brown skin. Of the Tamils measured (592) 20.1 percent had light-light brown skin, 16.4 percent had light brown skin, 52.5 percent had dark-light brown skin and 10.6 percent had dark brown skin.

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[26] Naamen Der Inlandsche Bedienden Inde Dorpen op Ceylon in Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien (1726)

[27] Vaeddas of Ceylon. The Taprobanian. April 1888

[28] The Veddas (1911)

[29] Veddahs. A Living Relic of Primitive Man. Loris.June 1945

The Veddas it is therefore evident were the darkest skinned among these races.

We will next consider the anthropometry of the Veddas which is another important indicator of racial origins and affinities. The Physical Anthropology (1961) which is based on the information gathered during the Ethnological Survey of Ceylon (1937-1939) has recorded the anthropometric data of 138 male Vedda subjects from the districts of Badulla (114 subjects) and Anuradhapura (24 subjects) and is an important source pertaining to the physical anthropology of the community. According to the work, the mean head length of the Veddas is 184.16 and the mean head breadth 134.90.

The mean cephalic index [30] of the Veddas is given as 73.46. The Veddas are therefore a decidedly dolicocephalic folk and are longer-headed than either the Sinhalese (whose mean cephalic index is given as 78.33) or the Tamils (whose mean cephalic index is given as 74.68). Hill (1945) observes of the Vedda skull: "Dolicocephaly is constant, the lateral compression being considerable across the forehead and again opposite the lower hinder part of the parietal region. The forehead is low and vertical or somewhat receding; the vault generally flattened or ridged in the mid-line and sloping away rapidly on either side of it (a feature shared with the Australian) and the occiput rounded". Thus dolicocephaly seems to have been a well established trait among the Veddas as among other Australoid peoples among whom it is invariably found.

As for nose form, according to the Physical Anthropology (1961) the Veddas have significantly broader noses than either the Sinhalese or Tamils. The mean for nose breadth of Veddas is given as 36.96 mm. The Veddas have much higher nasal indices than either the Sinhalese or Tamils. The mean Vedda nasal index [31] is given as 73.93 as compared with the Sinhalese mean of 70.35 and the Tamil mean of 70.51.

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[30] The Cephalic index is the proportion of the maximum breadth of the head (measured above the ears) to its maximum length (measured from the glabella to the back of the head).

$$\text{i.e. Cephalic index} = \frac{\text{Head breadth}}{\text{Head length}} \times 100$$

Indices below 75 are termed dolicocephalic; those between 75-80 mesaticephalic and those above 80 brachycephalic.

[31] The Nasal index is the proportion of the breadth of the nose to its height.

$$\text{i.e. nasal index} = \frac{\text{Nose width}}{\text{Nose height}} \times 100$$

Indices below 70 are termed leptorhine;those between 70-85 mesorhine and those above 85 platyrhine

Nandadeva Wijesekera [32] who has based his data on the information gathered during the Ethnological Survey of Ceylon as well as independent findings gives the mean Vedda nasal index as 73.1.

Thus the Veddas are not really platyrhine (broad-nosed) as most Austro-Asiatic peoples but rather mesorrhine with moderately broad noses. This may be due to miscegenation with leptorrhine Sinhalese or environmental factors, though it is more likely that environment could have played a role in bringing down their nasal index [33].

As for stature, the Physical Anthropology (1961) gives the mean Vedda stature as 156.78 cm while Wijesekera (1949) gives the mean stature of the Veddas as 1,578 mm. According to Hill (1945), male Veddas had an average stature of five feet while females attained a mere four feet, six inches. There however existed differences in stature between the various clans which is probably due to miscegenation with non-Veddas. For example, the males among the Talā Veddas inhabiting the Galgamuva area were generally about 5' 4" tall, while the relatively pure Morāne Maha Bandāra Veddas of Dānigala were the shortest of the Veddas, the men usually being about 4' 8" tall [34].

Deraniyagala (1963) however states that all large Veddas are not the direct results of such miscegenation, for large progeny are at times produced by two small Vedda parents and possess the usual Vedda characters such as heavy browridges, hairless skin, rudimentary face hair etc. He attributes this to either (a) the large size character whether derived from the ancestral Homo sapiens balangodensis now extinct, where the men were 5 ft ,10 ½ inches tall or from a Sinhalese ancestor, which had remained recessive for several generations, or (b) the Veddas were originally of normal stature but had become reduced in size owing to their practice of intensive cross-cousin marriage.

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[32] People of Ceylon (1949)

[33] As has been shown by J.Hiernaux (The People of Africa.1974) nasal breadth is considerably influenced by climate. For instance in Africa, it differs in the wet and dry areas of the equator. In wet tropical areas, the nose tends to be broader (platyrrhine) as is seen in Southern Negro types such as Bantu peoples whereas in dry hot conditions the nose tends to be narrower (mesorrhine) as with northern African types found in countries like Ethiopia and Somalia. Thus it is possible that the Veddas could have been influenced by environmental factors in the narrowing of the nose since their present habitations are found in the dry lowlands of the eastern hinterland.

[34] See The Hybridization of the Vaddas with the Sinhalese. P.Deraniyagala. SZ (1963)

Deraniyagala's suggestion that intensive cross-cousin marriage could have been responsible for the present low stature of the Veddas is deserving of consideration, especially since there is reason to believe that consanguineous marriages could increase the risk of congenital defects and other abnormalities in the resultant offspring [35] .

However, it is also possible that the low stature of today's Veddas is due to calcium deficiency. As seen earlier, calcium makes a significant contribution to increased stature amongst human populations. This theory is lent further support by the researches of Osman Hill [36] who states on pathological grounds that the Veddas probably suffer from calcium deficiency. Indeed as pointed out by Deraniyagala (1992): "The Vaddas' preference for drinking turbid water probably has some association with their mineral requirements. It is noteworthy that most of the island's natural waters are low in mineral content and hence the attraction of mineral springs to man and animal alike- as at the site of the elephant kraals at Panamure. The slaked lime that Vaddas made from burnt mollusks for use with masticatories would have contributed towards their calcium requirements".

As for hair form and distribution, Hill (1941) notes: "Veddas are not hairy people. The only part usually well covered is the scalp, moustache, beard, and body hair, if present at all, are typically scanty and reduced in distribution". The typical Vedda, he says "is recognised not so much by his mop of long, unkempt scalp hair, as by his small "goatee" beard, confined to the chin; and his almost hairless trunk and limbs". Unlike the Tamils who are capable of growing heavy moustaches, Vedda moustache hairs "when present, are sparse and short, never sufficient to clothe the upper lip completely". He also states: "The male, it is true, develops a beard and moustache of sorts, but, at best, the beard is of the *goatee* variety confined to the chin and with poor density. The moustache too remains in a state reminiscent of the adolescent of other races, its component hairs remaining short, set close to the skin and often entirely lacking on the central groove of the upper lip" (Hill 1945). R.L. Spittel [37] delving on the characteristics that distinguish a Vedda from a Sinhalese, notes: "The sparsity of hair on the Vedda's face is his outstanding characteristic, in marked contrast to the heavily bearded Sinhalese. Add to this a darker complexion, a shorter stature, a greater reserve, simplicity,

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[35] See Principles of human genetics . Curt Stern (1960)

[36] The Physical Anthropology of the existing Veddas of Ceylon. Part 1. CJS. Anthropology. vol.111.part 11(1941)

[37] Wild Ceylon (1924)

and apathy, and an easily aroused ferocity of nature –and there is no more to be said". Although the Veddas have been generally characterized by a sparsity of body and facial hair, this does not seem to have been universal amongst them for there do exist a good many Vedda men with much body hair and luxuriant beards. However it is likely that this is due to Sinhalese admixture. The Bintenne Veddas for instance were found to be more heavily bearded when compared to others (Hill. 1941).

It is however a matter of dispute whether sparsity of the hairy system is a distinctive character of the Austro-Asiatic type. Although it is pronounced in a number of Austro- Asiatic folk such as for example, the Sakai who are characterized by sparse chin hair, it is not altogether absent among the Australian aborigines whose beards may be well developed or sparse, almost absent.

With regard to hair form, the Seligmanns (1911) observe: "Vedda hair is wavy, sometimes almost curly". Hill (1941) however remarks that whereas the Veddas of Tammankaduva tend to have coiled curly hair, the Bintenne and other Veddas are wavy-haired. According to the Physical Anthropology (1961), the Veddas tend more towards deeper waves and curlier hair than either Sinhalese or Tamils. As many as 41.3 percent showed deep wave and 17.4 percent curly hair. The Badulla Veddas surveyed were also found to have decidedly deeper waves and more curly hair than those Veddas from Anuradhapura.

A curious trait that reveals itself in the childhood of individuals belonging to certain Austro-Asiatic peoples is the occurrence of light-coloured hair for a short period. Says Deraniyagala (1963): "As in the case of many South Indian tribes and among the Australians, there are Vadda children with head hair that is almost tow colored. This color which is most conspicuous when the child is about 6 to 7 years of age, alters to a dark reddish brown when the child is about 13 years and becomes black in the adult".

Prognathism, i.e. the degree of protrusion of the jaws which is in itself a conspicuous feature of the profile is also slightly present among the Veddas [38]. The trait seems to have been more pronounced in the olden days, for An Officer, late, of the Ceylon Rifles [39] described the Veddas of his time as having shaggy hair, wide nostrils and projecting jaws which approached very near the Australian type. The Physical Anthropology (1961) found 76.6 percent of the Veddas surveyed having normal or + alveolar prognathism and 7.3 percent having + + alveolar prognathism. Besides a slight prognathism, the Veddas were also characterized by

[38] Wijesekera (1964)

[39] Ceylon. A General Description of the Island (1876)

narrow and long thin lips (Wijesekera . 1964) as well as wide, though not high, cheek bones and often a receding chin (Hill. June. 1945).

As for browridges, another prominent Austro-Asiatic trait, according to the Physical Anthropology (1961): "The Vaddas have decidedly more prominent browridges than any of the other racial or subracial groups ...Among the Badulla Vaddas, 55 per cent are classified as + + in this trait, by far the highest percentage observed in the survey". According to the work, over 70 per cent of all Sinhalese and Tamils are classified as + or normal, in development of browridges. It is due to the well marked browridges of the Veddas that their eyes "appear deeply set or even sunken" (Seligmanns.1911). Hill (1945) found some Veddas showing reasonably large bony ridges above their eyes (superciliary ridges) which he believes are a reminder of their 'Australoid ancestry'. He also refers to their undue forward projection of the bony framework of the jaws (prognathism) as another Australoid trait best seen in males. He notes that it may be restricted to the tooth-bearing part of the jaws (subnasal prognathism) but more rarely it affects the whole facial skeleton.

The Vedda type is discernible in the skeletal remains of early man found in Sri Lanka, showing that the Veddas are in fact the remnants of early man that lived in ancient and pre-historic Sri Lanka. For instance, there is considerable evidence to connect the Veddas with the folk of the Balangoda culture (Balangoda man or *Homo sapiens balangodensis*) which appears to have flourished in places such as the open-air midden site of Bellan-Bandi Palassa near Embilipitiya about 6500-3000 years ago as well as cave habitation sites in the lowland wet zone such as Batadomba Lena near Kuruvita, Beli Lena in Kitulgala and Alu Lena in Attanagoda near Kegalle [40].

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[40] This anatomically modern prehistoric human population is referred to as Balangoda Man in popular parlance for his being responsible for the 'Balangoda Culture' first defined in sites near Balangoda in the Ratnapura District of the Sabaragamuwa Province. This Mesolithic culture was characterised by a tool kit comprising geometric microliths including small flakes of quartz and chert fashioned into stylised lunate, triangular and trapezoidal forms. This Mesolithic or Middle Stone Age culture had evidently developed from the Paleolithic or Old Stone Age when stones were used as tools in their natural form. It had not as yet reached the Neolithic or New Stone Age stage when lithic tools came to be characterised by blade traits. Such a state does not ever seem to have been reached in Sri Lanka. Rather, it would appear that the Mesolithic was abruptly succeeded by the iron age, introduced to the island by Aryan-speakers around the 6th or 5th century BC.

A.G. Wintle and K.P. Oakley [41] date the human occupation and mortuary deposits of Bellan –Bendi Palassa to C. 6500±700 years B.P.(i.e.C. 4500 B.C.) on the basis of thermoluminescent dating of fired rock crystal found in association with one of the burials. Balangoda man has been described as Proto-Veddoid with Australoid affinities [42] . They are said to have been a large-headed race with heavy, protuberant, diffuse brow ridges [43] . It has also been shown that the skulls are generally dolicocephalic and alveolar prognathism evident in most adult males[44]. Balangoda man however had a stature of about 5 ft 8 ½ inches (Deraniyagala.1971) which is more than that of the present –day Veddas, indicating that the latter had degenerated greatly – probably due to the socio – cultural and environmental factors we dealt with earlier. Besides the specimens from Bellan Bendi Palassa, early human remains of Sri Lanka's stone age man have been found at Batadomba Lena, Ravana Alla and Alu-galge Telulla. A specimen from Batadomba-lena is said to display dolicocephaly and very heavy supra-orbital ridges, traits also very pronounced in the assemblage from Bellan Bani Palassa. Further, the specimens found at Ravana Alla and Alu-galge Telulla are also said to possess Australoid affinities on the basis of cranial morphology which would suggest that they were the direct ancestors of the Veddas (Deraniyagala 1992).

Among the physical characters common to the Balangodans and Veddas are the dolicocephalic skull with slight keeling of the parietal region, subrectangular large orbits, well developed or at times enlarged supra orbital ridges, wide face relative to head breadth, low nasal bridge with concave nasal bones, large palate and mental foramen, besides close similarities in the humerus, clavicle, sternum and vertebral column [45].

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[41] Thermoluminescent dating of fired-rock crystal from Bellan Bandi Palassa, Ceylon. Archaeometry No. 14 (1972)

[42] Some Aspects of the Prehistory of Ceylon . P.E.P.Deraniyagala . SZ (1955)

[43] ibid

[44] Prehistoric Ceylon- a summary in 1968. S.Deraniyagala. AC (1971)

[45] Some features of especial interest in the skeleton and culture of Ceylon's extinct stone age humans homo sapiens Balangodensis.P.E.P.Deraniyagala, AC. August 1979

Studies based on standard bivariate metrical indices and the incidence of certain discrete morphological traits suggest the existence of significant biological similarities between the Veddas and the Bellan-Bandi Palassa specimens. Kenneth Kennedy [46] who has undertaken a comparative analysis of osteological specimens and morphological traits of Balangoda man (from Bellan –Bandi Palassa) and various South Asian populations, indicated that "the Veddas of Ceylon most closely resemble the Balangodese in their physical anthropology". More recently, S. Deraniyagala and K.Kennedy[47] have held that the Balangoda man of Bellan -Bandi Palassa may be considered "the ancestor of the Vadda with whom a high frequency of genes was shared". They opine that the Balangodans appear to have withdrawn into the Uva Bintenne area where they survived as the Veddas, following displacement by the metal- using Sinhalese during the Pre – Christian or early Christian period. It is however perhaps more reasonable to agree with the later observation of Kennedy that "the biological progenitors of the Veddas were the Late Stone Age People of which the specimens from Bellan Bandi Palassa constitute a local representation in Sabaragamuva at a time prior to the movements of the tribal people into the Veddarata of eastern Ceylon"[48].

There also seems to have existed some cultural similarities between the Veddas and Balangodans. Says Deraniyagala (1971): "The skull bones of the larger animals are rarely found amongst the food remains of Balangoda man. The explanation probably lies in the Vedda custom of offering the head of the kill to a forest deity before transporting the carcass back to camp". Deraniyagala [49] describes the culture as follows: "Among the stone artefacts of this culture are axes, adzes, hammers, picks and pestles. The pottery with its mat basket and wicker basket impressions consists of flat as well as gourd shaped vessels. These pots sometimes reveal the fingerprints of the maker. The small size of these prints suggests that the makers were probably women". At any rate, they seem to have been quite an advanced race. As noted by Deraniyagala (1955) : "The types of pottery and bone artefacts manufactured by this race indicate that

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[46] Human skeletal material from Ceylon, with an analysis of the island's prehistoric and contemporary populations . BBM (1965).

[47] Bellan –bandi palassa. 1970. A mesolithic burial site in Ceylon. AC (1972)

[48] The Palaeo-demography of Ceylon: A study of the biological continuum of a population from prehistoric to historic times. K.Kennedy in Perspectives in Palaeoanthropology. Ed.A.K.Ghosh (1974)

[49] Stone Age Ceylon. JRAS. CB. (1954)

it was more advanced than its hybrid descendants the so-called Vaddhas who had degenerated greatly even to forgetting the art of manufacturing essential weapons from river mussel shells". S. Deraniyagala (1971) states that "sorghum grains from Ravanalla cave might indicate a rudimentary knowledge of agriculture" [50].

Balangoda man evidently knew now to produce fire, though it appears that flesh was generally eaten raw. The diet consisted of elephant, buffalo, bear, pig, gaur,sambhur, deer, porcupine , pangolin, hare , monkey, rock squirrel, civet cat, jungle fowl, monitor lizard, star tortoise and fresh water crabs and snails (Deraniyagala.1971).This would suggest that the modern-day Vedda taboos against consuming the flesh of porcupine, jungle fowl and buffalo are later developments.

All this would indicate that the Veddas have degenerated physically and culturally from their primitive ancestor – *Homo sapiens balangodensis*. It would also add weight to our contention that in former times, a portion of the ancient Yakkhas (whom we have sought to identify in the previous chapter with the ancestors of the Veddas) had reached a relatively high degree of material development such as is portrayed in the MV. Given the advanced state of Balangoda man, it is quite possible that certain portions of the Yakkhas had reached the state of civilization that the Mahāvaṁsa attributes to them by around the middle part of the first millennium B.C.

That the Veddas constitute the descendants of Sri Lanka's Stone Age man is also supported by blood group and genetic studies. With regard to blood group, the Veddas have been shown to have a very high proportion of Group O blood which agrees with that of the Australian aborigines[51]. Group O blood is found in high proportions in primitive populations and this would suggest that the Veddas are the remnants of a very primitive population.

The latest genetic studies also support this view. A detailed phylogenetic analysis of Sri Lankan populations employing non-sex-determined markers, paternally-inherited Y-Chromosome and maternally-inherited MtDNA markers revealed that the Veddas constituted a distinct group

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[50] That advanced pre-historic cultures could regress is also proven from other parts of the world where tribal peoples have been found, as for example in South Africa where recent findings in Border Cave have indicated that the people there had reached an advanced state of culture including sophisticated hunting tools, digging implements and personal ornaments several millennia ago, which has been taken as the first signs of modern human behaviour which was subsequently lost before becoming established once again (Early evidence of San material culture represented by organic artifacts from Border Cave, South Africa. Francesco d'Errico et al. PNAS. August 2012)

[51] Veddas – A Living Relic of Primitive Man. W.C.Osman Hill. Loris. June 1945

compared to the other Sri Lankan groups studied, namely, the Sinhalese, Tamils and Moors. They were shown to possess haplotypes that separated them from other Sri Lankans with multiple mutational steps, suggesting that they might be "the surviving descendants of the earliest inhabitants of Sri Lanka". A phylogenetic analysis of Y-chromosome haplotypes of Sri Lankan populations indicated that the Veddas were closest to the Indian Tamils. Further among the Sri Lankan populations the Veddas were shown to be genetically closest to a cluster of populations from Sub-Saharan Africa [52].

All this indicates that the Veddas belonged to an Austro-Asiatic stock, as seen from their genetic proximity to Indian Tamils who show Australoid affinities and that they had their origins in Africa in the distant past, well before traits like the woolly hair characteristic of Negroes came to characterize Sub-Saharan African populations.

III) Vedda relations and miscegenation with other communities

It is likely that it was this more civilized segment of the Veddas who had reached an advanced state of material culture as suggested by the Mahāvaṁsa who would have merged with the Aryan-speaking settlers and their descendants to form the present-day Sinhalese race. It is only in comparatively recent times that the descendants of the less civilized sections of the folk have adopted civilized habits and the culture and lifestyle of their Sinhalese neighbours. All this would suggest that the assimilation of the Veddas into the Sinhalese fold has been an ongoing process throughout the centuries.

This is not to say that peaceful intercourse has throughout been the norm, for there is evidence to show that in the early days of Aryan colonisation, come sort of conflict between the two peoples did indeed take place. According to the MV, the Aryan prince Vijaya was responsible for the massacre of the Yakkhas of Sirīsavatthu with the help of the Yakkhini Kuveni. This massacre was evidently a preliminary to the establishment of Aryan settlement in the island, and reflects the ruthlessness and warlike nature of the pioneer Aryan conquerors whose

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[52] Thesis Development of Databases for Autosomal, Y-Chromosomal and Mitochondrial DNA Markers and their application in forensic casework and population genetics in Sri Lankan populations by Dr.Ruwan Illeperuma. Cited in Race in Sri Lanka. What genetic evidence tells us. A Hussein. Sunday Times. Jan.26.2014. The study took into consideration non-sex-determined autosomal markers, paternally-inherited Y-Chromosome STR (Short Tandem repeat) markers and maternally-inherited Mitochondrial HVS1 (Hyper Variable Segment 1) markers.

zeal for power and territory resulted in the subjugation of the indigenous people, not only in Sri Lanka , but also in India .

However, this period of conflict seems to have been short-lived, for not much later we find the two peoples having amicable relations, especially during the reign of king Paṇḍukābhaya (C. 4th-3rd century B.C.) and afterwards. We shall first consider the literary and epigraphic evidence showing the close relations that have existed between the Sinhalese and Vedda communities and then focus on the miscegenation that has evidently taken place between the two peoples.

Firstly, we have the evidence of the Mahāvaṁsa, especially those passages relating to the reign of king Paṇḍukābhaya, the grandson of Vijaya's nephew and successor, Paṇḍuvāsudeva. The MV relates how a Yakkhinī named Cetiyā living in the Dhūmarakkha mountain helped king Paṇḍukābhaya defeat his uncles and so acquire kingship by her wise counsel. This narrative however occurs couched in fantastic language, such as for instance when it describes the Yakkhinī as being mare-faced (*valava-mukha*). Paranavitana [53] was led to connect her with Assamukhī (lit .horse-faced) who seems to have been the centre of a popular cult in North India at the time of the rise of Buddhism. Assamukhī occurs as a fairy god-mother to the Bodhisattva in the Padakusalamanavaka Jātaka and it is possible that the author of the Mahāvaṁsa had been influenced by the Jātakas in this connection. But this does not necessarily mean that the entire story is mythical, for divested of its fanciful elements, the narrative suggests that the king had been actually aided by a Vedda chieftainess or prominent lady in his campaign for sovereignty.

This is also corroborated by the MV account of the Yakkhas named Cittarāja and Kāḷavela. The MV states that following the defeat of his uncles, king Paṇḍukābhaya who had *Yakkhas* and *Bhūtas* for friends, enjoyed his fortune together with the Yakkhas Kāḷavela and Citta "who were visible". The allusion to these Yakkhas being visible (in bodily form) suggests that they were human, and not at all divine or supernatural .These Yakkhas seem to have enjoyed a high status for the MV states that at the time of festivals, Paṇḍukābhaya was seated with Cittarāja on equal seats. This would suggest that not only had conciliation of the Yakkhas taken place, but that this concord between Yakkha and Sinhalese had been attached so much importance as to be symbolically demonstrated in public. Parker (1909) opines that Kāḷavela and Cittarāja were aboriginal chieftains whom the king treated with special honour, as a matter of policy, to reconcile them. The Dīpavaṁsa (an anonymous Pāli work assigned to the 4th –5th century A.C.) merely states that Pakuṇḍa

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[53] Pre – Buddhist religious beliefs in Ceylon. JRAS. CB (1929)

(Paṇḍukābhaya) enjoyed sovereignty over both men and Yakkhas, and though lacking in details, appears to corroborate the MV account.

The MV, relating the construction of the *Mahāthūpa* by Duṭṭhagāmani (C. 2nd century B.C.) alludes to the help rendered by a *sunakha –ludda* (hunter with dogs) in informing the king about some beautiful gems seen by him in a cave opening on the tank of Peḷivāpika village in the North-Central region. It is likely that this term refers to the Veddas whose close association with their canine friends is only too well known. The Pāli word *ludda* is synonymous with *vyādha* meaning hunter.

Ancient epigraphic evidence also suggests a close relationship between the Sinhalese and Veddas. In an ancient Brahmi inscription in Old Sinhala found at Situlpavuva (C.3rd century B.C.-1st century A.C.), we are told that the cave of the chief (*parumaka*) Milaka Pusa, son of the chief Naga had been given to the Sangha. In another ancient inscription at Kosavakanda we learn that Kati, the consort of king Gamani Abaya had founded the *Vihara* of Milaka-Tisa. This term Milaka is evidently connected to P.*milakkha* and Skt. *mleccha* 'barbarian' but appears to have had no derogatory connotation in the local context. It very likely refers to the Veddas. As S. Paranavitana [54] notes: " It is possible that the autochtones of the island are meant by this term. If so, these names are evidence of the fact that the aborigines of the island adopted the language and customs of the invading Aryans, came to occupy high positions in society, and that in course of time, the two coalesced to form one people".

This tradition of co-operation continued in mediaeval and post-mediaeval times. The sequel to the Mahāvaṁsa, the Cūlavaṁsa alludes to many thousands of *Vyādhas* (very probably Veddas) who were brought together by king Parakkama -Bāhu 1 (12th century) as part of his military campaign to unite the island under a single administration.

In the Mandārampura Puvata (C.17th century) we come across a reference to Veddas guarding the borders in the days of King Vimaladharmasūriya (C.1591-1604) as follows:

Vilkaḍa samaṅga yali mahavana rākavalaṭa
Maṅga rā vädihu haṭa pavarā bāra koṭa
Bamara badda nila dī koṭika vädi hata
Nayimā vädi täbi māvat mēvaraṭa

Kottā panolā yana nam äti dedena
Vilkaḍa kaḍavate murayata täbi mena
Ättama paṇivuḍaya pā samkaḍa da vena
Vē goḍa vädiṅdu hata pera vilasinma duna

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[54] Inscriptions of Ceylon. Vol.1(1970)

This shows that the protection of forests (*vana räkavala*) and guarding of borders (*kadavatē mura*) was entrusted to the Veddas. It also suggests that the Veddas were given tasks such as supplying elephant ropes (*ättama*) and skins for footwear (*pā samkaḍa*). The same work also refers to King Senarat (C.1604-1635) getting down Veddas from Uva and Matale for his campaign against the Portuguese General Constantine De Saa. It also relates that several Veddas from Vēgoda participated in the Battle of Gannōruva fought by King Rājasiṅha II against the Portuguese.

We also have the Portuguese historian Queyroz (1687) stating that the Veddas of Vellassa had in their keeping the treasure of the Kandyan king. He also notes that in times of war, as on the occasions when the Portuguese entered Kandy, the kings entrust to them their wives. The Veddas are said to have made for these queens houses in their fashion, in those Jungles and woods "very clean and with many flowers". As noted by Queyroz, " though these people be so wild, in no other has the king of Candea greater confidence". Robert Knox in his Historical Relation of Ceylon (1681) alludes to some 'pretty tame' Veddas being summoned to serve the army of the Kandyan king Rājasiṅha II (1635 – 1687) in a hasty expedition against the Dutch. He adds that they "with their Bows and Arrows did as good service as any of the rest". Dutch records also indicate that the Veddas formed the escort of the Adigars or Kandyan chiefs [55] suggesting that they were well trusted even by the leading men of the kingdom. More recently, the Veddas are said to have participated in the 1817 Kandyan war of liberation against the British [56]. The Veddas with their excellent marksmanship and tracking methods would have made a significant contribution to the struggle.

There is even evidence to show that in the olden days prominent Vedda personages took an interest in the political life of the country. Parker (1909) has recorded that a manuscript in his possession apparently dating from about 1640 refers to a number of Vedda chiefs such as Hērat Vaeddā of Nikakoṭuva, Maha Dombā Vaeddā of Dombawala and Maha Kanda Vaeddā of Kandapalla as well as a female Vedda chief, namely, Walli Vaeddī of Wallivela(all of whom are said to have belonged to the 'Vaedi Wasagama') who along with three Sinhalese chiefs of Matale took part in a rebellion in support of Prince Wijapala against Rājasiṅha II.

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[55] See Secret Minutes of the Dutch Political Council.1762. Ed.& Trans.J.H.O.Paulusz (1954)

[56] See Eleven years in Ceylon. Major Forbes (1840)

We will now consider how the respective cultures of the Sinhalese and the Veddas would have influenced one another. It is evident that while the Veddas have adopted the Aryan speech of the Sinhalese to a great extent, the latter have also been influenced by Vedda culture especially Vedda religious ideas.

There can be no doubt that there existed a wide dichotomy between the two cultures in ancient times. The early Aryan-speaking Sinhalese settlers from North India would have like most conquering peoples, been a rigidly patriarchal folk. The Veddas, on the other hand, would have probably been a matriarchal, if not sexually egalitarian or a mildly patriarchal folk as may be inferred from their more recent lifestyle and social organisation. It is therefore possible that the favourable social position of women in traditional Sinhalese society has been influenced by Vedda ideas, though the influence of Buddhism too cannot be ruled out. The influence of Vedda religious ideas on Sinhalese society has also been significant and may account for the numerous folk cults of the island which entail the propitiation of spirits known as *yakku* (Sg. *yakā*). The Bandāra cult, which entails the adoration and propitiation of deceased personages and prominent ancestors, practiced in certain parts of the country, especially among the Kandyan Sinhalese (e.g. the homage paid to the spirit of king Mahāsēna known as Minnēriya deviyō and other so-called Bandāra gods like GalēYakā, Kiulegedara deviyō and Bōvala deviyō) may have also been due to the influence of Vedda religious ideas as suggested by the Seligmanns (1911).

The Veddas are also known to figure prominently in the *Kohomba kankāriya* ceremony performed by the Sinhalese Buddhists for the purpose of warding off evil and bringing general prosperity. The *Kohomba kankāriya* includes an invitation to Veddas from 84 localities to be present at the ceremony which consists of such rituals as the *Vädi dāne* (offering to the Veddas) and *Väddan givissīma* (swearing in of the Veddas). According to the text of the *Kohomba kankāriya* (assigned to the 16th century), the ceremony was performed to counter the curse of Kuveni which took place as a result of the wrong done to her by prince Vijaya in casting her away in favour of a Pandyan princess. K.N.O. Dharmadasa [57] believes that the legend, in view of the wrong done to Kuveni and the important place given to the Veddas, "seems to dramatise a period of conflict and the ultimate compromise that was accomplished between the autochthones and the immigrants".

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[57] Creolization, Legend and History. SLJH. June.1975

Vedda linguistic influence on the Sinhala language also appears to have been considerable and may account for the obscure non-Aryan linguistic substratum in the present-day Sinhala language. Many such words and speech patterns would have disappeared among the Veddas themselves, before records of their language (which had largely become a corrupted form of Sinhala) were being made during the early part of the 20th century. As for the Sinhalese cultural impact on Vedda life, the greatest is perhaps the adoption of Sinhala speech on the part of the latter. Such social practices as the isolation of menstruous women also appear to have been due to Sinhalese influence.

However, there can be little doubt that despite the centuries of interaction between Sinhalese and Vedda, it is the culture of the former that has eventually gained the dominant place. It would otherwise be difficult to comprehend how such a significant Vedda admixture into the Sinhalese community –at different periods of course-could have taken place without making a greater socio-cultural impact on Sinhalese society. To this day, the basic vocabulary of the Sinhala language remains largely Aryan. The laws and customs of the Sinhalese have also been largely inherited from, or are a development of the North Indian Aryan tradition.

This however is not difficult to explain. In the acculturation process, it is usually the elements of dominant, advanced, complex cultures that are transferred to weaker, simpler, rudimentary cultures and this is exactly what appears to have taken place throughout the centuries of interaction between Sinhalese and Vedda. That a group of Aryan-speaking folk should have imposed their government and civilization on an equally numerous or larger body of native folk –at varying periods of course - is difficult to comprehend unless we presume that the aboriginal folk constituted an unorganised or ill-organised society having a rudimentary culture, and there can be no doubt that the early Sinhalese culture with its rich language, solider social organisation and greater material development was far more advanced than contemporaneous Vedda culture.

It is likely that the early Sinhalese, like other Indo-European speakers had the ability to offer material benefits (viz. goods, status, ritual or security) to the aboriginal population with whom they came into contact, and it is probably this factor that would have facilitated the adoption of Sinhala speech and culture on the part of the latter. Such a process of acculturation, followed by intermarriage, would have easily paved the way for the assimilation of Veddas into Sinhalese society. It is therefore not difficult to see how such large-scale assimilation of Vedda elements has been effected in Sinhalese society with what may perhaps be termed a minimal effect on Sinhalese culture. As seen above, social relations

between Sinhalese and Vedda has since ancient times generally been of a very cordial nature. This would have also led to miscegenation or mixing of these two originally distinct races, so much so indeed that the Veddas have been traditionally considered members of the dominant Sinhalese Govigama caste who to a large extent are representative of the early Aryan-speaking settlers of the country who introduced the Sinhala language and gave rise to the early Sinhalese civilization. Thus there can be little doubt that there has been considerable intermixture between Sinhalese and Vedda.

This contention is supported not only by a consideration of the physical characters of the Sinhalese as we shall see shortly, but also by an important socio-cultural factor, viz. caste rules pertaining to intermarriage. Intermarriage between Sinhalese and Vedda has been possible since the latter were also considered part of the dominant Sinhalese Govigama caste.

The Vijayan legend concerning prince Vijaya's role as the progenitor of the Pulindas would have been the likely cause for the later-day Sinhalese considering the Veddas as belonging to the Govi caste. Although it is true that prince Vijaya was deemed to be a Kṣatriya and not a Vaiśya as were the Govi it is likely that with the ascendancy of the Govi caste in mediaeval times the Veddas were subsumed under the same, due to their supposed connection with the founding father of the Sinhalese nation. Besides, the close connubial relations that have subsisted between Sinhalese and Vedda since ancient times would have also warranted such an amalgamation.

It is likely that in the early period, intermarriage or cohabitation between the early Indo- Aryan population and the Veddas took the form of hypergamy (*anuloma*)-the marriage or cohabitation of a man of higher rank or caste with a woman of a lower rank or caste. This would mean that during the early period (before the idea that the Veddas belonged to the ritually highest caste among the Sinhalese came to be established) inter-marriage or cohabitation was limited to Sinhalese males having relations with Vedda females and not vice versa, since we may suppose that the Veddas were considered to be of a lower social rank than the early Aryan Sinhalese in keeping with the Aryan worldview of the time. This however appears to have changed in later times as we shall shortly see.

Even Sinhalese royalty appears to have been susceptible to some Vedda admixture in ancient times. This is suggested by the fact that a few ancient Sinhalese monarchs possessed dark complexions, a trait which would have been inherited from some remote Vedda ancestress. Kākavanna Tissa (C. 2nd century B.C.), the name of king Duṭṭhagāmani's father literally means 'Tissa, the crow-coloured' while king Mahasena's father Goṭhābhaya (C.

3rd century A.C.) was also known as Mahāmeghavannābhaya or the 'great rain cloud –coloured Abhaya'. The MV narrates that upon the defeat of king Vaṭṭagāmani (C. 2nd century B.C.) by the Damiḷas (Tamils), a Niganta (Jain) named Giri on seeing the king fleeing, cried out loudly 'The great black Sinhalese is fleeing' (*palāyati mahākālāsīhaḷo*) . All this would suggest that there had been some infusion of Vedda blood into Sinhalese royalty in ancient times.

We also notice that in the Sigiri graffiti (8th -10th centuries), a few composers evince a desire for the dark-complexioned damsels, though most of them direct their attention to the golden-complexioned (*ran-van*) women. One eighth century composer named Agboy writes:

Nil ka [ṭ] roḷa maleka ävunu vätkoḷa mala sey
Sändägä sihi venne-y mahanel-vana [h]ay ran vana hun

(Like a Vätkoḷa (Luffa Acutangula) flower entangled in a blue Kaṭroḷa (Clitoria Ternatea) flower, the golden-coloured one who stood together with the lily-coloured one will be remembered at the advent of the evening). Here the fair lady standing by the side of the dark lass is imagined as a yellow Vätakoḷu flower entangled in a blue Kaṭaroḷu flower.

This preference for fair-complexioned women is however not universal and we find for example that another Sīgiri poet Kokeḷä Devä of the House of Kitala Mala declaring that a dark-complexioned one (*sam-vanak*) had captivated his heart. Another describes a damsel of the complexion of blue water lilies (*nil mahanel van*) attracting him. Thus although the mediaeval Sinhalese appear to have generally preferred fair-complexioned women as is also borne out by such classical works as the Dharmapradīpikāva (12th -13th century) and the Saddharmālaṅkāraya (14th century) which reflect conservative Sinhalese notions of feminine beauty, it is not unlikely that many a Sinhalese male became attached to the lovely, slender, dusky, Vedda damsels of yore, especially since such unions were socially sanctioned. After all, even royalty does not seem to have been prejudiced in this connection as is suggested by the dark complexions of many a Sinhalese monarch.

The Sinhalese nobility too seems to have absorbed a considerable infusion of Vedda blood. Egon Von Eickstedt [58] has shown how prominently the Veddas figure in the ancestry of Kandyan noble families. The Kandyan aristocracy known as the Radala (the highest sub-caste of the dominant Govigama caste) evidently did not consider it a mesalliance

[58] Rassengeschichte einer Singhalesisch –Weddaischen Adelsfamilie. ARGB (1927)

to intermarry with the higher elements amongst the Veddas. Francois Valentijn [59] subsumes the *wanneweddas* (Sinh. *Vana-väddo* 'forest Veddas') under the *Goy* (i.e. Govi) caste, while John Davy[60] mentions the Weddahs as being classed as part of the *Goewanse* (i.e. Goyi-vaṅsa or Govi caste) who were raised by caste above the rest of the people. Similarly Major Forbes (1840) tells us that "All Veddahs are considered to be of the Goyawanzae (the highest caste now existing in Ceylon)". Hugh Nevill[61] has recorded that the Sinhalese held, and hold "the Vaedda race to be the most honourable". He adds that the Sinhalese of the Govi caste had no reluctance to give their daughters to a Vedda, and were ready and often eager to marry Vedda girls. Gordon Cumming [62] tells us that the Sinhalese of her times recognized Veddas to be worthy of all honours, as being of very high caste, so much so that "it would be no disgrace for a woman of good social position to marry one of them, should her strange taste incline her to do so". Bryce Ryan [63] notes that the fact that there is no caste discrimination against the Vedda by the numerically dominant Govigama of the jungle is no doubt hastening their amalgamation with the Sinhalese. He observes that a high proportion of Sinhalese, particularly in the Vedda country (primarily East-Central Sri Lanka in the low-dry zone) have Vedda ancestry and notes that in instances where such mixtures are known "they are admitted, not being viewed as a violation of caste endogamy".

Indeed, it appears that it is the Kandyans, of all Sinhalese, who have absorbed a greater degree of Vedda blood due to their close proximity to Vedda communities. The Seligmanns (1911) observe that the Kandyans, and indeed all the up-country Sinhalese "have absorbed a considerable amount of Vedda blood". There is also evidence to show that during the British colonial period (19th century) many wild Veddas were induced to leave their traditional rock caves and to settle in small villages under the charge of the headmen of the adjoining districts-a development which would have further contributed to Sinhalese-Vedda intermixture. Paul and

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[59] Naamen Der Inlandsche Bedienden Inde Dorpen op Ceylon in Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien (1726)

[60] An Account of the Interior of Ceylon (1821)

[61] Vaeddas of Ceylon. The Taprobanian. August 1886

[62] Two Happy Years in Ceylon (1892)

[63] Caste in modern Ceylon (1953)

Fritz Sarasin [64] observe: "The settlement of the Veddas in villages give naturally much occasion for mixing with other elements; many Sinhalese villagers marry Vedda wives, and therefore, all the intermediate types between Veddas and Sinhalese are to be met with. In many villages of lower Uva, where Veddas are already completely extinct, the traces of old Vedda blood are easily noticed in the features and in the dark colour of many a Sinhalese villager". Indeed, by the early part of the 20th century, reasonably pure-blooded Veddas were to be found only in a few scattered communities in areas such as Dambani, Bulugahadena and Danigala (Seligmanns. 1911).

We will hereunder make an attempt, based on physical anthropology, to show that the modern-day Sinhalese represent an intermixture between a fair-skinned., broad-headed, narrow-nosed Alpine folk representative of the early Aryan-speaking Sinhalese and a dark-skinned, long-headed, broad-nosed Austro-Asiatic stock representative of the ancestors of the Veddas. Intermixture between the Veddas and the Dravidian folk of the country on the other hand has been very limited, if at all. Sinhalese or Tamil admixture into the largely endogamous relatively pure Vedda community that survived well up to the early part of the twentieth century also does not appear to have been pronounced.

In general, the Sinhalese display a number of racial features suggestive of hybridization between a fair-skinned, broad-headed, fine-nosed Indo-European type and a dark-skinned, long-headed, broad-nosed Austro-Asiatic type. This will become evident from a consideration of the complexion, physiognomy and the anthropometrical and descriptive details that characterize the Sinhalese. In this respect they closely resemble the Bengalis who are similarly a blend of these two types. On the other hand, much miscegenation could not have taken place between the Sinhalese and Tamils as the latter were considered non-Aryan Sudras, the fourth and lowest caste (*varna*) in the fourfold caste system formulated by the ancient Indo-Aryans The Sinhalese, on the other hand, were regarded as Vaiśyas (Davy 1821), the third ranking Aryan caste after the Brahmans and Ksatriyas. Much intermixture could also not have taken place between the Veddas and Tamils, especially in a context where traditional caste-conscious Dravidian Hindu society has looked down upon the Veddas as inferior beings lacking a proper ancestry and culture.

Physical anthropological studies and especially anthropometry or the measurements of physical characteristics such as cranial and nasal form testify to substantial intermixture between the Sinhalese and Veddas. We

[64] Outline of two years' scientific researches in Ceylon. JRAS. CB (1886)

will firstly consider the views of Prof. Rudolf Virchow [65] who has largely based his observations on detailed yet limited craniological evidence (20 male and female Vedda skulls and 11 male and female Sinhalese skulls). Virchow who has compared the Veddas with the Sinhalese with regard to cranial capacity, cranial index, nasal index, stature, complexion and hair form, concludes thus: Manifold resemblances exist between the Veddas and the Sinhalese, and that the origin of the Sinhalese race from a mixture of Veddas and Aryan immigrants from India possesses great probability.

Virchow's contentions are however not very authoritative due to a number of reasons. Firstly, the limited number of specimens which makes it unreliable for comparative anthropometry since the ranges of the cephalic and nasal indices may be wide. It is the mean obtained from a large number of specimens that is usually reliable. Secondly, the origin (locality) of the Sinhalese skulls were largely unascertained. In fact, Virchow's Sinhalese skulls were characterized by a dolicocephaly (albeit with a slightly higher cranial index than the Vedda mean) and vast differences in nasal index, suggesting that many ,or all of the specimens were dolico type Sinhalese with a heavy infusion of Vedda blood. Thirdly, Virchow did not take the caste factor into consideration and had no idea of the brachycephalic and leptorhine nature of the early Sinhalese whose traits largely survive in the dominant Govi caste.

Virchow has concluded that the Veddas and the Sinhalese in the main features are distinguished from the Ceylon Tamils and equally from those of Tanjore (Chola). His views in this connection are therefore deserving of some consideration. Virchow's inferences on the Tamil characters were largely based on craniology, namely four male skulls assigned to the Tamil race. He has noticed a 'radical contrast' between these and the Sinhalese and Vedda skulls with regard to the share of the brow and the upper part of the occipital bone in the forming of the skull-roof. "Whilst with the Tamils it culminates in the frontal division, with the Sinhalese, and still more with the Veddas, the occipital is strongly developed". Another difference cited by him is the lower cranial capacity of the Tamil skull vis-a- vis the Sinhalese and Vedda skull. However, here too Virchow's contentions suffer from the extremely limited number of specimens and the obscure origin of the skulls with regard to locality and caste. The caste factor is especially important since we know that the lower caste untouchables among the Tamil-speaking peoples are of largely Austro-Asiatic extraction, while the higher caste Sudras represent the Mediterranean and Armenoid types.

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[65] Ueber die Weddas von Ceylon und ihre beziehungen zu den Nachbarstammen (1881).

Leaving aside the views of Virchow whose material was no doubt limited, we can draw the same inferences as to the origin of the Sinhalese from an Indo-European race from India and the aboriginal Veddas as well as their distinctiveness from the Dravidian Tamils, by basing our studies on more recent data such as the Ethnological Survey of Ceylon (1937-1939) conducted by Lieutenant Commander J.R. de la Haule Marett and recorded in the Physical Anthropology of Ceylon (1961) and other reliable sources. This is not a very difficult task since we know that in racial crosses, whereas such characters as eye-colour segregate (which is to say that they are hereditary in the Mendelian sense), others such as cephalic index and skin colour blend [66].

We will now consider the cephalic and nasal indices of the Sinhalese and Veddas in order to show how the latter would have influenced the formation of the modern Sinhalese racial type. The Sinhalese, like the Bengalis, seem to represent a fusion of a fair-skinned, brachycephalic, leptorhine type that had its origins in Central Asia with a dark-skinned, dolicocephalic platyrhine race[67]. This Central Asian Alpine type is represented in comparative purity by the Wakhi folk of Wakhan who have a relatively high mean cephalic index of 86.9 and a relatively low mean nasal index of 57.4 [68]. However, according to the Physical Anthropology (1961), the Sinhalese have a mean cephalic index of 78.33 and a mean nasal index of 70.35. The mean cephalic index of the Veddas is given as 73.46 and their nasal index as 73.93 [69]. It is thus evident that the Sinhalese represent a type intermediate between the Central Asian Alpines and the Austro-Asiatic Veddas. We would therefore have to conclude that miscegenation with the Veddas has contributed to the lowering of the cephalic index and the raising of the nasal index among the Sinhalese [70].

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[66] Die entwicklungsgeschichtliche vererbungsregel in der volkerkunde . V. Haecker (1918)

[67] For more details see next chapter

[68] Notes on the Physical Anthropology of Chinese Turkestan and the Pamirs. T.A. Joyce. JRAI. GB & I (1912).

[69] Wijesekera (1949) gives the mean Vedda cephalic index as 72.6 and the mean Vedda nasal index as 73.1

[70] Interestingly, Nevill (April 1888), referring to the squat nose of the Veddas with no bridge to it, says that half the Goyi Sinhalese have the same nose, in strange contrast to the aquiline nose of other Goyi Sinhalese. The broadening of the nose seen in the Sinhalese is no doubt due to miscegenation with Veddas over the ages.

This is not to say that some Indo-European-Austro-Asiatic hybridization did not take place prior to the emigration of the ancient Sinhalese from Eastern India in C. 6th - 5th century B.C. Rather, it would appear that there had been some intercourse between Aryan and Munda –speakers prior to such migration as is suggested by the ancient Sinhalese propensity to palatalize sibilants in common with Magadhi. This peculiarity is evidently due to Munda influence [71].

However, it must be pointed out that miscegenation between Sinhalese and Vedda has not been quite uniform since some Sinhalese regional groups appear to have been more affected than others. The physical Anthropology (1961) classes the 638 male Sinhalese subjects measured into three categories, viz. Low-wet zone (Matara, Colombo, Ratnapura, Kegalle and Kurunegala), up –wet zone (Kandy, Nuvara Eliya) and low-dry zone (Badulla). The mean cephalic indices of these three groups are given as 79.22,78.96 and 75.31 respectively. We may therefore conclude that the low-dry zone group has been subject to a greater degree of Vedda admixture. This is also supported by a comparison of the nasal indices of the regional Sinhalese groups with that of the Veddas. The low-dry zone Sinhalese mean nasal index of 71.35 is certainly higher than the low-wet zone Sinhalese mean of 70.37 and therefore closer to the Vedda mean of 73.93.

As for stature, it is possible that miscegenation with the Veddas has tended to lower the stature of the low-dry zone Sinhalese. This is suggested by the fact that the low-dry zone Sinhalese mean of 159.21 cm is lower than the low-wet zone Sinhalese mean of 160.74 cm and therefore closer to the Vedda mean of 156.78 cm.

The same perhaps holds true of skin colour. As many as 56.7 percent of the low-dry zone Sinhalese were found to have dark-light brown skin colour compared to 24.2 percent in the case of the low wet zone Sinhalese and 43.5 percent in the case of the up-wet zone Sinhalese. The darker skin colour of the low-dry zone Sinhalese of Badulla is therefore very probably due to heavy Vedda admixture. Thus what we see here is that there exists a definite co-relation between traits such as dolicocephaly, dark skin colour etc among the Sinhalese of the low-dry zone and that this was the result of intensive miscegenation with the Veddas.

There is reason to believe that the so-called Sinhala dolico-type which has been described by Wijesekera (1949) are really Sinhalese-Vedda hybrids with an extremely large infusion of Vedda blood . The type is common in the Vanni and up-country districts and is said to form the backbone of the Sinhalese peasantry in the dry zone (Wijesekera,

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[71] See Munda affinities of Bengal. Dr. M. Shahidullah. PTSAIOC (1933)

1949).Wijesekera gives the cephalic and nasal indices of this type as 75.3 and 74.9 respectively and the stature as 1,592 mm. It is also significant that Wijesekera describes the Sinhala dolico type as having a slight alveolar prognathism, a feature which also characterizes the Veddas. The purer Sinhalese, like other Indo-European peoples, are generally an orthognathous folk.

Descriptive details such as skin colour also support our contention that the Sinhalese represent a fusion between a fair-skinned Alpine type and a dark-skinned Austro-Asiatic type. We certainly know that the Sinhalese in general are fairer skinned that the Veddas. According to the Physical Anthropology (1961), the skin colour of the Sinhalese ranges from light-light brown to light brown and dark-light brown in contrast to the Veddas of whom the great majority are described as dark-light brown and a large minority as dark brown. Now it is well known that intermarriages between the light-skinned and dark-skinned lead to a blending of skin colour in their offspring [72], and this is exactly what seems to have happened in the case of the Sinhalese, whose usual skin colour is suggestive of miscegenation between a fair-skinned Alpine type, whose complexion could best be described as white-rosy (Joyce. 1912) and a dark-skinned Austro-Asiatic type among whom a medium brown-black complexion is perhaps the commonest (Seligmanns. 1911).

As for Sinhalese admixture into the relatively pure endogamous Vedda communities that survived till recent times, there is reason to believe that it could not have been very pronounced. The absence of any traces of brachycephaly amongst the pure Veddas would suggest that there had not been any significant infusion of Sinhalese blood into the community prior to the early 20th century. This, of course, does not apply to the exogamous Veddas of the peripheral areas who would have had close intercourse with their Sinhalese neighbours.

Although the infusion of Sinhalese blood into the purer Vedda groups could not have been very considerable, there is reason to believe that such admixture was not altogether absent. The dark-light brown complexion of a good many Veddas (in contrast to the dark chocolate brown of the pure Austro-Asiatic type) and the mean Vedda nasal index of 73.93 (which is somewhat lower than that assigned to the pure Austro – Asiatic type) is indeed suggestive of some Sinhalese admixture . Besides, the luxuriant beards of some of the Vedda males and the luxuriant head hair of many a Vedda female may have been due to an infusion of Sinhalese blood. Deraniyagala (1963) who notes that Vedda head hair reaches down the

[72] See Heredity of skin colour in Negro-White crosses. C.B. Davenport (1914)

back to half –way down the shoulder blades, observes that in women with Sinhalese blood "the head hair can be luxuriant and extend to below the level of the buttocks". Spittel (1924) could also observe nearly a century ago: "*There is, almost certainly, no Vedda to-day without some trace of Sinhalese (or Tamil) blood in his veins*" though he notes that one can usually tell a Vedda from a Sinhalese from the sparsity of hair on the Vedda's face in contrast to the heavily bearded Sinhalese, added to which was a darker complexion and shorter stature. He also observed that some of the Vedda women he came across were relatively fair-complexioned, "*presumably from Kandyan admixture*". Spittel found Omuna, Dolagalwella and Kalukolu Eba inhabited by Veddas with a large proportion of Sinhalese blood, while Yakkure, where the people called themselves Veddas, showed strong Tamil traits.

Such admixture is not inexplicable, for there is reason to believe that an infusion of Sinhalese blood into the purer Vedda groups could have taken place as a consequence of the close relations that have traditionally subsisted between the two communities .This is supported by the statement of Knox (1681) who says that some of the Sinhalese in discontent would leave their homes and go and live among the Veddas "where they are civilly entertained".

In spite of all this, there is reason to believe that the infusion of Sinhalese blood into the traditional Vedda groups has not been significant, a contention supported by the latest genetic evidence which has taken into consideration non-sex-determined Autosomal, paternally-inherited Y-Chromosomal and maternally-inherited mtDNA markers. An analysis of non-sex-determined autosomal markers showed that the Veddas had the lowest observed heterozygosity when compared to other Sri Lankan groups, indicating a lower level of genetic diversity and suggesting considerable isolation and inbreeding. They were nevertheless shown to be more similar to the Sinhalese than any of the other groups studied, namely, Tamils and Moors. Furthermore, both paternally-inherited Y-Chromosome DNA and maternally-inherited mtDNA suggested considerable inbreeding among the Veddas [73].

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[73] For instance, low Y-STR haplotype diversity among them indicated inbreeding in their paternal lineages, while they also possessed the largest proportion of shared mt-HVS1 haplotypes within the population, indicating a high degree of homogeneity in the maternal line, very likely acquired as a result of inbreeding due to endogamy. Indeed the maternal lineages were found to be even more homogeneous than the paternal lineages.What this means is that the mtDNA passed down from mother to daughter has come from pure-blooded Vedda ancestresses and not Sinhalese ones. Whatever little admixture that seems to have come their way would have been contributed by Sinhalese males (See Hussein.Jan.26.2014)

Vedda relations with the Tamil community on the other hand has traditionally not been as intimate as it has with the Sinhalese; the Tamil Hindu attitude towards the aboriginals has generally been one of disdain, an attitude that has militated against free social intercourse and intermarriage with the Veddas. Besides the strong sense of racial pride that has traditionally characterized Jaffna Tamil folk, Jaffna Hindu society's rigid perception of social and sexual order, its obsession with ritual , status, formality and orderliness and its peculiar notion of the inherent power (*cakti*) of women that had to be controlled and regulated by men (through strict rules such as those concerning chastity) in order to be of benefit to them may have also been responsible for this negative attitude.

Bryan Pfaffenberger [74] sums up the typical Tamil perception of the aboriginals thus: "They live a life without rules, without ritual and without conventions (olaṅkumurai illāta vālkkai) celebrating no marriages and failing to seclude women. Their women possess no chastity ... Jaffna Tamils say of the Veddahs, "They are fools of the Jungle (kāṭṭu mirāṇṭikaḷ). They let their women go about freely (cummā) and later on they suffer for it". Afflicted and saturated with primordial and therefore disordering power, the fools of the Jungle are riddled with the very opposite of the orthodox Hindu power of vitality. They are saturated with a negative power of disorder, so that they become, in Jaffna Tamil thinking, very dangerous indeed. The Veddahs, and anyone whose lifestyle resembles theirs, are deemed to be not only low by caste (kurainta cāti "castes found wanting") but also thoroughly evil and dangerous (keṭṭavarkal "bad people"). Thus it is said of the Veddahs that they are not only impure by custom (which in itself is not a thorough justification for low rank), but also evil by saturation with disorder". The Veddas were therefore thought of as not only being dangerous to social order, but also beyond reformation. Thus, given the rigid Tamil religious ideas concerning the state of the Veddas, it is not difficult to imagine why much intermixture has not taken place between the two communities.

Leaving aside restraints on social intercourse there does not even seem to have been much emphasis placed on peaceful co-existence. According to a Tamil history of Jaffna, Yalpanaccarittiram dateable to the 16th century or thereabouts, Vellala invaders from South India, Nilayinar, Tisaiyandar and their retinue invaded Tanikkallu in Melpattu which was under the Vedar (Veddas) and killed them before taking control over that region [75]. Hugh Nevill [76] also observed over a century ago that the Jaffna

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[74] Caste in Tamil culture – The Religious foundations of Sudra Domination in Tamil Sri Lanka (1982)

[75] The Vanni. Monthly Literary Register. Feb.1893

Tamils "craftily made use of the Vaeddas as long as they were in a minority, but as soon as they became strong, they cruelly persecuted and tried to exterminate them". He also notes that the Veddas north of the Mahaweli river have lost their original divisions, "having been cruelly exterminated, as far as possible, by the Tamils of Jaffna". The tendency towards corpulence, especially of the face and trunk as well as other somatic features such as the flat, squat nose, relatively long forehead and thick everted lips common among Dravidian folk is conspicuously absent among the Veddas, again showing that intermixture with Tamil elements could not have been pronounced, if at all.

Nevertheless some intermixture with the Tamils of the eastern littoral appears to have taken place in the case of the so-called Coast Veddas [77]. Indeed, as far back as 1886, the Sarasins observed that in the east coast, north of Batticaloa, the mixture of Tamils with Veddas was conspicuous. Nevill (Aug. 1886) has observed that some members of a few Vedda territorial clans such as the Kattakulam Pattu clan intermarried with Tamils and adopted Tamil ways. The Seligmanns (1911) have also noticed that "The Coast Vedda is darker, taller and more stoutly built than the true Veddas. In fact they generally resemble low caste Tamils, yet in almost every settlement there are one or two men shorter than their comrades and presenting an almost typical Vedda cast of countenance. The women are all much bigger than true Vedda women and would pass for Tamils, after whose fashion they dress". Such intermixture would have however been confined to the lower castes among the Tamils who show Austro-Asiatic affinities as it is doubtful whether the higher Tamil castes would have intermarried with them for the reasons stated above.

At any rate, there is reason to believe that such intermixture is but a relatively recent phenomenon. Nevill (Aug. 1886) has recorded that the Coast Veddas of his time "now speak Tamil with a foreign accent" and alludes to the older generation of Coast Veddas speaking a language they called 'Vaedda', "which is pure but quaint Sinhalese with a Vaedda accent, as a rule, though mixed with some words characteristic of true Vaedda". Besides, these Coast Veddas had a recollection that their fathers came from inland (Seligmanns. 1911) while some of them could even recall their ancestral *varuges* such as the Uru and Aembale (ibid). There is

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[76] Vaeddas of Ceylon. The Taprobanian. August 1886

[77] The Vēdar or Coast Veddas are today largely found in Kuñjankulam in Vakarai in the Batticaloa coast while there are also said to exist substantial settlements in Pancankēni, Ālamkulam, Mādurankulam, Kēnikulam, Kāyangēni, Māngēni, Kilimicca and Kaccuvil. These folk are at the present day Tamil-speaking and bear Tamil names like Vēlāilan, Ārumugam, Rasiharan and Pāskaran.

also reason to believe that in former times, their religious life resembled that of the true Veddas (ibid). All this would indicate that the Coast Veddas had adopted Tamil speech and manners but recently, at any rate certainly not before the turn of the nineteenth century.

Besides, unlike Sinhalese culture, Sri Lankan Tamil culture is largely free of Vedda cultural elements, again suggesting that Vedda admixture into the Tamil community has been negligible. As noted by the Seligmanns (1911): "The Tamils do not appear to owe anything to the Veddas, though the religion of those Veddas who live in or near the Tamil zone has been influenced by the latter".

IV) Vedda speech

The speech of the Veddas could be said to comprise of modern Sinhala, old Sinhala and an obscure non-Aryan, non-Dravidian element that may well constitute the remnants of the original speech of their ancestors. The absence of a literary tradition among the Veddas would have meant that Vedda words and forms not only underwent far-reaching phonological and semantic changes, but also the total disappearance of a large part of the original Vedda vocabulary and its replacement by compounded or periphrastic terms largely coined from Sinhala.

Although it cannot be said exactly when the endogamous Veddas (i.e those Veddas who married amongst themselves) took to speaking Sinhala, it is certain that it has been for quite some time. Robert Knox (1681) noted that the Veddas of his time spoke "the Chingulayes Language". The adoption of Sinhala would have however been a gradual process and would have been largely dependent on the intercourse the Veddas had with the neighbouring Sinhalese communities. The spread of Sinhala among the Veddas and Sinhalese-Vedda hybrids is not difficult to explain. It is generally assumed that when two distinct languages come into contact, one does not immediately give way to the other, but is usually preceded by a period of bilingualism which may last as little as a generation or remain stable for a longer period. This prerequisite to language shift is termed 'societal bilingualism' and is usually induced when the context of speech requires the use of the other language if one wishes to obtain better access to goods, status, ritual or security. In the event of such social benefits being especially pronounced by the adoption of the other language, and its employment in more and more different contexts, a language may eventually be superseded by another, sometimes leaving its mark on vocabulary, grammar and phonology. This is exactly what seems to have happened to the Vedda language [78].

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[78] This linguistic phenomenon known as the elite dominance model of language replacement is well attested in many parts of the world and has even been established by recent genetic advances. For instance Vikrant Kumar et al (Molecular Genetic Study on the Status of Transitional Groups of Central India. IJHG.2008) have shown how the transitional tribal populations speaking Indo-European (i.e.Indo-Aryan) in the Chota Nagpur region are genetically Austro-Asiatic though they have lost their Mundari speech. The team found that of all the Y-haplogroups, the frequency of O-M95 is highest (62 %) in Indo-European-speaking transitional groups followed by H-M69 (22%) similar to the average frequency found for O-M95 (61 %) and H-M69 (26 %) as the two most common haplogroups in the Mundari groups. In contrast the IE groups did not show any O-M95 and a very low frequency of H-M69 (7%). This is consistent with an elite dominance model in mosaic linguistic zones where the language spoken by a population practicing agricultural economy is considered to be dominant and is adopted by the erstwhile hunter-gatherer population

There can be little doubt that a good part of the original Vedda lexicon would have disappeared among them by the time detailed lists of their vocabulary were being compiled in the early part of the twentieth century [79]. Given the fact that the Vedda speech has been subject to considerable Sinhala influence, both lexically and grammatically, it may perhaps be regarded as a mere dialect of Sinhala.

Never heless Vedda speech does contain some distinct forms that seem to be survivals of an earlier language. Among the distinct Vedda nouns may be included *tuta* 'son', *tuti* 'daughter', *midala* 'women', *kävili* 'water' *pombana* 'sky' *gommana* 'evening', *gabiaci* 'iron', *moru* 'fungus', *bokki* 'yam', *tomba* 'snail'. *kukkā* 'dog', *kokkā* 'monkey', *munda* 'monitor lizard', *dola* 'pig', *cappi* 'bird', *kadira* 'bat', *käriya* 'bear', *bagusa* 'pangolin', *lendi* 'hare', *kuncā* 'cat ' , *limba* 'mouse deer', *okma* 'buffalo' and *hulica* 'sambur'. Such Vedda forms as *kukkā* 'dog' and *cappi* 'bird'may perhaps go back to a Proto-Austro-Asiatic origin. *Kukkā* bears a striking resemblance to the Munda term for canine *chucchū* while *cappi* closely resembles the Sakai word *cap* or *cep*.

The Vedda speech has also preserved a number of archaic Sinhala forms not found in the modern Sinhala language. For instance, the Vedda *lombuca* 'beard' has preserved an Old Sinhala form for hair *lom* (Skt. *loman*, P.*loma*) to which has been added *buca* 'bush or tuft' . The Vedda *dundia* 'bowstring' is similarly a compound formed from the Sinhala *dunna* 'bow' and an Old Sinhala form *diya* 'bowstring' (Skt.*jyā*, P.*jiyā*) .This form also survives in the term for the waist-string tied by Vedda maidens on the waists of their bridegrooms in the compound *diya-lanuva* (lit. bowstring) which is a combination of the Old Sinhala *diya* and the modern Sinhala *lanuva* 'string'. The Vedda term for thunder and lightning *devula* literally seems to mean 'celestial or heavenly point' formed from

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sans the involvement of a gene-flow between them. Thus taken on a whole, the genetic analysis reflects a shift in the language without any exchange of genes between the groups.

[79] A sizeable Vedda vocabulary including the various regional dialectal forms has been appended in the Seligmanns' Veddas (1911). Another important work in this regard is Wilhelm Geiger's Zur Kenntnis der Sprache der Väddās (1914). More recent works include Dr.Sugathapala De Silva's Dambānē Vädi Basa (1963) and Tissa Weerasekera's Dimbulāgala Vädi Basa (1996). A comprehensive Vedda vocabulary of over 1000 vocables employed by the village Veddas of Bintenna has been provided by Piyasena Kahandagamage in his Bintänna Vitti (1988). E.M.Ratnapala has also given a sizeable Vedda vocabulary in his Lankāvē Väddō (1996, 2003). Ratnapala's work is particularly interesting since it also contains a lengthy conversation in the Vedda tongue on Vedda religion, customs and economy the author had with Tisāhāmi, the Vedda chief of Dambāna. The work also contains a speech of Vedda grievances by Sudu Bandiya, Vedda chief of Hennānigala and a speech by a Vedda woman of Sorabora village named Davuṭi on her life and woes, all in the Vedda language with their Sinhala translations.

two Sinhala words *dev* 'godly' or 'heavenly' and *ula* 'point'. An Old Sinhala term for 'fish' *diya-mas* occurring in a tenth century work on monastic discipline, Sikhavalanda, has survived in the Vedda speech as *diyamacca*. Another Old Sinhala term *kavuḍu* 'crow' occurring in the Gäraṅḍigala rock inscription of the eighth century and evidently related to the Hindi *kāgḍā* and Gujerati *kāgaḍo*, has survived in the Vedda speech of Bintenne as *kavḍā*. We also find in the Sitala Vanniya dialect the form *hela* 'hill (Skt.*śaila*, P.*sela*) which has been lost in Sinhala. Further, the Vedda *bala* in the form *val-bala* 'bear' occurring in the Lindegala dialect seems to have preserved its original sense as found in the Sanskritic *bhāluka*. The cognate Sinhala term *ballā* has evidently lost its original meaning and presently denotes a 'dog'.

It appears that Vedda speech, in common with other primitive languages belonging to the Austro-Asiatic, Dravidian and Negrito groups, originally possessed no sibilants. This may explain why Sinhala words containing sibilants have had these substituted by palatals in their passage to Vedda speech. Cf.Ved. *ica* 'head' (Sinh. *isa*, *hisa*, P. *sīsa*. Skt. *śīrṣa*) and *ec* as in *ec-pojja* 'eye' (Sinh.*ähä*, *äsa*, P.*acchi*, Skt.*akṣi*) Forms with *s* occurring in some Vedda dialects are very probably due to Sinhala influence. In the Seligmanns' time, the Vedda dialect of Dambāna employed the palatal *c* (Cf. *cappi* 'bird') while the Sitala Wanniya dialect employed a sibilant (Cf. *sappi*). Among the Vedda songs recorded by the Seligmanns (1911), those collected at Nilgala and from the Village Veddas of Uva-Bintenne show the palatal *c*. The Vedda songs of Pollebadde and Ratugala recorded by Kahandagamage (1988) also show the *c* to a great extent. Other notable phonetic peculiarities in the Vedda dialect are the substitution of *c* for the Sinhala *ţ* as for instance in Ved. *aca* 'bone' (Sinh. *äţa*) , the substitution of – *cc*- for Sinhala – *ţiy*- as for instance in Ved. *peccā* 'little one' (Sinh. *päţiyā*) and the substitution of –*jj*- for –*ḍiy*- as in Ved. *kiri-gejja* 'coconut' (Sinh.*kiri-geḍiya* lit. 'milk-fruit'). We also find that in some instances, the Vedda speech has dropped the sibilants of Sinhala as seen for instance in *iakabala* 'head' (Sinh.*his*-or *is-kabala*) and *gaigeḍi* 'arecanut' (Pr.fr.Sinh.*gas-geḍi* or *gahe-geḍi* 'tree fruit').

The Vedda language is characterized by a high degree of periphrasis where two or more words of Sinhala or indigenous origin are used to construct a simple noun or verb. Consider the following Vedda terms: *gal-ge* 'cave' (lit.rock-house), *bol-pini* 'fog', 'mist' (lit. thick dew), *la*-geca 'breast' (lit. heart-house), *kiri-ula* 'paps' (lit.milk-point), *val-kukkā*'Jackal' (lit. wild dog), *capi-kole* 'feather' (lit.bird-leaf), *gini-poja–val* 'star' (lit. heaps of fire). There also existed a propensity for naming fauna by their prominent features or characteristics. Cf. *hocca dikkā*'boar' (probably a corruption of the Sinhala *hoţa-diga-ekā* 'long-snouted one'), *olugeḍiya*

kanekā 'louse' (lit. one who eats the head), *katuboika* 'porcupine' (lit.one who has many thorns), *kabarā*'deer' (lit.the speckled one) and *rukka* 'squirrel' (lit.the one of the tree).

More elaborate periphrastic forms include *kekulati kevulanika* 'milk' (lit.that which is fed to the child), *udatanin mando vena diyarāccā* (lit.water heap falling from above), *pucala kavelaneka* 'pot' (lit. that from which one burns and eats) and *capirandana gampoja* 'nest' (lit. the little village where the bird stays). Such periphrasis is also commonly found in verbs, as for instance, *diapoje kevilane* 'to drink' (lit. to eat water), *bimpoja patagacan* 'to dig' (lit. to break the earth), *baḍapojjen mangaccanavā* 'to be born' (lit. emerging from the belly), *dotkecamando kerenya* 'to bite' (lit. to make come between the teeth blade).

Although it is generally assumed that periphrasis usually indicates a low level of culture, the Seligmanns (1911) have come up with a more ingenious explanation for the existence of Vedda periphrasis. They opine that the dialect formed by the Veddas from the limited peasant Sinhalese vocabulary and which took the place of their old language adopted only a small number of words suitable to their Jungle life, and so prepared the way for the use of large numbers of periphrases even if it did not at first necessitate their formation. They also believe that such periphrasis arose, at least in part, out of a deliberate attempt at a secret language whereby they could converse among themselves in the presence of the Sinhalese, especially traders, without allowing the latter to understand what they were saying. They note that this necessity "would naturally lead them to invent periphrases and onomatopoeic words while it would encourage mispronunciation and the use of archaic forms". They observe that the Vedda dialect is directly useful to the Dambani and Bulugahaladena Veddas (who did not freely mix with the neighbouring peoples) in their trading activities with the Sinhalese. The Seligmanns state that the hypothesis that the Vedda language arose in part as a secret language "explains how it is that at the present day the Vedda dialect is best preserved among the Village Veddas of Bintenne".

However it must also be pointed out that such periphrases would have arisen, at least partly, from the simple fact that the Veddas were an illiterate community characterized by the absence of a strong linguistic consciousness. Periphrasis is not altogether absent among the Sinhalese peasantry and may have arisen from a similar situation. Cf.Sinh.*bim-mal* 'mushrooms' (fr.*bim* 'ground + *mal* 'flowers') which has come into being despite the fact that an inherited Aryan form *hatu* (Skt.*chattra*) exists in Sinhala.

The following Vedda sentences obtained from the Veddas of Bulugahaladena by the Seligmanns (1911) are given below with their respective Sinhalese equivalents and suffices to demonstrate the close grammatical relationship that exists between Standard Sinhala and the Vedda dialect, though not so much in vocabulary:

Ved. *Me galreke maieme*
Sinh. *Me porova magē*
(This axe belongs to me)

Ved. *Malaliyai moreanainai arang mangacapa*
Sinh. *Dunnayi ītalayai araṅ enna*
(Bring your bow and arrow and come)

Ved. *Kakulai mai mangacawe bulugahaladening*
Sinh. *Lamayayi mamayi āvē bulugahaladeniṅ*
(We have come from Bulugahaladena)

Ved. *Kankuna patagacala ginaucala pucakadala kavilanye*
Sinh. *Gōnā maralā gini avussalā puccalā kanavā*
(Having killed the Sambar, made a fire and burned it, he eats it)

We even find that traditional Vedda folk songs are largely Sinhala based with only a few Vedda vocables thrown in for good measure. This is very significant as folk songs which are an important aspect of a people's oral heritage are generally very conservative and there may even be instances where such songs which are passed down several generations may even preserve obsolete usages, phrases or expressions.

Vedda folk songs on the other hand comprise largely of a Sinhala vocabulary and follow the Sinhala grammatical pattern [80]. In fact, an

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[80] Consider for example the following folk song recorded by the Seligmanns (1911) which were collected from the Village Veddas of Uva-Bintenne (modified here with suitable diacritical marks):

Käliya välē nägilā, rāṭaṭa palāgena vātilā' tunaṭiya pollat biṅdilā, to ya kella genun vat, nändage pädurața mangaccala, tānanne bala tānannē

Mundi kaṅdupita vātirilā, ōkaṭa vidapav kiri nänā, iccata vidapi icca ärä, tombaṭa läṭṭen numāpi, ē madi vidapi märē, depiṭa mäṭen vilga

Peruma marāpin nänā, pucca kālayi diya bonnē, eliya pān vī ennav nänā, cappi cili bili kiyannan, yannata näṭiya nänā, välkoggāye cappigē gōtē

Cappige bittara dekama dekayi puccā kālā diya bonne nänā, tan tadina tan tadinānē

ordinary Sinhala speaker would not have much difficulty understanding a Vedda speak. Vedda chieftain Uruvarige Vanniyalāätto whom we met at Kataragama following the culmination of the Äsala festival there in 2003 provided us with a good specimen of Vedda speech when he responded to a question on the Vedda population in the Dambane area as follows:
Mē ättanne ē gampojje tibenavā, kotabakiniyapōr gampojja, dambānapōr gampojja, vatiyāyapōr gampojja, kurukumburapōr gampojja, gampojjaval hataramak tibenava. Ē gampojjaval hataramema mē pavul pojjaval tibenavā. Sīya pojja tunamayi panahamak. Minigejjō mando karagattot dahaya pojje ekamayi sīya pojje aṭamayi bāga tānai kāla pojja. Ē häma ekamekma kälā pojjen tamayi raksā pojja mandovennē. Kälā pojjaṭa mangoccena kodoyi kiyalā tahanam pojja mandovennē mē paramparā pojjeṭa aṅga pojjak kodovenavā. Miniggajju raksā pojjaval tibenna ōnē. Āndu pojje raksā pojjaval kodoyi. Govitän pojja mando karaganna, daḍayam pojja mando karaganna, kälā pojja mangaccanna. Ēvage tibenna kodovunot minigajjunta vena mona ekak kara tibenna ōnē[81].

This specimen of Vedda speech we would find contains a good number of Sinhala words, so much so that the average Sinhala speaker would not find it very difficult to make it out, provided he takes into consideration the following expressions peculiar to Vedda speech. For instance *mē ätto* 'us' (li.these people) which commonly occurs in their speech. Similar expressions include *Vanniyalā-ättō* 'those of the forest', the name by which the Veddas term themselves, *appilättō* 'father' and *ammilättō* 'mother'.

There is also the distinct Vedda form *pojja* which is very commonly suffixed to nouns. This form which is supposed to derive from the Sinhala *podda* 'little bit' occurs in a number of expressions in the sense of 'thing',

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(Having climbed up the käliya creeper; splitting it in two and having fallen; having broken hip and stick; having even brought thy girl;
having even gone to thy mother-in-law's mat; tananne bala tananne
The monitor lizard is sprawling on the log; shoot it dear (female) cousin; shoot at the head, incline (the arrow) towards the tail, by the ribs; shoot (it) in the middle; it will die
Kill the buffalo cousin, which has smeared (itself) at the pool with mud on both sides; having roasted and eaten (part of it) we drink water
The light is coming cousin; the birds say silibili; must we not go cousin ? In the bird's nest on the wal-kon tree, there are two and two bird's eggs, having roasted and eaten (them) we drink water, cousin; tan tadina tan tadinane)

We will find here only a few Vedda vocables such as *mundi* (monitor lizard), *cappi* (bird) and *tomba* (tail) figuring in it

[81] Vedda Language. Distinct speech or dialect of Sinhala ? Asiff Hussein. Sunday Observer. Nov. 16, 2003

'object' or 'heap'. For instance *gampojja* 'village', *kälāpojja* 'forest', *alapojja* 'yam', *hulaṅpojja* 'wind', *varigapojja* 'lineage' and *daḍayampojja* 'hunting'. Although these are easy to make out due to their being obvious Sinhala loans, there are others like *pāna-pojja* 'moon' (lit.lamp-thing) and *gini-pojja* 'star' (lit.fire-thing) which require more caution. However even these have their more Sinhalised substitutes such as *taru-pojja* for 'star'. We also find the use of *miniggajju* for 'men' or 'people' which has evidently derived from the Sinhala *minissu*, and the peculiar suffix *–pōr* attached to village names which may well be a corruption of the Sinhala *pura* 'city'. Besides these, one would find some peculiar usages such as *kodoyi* 'no', 'not', *mangaccanna* 'to go' and *mando-karanna* 'to do', 'to engage in', 'to add or include'.

Taking these usages into consideration, we would not find much difficulty in understanding what Uruvarige Vanniyalāätto is telling us. He is telling us that the Veddas have four villages, namely, Kotabakiniya, Dambana, Vatuyaya and Gurukumbura. In these villages are 350 families and some 1800 individuals. All of them subsist on the forest. By prohibiting them from going into the forest, this generation is losing something very important. People must have jobs. There are no jobs in the government. If they are not able to farm, hunt or go into the forest, people must have something else to do.

This is not to say that the Vedda language is or was a uniform speech. There existed substantial dialectal differences among Veddas settled in different areas, especially in the olden days when they were more widely distributed than today. This is borne out by the Vedda vocabulary given as an appendix to the Seligmanns 1911 work where we find a variety of terms relating particularly to animals. Thus the 'bear' widely spoken of as *keria* among the Veddas of Nilgala, Dambana, Bandaraduva and Rerenkadi was known as *hatera* among the Veddas of Sitala Wanniya, *walbala* among the Veddas of Lindegala and *keri kanda* among the Veddas of Kovil Vanamai. The 'monitor lizard' known as *munda* or *mundi* among the Veddas of Unuwatura Bubula, Bulugahaladena, Lindegala and Rerenkadi was known as *goya* among the Veddas of Godatalawa and *bimbadu* among the Veddas of Sitalanniya. The 'pig' known as *dola* among the Veddas of Nilgala, Lindegala, Rerenkadi and Kovil Vanamai was known as *hocedike* among the Veddas of Uniche, Dambana and Bulugahaladena and *hota bariya* among the Veddas of Godatalawa.

However it was not only in faunal terms that there were differences, but sometimes in other common vocables as well, as seen for instance in the term for 'axe' widely known among the Veddas of Dambana, Lindegala and Bulugahaladena as *galrakiya*, but known as *sambala* among the Veddas of Bambaraduva and *tarian keca* among the Veddas of Kovil

Vanamai. Similarly, the term for 'eye' known as *airukula* among the Veddas of Bulugahaladena, was known as *aslonjia* among the Veddas of Sitala Wanniya and *etcel* among the Veddas of Kovil Vanamai.

When we consider these terms we would find what appear to be indigenous Vedda words used by certain groups of Veddas, which other groups have replaced with their Sinhala equivalents while yet other groups have resorted to periphrasis largely coined from Sinhala. A typical example is furnished by the term for monitor lizard where there exists what seems to be an indigenous term (*munda*), a Sinhala loan (*goya*) and a word coined by means of periphrasis (*bimbada*, lit. (the one whose) belly (strikes) the ground').

In some instances however there do not even exist what appear to be indigenous terms, but rather frozen preservations or radical corruptions of Sinhala terms to which have been appended various suffixes with a desire to elongate them in keeping with the Vedda preference for multi-syllabic words. This is clearly seen in the terms for 'eye' where *etce(l)* seems to have originated from an Old Sinhala **aca* (Pkt.*acca*), *as (-lonjia)* from the later Sinhala *äsa* and *ai(-rukula)* from a corruption of *äsa* or *ähä* where the intervocalic sibilant or aspirate has been dropped.

There is reason to believe that the old Vedda speech has left its impress on Sinhala, both in vocabulary and syntax. The obscure non-Aryan element in Sinhala is very pronounced and accounts for a good number of Sinhala vocables, including such common terms like *iva* 'smell', *pol* 'coconut', *kola* 'leaf', *liňda* 'well', *lipa* 'fireplace', *gembā* 'frog', *bokaṭu* 'curly', *hakka* 'jaw', *bella* 'neck', *vilumba* 'heel', *kaňdula* 'tear', *bolaňda* 'young', *gollō* 'people' (as in *ōgollō* 'you'll' and *aragollo* 'them') and *golla* 'forest, clump, cluster' (as occurring in the place-names *Imbul-golla* and *Damba-golla*). Such forms may well be the linguistic remnants of the country's aboriginal inhabitants, the Yakkhas of the Mahāvaṁsa who may with some certainty be regarded as the ancestors of the present-day Veddas.

As seen earlier, the Veddas very likely belong to the Austro-Asiatic human type and it is not improbable that their original tongue, now lost to us except for a very small lexicon, derived from this source. In fact, there exist a few vocables used by both the Veddas and Sinhalese that may have an Austro-Asiatic origin. Among these is *kukkā* used in the Vedda speech for a 'canine' and by the Sinhalese in the form *(balu)-kukkā* for 'puppy' which may possibly be connected to a similar term in the form *chucchū* employed by the native people, presumably aboriginal Munda-speakers, in the Lāḍha country of West Bengal in the time of Mahavīra, the founder of Jainism around the 6th-5th century B.C. as borne out by the Ācārāṅga Sūtra.

The colloquial or rather vulgar Sinhala term for 'navel' *buriya* also appears to be cognate with such forms as Korwa *buḍuri* and Munḍā and Ho *buṭi* and may have been acquired from the ancestors of the Veddas at some distant period.

CHAPTER 3

THE ORIGINS OF THE SINHALESE NATION AND OF THE SINHALA LANGUAGE

The recorded history of Sri Lanka begins with the Aryan invasion of the island about the 5th century B.C. when a group of Aryan-speaking migrants who hailed from West Bengal vanquished the country's aboriginal inhabitants and established permanent settlements here. According to an ancient Sinhalese chronicle, the Mahāvaṁsa compiled C.5th century A.C., the Sinhalese race was founded by Prince Vijaya and his 700 compatriots who having been banished from their homeland, the Lāḷa country or West Bengal, landed upon the shores of Laṅkā at about the same time of the death of the Buddha which is variously assigned to the 6th-4th centuries B.C. This legend, together with the evidence furnished by a consideration of language and racial characteristics suggests that the Sinhalese are descended from an Aryan stock hailing from North India.

Epigraphic and linguistic evidence certainly shows Sinhala, the speech of the Sinhalese, to be related to the Aryan language group (which includes Indo-Aryan languages like Hindi and Iranian languages like Farsi) and more distantly to other members of the Indo-European linguistic family such as Greek, Latin, German, French, English, Russian, Prussian and Lithuanian. A consideration of Sinhalese physical characteristics also indicates that the Sinhalese may be closely related to a number of other Indo-European-speaking peoples such as the Bengalis of Eastern India, the Ghalchas of Central Asia and the Lithuanians of the Baltic region.

The aim of this essay is not only to corroborate the traditional view as to the origins of the Sinhalese, but also to trace the culture and the early migrations of the ancestors of those folk who eventually settled in Sri Lanka and gave rise to the Sinhalese nation.

The Indo-European connection

I) The linguistic relationship between the major languages of Europe, Central Asia, Iran and India

It is today established beyond doubt that Sinhala belongs to the great Indo-European family of languages which includes among others, living languages such as Hindi, Farsi, German, French, Russian and Lithuanian, and dead languages such as Sanskrit, Latin, Gothic and Prussian.

We need cite only a few examples to prove this point. Sinhala *hata* 'seven' may easily be connected to the Sanskrit *saptan*. Latin *septem*, Greek *hepta*, Avestan *hapta*, Hindi *sāt*, Persian *haft* and French *sept*. Similarly, Sinhala *nama* 'name' could easily be connected with the Sanskrit *nāman*, Hindi *nām*, Latin *nōmen*, Gothic *namo* and French *nom*, while Sinhala *dora* 'door' could be connected to the Sanskrit *dvāra*, Gothic *daura*, Lithuanian *durys*, Irish *doras*, Russian *dver* and Dutch *deur*. In like manner, the Sinhala *data* 'tooth' could be connected to the Sanskrit *danta*, Latin *dentis*, French *dent*, Dutch *tand*, German *zahn*, Kashmiri *dand* and Hindi *dāt*.

All these related speeches evidently derive from a primitive language that flourished in Southern Russia, Eastern or Central Europe 6000-5000 years ago. It is believed that the speakers of this language were a light-skinned people possessing regular features. They appear to have been accustomed to a pastoral livelihood and possessed a strong patriarchal tradition. However, it was not long before a number of factors compelled these restless and virile folk to leave their primitive homeland and burst forth into the outlying areas of Eurasia, in successive phases and in diverse directions. Population pressure, environmental or climatic changes, internal dissent such as that due to religious schisms or political differences, economic considerations, attraction of favourable conditions for pasturage or prospects for raiding elsewhere and perhaps the mere love for adventure would have contributed to this massive movement of populations. It is presumed that this great dispersal began around the latter part of the fourth millennium B.C. or the early part of the third millennium B.C. Many of these Indo-Europeans would have migrated to the various parts of Europe and Asia Minor, while others would have migrated to Eastern Russia or Central Asia where they would have acquired their Aryan identity before spreading out to occupy the Iranian plateau and the Indian subcontinent. The descendants of those Indo-European peoples who migrated to India called themselves *Ārya* while their Iranian brethren knew themselves as *Airya* so that it is to only these two groups, the Indo-Aryans and the Iranians, that the designation of Aryan should properly apply. It was the Indo-

Aryans who introduced the Sanskrit language and the Vedic religion to the subcontinent C.1700 B.C. This folk seem to have initially led a nomadic life as herdsman, wandering about in tribes and waging war against hostile peoples, before taking to a settled agrarian lifestyle and developing their culture and society.

The credit for first propounding the theory of a common origin for the major Indo-European languages goes to the French Jesuit missionary Pere Gaston Coeurdeux who in a missive to the Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres in 1767 commented on the remarkable similarity of Sanskrit to Latin and Greek and proposed a common origin (*commune origine*)[1]. William Jones in his third annual presidential address to the Asiatic Society of Bengal (On the Hindus 1786) observed thus:

"*The Sanscrit language, whatever may be its antiquity, is of wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either; yet bearing to them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and in the forms of grammar, than could have been produced by accident; so strong that no philologer could examine all the three without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which perhaps, no longer exists. There is a similar reason, though not quite so forcible, for supposing that both the Gothick and the Celtick, though blended with a different idiom, had the same origin with the Sanscrit; and the Old Persian might be added to the same family*" [2].

However, it was only in the first half of the 19th century that a truly scientific approach to Indo-European comparative linguistics took root, an achievement attributable to German scholarship. This hypothetical language family was initially called Indo-Germanic, being named as such by Conrad Malte Brun as far back as 1810 as it extended from India in the east to Europe whose westernmost language, Icelandic, belonged to the Germanic group of Indo-European languages. It was the renowned German Philologist Franz Bopp, regarded as the founder of the science of comparative linguistics who popularized the term *Indo-Europäisch* or Indo-European, which with the passage of time replaced the terms Indo-Germanic (*Indogermanisch*) and Aryan (*Arisch*) which were formerly used in the sense of Indo-European. His two epoch-making works, Über das conjugations-system der Sanskritsprache in Vergleichung mit jenem der griechischen, lateinschen, persischen und germanischen sprache (1816) and Vergleichende Grammatik des Sanskrit, Zend, Griechischen, Lateinischen, Litauischen, Gotischen und Deutschen

[1] See MAIBL XLIX (1784-1793)

[2] Cited in 'The Works of Sir William Jones' Ed. Teignmouth (1807).

(1833) paved the way for the scientific study of the Indo-European family of languages.

Comparative linguistics brought to light the affinity Sanskrit had with the classical languages of Europe, Latin and Greek, as well as other European languages belonging to the Germanic, Celtic, Baltic and Slavic language groups.The phonetic differences existing between the various languages designated Indo-European is attributable to their evolution in comparative isolation from one another and the various sound changes they underwent with time.The parent speech from which these languages arose is believed to have flourished someplace in Europe, very probably Southern Russia, about 5000-6000 years ago.

Take for instance the resemblance between the following words drawn from some Indo-European languages from Western Europe to India:

Sanskrit	Greek	Latin	Gothic	Lithuanian	English
navas	*neos*	*novus*	*niujis*	*naũjas*	*new*
trayas	*treis*	*tres*	*threis*	*trys*	*three*
madhya	*mesos*	*medius*	*midjis*		*middle*
rudhira	*eruthros*		*rauths*	*raudas*	*red*

The similarities between Sanskrit and the Classical European languages is remarkable, especially in connection with the roots of words. Consider for instance the following numeral terms:

Sanskrit	Greek	Latin	English
dvau	*duō*	*duo*	*two*
trayas	*treis*	*trēs*	*three*
catur	*tettares*	*quattour*	*four*
pañcan	*pente*	*quinque*	*five*
ṣaṣ	*heks*	*sex*	*six*
saptan	*hepta*	*septem*	*seven*
aṣṭau	*okto*	*octō*	*eight*
navan	*ennea*	*novem*	*nine*
daśan	*deka*	*decem*	*ten*

We may also compare the kinship terminology of the classical languages and other extinct Western European languages belonging to the Germanic and Slavic groups with Sanskrit:

Sanskrit	Greek	Latin	Gothic	Old Slavonic	English
pītṛ	*patēr*	*pater*	*fadar*		*father*
mātṛ	*matēr*	*māter*		*mati*	*mother*
bhrātṛ	*phrater*	*frāter*	*brōthar*	*bratrŭ*	*brother*
svasr		*soror*	*swistar*	*sestra*	*sister*
duhitṛ	*thugatēr*		*dauhtar*	*dušti*	*daughter*
sunu			*sunus*	*synu*	*son*

As for grammatical affinities, we may compare the verb 'to be' as expressed by some major Indo- European languages of the past:

Greek	Latin	Hittite	Sanskrit	Gothic	English
eimi	*sum*	*esmi*	*asmi*	*im*	I am
esti	*est*	*eszi*	*asti*	*ist*	He is
enti	*sunt*	*asanzi*	*santi*	*sind*	They are

Or the verb 'to carry'

Greek	Latin	Sanskrit	Gothic	OCS	English
pherō	*ferō*	*bharāmi*	*baira*	*bero*	I carry
pherei	*fers*	*bharasi*	*bairis*	*beresti*	You carry
pherei	*fert*	*bharati*	*bairith*	*beretŭ*	He carries

Differences in sound or phonetics between the various IE languages could be explained on the basis of specific laws through which sound or phonetic changes have taken place. Grimm's Law, Verner's Law and Grassman's Law are among the phonetic laws that seek to explain the phonetic differences in the Indo-European languages.

A major phonetic change that characterizes many IE speeches is the change of the PIE velar or rather palato-velar * *k* into sibilants. A number of IE languages have participated in this change and are known as the Satem group after the Avestan term for 'hundred' in contrast to those which have retained the original *k* and are known as the Centum group after the Latin term for 'hundred'. The Centum group comprises the Hellenic, Italic, Celtic and Germanic language groups while the Satem group consists of Indo-Iranian, Albanian, Armenian, Baltic and Slavic. Compare the following IE terms for 'hundred' which give an indication of their phonetic affinities, whether Centum or Satem: Toch. *känt*, Wl.*cant*. Ir..*cead*, Gaul.*canto*, Goth. *hund* but Skt. *śatam*, Lith. *šimtas*, OCS *sŭto*, Russ.*sto*, Pers.*sad*. The Proto-Indo-European form of these is believed to have been **kmtom*.

It is evident that the Germanic *h* represents the PIE * *k* which the Satem speeches have changed to a sibilant:

Skt. *śvan*, Gk *kuōn*, L. *canis*, Goth. *hunds* 'dog'
Skt. *śroni*, Gk. *klonis*, L. *clūnis*, ON. *hlaun* 'buttock'
Skt. *aṣṭau*, Gk. *okto*, L. *octō*, Goth. *ahtau* 'eight'
Skt. *daśan*, Gk. *deka*, L. *decem*, Goth. *taihun* 'ten'

Modern scholars postulate that the Satem phenomenon occurred during the PIE period before the dispersal of the IE speeches, affecting a group of contiguous dialects within the IE speech area. The change has certainly not affected Tocharian, the easternmost IE language (E.g: *yakwe* 'horse', *okt* 'eight')

The Germanic languages have also hardened the PIE initial dental **d* to *t* :

Skt. *dvau* Gk. *duō*, L. *duo*, Goth. *tvai* 'two'
Skt. *dant*, L. *dent*, Lith. *dantis*, Goth. *tunthus* 'tooth'

and changed the PIE initial labial * *p* into *f* :

Skt. *pitṛ*, Gk.*pater*, L. *patēr*, Goth. *fadar* 'father'
Skt. *pāda-s*, Gk.*pod-os*, L. *pedis*, Goth. *fotus* 'foot'

Sanskrit, despite having archaic Indo-European features has also undergone a few phonetic changes such as the change of the PIE liquid **l* to *r* :

Skt. *dīrgha*, Gk.*dolikhos*, Hitt.*dalugas*, Russ.*dolgij* 'long'
Skt. *pūrna*, Lith.*pilnas*, Lat.*pilns*, Goth.*fulls* 'full'

And turned the PIE velar **g* into a palatal *j*:

Skt. *jānu*, Gk.*gonu*, L.*genu*, Goth. *kniu* 'knee'
Skt.*janas*, Gk.*genos*, L.*genus*, Goth *kuni* 'kin', 'people'

The fact that the many IE languages bore a striking resemblance to one another in such aspects as kinship and numeral terminology, terms denoting body parts and organs, flora and fauna and a host of other basic terms such as those for life, death, man, woman, day, night, sun, moon, star, sky, cloud, fire and smoke, naturally led to much speculation as to the relationship between the speakers of these languages. During the early part of the 19th century, the

idea that since the Indo-European speeches derived from a common source, its speakers had to belong to the same genetic stock, gained wide credence.

Friedrich Maximillian Müller [3], a renowned German Indologist could thus boldly proclaim: "We challenge the seeming stranger; and whether he answers in the lips of a Greek, a German, or an Indian, we recognise him as one of ourselves.... All must yield to the facts furnished by language. There was a time when the ancestors of the Celts, the Germans, the Slavonians, the Greeks and Italians, the Persians and Hindus, were living together beneath the same roof".

Although initially the Proto-Indo-European homeland (known to German scholars as the *Urheimat* or 'primitive homeland') was sought to be located in Asia, in later times, beginning from the 1860s, the theory of an European homeland gained wide currency- with good reason. This led to another important question – who were the people who spoke this mother tongue that had spread so far and wide in the subsequent centuries before breaking up into daughter languages that eventually came to dominate the linguistic scene of much of Europe and Asia ?

It was contended that a language as specialized as Proto-Indo-European would have required a long period of isolation and that the very conditions that could produce a specialized type of language should have also produced an equally specialized type of man.The speakers of this extinct language conveniently designated Proto-Indo-Europeans (and by some German scholars as the *Urvolk* or 'primitive folk') have like their language commanded much scholarly interest. Who indeed were these *Urvolk*?

(II) The Urheimat

In order to locate the urheimat or the cradle-land of the Indo-European peoples, it is necessary that we reconstruct the primitive Proto-Indo-European socio-cultural milieu which has been made possible by employing the comparative method of philology to illumine this hypothetical period [4].

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[3] The Veda and Zend Avesta (1865)

[4] This method was first employed by A.Kuhn in his pioneering work Zur ältesten Geschichte der Indogermanischen Völker (1845). Later times saw more developments in this regard especially after the reconstruction of the *Ursprache* from its daughter speeches was first attempted by August Schleicher in his Compendium der Vergleichenden Grammatik der Indogermanichen Sprachen (1861). Proto-Indo-European culture and society has been extensively dealt with in the Reallexicon der Indogermanichen Altertumskunde by O. Schrader and A. Nehring (1917-1929).

We will hereunder cite some general conclusions pertaining to the environment, culture and social organisation of the *Urvolk*.

The *Urvolk* evidently lived in a region which, at least in certain seasons, was fairly cold and experienced winter (PIE * *gheim* with reflexes in Skt. *hima*, Gk. *kheima*. L.*hiems*, Hitt.*gimmant*, Wl.*gaem*, O.Prus.*semo*, Lith. *žëma* 'winter') where even snow (PIE * *sneig^{w}h*, OCS *sněgŭ*, Russ.*sneg*, Goth.*snaiws*, L.*nix*, 'snow', OIr. *Snigid*, O.Prus.*snaigis* and Av.*snaēzaiti* 'snows') and ice (PIE * *yeg*, Hitt.*eka*, OIr.*aig* 'ice', Sarikoli *yoz* 'glacier') were known. Neverthless the climate was apparently a temperate one as they also knew of a warm or summer season (PIE **sem*, Toch.*sme*, OHG *sumar*, Germ.*sommer* Dut.*zomer*, Av.*hama*, Skt.*samā* 'season' 'year') and rain (PIE **hwers*, Hitt.*warsa* 'rainfall', Skt.*varšati* 'rains', Gk.*eerse* 'dew' and *oureō* 'urinate', literally meaning 'make rain'). They also seem to have been familiar with mountainous terrain (PIE **g^{w}orh*, Av.*gairi*, OCS *gora*, Russ.*gara* Skt.*giri* 'mountain', Alb.*gur* 'rock' and Lith. *giria* 'forest', a semantic shift probably arising from the fact that forests are often found or have survived in upland areas following the introduction of agriculture into the plains). That the landscape was not a treeless waste is borne out by the fact that a few trees were known (PIE **dru*, Skt.*dru* 'wood' 'tree', Goth. *triu* 'tree', Gk.*drus* 'oak'), particularly the Birch (PIE * *bhergo*, Skt. *bhūrja*, Russ. *berëza*, Lith.*berzas*, Lett. *berzs*, O.Prus.*berse*, Os. *Bärz, Ger.birke*).

Agricultural activity also seems to have been known as we have a well attested PIE term for 'plough' * *heryo* (L.*arō*, Gk.*aroo*, Goth.*arjan*, Lith. *ariu*, OCS *orjo*, Toch. *āre*). Another indication that cultivation was practiced is found in the term for 'field (for cultivation)'**hegro* (L.*ager*, ON.*akr*, OHG.*ackar*, Goth.*akrs* 'field', but Skt.*ajru* 'plain') though it is not unlikely that it originally meant 'pasture' as it appears to be derived from the PIE root **heg* 'drive (cattle)'. We also know that some sort of grain, probably barley (PIE * *yawos*, Skt. *yava*, Gk.*zea*, Pers.*ğaw*, Os.*yew*) appears to have been cultivated. A drink made of honey, possibly mead (PIE * *medhu* 'honey/mead', Skt.*madhu*, Lat.*med*, OHG.*metu*, O.Pruss. *meddo*, Lith.*medus* 'honey',OCS *medvědĭ* 'bear' lit. 'honey-eater', Gk.*methu* 'wine') was also evidently known.

It was probably livestock that formed the mainstay of the PIE economy. The notion that the *Urvolk* were a pastoral community is founded on the grounds that many species of livestock were known to them, among them the bovine (PIE * *g^{w}ows*, Skt. *gaus*, Av.*gao*, Lat. *guovs*, Toch. *ko*, Arm. *kov*, Ger.*kuh*, OHG. *chuo*, OE *cū* 'cow', *OCS gov-ežd*ĭ *'bovine'*) and sheep (PIE * *howis*, Skt. *avis*, Gk.*ois*, L. *ovis*, Goth.*awis*, Lith.*avis*, OHG. *ouwi*, OCS. *ovĭca*). Besides, a common term for cattle was also known (PIE * *peku*, Skt. *paśu*, L. *pecu*, O. Prus. *pecku*, OHG. *fihu*). A consideration of such terms suggests that

the Urvolk were accustomed to stock-raising and not just for their meat, a term for which is attested (PIE **mems*, Skt.*māṁsa*, Goth.*mimz*, O.Pruss.*mensā*, OCS.*meso*, Toch.*mīsa*, Lith.*mesa*, and Arm.*mis*). From the sheep it is evident they obtained wool (PIE **wlnah*, Skt.*urnā*, Av.*varena*, Hitt.*hulana*, Russ.*volna*, Lith.*vilna*, Goth.*wulla*). The horse was also known (PIE * *hekwos*, Skt. *aśva*, L *equus*, Myc. *iqqo*, Ill.*hikkos*, Goth. *aihwa*, OI. *ech*). The bear too was evidently known (PIE * *hrtkōs*, Gk.*arktos*, L.*ursus*, Skt.*ṛkṣa*, Av.*araša*, Arm.*arj*, OIr.*art*, Lith. *irstva* 'bear's den' and Hitt.*hartagga* 'bear people') as also the wolf (PIE **wulk"os*, Skt.*vrka*, O.Prus.*wilkas*, Pol.*wilk*, Lith.*vilka*, Serb. *vûk*, *Alb.ulk*, *Goth. wulfa*) and the beaver (PIE**bhebhrus*, OHG *bibar*, O.Prus.*bebrus*, Lith.*bebras*, Rus.*bobr*, Av.*bawra* 'beaver' and Skt.*bhabhru* 'red brown', the colour of the beaver, beavers being absent in India).

The other fauna known were the goose (PIE * *ghans*, Skt. *haṁsa*, Gk. *khen*, L. *anser*, OHG. *gans*, OCS.*gos*, Wl.*gwyz*, Pers.*kaz*, Lith. *žasis*,O.Pruss.*sansy)* , the hare (PIE **kasos*, Skt. *śaśa*, OHG. *haso*, Dut.*haas*, Ger.*hase*) and the mouse (PIE * *mus*, Skt. *mūṣ*, Gk.*mūs*, L. *mūs*, ON *mús*, Ger.*maus*), all of which are common in both Europe and Asia.

These Proto-Indo-Europeans also seem to have attained some level of technological development and evidently had a knowledge of metal which they would have put to good use as in the manufacture of weaponry. There can be no doubt that some sort of metal, probably copper or bronze (PIE**heyes*, Skt.*ayas* 'copper', 'iron', Av.*aiiah* 'bronze', Goth.*aiz* 'bronze', 'brass'. L.*aes* 'bronze') was known, suggesting that this folk may have been a chalcolithic or copper- or bronze-using folk. Wheeled vehicles, very likely wagons (PIE **wogho*, Skt. *vahana*, OHG *wagan*, Lith.*wezimas*, OIr *fen*) pulled by teams of oxen joined by yokes or drawn by horses were also known, a supposition supported also by a consideration of the following technical terms.

Skt,Av.*ratha*'chariot',L.*rota*,OHG.*rad*,OIr.*roth*,Lith. *ratas* 'wheel' (PIE **roteh*)
Skt. *akṣa*, Gk. *aksion*, L.*axis*,OHG.*ahsa*,OCS *osĭ*,Lith.*ašis*'axle'(PIE * *heks*)
Skt.*nabhya*, AS *nafu*, OHG.*naba*, O.Prus.*nabis* 'nave' (PIE * *nobh*)
Skt.*yugam*,Gk.*zugon*,L.*iugum*,Lith.*jungas*,Goth.*juk*,Russ.*igo*'yoke'(PIE* *hiugom*)

All this would indicate that the *Urvolk* were a fairly mobile, wagon-using society, though it is unlikely at that stage that they knew of chariots for while this vehicle is known as *ratha* in Indo-Iranian, the cognate forms found in the Western IE languages such as L.*rota* and German *rad* all mean 'wheel' which is apparently what its parent form **roteh* also meant. This would suggest that these languages had moved away from the early PIE homeland before the chariot evolved from an ox-drawn wagon C.2000 B.C. in the Southern Russian or Central Asian steppes. Navigation was evidently not unknown as borne out

by a term for 'water-borne vessel' (PIE **nāwus*, Skt. *naus*, G. *naūs*. L.*nāvis*, Oss.*naw*). However, as the terms designating masts, sails, etc, in IE speeches differ from one another, it is supposed that the *Urvolk* knew only boats with which they navigated the waterways of their land, seafaring being unknown. This would also indicate that the *Urvolk* were a lacustrine or riverine folk.

This does not mean that the *Urvolk* were invariably nomadic, for there is evidence to show that they led a somewhat settled domestic life (PIE **domos*, Skt. *damas*, L. *domus*, Rus. *dom*, Czech *dum* 'house'and Lith.*dim-stis* 'house-stead'). Incidentally the Gk. *domos* denotes 'hut' so that it is possible that the homes of the *Urvolk* were very modest abodes, which would also suggest that they led a semi-nomadic lifestyle. At the same time, however, it is not unlikely that these folk knew or had forts or fortifications (PIE **pelh*, Lith.*pilis*, Latv.*pilvs* 'fort', 'castle', Gk.*polis* 'city', 'citadel', Skt.*pura* 'fortress', 'city') though these could have simply meant a 'walled enclosure' as suggested by the Skt.*pur* 'wall', 'rampart', 'pallisade'.

As for social organization, the Avestan *vispaiti* and Vedic *viśpati* 'king, clan-chief' and Lithuanian *veszpatis* 'lord', formerly 'clan-chief' (PIE * *weik-potis*), suggests that Indo-European society was constituted into clan or tribal groups based on patriarchal authority. Some form of kingship also seems to have been known, as seen in forms like Sanskrit *rāja*, Gothic *reiks*, Gaulish *rix* and Old Irish *ri* 'king' all of which go back to a postulated PIE **reĝs*.

That Proto-Indo-European society was highly patriarchal is also suggested by the patriarchal character of the early Vedic, Hellenic, Roman and Teutonic societies. The existence of a term for widow (PIE**widhewa*, Skt.*vidhava*,L.*vidua*, OCS *vidova*, O.Prus.*widdewu*, Goth. *widuwo*, Ger.*witwe*, OIr.*fedb*) and the absence of corresponding terms for males in the early IE languages may also be taken as evidence of this patriarchy. Although it usually follows that in IE words, feminine forms are derived from the masculine, it is not so in the case of widow. The terms for widower in the modern IE speeches such as German, French and English are secondary, being derived from the term for widow which is primary. In a patriarchal society such as that postulated for the *Urvolk*, the status of a woman would have depended on that of her husband. Widowhood would have meant a change in her social position, possibly restriction on remarriage or perhaps immolation upon the death of the husband, especially since the sacrifice and internment of widows with their deceased husbands was not unknown among ancient Indo-European peoples. The position of a man, in case his wife died, would have remained unaffected. A patriarchal tradition is also suggested by a consideration of kinship terms denoting affinal relatives in the various IE languages which are given below.

PIE	Skt	L	OHG	O.Russ	English
**swekᵂros*	*śvaśura*	*socer*	*swehur*	*svekru*	*husband's father*
**swekruhs*	*śvaśru*	*socrus*	*swigar*	*svekry*	*husband's mother*
**daywēr*	*devar*	*lēvir*	*zeihhur*	*deveri*	*husband's brother*
**yenater*	*yātar*	*ianitricēs (pl)*		*jatrovi*	*husband's brother's wife*
**snusos*	*snuṣa*	*nurus*	*snur*	*snukha*	*son's wife*

The prevalence of affinal terms denoting husband's relatives (husband's father, mother and brother and husband's brother's wife) in PIE, in contrast to the absence of corresponding terms denoting wife's relatives, and the existence of a common term for daughter-in-law in contrast to the absence of any denoting son-in-law would suggest a patrilocal society consisting of extended households.

As for Proto-Indo-European religion, it is quite evident that the idea of a divinity had been realized. This is suggested by a reconstructed PIE form for some sort of deity **deiwos* (Skt.*devas*, Lith.*dievas*, L.*deus*, Gaul.*divo*, Olr.*dia*, all of which signify 'god' and the ON plural *tivar* 'gods'). Many an appellation of mythological significance in ancient Greek, Roman, and Germanic religion have also been found to be cognate with corresponding terms in the Vedic pantheon of the ancient Indo-Aryans. The Vedic *Dyaus* or *Dyaus Pitr* (Sky or Sky Father; i.e. The bright sky) thus appears to be identical with the Hellenic *Zeus* or *Zeus Pater*, the Roman *Iū-pitar* or *Jupiter*, the Umbrian *Luvepatre*, Illyrian *Deipatrous* and Luwian *Tatis Tiwaz* or 'Father Tiwaz' transformed into a solar deity. Similarly, the Vedic solar deity *Sūrya* (Sun) may be identified with the Hellenic *Helios*, Germanic *Sol*, Lithuanian *Saule*, Gaulish *Sulis* and the Slavic *Tsar Solnitse*, and the Vedic goddess *Uṣas* (Dawn) with the Hellenic *Eōs*, Latvian *Auseklis*, Lith.*Aušrine* and Anglo–Saxon *Eastre*. Similarly the Vedic storm god *Parjanyas* may be compared to the Lithuanian *Perkunas*, Prussian *Perkonis*, Latvian *Perkons*, Slavic *Perun*, Hittite *Peruna*, and perhaps even the Norse *Fjörgyn*, the mother of the Norse thunder god Thor, and the Greek *Keraunos* 'thunderbolt' used also in epithets of the thunder god, which was probably used as a substitute for a tabooed **Peraunos*. These deities appear to have been nothing but the deification of natural phenomena, though they were often vested with anthropomorphic traits. To the PIE Dawn goddess **Heusos* was applied the epithet **Dhughater Diwos* 'Daughter of the Sky' (as suggested by Greek *Thugater Dios*, Sanskrit *Duhita Divah* and Lithuanian *Dievo Duktē* 'Saulyte' represented as the 'daughter of the sky'). There was also **Neptonos* or **Hepōm Nepōts* 'grandson of the waters' (as suggested by Latin *Neptunus*, Vedic *Apam Napāt*, Avestan *Apam Napāt*, the Persian *Ābānnaf*).

Adolphe Pictet [5] has however postulated that the early *Urvolk* possessed a sort of primitive monotheism as suggested by the generic term for god. This is said to have been a vague, obscure conception that subsequently degenerated into polytheism and nature-worship. The monotheistic ideal, though obscured was not altogether lost and may account for the traces of monotheism, or rather latent monotheism, found amongst later IE folk. Pictet contends that these may be reminiscences of the more ancient religion.

As to the location of the *Urheimat*, the homeland of the Proto-Indo-Europeans, or more specifically the last place inhabited by the undivided Indo-European speakers, linguistic and archaeological evidence points to Southern Russia, though there has been some dispute as to its location ever since the early part of the 19th century. Some early scholars argued for an Indian origin for the Urvolk a view that seems to have gained currency shortly after it was revealed that Sanskrit was an Indo-European language that had preserved many of the archaic features of Proto-Indo-European. Friedrich Schlegel [6] held that this master race that had formed in northern India had marched to found empires in the west. In an attempt to explain why the Indo-European inhabitants of the fertile regions of Asia should have migrated even to the harsh northern climes of Scandinavia, he sought to connect such migrations to Indian legends relating to a holy mountain called Meru in the far north. The Indian tribes, he held, had been driven northward not out of necessity but by some supernatural idea as to the splendour of the north.

This view however found little support, including from his brother Wilhelm Schlegel [7] who pointed out that it was completely unlikely that the migrations which had peopled such a large part of the globe would have begun at its southern extremity and would have continually directed themselves from there towards the north. "On the contrary", he noted "everything compels us to believe that the colonies set out in diverging directions from a central region". He believed that the Caspian Sea region possessed such required centrality.

There were others who contributed to the debate, among them Christian Lassen [8] who noted that among the names of plants and animals which were common to the Indo-European nations, there was none which was native to

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[5] Les origines Indo-Europeennes. (1859-1863)

[6] Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier (1808)

[7] De l'origine des Hindous. Essais litteraires et historique (1842)

[8] Indische Alterthumskunde (1867)

India and that the fair-skinned Aryans, that branch of Indo-Europeans that entered India were originally distinguished from the dark aborigines, according with the assumption that they came from a more northerly country while John Muir [9] demonstrated from a consideration of Vedic texts composed by the ancient Indo-Aryans that the Aryans entered India from the North-West with which they were familiar before gradually advancing to the east and south. This staging area in the northwest of the subcontinent precluded the possibility of an Indian origin for the Proto-Indo-Europeans and rather placed their place of origin to the north west of India. Another argument marshalled to counter the Out of India theory was that Sanskrit or Old Indo Aryan must have been a relative late comer to India for otherwise it would have been divided by the modern period into several subfamilies as distinct from one another as Germanic is from Slavic had it had a long residence spanning several millennia in India. But this is not at all the case and the fact that all Modern Indo-Aryan Vernaculars differ very little from one another and show a pattern of evolution traceable to Old Indo-Aryan suggests that the Old Aryan speech could not have originated in India, but was introduced from outside.

There were also those scholars who sought to place the Urheimat in Central Asia, prominent among them being Heinrich Julius Von Klaproth who having encountered speakers of Ossetian languages in the North Caucasus who used root words similar to German and Persian and who had blue eyes and blond or red hair [10] sought to locate the Urheimat in the Caucasus or Northern Himalayas. In like manner, F.A.Pott [11] settled for the valleys of the Oxus and Jaxartes, from the northern slopes of the Himalaya to the Caspian Sea.

The focus however later shifted to Europe with a number of scholars questioning the theory of an Asiatic origin. Prominent among them was Omalius de'Halloy who raised objections to the theory of the Asiatic origin of the Indo-Europeans before the Belgian Academy in 1848, contending that the Indo-Europeans had their origins in Europe. In 1864 d'Halloy put forth some questions before the Societe de'Anthropologie of Paris again questioning the theory of an Asiatic origin [12] and before long it came to be accepted that the Indo-European cradle might have well been in Europe. Noteworthy in this regard was the contribution made by Robert Latham in his edition of Tacitus'

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[9] Original Sanskrit Texts on the Origin and History of the People of India (1860)

[10] Tableau Historique, geographique et politique du Caucase (1827)

[11] Indogermanischer Sprachstamm (1840)

[12] L'origine des Aryens: Historie d'une controverse. Salomon Reinach (1892)

Germania (1851) who convincingly argued for an European origin. Latham based his conclusions on the archaic character of Lithuanian which he held was no less archaic than Sanskrit, meaning that Sanskrit must have reached India from Europe, as well as the fact that the main body of IE folk are found in Europe, and a smaller detached body in Asia, making it probable that the smaller body broke away from the larger. It is generally accepted that an area showing greater linguistic diversity of a given language family is to be attributed a longer residence for that particular linguistic group than an area showing lesser linguistic diversity for the simple fact that the longer a language is resident in a given region, the more likely it is to get differentiated and split into dialects which eventually evolve into languages in their own right. Such languages may split further, dividing and sub-dividing, until they themselves disappear, the only indication of their former kinship being certain peculiarities surviving in the daughter languages which help identify these as belonging to a certain linguistic sub-family of a larger macro-family such as is postulated for Indo-European. The fact that it is in Europe that the largest number of Indo-European sub-families are found, no less than eight, viz. Greek, Italic, Germanic, Celtic, Slavic, Baltic, Armenian and Albanian in contrast to the Anatolian (Hittite, Luwian, Palaic and Lydian) in Asia Minor, Tocharian (Tocharian A and B) in Northwestern China and Aryan (Iranian and Indo-Aryan) in Central Asia, Iran and India, indicates that it was very likely in Europe that the parent speech of all these languages was spoken.

But exactly where in Europe was the Indo-European cradle was the next question that needed to be answered. Ludwig Geiger [13] favoured Germany while Karl Penka[14] propounded the theory of a Southern Scandinavian origin. G.Kossinna [15] argued for a North European origin, contending that the Baltic basin was a centre of origin from which radiated various civilizing movements of Nordics from 4500 B.C. onward and especially after 3000 B.C. Theodor Pösche [16] ought to locate the cradleland in Eastern Europe, more specifically to the south of the west Russian ridge of land, in a district traversed by the Pripet, the Beresina and the Dnieper, in the enormous wide-spreading marshes of Pinsk, citing among other reasons the fact that of all living IE languages, Lithuanian posseessses "the greatest antiquity". The fact that Lithuanian has

[13] Über die Ursitze der Indogermanen (1871)

[14] Die Herkunft der Arier (1886)

[15] Die Indogermanen (1921)

[16] Die Arier (1878)

remained a remarkably archaic IE Language suggests that the Lithuanians have throughout managed to keep close to the land of their native speech and thereby avoid, to a significant extent, the linguistic degeneration or wear and tear (as a result of changes in environment, culture contact, etc.) that would have characterized movements to distant lands by other related folk. Despite it being a Satem speech, it has retained a nasal sound in the term for 'hundred' *šimtas* (Cf. PIE * *kmtom*) which other Satem languages have lost [17].

Hermann Hirt [18] suggested that the *Urheimat* was located in the region of the Vistula. He noted that whereas those IE speeches to the west of the river were Centum languages, those to the east of the river were Satem languages. He held that the Vistula itself may have been the cause of the Centum-Satem split. Hirt's theory has since been cast in serious doubt, as two extinct Indo-European languages, both belonging to the Centum group have been discovered to the east of the Vistula, viz. Hittite, spoken in Asia minor C. 2000-1200 B.C. and Tocharian, spoken in the Silk Road caravan cities of the Tarim Basin in Northwestern China as in the oasis town of Kucha in the heart of Chinese Turkestan until about the thirteenth century A.C. The Centum character of Tocharian was demonstrated in 1908 while the Indo-European character of Hittite was established only in 1917.

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[17] Despite the fact that the oldest extant records of Lithuanian, a Baltic speech, date only from the 15th century A.C. it remains a remarkably archaic tongue and in some respects more so than the Sanskrit language itself. Consider the following Lithuanian numeral terms with their reconstructed Proto-Indo-European forms:

PIE	Lith.	Eng.
* *oinos*	*vienas*	*one*
* *duwo*	*du*	*two*
* *treyes*	*trys*	*three*
* *k^{w}etwores*	*ketturi*	*four*
* *penk^{w}e*	*penki*	*five*

and the declension of the PIE term for wolf in Sanskrit and Lithuanian.

PIE	Skt	Lith
* *wlk^{w}os*	*vrkas*	*vilkas* (nominative)
* *wlk^{w}e*	*vrka*	*vilke* (vocative)
* *wlk^{w}oi*	*vrke*	*vilke* (locative)
* *wlk^{w}oi*	*vrkaya*	*vilkui* (dative)

[18] Die Indogermanen. Vol.1 (1905)

Both Hittite and Tocharian show archaic features and appear to have branched off from the Indo-European parent body during a very early period, before the Proto-Indo-European as we know it acquired its final characteristics before the great dispersal [19].

More recently Claus Peter Zoller has sought to show that a centum substrate is found in a little known Indian Himalayan language known as Bangani spoken in Bangan, north of Dehra Dun, perhaps the remnants of a pre-Vedic Indo-European migration to the Indian subcontinent [20].

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[19] The archaic character of Hittite is borne out by the presence before vowels of laryngeals or guttural sounds usually transcribed by *h* which are believed to have been possessed by Proto-Indo-European before all the other Indo-European languages split from it. This is seen for instance in Hittite *hanti* 'before' and *haštai* 'bone' which other IE languages have lost, as seen for instance in its respective Greek equivalents *anti* and *os-teon* and Latin equivalents *ante* and *os*.This suggests that Hittite separated from PIE at a very early date, probably.C.4000 B.C. though it is first attested in inscriptions in Anatolia (Modern Turkey) dated to C.1900 B.C. It also confirms the theory of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure who as far back as 1879 postulated the existence of these laryngeals on the basis of several seemingly random differences in vowel pronunciation between the then known IE languages, indicating that these vowels had been affected by a lost consonant that no longer existed in any IE speech, a remarkable observation indeed, considering the fact that it was made forty years before the discovery and decipherment of Hittite. More Anatolian languages could have preserved these archaic characteristics for Hittite (a Northern Anatolian language which was spoken by a warrior ruling elite in a largely non-Indo-European Central Anatolian landscape dominated by speakers of Hattic, a non-IE language possibly linked distantly to the Caucasian languages) along with Luwian (a Southern Anatolian speech believed to have been spoken originally in Western Anatolia by peoples such as the Trojans on the evidence of a seal containing a Luwian inscription found in Troy level VI-the Troy of the Trojan War), Lydian (spoken in the western coast of Anatolia) and Palaic (spoken in the city of Pala probably located in North Central Anatolia, north of Ankara) are all thought to have originated from a hypothetical Indo-European speech known as Proto-Anatolian which evolved not long after its separation from PIE. As for Tocharian, there is reason to believe that it separated from the main Indo-European body shortly after the separation of Hittite, that is, around 3500 B.C. well before any other IE speech went its own way. The following vocables should suffice to demonstrate the close affinities of these languages to Proto-Indo-European when compared to Sanskrit:

PIE	Hittite	Tocharian	Sanskrit
**kwon* 'dog'	*kuwan*	*kwen*	*śvan*
**genu* 'knee'	*genu*	*keni*	*janu*

[20] Bericht über besondere archaismen im Bangani. MSZS.1988. The centum character of Bangani is suggested by such forms as *doko* 'ten' (PIE **dekm*) and *kotia* 'hundreds of' (PIE **kmtom*). The language has also managed to retain the PIE **g* as for instance in *gimo* winter' with which we may compare the archaic Hittite *gimmant* (PIE **gheim*) as against the Greek *kheimon*, Sanskrit *hima*, Avestan *zima* and Old Prussian *semo*.

P. Thieme [21] has, following a detailed lexico-cultural survey, concluded that the *Urheimat* lay in Northern Europe, in the region of the Vistula, Oder and Elbe rivers. However, it is the Steppe theory propounded by Prof. Otto Schrader that has gained wide acceptance, especially in view of the linguistic and archaeological evidence. Prof. Schrader [22] places the Urheimat in South Russia, more specifically, in the lower course of the river Volga. He has taken into consideration its climate which is characterized by an extraordinary cold and snowy winter and a hot summer, its presence of rivers and its flora and fauna.

In this he is supported by Gordon Childe [23] who favours the kurgans of the South Russian steppes, graves containing skeletons covered with red ochre and surmounted by a mound or kurgan. Childe argued that there was contact between the undivided Indo-Europeans and the Sumero-Akkadians as attested by the Indo-European terms for copper and axe which he believes to have been imported from Mesopotamia. The old IE terms for 'axe' (Skt. *paraśu*, Gk. *pelekus*) and 'copper' (L. *raudus*, ON *raudi*) have derived from Mesopotamian languages, the former from the Akkadian *pilaqq* and the latter from the Sumerian *urud*, which would suggest that the Urvolk did not live too distantly from the lands between the Tigris and Euphrates. This is all the more significant as the folk interred in the kurgans were in a chalcolithic phase of culture with small articles of pure copper as well as perforated axes of stone or copper being found at these sites. He also noted that clay figurines of naked women found in the kurgans bore a distinct likeness to models of the goddess Ishtar found at Assur and elsewhere in Mesopotamia. The name he believed to be concealed in the Indo-European term for star **ester*, pointing out that the ideogram for Ishtar in Babylonian was precisely a star. Besides, a PIE term for wheel or wheeled vehicle * $k^{w}ek^{w}lo$ (Skt.*cakra*, Gk.*kuklos*, AS *hweol*, ON *hvel* 'wheel', Toch.*kokale* 'cart', 'wagon', chariot') has been shown to bear a striking similarity to the terms for vehicles in the other languages of the region such as the Sumerian *gigir* and the Semitic * *galgal*. Since the Indo-European term is evidently derived from a PIE verbal root * $k^{w}el$ 'to turn, to twist' it is likely that it was the *Urvolk* who invented wheeled vehicles and introduced them to the Middle or Near East. This again suggests some contact between the *Urvolk* and the region to the south of the Russian Steppes.

Further the fact that the *Urvolk* were familiar with the horse has given rise to the presumption that they must have lived in close proximity to the natural

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[21] Die Heimat der Indogermanischen Gemeinsprache (1954)

[22] Sprachvergleichung und Urgeschichte (1890)

[23] The Aryans. A Study of Indo-European origins (1926)

breeding grounds of the true horse, very probably *Equus caballus*, a native of the Russian steppes. This view has been lent further support by the not unlikely notion that it was the Indo-Europeans who introduced the domestic horse to the old world, as inferred from the simultaneity of the spread of wheeled vehicles with that of the Indo-Europeans. The possesssion in common of a word denoting 'town' or 'stronghold' (Skt. *pura*, Gk. *polis*, Lith. *pilis*. O.Prus.*pil*) has also been cited to support the theory of a Steppe homeland. Such settlements were not uncommon amongst the ancient peoples who dwelt on the margin of the Steppe region. Another indication supporting the notion of a Southern Russian origin for the Urvolk is that it is the Slavic (today more commonly conjoined with the Baltic and known as Balto-Slavic in view of their similarities) branch of Indo-European spoken in these parts today that have the least Non-Indo-European forms in its lexicon when compared to other Indo-European sub-families, suggesting that this language group originated in a region that hardly if ever had Non-Indo-European speakers as Germanic, Hellenic or Greek encountered as suggested by the fact that these languages have a significant non-IE substrate influence.

The steppe theory is further supported by the contentions of Bata Ghosh [24] who has, basing his hypothesis on the evidence that the *Urvolk* had been in some sort of contact with both the Semites and Finno-Ugrians, concluded that the *Urheimat* lay in South Russia as it was from there alone that the *Urvolk* could have come into contact with these peoples. More recently, David Anthony [25] has argued for the location of the Proto-Indo-European home in the grasslands north of the Black and Caspian Seas, that is the Pontic-Caspian Steppes, in the steppeland west of the Urals, in what is today Ukraine and Southern Russia. Anthony narrows down to his thesis by excluding any part of Siberia (on the grounds that the honeybee was absent east of the Urals) and the tropics, Mediterranean and the Near East (on the grounds that it is a temperate zone flora and fauna that could be reconstructed in Proto-Indo-European) and then goes on to argue that PIE exhibits very ancient links with the Uralic languages, overlaid by more recent lexical borrowings into Proto-Uralic from PIE as well as less clear linkages to some pre- or proto-Kartvelian language of the Caucasus region. He therefore concludes that the Proto-Indo-European homeland should be placed west of the Ural Mountains, between the Urals and the Caucasus, in the steppes of Eastern Ukraine and Russia, a homeland that

[24] The Origin of the Indo-Aryans. The Cultural Heritage of India Vol. 1 (1958)

[25] The Horse, the Wheel and Language. How Bronze-age riders from the Eurasian Steppes shaped the modern world (2008)

existed between 4000-3000 B.C. with an early phase that might go back to 4500 B.C and a late phase that ended by 2500 B.C.

However, it is the contentions of Marija Gimbutas who has taken archaeological considerations into account that has lent the Steppe theory greater tenability. Gimbutas [26] locates the *Urheimat* in the Steppes of South Russia on the basis of the latest archaeological evidence and lexico-cultural reconstruction. She calls this culture the *Kurgan* culture after the pre-historic burial mounds (known as *Kurgans* in Russian) found in the area, though it is also known as the *Pit Grave* or the *Yamnaya* culture after the *yama* 'pit', a shaft dug in the ground where the body was placed. Gimbutas has taken the practice of burial under tumuli or burial mounds heaped over pit graves as a significant marker of IE culture. The practice of burying people under mounds appears to be Indo-European as it is attested by such works as the Greek Iliad (C. 8th century B.C.) and the Old English Beowulf (C. 6th-8th century A.C.). This culture, which once prevailed in the Pontic and Volga Steppes has been shown to be rather homogeneous. It is dated to C.3500-2800 B.C.

The people interred in the *Kurgans* were generally a tall, dolicocephalic, orthognathic, leptorhine folk, essentially of the Nordic type, although a minority of brachycephals have also been found. Animal remains include those of the horse, sheep and cattle, indicating that these peoples were a pastoral folk while pots filled with millet or wheat grain indicate that some agriculture was practiced. Evidence that they used wheeled vehicles (wagons) has also been found. Remains of two- and four-wheeled wooden vehicles with solid wheels have been found in the lower Dnieper and Volga region. The climatic, arboreal, faunal, metallurgical and technological evidence adduced from IE lexico-cultural reconstruction has been shown to fit the *Kurgan* culture of the Pontic Caspian region [27]. Mortuary evidence (i.e. the emphasis on male burials) also indicates the strong patriarchal nature of this Steppe society [28].

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[26] Die Indoeuropäer: Archaeologische probleme. Die Urheimat der Indogermanen. Ed. A. Scherer (1968) and Proto-Indo-European Culture: The Kurgan Culture during the Fifth, Fourth and Third Millennia B.C. Indo-European and Indo-Europeans. Papers presented at the Third Indo-European Conference at the University of Pennsylvania. Ed.George Cordona, Henry Hoenigswald & Alfred Senn (1970)

[27] In Search of the Indo-Europeans. J. P. Mallory (1989)

[28] Mallory. 1989. At the same time, however, females are not excluded from burials in the kurgans which apparently commemorated the deaths of special adults and were by no means family cemeteries. Indeed, adult females appear in one out of five kurgan graves, including central graves on the Volga and it has been found that about 20 % of Scythian-Sarmatian 'warrior-graves' on the Lower Don and the Lower Volga contained females dressed for battle as if they were men, a phenomenon that probably inspired the Greek tales about the Amazons. And it is interesting that the frequency of adult females in central graves under Yamnaya kurgans in

Recent genetic studies also suggest that a significant genetic marker of the Indo-European-speaking peoples, R1a1 or M17, a paternally inherited Y-chromosome haplogroup that has a widespread distribution and high frequency across Eurasia, Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent originated in Southern Russia or the Ukraine in a region corresponding to the area of the Kurgan culture [29].

Ancient human specimens recovered in regions as far flung as Germany and Siberia have also been shown to have possessed this haplogroup. Skeletons dug up in Eulau, Saxony-Anhalt, Germany dating back to C.mid-3rd millennium B.C. have been found to have possessed the marker [30] while those

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the same region, but 2000 years earlier was about the same. It is conjectured that some women may have been assigned leadership roles that were traditionally male (Anthony 2008). Nevertheless the lot of women in PIE culture on the whole seems to have been a very unenviable one. Double graves of man and woman found in the kurgans would suggest the custom of wives following their husbands to death, presumably to accompany them in the afterlife, a custom which is known to have existed in India until fairly recent times where Hindu widows are known to have immolated themselves on the funeral pyres of their husbands (A practice commonly known as Sati) and as late as the 13th and 14th centuries in Lithuania, symbolic vestiges of which even survived well up to the 20th century (See The Balts. Marija Gimbutas.1963).

[29] See The Eurasian Heartland: A continental perspective on Y-chromosome diversity. Spencer Wells, Nadira Yuldasheva et al. PNAS.August 2001. The study concludes that the current distribution of the M17 haplogroup is likely to represent traces of an ancient population migration originating in Southern Russia or the Ukraine where M17 is found at a particularly high frequency (>50 %) and that the domestication of the horse in this region C.3000 B.C. may have driven the migration. The study further notes that the distribution and age of M17 in Europe and Central and Southern Asia is consistent with the inferred movements of these people who left a clear pattern of archaeological remains known as the Kurgan Culture and are thought to have spoken an early Indo-European language. The findings also suggest that the decrease in frequency eastward across Siberia to the Altai Sayan mountains and Mongolia, and southward into India, overlaps exactly with the inferred migrations of the Indo-Iranians during the period 3000-1000 B.C. The report adds that that the IE-speaking Sourashtrans of Tamil Nadu in South India have a much higher frequency of M17 (39 %) than their Dravidian-speaking neighbours such as the Kallar (4 %) adding to the evidence that M17 is a diagnostic Indo-Iranian marker. What is also interesting is that M17 is also found in very high frequencies in the Brahmans of India, the Aryan priestly caste who could be expected to have practiced endogamy or marriage within one's group more than any other group, hinting at its presence as a founder lineage of this caste group. It is particularly prominent among the West Bengal Brahmins (72.22 %), Uttar Pradesh Brahmins (67.74 %) and Bihar Brahmins (60.53 %). In Europe it is of frequent occurrence in the Ukraine (54 %), among Baltic populations such as the Lithuanians (34 %) and among certain Scandinavian populations such as the Norwegians (20-30 %) but gradually decreases as one moves towards western and southern Europe where its place is taken by a sister haplogroup R1b which is thought to have belonged to the Pre-Indo-European peoples of Europe.

[30] Ancient DNA, Strontium Isotopes and Osteological Analyses shed light on Social and Kinship Organization of the Later Stone Age. Wolfgang Haak et al. PNAS. Nov.2008

recovered from Krasnoyarsk in Southern Siberia and belonging to the 2nd millennium B.C-4th century A.C. have also been found to have possessed this marker which is thought to have marked the eastward migration of Indo-European speakers and significantly enough, the findings indicated that these folk were a blue-eyed, light-haired, fair-skinned people [31] which tallies well with the physical characteristics postulated for the early Indo-Europeans.

To go further back, the foundations of the *Yamnaya* culture have been traced to the *Srednij Stog* culture. The *Srednij Stog* culture located primarily along the middle Dnieper and extending eastwards to the Donets and the lower reaches of the Don has been dated to C. 4500-3500 B.C. (Mallory. 1989). The economy of the culture was based on Stockbreeding, agriculture, hunting and fishing. The domestic livestock included the horse, sheep/goat, cattle, pig and dog. The earliest evidence for horse domestication comes from Dereivka on the Dnieper river, an Ukranian Srednij Stog culture site, believed to have flourished C. 4200-3500 B.C [32]. The site is probably connected with the earliest stage of a distinct Indo-European culture.

There is also evidence to show that the latter phase of this culture was characterized by a warrior or military tradition such as is postulated for the *Urvolk*. As noted by Asko Parpola [33]: "Marked contrasts in wealth within cemeteries of the Srednij Stog culture indicate that society was now stratified and dominated by raiding warriors". He observes that during the following *Pit Grave* culture dated to C. 3500-2800 B.C., full-scale pastoral technology, including the domesticated horse, wheeled vehicles, stockbreeding and limited horticulture spread eastwards over the vast lowland Steppes, which were earlier largely uninhabited. Thus it seems likely that as noted by Parpola, "the dispersal of the Indo-European languages is to be connected with the rapid diffusion of horsemanship and related culture traits of Srednij stog and Pit Grave ("Kurgan culture") origin to ever widening areas".

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[31] Ancient DNA provides new insights into the history of South Siberian Kurgan people. C.Keyser, C.Bouakaze et al. HG. May 2009. The study involved a Y-chromosomal, mitochondrial haplotype and haplogroup analysis as well as phenotype-informative single nucleotide polymorphisms of 26 specimens.

[32] The "Kurgan Culture", Indo-European origins, and the Domestication of the Horse. David Anthony. CA (1986)

[33] The Coming of the Aryans to Iran and India. SO (1988)

As to what prompted these folk to expand beyond the region of their homeland, there are many possible causes. Elena Kuzmina [34] who favours the Pontic Caspian zone as the Proto-Indo-European home believes that large scale migrations of these folk were motivated by the reduction of local food resources as a result of deteriorating climatic conditions and by a conscious search for new productive lands and modes of subsistence. It has also been conjectured that the stimulus to expand beyond the traditional boundaries of their homeland could have easily been provided by the nature of their pastoral livelihood.

As convincingly shown by Anthony (2008), the PIE speakers were the first people in the Eurasian steppes to create a herding economy that required regular seasonal movements to new pastures throughout the year. Wagons pulled by cattle allowed them to carry tents, water and food into the deep steppes, far from the river valleys, while horseback riding enabled them to scout rapidly and over long distances, and to herd on a large scale, necessities in such an economy. Herds were spread out across the enormous grasslands between the river valleys, making those grasslands useful, which led to larger herds and the accumulation of greater wealth. Thus having developed a pastoral economy based on the innovative use of the ox wagon and horseback riding, it would have only been a step further to put these to other applications by combining the best of both, the wheel and the horse, thus resulting in the wheeled vehicles which was little doubt used in the later stages of Proto-Indo-European society to acquire greater territory, in areas which would have otherwise been beyond their power.

We could therefore attribute the expansion of Indo-European communities to the other parts of the world which they came to dominate not merely to population growth or other natural factors such as climate change or the search for greener pastures for their livestock, but also to a desire, born out of the innovative use of the horse and wheel, to acquire new territory for themselves at the expense of other peoples. The wagon, so essential for the primitive mobile economy and the horse-drawn chariot equipped with spoked wheels which followed were certainly revolutionary advances in mobility in ancient times and it is likely that it were such mobile factors that enabled the invading Indo-European warrior aristocracies to impose their rule on native peasant communities in both Europe and Asia. As borne out by ancient historical records, the Imperial Hittite, Mycaenean Greek and Rg Vedic Aryan societies were militaristic communities that entered the regions they came to dominate driving chariots pulled by swift horses.

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[34] Otkuda Prishli Indoarii ? Material naia kultura plemen Andronovskoi obshchnosti i proiskhozhdenie Indoirantsev (1994)

There is also reason to believe that the Proto-Indo-Europeans were better endowed physically than most other contemporaneous peoples and it is not unlikely as contended by Gregory Cochran and Henry Harpending [35] that Lactase Persistence (the ability to digest animal milk as adults) was the genetic edge that allowed the pastoralist dairy-farming Indo-Europeans to spread at the expense of other peoples [36]. This development not only gave the PIE folk the ability to survive famines by constant recourse to animal milk, particularly in times of scarcity, but also the energy that made them better suited as conquerors. Dairy farming has obvious advantages since cattle could go on turning grass into milk for years before slaughter for their meat and it is estimated that it could produce many times more calories per acre as raising cattle for slaughter. Thus it is quite likely that lactose tolerance known to have figured prominently in Indo-European-speaking peoples was a major genetic factor that facilitated their expansion to new lands and the subsequent spread of the Indo-European languages over a good part of the world.

III) The Urvolk

There has been considerable controversy as to the physical type of the Proto-Indo-Europeans or *Urvolk*. The debate has however been limited to the two dominant physical stocks of Europe, viz. The Nordic and Alpine types. The long-headed, dark-haired, dark-eyed, short-statured Mediterranean race found in the southern parts of Europe such as Spain and Southern Italy would have to be excluded from consideration as there is sufficient evidence to show that they belong to a Pre-Indo-European population or populations, remnants of

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[35] The 10,000 year Explosion: How civilization accelerated human evolution (2009)

[36] Lactase Persistence (LP) is a dominant Mendelian trait associated with a Single Nucleotide Polymorphism in the gene encoding lactase (T-13910) which confers its bearers the ability to digest milk as adults. The trait is almost universal in European and Middle Eastern populations in contrast to East Asian and Sub-Saharan African populations who are lactose intolerant as adults. It is believed to have been the result of a genetic mutation whereby the production of Lactase, an enzyme in the intestinal system that can metabolise the milk sugar Lactose persists through adulthood in contrast to other mammals which could only produce the enzyme as infants to digest their mother's milk, the production of which subsequently shuts down after infancy, dramatically declining after weaning. Indeed, even early Neolithic European farmers are believed to have lacked the trait as borne out by genetic studies on skeletal remains (Absence of the lactase-persistence associated allele in early Neolithic Europeans. J.Burger et al. PNAS March 2007) and it is surmised it had a Caucasian origin (Evidence of still-ongoing Convergence Evolution of the Lactase Persistence T-13910 Alleles in Humans. N.S.Enattah et al. AJHG.Sep.2007) suggesting that it would have very likely been borne by the postulated Proto-Indo-Europeans of the Pontic-Caspian steppes.

which are also found among the Basques of the Western Pyrenees in Spain who speak a non-Indo-European language to this day [37].

Theodor Pösche [38] was among the first to seek to identify the Proto-Indo-Europeans with a particular race and his choice fell on the Nordic type, the tall, blond, blue-eyed, fair-skinned type with dolicocephalic skull and abundant facial hair represented by the Germanic race. Karl Penka [39] too supported a Nordic origin of the *Urvolk*. The Nordic type predominant in Northern Germany (e.g. Schleswig-Holstein), Norway, Sweden and other Northern European countries is characterized by a pronounced dolicocephaly and leptorhinity, light skin colour, blond hair and tall stature. The type is also found in North-Western India among the Indo-Aryan-speaking peoples of the Sind and Panjab, though some descriptive details such as blond hair and blue eyes appear to have been lost.

Many were the arguments marshaled in favour of the Nordic origin of the Urvolk and this was not merely confined to the fact that the Nordic element figures prominently in Indo-European-speaking peoples in many parts of the world, including western Europe and northern India, but also derived its strength at least in part from the emerging science of anthropo-sociology popularized by European scholars such as Vacher de Lapouge in his Les Selections Sociales (1896) and Otto Ammon in his Die Natürliche Auslese beim Menschen (1893) which sought to prove the natural superiority of blond long-heads on the grounds that they predominate among the upper classes of west European cities in contrast to the brunet broad-heads who prefer rural surroundings, implying that Nordics in their wanderlust tend to migrate to areas which show greater opportunity in keeping with their inherent energy, drive and enthusiasm and taste for novelty and adventure, an expression of their primitive Indo-European virility. The arguments even drew upon

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[37] A contention corroborated also by genetic evidence. These Pre-Indo-European peoples of Europe appear to have been the carriers of the R1b or EU 18 Y-chromosome haplogroup which is the most frequently occurring Y-chromosome haplogroup in Western Europe, its highest frequencies being found in people of Atlantic Europe such as the Basques (a non-IE-speaking people of Spain) among whom its frequency is as high as 88.9 %, its frequency declining as one moves eastwards ranging from 52.2 % in France, 50 % in Germany, 10.3 % in Croatia, 4.9 % in Lithuania and 2 % in Ukraine (The Genetic Legacy of Paleolithic Homo sapiens sapiens in Extant Europeans: A Y-chromosome perspective. Ornella Semino et al. Science. Nov.2000). This haplogroup appears to share a distant relationship with R1a or EU19 both aparently being descended from R1 which seems to have originated in the Central Asian steppes or thereabouts before moving to the west several millennia ago.

[38] Die Arier: Ein Beitrag zur historischen Anthropologie (1878)

[39] Origines Ariacae (1883)

religious affiliations contending that dolicho-blonds tend to be Protestant as an expression of their self-willed, independent and contentious nature in contrast to the conservative brachy-brunets who more often tend to be Catholics, arguments that were called into question and debunked by later scholars such as Frank Hankins in his well-researched work The racial basis of civilization. A critique of the Nordic doctrine. (1926).

There were also those who sought to connect the original speakers of PIE not to the dolicocephalic Nordic type, but rather a brachycephalic stock, among them Charles Taylor [40] who argued that the lineal descendants of the "primitive Aryans" were to be sought in the Celtic race of Central Europe, rather than the Teutonic race of Scandinavia. He reasoned that it was difficult to believe that the Teutons of the Baltic region who were in a lower state of culture could have succeeded in 'Aryanising' tribes more numerous and civilized such as the brachycephalic peoples of Central Europe. He also pointed out the fact that Teutonic had degraded the primitive phonology of Indo-European, taking it as further evidence that the Nordic or Teuton peoples could not have been the speakers of the original Indo-European tongue. This view found considerable support among those of the Gallic school who held that the *Urvolk* were round-headed and best represented by the South Germans, Slavs and Celts. The Alpine type, predominant in Austria, Switzerland, Northern Italy and Southern Germany (e.g. Bavaria) is characterized by a pronounced brachycephaly and leptorhinity. Light skin colour, black or light-brownish (usually chestnut) hair, brown, grey or hazel eyes and medium stature. The type is represented in Asia by a number of Iranian-speaking folk inhabiting the Pamirs such as the Ghalchas.

Although it is true that the population of the likely candidate for PIE culture, the *Kurgan* culture, were generally long-headed, a number of broad-heads have also been found suggesting that the *Urvolk* were a mixed ethnic grouping comprising of these two types with the Nordic type predominating. This would suggest that the Alpines had also participated in the development and dispersal of IE culture. Besides, we know that the Prussians as well as the Letts and Lithuanians who speak an Indo-European speech that shows very archaic characteristics are also brachycephalic [41] suggesting that a significant portion of early Indo-European folk possessed what may be termed Alpine traits.

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[40] The Origin of the Aryans (1890)

[41] A glance at the present state of Ethnology, with Reference to the Form of Skull. Anders Retzius (1856)

In fact, S. Feist [42] opined long ago that the *Urvolk* were not a pure race but a conglomerate of different types who had been welded together as an ethnic entity in pre-historic times. Although he assumes that the *Urvolk* came from a northern region, he does not exclude the brachycephals. More recently, J.P. Mallory (1989) following a detailed account of the *Yamnaya* culture, supports the view that the rapid expansion of the burial ritual and ceramic style (so closely associated with expressing ethnic identity) may indicate the existence of substantial tribal unions engaged in intense contacts with one another. "This would certainly be in accordance with our image of the Pontic-Caspian region as an enormous sphere of continual interaction and mutual influences, in which cultural traits and human groups traversed with great rapidity. If the inhabitants of the regions also shared a broadly similar language at this time, this would have no doubt assisted in the rapid diffusion of common cultural traits, and the creation of a broadly similar cultural horizon".

Let us now consider how and where these two types, the Nordic and the Alpine, would have originated. Sweden has been shown to have perhaps the highest incidence of dolicocephaly in Europe [43], while recent studies have shown that both hair and eyes are lightest in the South Baltic and that their darkness increases fairly regularly and almost concentrically around this region suggesting perhaps that this was the place of origin of mutation(s) to light pigmentation due to natural selection [44].

However this does not necessarily prove that the Nordic race originated in Scandinavia or the Baltic region for although this region has long been regarded as the area of the greatest Nordic blond purity, it is not unlikely that it achieved a greater degree of differentiation due to environmental factors, for it is quite likely that the extremely cold climate of Norway contributed to blondism among its people just as we find an incidence of blonds among northen European populations speaking decidedly non-IE languages such as the Finns and Estonians. The relative isolation of the population of this region would have also been a contributory factor in ensuring the dominance of blondism among Norwegians and other Scandinavians. Indeed, a Baltic or Scandinavian origin for the Nordics or Urvolk is very improbable given its archaeological record that disqualifies this region from any claim to be the Indo-European cradle-land. The Corded Ware Culture which takes its name

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[42] Kultur, Ausbreitung und Herkunft der Indogermanen (1913)

[43] Anthropologia Suecica. G. Retzius and C. Furst (1902)

[44] The History and Geography of Human Genes. L. Cavalli-Sforza, P. Menozzi & A. Piazza (1993)

from the frequent use of decorative cord impressions on pottery found in the Baltic and Southern Scandinavia besides regions further to the west such as the Netherlands and Germany which thrived C.2900-2300 B.C. is very likely derived from the Kurgan Culture [45] and is certainly not anterior to it. It is probably this culture largely peopled by a dolicocephalic type that introduced the ancestor of the Balto-Slavic and Germanic languages to Western Europe.

Theodor Pösche (1878) who identified the Urvolk with the Nordics believed that the Indo-European race originated in the great Rokitno Swamp, between the Pripet, Beresina and Dnieper where depigmentation or albinism was very prevalent. He was also influenced in this regard by the archaic character of the neighbouring Lithuanian language. Pösche's arguments however found little favour since it was argued that the Rokitno Swamp was not sufficiently extensive for the cradle of such a numerous people as the Indo-Europeans and that such a virile race could hardly have originated from such an unhealthy region which had given rise to a sickly tow-haired albinism rather than the blond hair and robust complexions that characterized other North European peoples. It was also argued that the conditions of the swamp were unsuited for the herding lifestyle reconstructed for the Proto-Indo-Europeans.

What we can be fairly certain of however is that the Nordic type probably had its origins in a cold habitat, considering the environmental factors that would have given rise to such a type. The evolution of blondness, for example, is largely attributable to a cold, dark, snowy, cloudy, misty, northern climate, while the fine, high, narrow nose characteristic of this folk is very likely an adaptation to a cold environment where it is an advantage as the air breathed in is warmed before it reaches the lungs.

As for the Alpine type, this type too is well attested in Europe from a very early period and appears to have advanced as far west as France through the valley of the Danube C. 3000-2000 B.C. They seem to have been wandering herdsmen of the Steppe before entering Central Europe. To this migration may be attributed the Bell Beaker Culture which takes its name after its distinctive pottery type in the shape of an inverted bell often associated with the consumption of mead which is dated to C.2500-1900 B.C and which is known to have been largely peopled by a tall, heavy-boned, brachycephalic people. This chalcolithic culture which is believed to have derived from the Yamnaya

[45] Both Yamnaya and Corded Ware cultures share many common traits such as mounds, cord-ornamented pottery, battle axes and red ochre in burials (See European Prehistory. Sarunas Milisauskas. 2002) and it is very likely that the Corded Ware Culture whose earliest attested presence is seen in the Carpathian foothills in South Eastern Poland C.2900 B.C. developed as a western extension of the Yamnaya Culture.

Culture [46] covers many parts of Europe from the Middle Danube through Southern Germany and France to the Swiss and Italian Alps and may well represent the ancestral speakers of Celtic which is thought to have been formerly spoken in Gaul, Southern Germany, Italy and Switzerland, or perhaps even Proto-Italic-Celtic-speakers before these languages went their separate ways.

Although this would suggest that these Alpine folk originated in Eastern Europe, there are also grounds for believing that it evolved in Central Asia. It is possible that this brachycephalic element may have originated in the Turfan area in Turkestan. Skulls from the region show a marked brachycephaly (91.6), a convex and high forehead and a prominent nose. There was no prognathic upper jaw nor any marked eyebrow ridge [47], showing that these folk closely resembled the IE-speaking Alpines of Europe and Asia. T.A.Joyce [48] believes it probable that "the Pamir valleys may contain the purest representatives of the tall, white brachycephalic, leptorhine, brown- and wavy- haired race whose physical traits appear to have been inherited in varying degree by so many of the present neighbouring populations". He adds that the Pamir valleys, as far as Asia is concerned, "seem to be the locality where Homo Alpinus appears in his greatest purity". Even though in close proximity to Mongolian peoples, the type is characterized by the absence of typical Mongolian features pertaining to eye shape, hair form and skin colour [49].

The Pamir folk like the European Alpines are generally characterized by a high brachycephaly and leptorhinity, white-rosy complexion, dark-brown hair and medium-light eyes [50]. Haddon and Quiggin (1920) suggest that while the central plateaus of Asia were the centre of dispersal of the true Mongols, the Western plateaus were the area of characterization of a non-Mongolian brachycephalic (Alpine) race. At any rate, the physical characters of the Alpines suggest that they originated in a cold, and perhaps elevated region.

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[46] It is believed that these pastoral, horse-riding Bell Beaker people likely formed in the Kurganised territories of Serbia are descendants of the late Yamnaya culture as suggested by similarities in weaponry, ceramic techniques and mortuary patterns (See Kurgan Culture and the Indo-Europeanization of Europe. Marija Gimbutas. 1997)

[47] See. Lissauer, L'Anthropologie (1905)

[48] On the physical anthropology of the oases of Khotan and Keriya. JAI. GB & I (1903)

[49] Ibid.

[50] See Notes on the Physical Anthropology of Chinese Turkestan and the Pamirs. T.A. Joyce. JRAI. GB & I (1912)

The leptorhinity of the Alpines, like that of the Nordics, appears to have evolved in a cold habitat.

There is also reason to believe that some Asian Alpine folk, like the Nordics, possessed fair hair and light eyes, a characteristic also shared by some brachycephalic Indo-European-speaking peoples of Europe such as the Lithuanians. Fair hair and light eyes are not uncommon among highly brachycephalic Asiatic peoples such as the Ghalchas. Aurel Stein [51] who holds that the folk of Roshan preserve the *Homo Alpinus* type in its greatest purity says of the Iranian-speaking Ghalcha population who inhabit this secluded Alpine tract: "They were tall, well-built men, many quite European in looks. Their fair hair, blue or steel-grey eyes and flowing beards distinguished them at a glance from their nomadic Kirghiz neighbours". Besides, there is evidence to show that a significant proportion of other Iranian-speaking Alpine folk of the Pamirs such as the Wakhi and Sarikoli as well as the folk of Khotan (in the Takla Makan desert north of Karanghu-Tagh) and Turfan (north of the Tarim river in Xinjiang) possess fair-medium hair and light eyes (Joyce. 1912).

Further, the corpses of a golden-haired folk with high nose, deep set eyes and typically Alpine anthropometrical characteristics similar to that of the peoples of the Pamirs and Hindu Kush region have been preserved at Lou-Lan (Shan Shan) to the North West bank of the Lop Nor marsh due to the extreme aridity of the area[52]. The language spoken here was evidently a dialect of Tocharian [53]. The Tocharians are depicted in wall paintings as having red hair and green eyes while the Wu-Sun, a tribal group who occupied the territory to their North (The T'ien Shan mountains and Semirechye) are described in Chinese sources as having red hair and blue eyes (Mallory. 1989).

According to the information gathered from some Sri Lankan envoys during the reign of the Roman Emperor Claudius (41-54 A.C.) and recorded by Pliny in his Naturalis Historia, the Seres, who lived beyond the Hemodi mountains (Himalayas) and known to the people of Taprobane (Sri Lanka) through commerce, were tall, red-haired, blue-eyed and had harsh voices (*ipsos vero excedere hominum magnitudinem, rutilis comis, caeruleis oculis, oris sono*

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[51] On ancient Central-Asian tracks (1933)

[52] See The Culture of the Xinjiang region. Ma Yong and Wang Binghua. History of Civilizations of Central Asia. Vol II. Ed. Janos Harmatta (1994)

[53] See The Western regions under the Hsiung-Nu and the Han. Ma Yong and Sun Yutang (ibid)

truci). These Seres evidently refer to the Indo-European-speaking folk of Central Asia such as those of the Tarim basin[54].

At the same time, however, it must be pointed out that the existence of a pronounced brachycephaly in a particular region does not necessarily mean that it should have originated there for it is not unlikely that it could have acquired greater differentiation due to isolation. It is even quite possible that those brachycephalic peoples of Indo-European speech in Europe and Central Asia evolved separately from a Nordic or Proto-Nordic stock due to environmental factors.

Indeed, it is quite possible that the Alpines may constitute a development from a Proto-Nordic stock. Arthur Thomson [55] has, following a detailed scientific study, concluded that the determination of head form depends on the interaction of a variety of factors and that the different head shapes are the outcome of man's physical and intellectual environment, and that though, through the influence of heredity, they may have developed into racial types, there is not necessarily any stability about them, and that given the necessary conditions "it is quite possible to evolve a round-headed race from a long-headed race, though undoubtedly in nature the change may have taken many thousands of years to effect". He has also adduced some evidence to show that the early human stock was dolicocephalic and that the rounder headed races have evolved from it, a contention supported by the empirical evidence, at least as far as Eastern Europe is concerned where we find what we may term a progressive brachycephalization of peoples taking place over the centuries.

For instance Griffith Taylor [56] who believed that brachycephals were a highly evolved type of man has cited evidence to show how they were supplanting the Nordics in Europe. He could observe that much of the ancient population of East Europe was long-headed and closely allied to the so-called Nordics, but that in later times the population had become predominantly brachycephalic. "Thus in Russia in the kurgans (or tumuli) of the stone age, three quarters of the skulls were narrow. In the eleventh century about half of the people were of this type, while to-day the population is Alpine and only contains 10 per cent of the narrow heads. Similar changes have occurred in Lombardy and Swabia". What is also interesting in this connection is the existence of blond brachycephals in both Europe and Asia. We know for

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[54] Das Land der Seide and Tibet im Lichte der Antike. Albert Hermann (1938)

[55] Man's cranial form. JAI. GB & I (1903)

[56] Environment and Race (1927)

instance that the brachycephalic Letts and Lithuanians are often blond[57] as were possibly the brachycephalic Celts of old [58] while the same traits are shared by various Indo-European-speaking peoples of Asia as seen in both the skeletal remains of the Lou-Lan folk who are thought to have spoken Tocharian and Iranian-Speaking Ghalchas [59]. This may suggest that such folk bearing these shared physical characteristics have in fact derived from blond dolicocephals.

As to what factors would have contributed to the emergence of this Alpine brachycephaly, it is quite possible that it was influenced positively by residence at higher altitudes. There are indications that the Alpine type in Europe is very commonly found in the up-lands in contrast to the European dolicocephals who are more frequent in the low-lands [60], a feature also seen in the Alpines of Asia who are found in a rather pure form or are thought to have evolved in the Western plateaus of Asia in valleys such as of the Pamirs. This might perhaps suggest that the brachycephaly of the Alpines, whether in Europe or Asia, was acquired, or at least influenced positively to some extent by a lengthy residence in a cold, elevated environment, which may also explain the decline of blondness among them [61]. Indeed, it is quite possible that lenghty residence at higher altitudes led to the evolution of a more stockier

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[57] See Hankins (1926)

[58] Taylor (1890) basing his views on ancient notices such as Caesar's and Ammianus Marcellinus' descriptions of Gauls, Strabo's description of the Caritavi, a British tribe and Dio Cassis' description of the warrior queen of the Britons Boadicea contends that the Celtic race were tall, fair, with red or yellow hair and blue or blue-grey eyes which he seeks to corroborate by an examination of the archaeological evidence, namely human remains which indicate that these people were tall and brachycephalic and clearly distinct from the shorter, dolicocephalic Pre-Indo-European Iberian or Mediterranean type.

[59] Harmatta (1994) and Stein (1933)

[60] See L' Aryan, son rôle social. Vacher De Lapouge (1899)

[61] There are indications that blondism of hair diminishes with altitude as suggested by a study of Iranian-speaking peoples. Ujvalvy (Résultats anthropologiques d'un voyage en Asie Centrale.1880) pointed out long ago: "All the Iranians have chestnut hair, but one meets with blonds among them, more among the Tajiks of the plain than among the Galchas. While in the last mentioned tribe the blonds are 8 percent of the population, among the Tajiks of Fergannah we meet with 12 to 13 percent and in those of Samarkand up to 27 percent". He also states: "There is the same progressive variation on account of the altitude in the case of the beard. The Tajiks of Samarkand have 38 percent of blond beard, those of Fergannah 36 percent, the Galchas taken all together 15 percent and the Galchas of the high valleys of Zerafshan and of its affluents only 13 percent".

type from a previously taller stock and to a concomitant broadening of the skull.

Besides, there is reason to believe that brachycephaly is more persistent than dolicocephaly in the case of racial mixtures and it is likely that once brachycephaly is acquired it is easily passed on to the descendant stock even though it may have had a largely dolicocephalic parentage. The studies of B.Hagen[62] and H.Bryn[63] suggest that brachycephaly is dominant to dolicocephaly. This however should not be interpreted in the Mendelian sense as intermediate types do occur among the offspring. It is nevertheless a very persistent trait.

There exists no evidence to show that the Alpines – whether in Europe or Asia – ever spoke a non-Indo-European tongue and all available evidence suggests that the Alpines as much as the Nordics were responsible for the dispersal of Indo-European speech. Thus, given the available evidence we would have to presume that the Proto-Indo-Europeans comprised of both Nordic and Alpine elements in varying measure with the Nordic type preponderating and that with the passage of time physical differentiation took place due to isolation and genetic drift following the great migrations that dispersed Indo-European peoples to the other regions which they would come to dominate in the following centuries and millennia.

The Aryans

1) The home and culture of the Aryans

The Aryans are that branch of the ancient Indo-European-speaking peoples who designated themselves as such [64]. The term *Ārya* which means 'noble, honourable' in Sanskrit is connected to the Avestan *Airya* and the very name *Irān*, the name given by the Western or Iranian Aryans to their country, derives from the Avestan genitive plural *airyanam* and means '(land) of the Aryans'. The Ossets, a largely Christian Iranian people inhabiting the Caucasus mountain region are also known to have termed themselves *iron*

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[62] Kopf und Gesichtstypen (1906)

[63] Researches into Anthropological heredity (1920)

[64] *Ārya* in the case of the Indo-Aryans and *Airya* in the case of the Iranian Aryans. That even the Iranians who ventured further north termed themselves as such is seen from the fact that finnish has retained a very ancient word for 'slave' *orja* which was no doubt the term the Aryan folk captured by their ancestors in raids into southern territories were known.

meaning 'Aryan'. J.P.Mallory and D.Q.Adams [65] give as the origin of the Vedic *Ārya* and Avestan *Airya*, the PIE protoform **heros* or **herios* 'member of one's own (ethnic) group, peer, freeman' to which they also connect Hitt.*arā* 'member of one's own group', 'peer', 'companion', 'friend' with a further derivative *arawanni* 'free' 'freeman', Lycian *arawa* 'free' and *arus* 'citizens' and O.Ir. *aire* 'freeman' (whether commoner or noble) 'noble' (as distinct from commoner). Anthony (2008) avers that the Proto-Indo-Europeans had a group identity above the level of a clan, probably tribe, which was known as **heros* which root developed into Aryan in the Indo-Iranian branch. These Aryans, it is likely, would have at some point possessed a linguistic unity and a homogeneity of cultural traditions. Although it is likely that this distinct Aryan culture evolved in Central Asia, its exact location remains a matter of dispute. The Rg Veda, a collection of religious hymns in an archaic form of Sanskrit known as Vedic is perhaps the oldest extant specimen of Aryan speech yet known. This language is believed to have been spoken in Northern India (i.e. the Sind and Panjab) C.1800-1500 B.C. Vedic shares much in common with Avestan, the language of the Zend Avesta or more properly, the Avistak Va Zand which constitutes the sacred scriptures of the Zoroastrians, the followers of the Iranian Prophet Zarathustra who is believed to have lived C. 1400 – 1200 B.C in Khwarezmia (Choresmia), the land along the lower course of the Oxus, in Central Asia, to the northeast of modern-day Iran [66] . Among the common features shared by these two ancient Aryan speeches is the change of the PIE *l* into *r*, a feature not usually shared by other ancient Indo-Aryan and Iranian tongues.

However, on the whole, all Aryan languages, whether Indo-Aryan or Iranian, share many common characteristics, especially in vocabulary. A major phonetic difference between the Indo-Aryan and Iranian groups is the aspiration of the dental sibilant *s* into *h* by the latter. For example, the Sanskrit term for 'seven' *sapta* is cognate with the Avestan *hapta*. However, whereas both Vedic and Avestan have turned the PIE *l* into *r*, the Classical Sanskrit of the Madhyadesa has preserved the distinction between the two to a large extent. There is also reason to believe that still farther east, the Old Indo-Aryan dialects had made *l* the regular representative of both PIE *r* and *l*. It is thus that we find in Sanskrit doublets having both *r* and *l* in words where PIE shows *r* (E.g.*rohita / lohita* 'red'). That the *l*-dialect belonged to the east is supported by the fact that such *l*-forms become more numerous in the tenth book

[65] Encyclopedia of Indo-European Culture (1997)

[66] See Eransahr nach der Geographie des Ps.Moses Xorenaci. J.Marquart. AKGW zu Gottingen.1901

(*maṇḍala*) of the Rg Veda which could be shown to be more recent than the other portions of the work and probably dating from a period when the Vedic Aryans had progressed farther east than their earlier occupation in North-Western India. The fact that the early Eastern Indo-Aryan dialects were not subject to the change of PIE *l* > *r* has led to the assumption that there was a comparatively early separation from the main Aryan (i.e. Indo-Iranian) body. The Vedic language, in common with Avestan, had evidently undergone the change before being introduced into India.

It is very probable that the Proto-Aryan speech retained the distinction between PIE *l* and *r*. The change *l* > *r* has evidently not reached a number of peripheral Iranian dialects including Ossetic and some Pamir dialects within East Iranian (Parpola. 1988). There is also evidence to show that the Proto-Nūristāni speech (i.e. The language which gave rise to the modern Nūristāni dialects of Northern Afghanistan which constitute a separate branch of Aryan speech) retained the original PIE *l* and did not turn it into *r* like Vedic and Avestan; those Nūristāni terms attesting to the change *l* > *r* probably being early loanwords from Proto- Rg Vedic [67].

As to the original home of the Aryans, we may consider some literary and archaeological evidence to arrive at a tenable conclusion. The traditions of the ancient Iranians, contained in the Vendīdād (a compilation of religious laws and legendary tales constituting part of the Zend-Avesta) mention an Airyāna Vaējō by the river Vanguhi Dāitya as the first of the good lands and countries created by the Supreme Being Ahura Mazda. Its very name which means 'Aryan seed' seems to imply that it was considered to be the original homeland of the Aryan race.

The relevant passage has Ahura Mazda saying to Zarathustra: "I have made every land dear to its people, even though it had no charms whatever in it; had I not made every land dear to its people, even though it had no charms whatever in it, then the whole living world would have invaded the Airyāna Vaējō. The first of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was the Airyāna Vaējō, by the Vanguhi Daitya. Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created the serpent in the river and winter, a work of the daevas. There are ten winter months there, two summer months; and those are cold for the waters, cold for the earth, cold for the trees. Winters fall there, the worst of all plagues". Mention of Airyāna Vaējō in the Vendīdād is followed by references to Sughda (Samarkand), Mouru (Merv) and Bakdhi (Balkh) all of which lie in Central Asia. This has led to the assumption that the legendary Airyana Vaejo is also to be located in

[67] See. The historical development of the Nuristani languages. David Nelson (1986)

the area, namely in the region of the Amu Darya valley today occupied by the Central Asian Republics of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Besides, the river Vanguhi Daitya has at least from Sassanian times, been identified with the Amu Darya river under the name Vēh. Ernst Herzfeld [68] locates the Airyānem Vaējō in "the vast plains of the Oxus [69] and Jaxartes [70] " while hydronomic evidence may also suggest that the ancestors of the Vedic Aryans and Avestan Aryans lived in close proximity to the Oxus (modern Amu Darya) [71]. At the same time, however, this supposed Aryan homeland could probably not have been in Choresmia along the lower course of the Oxus or thereabouts where Zarathustra is believed to have lived, for the recollection in the Vendīdād of the Airyāna Vaējō being a sort of terrestrial paradise which was turned into a wintry wasteland by the spirit of evil is perhaps nothing more than an allusion to severe climatic conditions or changes that drove the inhabitants of this region in search of greener pastures elsewhere, and the fact that this region is spoken of in rather harsh terms in the Avesta such as its having ten winter months certainly cannot apply to the natal land of Zarathustra which we may surmise was a fairly prosperous one with warm summers even at that time (which is also suggested by its Iranian name *Khorezm* derived from the Old Iranian **Xvara-zmi* 'land of the sun') and a vibrant pastoral economy as borne out by the names of his parents, his father Pourušaspa '(Having) many horses' and his mother Dughdhōvā 'milkmaid'.

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[68] Iran in the Ancient East (1941)

[69] Amu Darya

[70] Syr Darya

[71] The *Sapta Sindhu* (lit.seven rivers) of Vedic literature has its equivalent in the *Hapta Hindu* of the Vendidād, which may have primarily been applied to the seven head-streams of the Oxus, and not the Indus as is commonly supposed. The famous historian Al-Beruni in his great work on India (C.1030 A.C.) records thus: "As the name *Union of the Five Rivers* occur in this part of the world (i.e the Panjāb, fr.Pers.*panj* 'five + *ab* 'waters') we observe that a similar name is used also in the north....for the rivers which flow towards the north, after having united near Tirmidh and having formed the river of Balkh, are called the *Union of the Seven Rivers*. The Zoroastrians of Sogdiana have confounded these two things; for they say that the whole of the seven rivers is Sindh and its upper course Barīdīsh". It would appear that the Zoroastrian population of Samarkand in the Upper Oxus called the rivers in the vicinity Sabā Sind, ie. The Seven Sinds, distinguishing the above from the united streams of the Indus, 'the 'five rivers'. This is supported by the fact that the Avestan appellation Hapta Hindu indicates that the ancient Iranians had once lived near this series of rivers for had they not they would have left its original form with a sibilant intact as they had done on other occasions. Rather, the appellation had undergone the phonetic change of *s> h* peculiar to Iranian suggesting that it had once formed part of their vocabulary.

This is not to say that there are no other candidates for the legendary Airyāna. One such is the Pamir valleys. Aurel Stein (1933) records that the Iranian-speaking Sarikolis had a saying that "winter lasts ten months and summer two" in the Taghdum-bash Pamir valley. This saying is similar to the statement in the Vendīdād describing the climatic conditions of the Airyāna Vaējō. There is however hardly any other evidence for locating the Aryan homeland in this region.

James Darmesteter [72] identifies Airyānem Vaējō with the mediaeval Arrān, the modern Karabagh. Darmesteter has based his conclusions on a relatively late commentary to the Avesta, the Bundahish, which states that Irān-Vēj is 'bordering upon Adarbaijan'. He also notes that the climatic conditions of Irān-Vēj with its long winter suits Arrān, where the summer lasts hardly two months. According to the Vendīdād, following the counter-creation of winter by the evil spirit *Angra-Mainyu* (*Ahriman*), Airyāna Vaējō had ten winter months and two summer months. Darmesteter also notes that Arran seems to have been known to the Greeks as Ariania bringing it close to our Airyānem. The Vanguhi Dāitya he identifies with the modern Aras. We also have Wilhelm Geiger [73] who places the Airyāna Vaējō on the upper waters of the Zarafshān river (which he identifies with the Dāitya river).

Given the linguistic evidence adduced from Proto-Aryan loans in Finno-Ugric, it is likely that a Proto-Aryan language was spoken in South Russia early in the third millennium B.C. (i.e. before C. 2500 B.C.) as held by Parpola (1988). Parpola suggests that while the *Pit Grave* (*Kurgan*) culture probably represents the Proto-Indo-European, and in its final stages, the Proto-Satem language, the *Hut Grave* culture of the Volga Steppes is likely to have been Proto-Aryan linguistically. The *Hut Grave* culture (C. 2800-2000 B.C.) evidently evolved from the *Kurgan* culture of the South Russian Steppes (C. 3500-2800 B.C.). The continuity between these cultures is said to be very clear in their burial rites, dwellings and anthropomorphology (Parpola. 1988).

The Airyāna Vaējō of Iranian tradition may however perhaps refer not to the *Hut Grave* culture, but to the area of the *Andronovo* or the related *Timber Grave* culture which evolved C. 2000 B.C. after the *Hut Grave* phase (2800-2000 B.C.) resulting in the emergence of a truly distinctive Aryan culture with its unique *Soma* cult and linguistic peculiarities such as the merger of the IE *l* and *r* into *r* (rhotacism).

The Timber Grave culture which evolved in the lower Volga basin and expanded to the area north of the sea of Azov and Turkmenia is held by

[72] Translation of the Zend-Avesta. SBE (1895)

[73] Ostiranishe Kultur im altertum (1882)

Parpola (1988) to have been the early home of whom he terms the 'Sauma Aryans', namely, the ancestors of the Iranians and Indo-Aryans who were adherents of the *Soma* cult. Parpola has expanded on the theory propounded by Soviet Archaeologists that it was the *Timber Grave* folk who were responsible, at least partially, for the collapse of the Bronze Age civilization of Greater Iran and that they represented the arrival of those Aryans associated with the Rg Veda and Avesta. Parpola however subsequently revised his thesis contending that the Proto-Aryan Hut Grave Culture, at the beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C. expanded eastwards and split into two strands, the Western branch producing the Timber Grave Culture which stayed in the North Pontic area representing Proto-Iranian speakers and the Eastern or Andronovo branch which by 1700-1500 B.C. had expanded as far south as as Southern Turkmenistan and northern Afghanistan likely representing Proto-Indo-Aryan speakers [74].

At the same time, however, we have another likely contender for the Aryan Urheimat, and that is the Andronovo Culture, a blanket term for a series of Bronze Age cultures that spanned western Siberia from the southern Urals to the Yenisei river. The houses here were constructed of pine, cedar and birch, the last being one of the few Indo-European arboreal names retained in Indo-Iranian. Livestock included cattle, sheep/goat and horse, the last being employed both for riding and traction. The Andronovo dead were buried in timber or stone chambers under both round and rectangular kurgans (tumuli). Burials were accompanied by the remains of livestock, wheeled vehicles and weapons and among the more spectacular remains are the burials of chariots with paired horse-teams dating to C.2000 B.C. if not earlier. Further association between the Andronovo culture and the Indo-Iranians is supported by their pastoral lifestyle, by the distribution of Iranian place names across the region of their occupation and by the historical evidence of the first millennium B.C. which indicates that their territory was occupied by Iranian-speaking tribes such as the Alans, Saka and Sarmatians [75].

The earliest phase of the culture, the Sintashta-Petrovka Culture is believed to have commenced C.2300 B.C. and seems to have reached its peak C.2000 B.C. in the northern steppes east of the Urals. As convincingly shown by Kuzmina (1994) it is in the Andronovo and more specifically the Sintashta site that one can identify a cluster of specific Indo-Iranian cultural traits such as a

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[74] The Problem of the Aryans and the Soma:Textual, linguistic and archaeological evidence. The Indo-Aryans of Ancient South Asia. Ed. George Erdosy.1995

[75] See Encyclopedia of Indo-European Culture. J.P.Mallory and Douglas Adams. 1997

mixed economy of pastoralism and agriculture, handmade ceramics, horse-drawn chariots, cultic significance of the horse, fire and ancestors and the high status accorded to charioteers. In this she is supported by David Anthony [76] who opines that the Sintashta-Petrovka Culture represents the ancestral Indo-Iranians whose traditions were later carried into India and Iran. This folk established heavily fortified settlements, engaged in bronze metallurgy, raised herds of cattle, sheep and horses and practiced complex mortuary rituals that parallel in many details the rituals described in the Rg Veda. Says Anthony: "While the Indo-Iranian language might have been emerging from a PIE dialect on the eastern margins of the Yamna territory before 2000 B.C., it was with the Sintashta-Petrovka Culture that the defining ritual aspects of Indo-Iranian identity seem to have been solidified".

As such we may have to assume that the folk peopling either or both the Andronovo and Timber Grave Culture spoke an *r*- Aryan dialect (i.e. a dialect that turned the PIE *l* into *r*) and were a predominantly dolicocephalic people like their supposed descendents, the Vedic Aryans. We may, after Parpola, perhaps designate these folk as 'Sauma Aryans' as the *Sauma* cult appears to have been deeply ingrained in Indo-Iranian culture, so much so that in spite of the monotheistic reformation of Zarathustra, we find the *Haoma* cult figuring prominently in Avestan religion [77].

On the other hand, it is quite possible that the earlier Proto-Aryan or Hut Grave Culture of the Volga steppes was partly constituted of broad-headed elements for we find that many of the Aryan peoples speaking dialects that did not turn PIE *l* into *r* were broad-headed folk, such as for instance, the Iranian-speaking peoples of the Pamirs, whose Iranian linguistic traits were probably a later development, arising perhaps out of a later Iranian influence. What is significant is that these folk did not turn the PIE **l* into *r* as the Indo-Aryans and the Iranians did. We may therefore have to postulate a sizeable Alpine presence in the Proto-Aryan or *Hut-Grave* culture of the Volga Steppes. Genetic drift due to the separation and isolation of the Aryan populations

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[76] Horse, Wagon and Chariot. Indo-European languages and archaeology. Antiquity. September 1995

[77] This *haoma*, known in Vedic Sanskrit as *soma* (<Proto-Aryan **sauma*) was evidently a plant, which when crushed yielded a substance that, when mixed with water or milk, served as a powerful stimulant or intoxicant. It is often identified with Ephedra commonly found in Central Asia. Although there is no explicit reference to haoma in the gathas or hymns of Zarathustra, we find a verse (Yasna 48.10) where an intoxicant (*mada*) with which the pagan sacrifical priests (*karapan*) deceive is strongly condemned, while in another verse (Y.32.14) we find the term *dūraoša* (an epithet for haoma) occurring in the context of evil doing, suggesting that Zarathustra was an avowed opponent of the cult.

would have resulted in traits such as dolicocephaly and brachycephaly gaining prominence among the different groups.

II) Vedic and other Aryan-speaking peoples

The hymns of the Rg Veda, as may be gathered from internal evidence were composed at a very early period (C. 1800-1500 B.C.), not very long after the Indo-Aryans had first settled in North Western India. Indeed there are even indications that they were settled in Afghanistan and the bordering North Western Frontier Province of Pakistan before they found their way to India. This is suggested by the hydronomy of the RV which alludes to the Kubhā (Kabul), Krumu (Kurram), Suvāstu (Swat) and Gomatī (Gumal), all of which are included among the western tributaries of the Sindhu (Indus). Also finding considerable mention is the river Sarasvati, which though often identified with the now dry Ghaggar- Hakra bed, may have at least in certain instances referred to a river of that name in Afghanistan known in Avestan as Harahvaiti (<Sarasavati, the Avestan language turning the Old Aryan sibilant *s* into *h*), the modern Helmand or Arghandāb near Qandahār which would imply that the name of that river known as Sarasvati in India arose as a result of toponymic duplication where the Aryan invaders previously located in Afghanistan gave the Indian river the name of the river they knew in the old country.

The rivers of the Panjāb, viz. Vistastā (Jhelam), Asiknī (Chenāb), Paruṣni (Rāvī), Vipāś (Beās) and the Śutudrī (Sutlej) were well known as also the Yamunā (Jamna). The Gaṅgā (Ganges) however, is named only once, and that in the last or tenth book of the RV believed to be the latest portion of the work and dateable to about the 12th century B.C. All this would indicate that the Vedic Aryans had lived in Afghanistan before making their way into North-Western India. It would thus appear that the Vedic Aryans had extended their settlements from the north western mountain passes through which they had descended into the western portion of the Ganges-Yamuna doab.

The RV's reference to rivers in Afghanistan and the North Western Frontier Province of Pakistan such as the Kubha and Suvastu (Kabul and Swat) is particularly interesting as this region is characterized by what is known by archaeologists as the Gandhara Grave Culture with distinctive traits of new burial rites, fire alters, horses and the use of bronze and copper [78].

This intrusive Culture dated to C.1700-1400 B.C. is characterized by inhumation in graves though cremation is also known which goes well with the data provided in the RV. The culture is believed to have spread to the

[78] See A history of India. Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund (1998)

Punjab around the 16th century B.C. It has been suggested that the origins of the Gandhara Grave Culture are to be sought in the contemporaneous Bishkent and Vaksh Cultures of South Tajikistan less than 500 km away [79].

It is likely that it was in the Panjāb that the Vedic Aryans made the transition from a semi-nomadic lifestyle to one of settled life as this fertile, well watered region possessed all the factors necessary for such a transition to settled agriculture. These Vedic speakers were little doubt a predominantly Nordic folk whose physical type is perhaps best represented in the subcontinent by the inhabitants of the Panjab, the stronghold of Vedic culture during ancient times. The Nordic type of the Indian subcontinent predominates in a good part of northern India, in the Punjab, Rajputana and the United Provinces [80].

There is also reason to believe that the ancestors of the dolicocephalic Indo-Aryans possessed fair hair like their Teutonic counterparts. This is suggested by the Grammarian Patañjali's declaration in the Mahābhāṣya Ad Pānini (C. 2nd century B.C.) that blond or red brown hair (*kapilah piṅgalakeśa*) is one of the essential qualities of a Brāhmana, i.e. a member of the highest ranking caste among the Indo-Aryans. S.K. Chatterji [81], who is of the view that the Nordic type characterized the true Aryans of ancient times, holds that owing to miscegenation and to climatic conditions "the complexion of the body and the colour of the hair and eye have been modified or eliminated by natural selection to light brown or brown or black (for the hair and the eyes), although light-eyed people are not uncommon among the Nordic long heads of India, scattered as they are all over the country". We also have Risley (1915) stating: "*Occasional instances of grey eyes are found among the Konkanasth Brahmans of Bombay, and the combination of blue eyes, auburn hair and reddish-blond complexion is met with on the north-western frontier*".

Besides, it is also known from anthropological studies that light hair is recessive to dark hair [82]. It is also a well established fact that the gene for dark

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[79] The similarities between the two cultures are apparent not only in ceramics, but also grave forms and burial rituals. The trait of burying deceased males on the right side and females on their left connects the Swat Culture with the Bishkent Culture and further with the closest group of steppe nomads, the Tazabagyab Andronovo in Chorezmia and Andronovo in general. Another important trait connecting the Swat and Bishkent Cultures is the burial of couples in the same grave, to which is possibly connected the Vedic practice of making the widow lie down on the deceased's right side and then stand up again (See Formation of the Aryan branch of Indo-European. Asko Parpola. Archaeology and Language. III. R.Blench and M.Spriggs.1997)

[80] See People of India. H.H. Risley (1915)

[81] Race movements and pre-historic culture. The History and Culture of the Indian People. Vol. 1. Ed. R.C. Majumdar. (1951)

[82] F.Rozprym. JRAI.GB & I.1934

eye colour is dominant over that for blue eye colour so that two parents, one brown-eyed (homozygous for brown eyes) and the other blue-eyed, would produce only brown-eyed offspring. In instances where both parents are heterozygous with regard to eye colour, the likelihood of having brown-eyed offspring is three times as great as that of having blue-eyed ones [83]. This means that in case the early Aryans whom we may suppose were blond sired offspring through dark-haired women, drawn perhaps from the native peoples, such offspring and their descendants would tend to have dark hair. Similarly, it is quite possible that these early Aryans had light eyes which were lost in subsequent generations through marriage or cohabitation with dark-eyed native women.

There is also evidence to show that some Aryan groups split off from the main Indo-Aryan body, perhaps even before the latter had reached India. This is suggested by the presence of the Mitanni who ruled in what is now northern Syria between 1500-1350 B.C. The Tel-el-Amarna tablets (C. 1460 B.C.) discovered in Egypt, allude to princelings with typically Aryan names such as Artatama, Dusratta, Suttarna and Artasuvara ruling in the region of the upper Euphrates. These names are distinctly Aryan Eg.Tusratta (fr.*Tvesa-ratha* 'having an attacking chariot') and Artatama (fr.*Rta-Dhāman* 'Having the Abode of the Cosmic Order'). The military aristocracy of the kingdom was composed of chariot warriors known as Maryanna, which is related to the Indo-Aryan marya 'young man' employed in the Rg Veda to refer to the heavenly war-band assembled around Indra.

A manual on horse-racing authored by a Mitannian named Kikkuli recovered from the state archives of the Hittite empire at Boghaz-köi mentions the Aryan numerals *aika* 'one', *tera* 'three', *panza* 'five' and *satta* 'seven'. We also find, in a peace treaty concluded by the Mitannian ruler Mattiuaza with the Hittite King Subhiluliuma in C. 1380 B.C., deities of Vedic belief, viz. Mitra, Varuna, Indra and Nasatyas (*ilāni Mi-it-tra-as-si-il ilāni u-ru-w-na-as-si-il ilu in-da-ra ilāni na-sa-at-ti-ia-an-na*) being invoked, evidently from the side of the former. Besides, we find that the Kassites who ruled Babylon from the 18th – 11th century B.C. also had deities with typically Aryan names like *Surias* 'the sun god' and *Su-ma-li-ia* ' the lady of the shining (snow clad) mountain'.

Manfred Mayrhofer [84] concludes that the language in which the names of the Aryan divinities, Kikkuli's numeral terms and the Aryan princely names are

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[83] For the dominance of dark over light eyes see for instance Heredity of Eye-colour in Man. C.B.Davenport. Science (1907) and On the Inheritance of Eye-colour in Man. C.C.Hurst.PRS (1908)

[84] Die Indo-Arier im alten vorderasien (1966)

expressed, is neither early Iranian nor early Indo-Iranian (*Urarisch*), but specifically ancient Indo-Aryan. We would therefore have to assume that such Aryan principalities as in Mesopotamia were the creation of a group of condottieri and their troops who had detached themselves from the main Aryan body, perhaps even before the latter had entered India.

There is however also reason to believe that before the Vedic invasion of India C. 2000 B.C., other Aryan-speaking peoples had reached the borders of India. As noted by T. Burrow [85], certain features of the Nūristānī languages indicate important dialectal divergencies of ancient Aryan at a time preceding the invasion of India. This is suggested by their preservation of an archaic sound, the dental affricate *ċ* (as for instance occurring in Baśgalī *duċ* 'ten') which in Sanskrit appears as ś, a feature which Burrow contends can only be satisfactorily explained as "the isolated preservation of a very ancient dialectal feature within Indo-Iranian". Observing that the change of *s* > *š* (Skt. *ṣ*) under specified conditions is so ancient as to be shared by both Indo-Aryan and Slavonic (after *k*, *r*, *i* and *u*)[86], he says that it seems that some peripheral dialect of Indo-Aryan must have escaped it in connection with *ŭ*, and it is from this source that the Nūristānī forms are derived. "The evidence would suggest that the Aryan dialect which preserved these archaisms was the first to reach the borders of India, and that later successive waves of Indo-Aryan invaders confined it into a narrow space in the mountain valleys of the North-West frontier, where it has survived in isolation to this day".

The Nūristānī (formerly Kāfir) languages comprising Basgali, Waigali, Wasi-Weri and Askun constitute a separate branch of Aryan and are spoken in Nūristān (formerly Kāfiristān) in North-Eastern Afghanistan. There are valid grounds for supposing that Proto-Nūristānī broke away from the Proto-Indo-Iranian parent group at a Pre-Indo-Aryan and Pre-Iranian stage [87] . As seen earlier, Proto-Nūristānī retained the PIE *l* and did not turn it into *r* like Vedic and Avestan. The Dardic languages of North-Western India (present-day Pakistan) though classed as a bundle of aberrant Indo-Aryan hill languages by

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[85] The Sanskrit language. (1959)

[86] This is the so called ruki rule which involved some Satem languages such as Indo-Iranian, Baltic and Slavic undergoing an innovation where the original **s* of PIE was palatalized after *r,u,k* and *i*. Those IE languages that do not share these innovations are believed to have split away before they occurred.

[87] See Nelson (1986)

Georg Morgenstirne [88], also shares much in common with Nūristānī and appears to have reached India before Vedic Sanskrit, as will be seen shortly.

It is today widely accepted that besides Vedic Sanskrit, there existed other Old Indo-Aryan languages as well. These languages appear to have preserved the PIE *l* which in Vedic and Avestan became *r*. The Old Indo-Aryan speeches were evidently spoken in the Indian subcontinent from C. 1800 B.C. – 800 B.C. before gradually evolving into the Middle Indo-Aryan or Prakritic languages, including Pāli, the liturgical language of the Buddhist scriptures.These Prakrits in turn evolved into the Modern Indo-Aryan languages such as Hindī, Sindhī, Marāṭhī, Gujarātī, Bihārī, Bengali, Oriya and Sinhala. The Indo-Aryan term for the Sanskrit language *saṁs-kṛta* literally means 'adorned, aranged, polished, refined (according to the rules of grammar)' and was employed in contradistinction to the vulgar Prakritic tongues (*prākṛta* 'natural', 'popular)) that evolved from it. Nevertheless there is reason to believe that Sanskrit continued to be a spoken language even until as late as the 5th century B.C. since the Sanskrit grammarian Panini who lived in that period clearly implied that Sanskrit was still a living language in his time, a contention also supported by some of the rules laid down by him which seem to reflect a living language. This speech however seems to have been limited to the educated elite of the Āryāvarta and there can be little doubt that the Prakrits had already evolved during this period, being especially spoken by the common masses including those non-Aryans who had entered the pale of Aryan society and particularly women who had no opportunity to learn the ritual language of the Vedas which seems to have been considered the preserve of the Brahman priestly class and the Kṣatriya ruling elite.

With time however, Sanskrit gradually evolved into the status of a literary language used in scholastic circles and as a liturgical language much like the status Latin enjoyed in mediaeval Europe. The Prakrits appear to have already caught on as a medium of popular communication by the 3rd century B.C. when we come across the famous rock inscriptions of Emperor Asoka written in Prakrit and apparently meant for the edification of the common masses.

III) The Aryans in India

The first great Aryan invasion of the subcontinent appears to have taken place sometime after C. 2000 B.C., very likely in the period between 1800-1700 B.C. Comprehensive bone analyses have revealed that there is no clear osteological evidence of the horse (*Equus caballus*) in the Indian subcontinent prior to C. 2000 B.C. (Parpola. 1988).

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[88] Dardic and Kafir Languages. Enc. I. Vol. II. (1961)

This is especially relevant in a context where the horse figured prominently in both Indo-European and Aryan social life as is borne out by the numerous rituals connected with the horse during the Vedic period and the possession in common of hippophoric or horse-based names (Vedic *Yauvanāśva*, Avestan *Vištāspa*, Greek *Leukippos*, Gaulish *Epo-Pennus* and Old English *Eo-Maer*) among the early Indo-European nations including the Indo-Aryans and Iranians. As borne out by the absence of horses among the many realistically depicted animals of the Harappan seals and figurines, the Pre-Aryan Indus civilization evidently did not know the horse.

The early history of the Indian subcontinent was evidently one of Aryan political and cultural expansion, with the Indo-Aryan invaders overthrowing the existing indigenous polity and founding states and dynasties of their own. The Aryans, with their swift horses and chariots, their advanced metallurgy and their superior physical prowess would have easily defeated and in certain instances wiped out the native peoples of the land known variously as the Dāsa and Dasyu. These Dāsas and Dasyus it would appear were the indigenous folk of the country including those peopling advanced urban centres such as the the Indus valley cities of Mohenjo-daro, Harappa and related cultures which flourished C.3500-2000 B.C. as well as Neolithic and Chalcolithic farming communities thought to be Dravidians and Mesolithic hunter-gatherers largely of Austro-Asiatic origin.

There apparently existed a wide dichotomy between the Vedic Aryans and these native folk, especially with regard to racial characters and religious and cultural traits. According to the Rg Veda, the Aryan men and women had lustrous complexions like the sun (*sūrya tvac*) while the native peoples were characterized by dark skin (*tvacam kṛṣṇām*). The tawny-bearded Aryan war god Indra was constantly invoked for help in the fight against the dusky native folk. One Rg Vedic passage has it that "Indra, the breaker of the fort, has torn open (the forts) of Dāsas, which in their wombs hid the black folk", while another Rg Vedic passage says of Indra: "Slaying the Dasyus, he promoted the Aryan colour". Yet another passage has it: "Fifty thousand blacks you defeated. You slit up the forts like age (slits up) a garment (*pañcāsat kṛṣṇa ni vapah sahasrā atkam na puro jarimā vi dardah*)" while yet another declares: "Out of fear of you the black tribes moved away, leaving behind their possessions without fight (*tvad bhiya viśa ayann asiknīr asamana jahatīr bhojanāni*)". The Rg Veda further describes the Dasyu as non-sacrificing (*ayajvan*), godless (*adevayu*) and inhuman (*amānuṣam*) which is to say that they were not descended from Manu or the Aryan man.

The native inhabitants of India at the time of the Aryan conquest would have comprised the two distinct Pre-Aryan peoples of the subcontinent, viz. The Austro-Asiatics and the Dravidians. There is reason to believe that in ancient

pre-historic times, the Austro-Asiatics occupied a far larger area than that occupied by their present-day descendants- the Munda or Kol peoples of the Choṭā-Nāgpūr plateau in Bihar and West Bengal and other parts of Eastern India such as the Hos, Birhōṛs and Santāls. The Dravidian peoples at the time of the Aryan conquest would have been concentrated in the Indus region and in the Deccan, south of the Godāvari river where to-day four major dialects of Dravidian speech, viz. Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu and Kannada, are found amongst their descendants [89].

Although in the early Vedic period, the Indo-Aryans generally intermarried amongst themselves, in later times, marital or sexual relations with the native peoples (in the form of unions between Aryan men and native women) evidently took place. Miscegenation would have certainly been commonplace during this period, for we find in the RV, the Aryans praying that they be granted fair-complexioned (*piśaṅgarūpa*) sons only. This suggests that although the early Aryans cohabited with aboriginal or native women, they nevertheless feared begetting dark offspring by these women.

It was perhaps as a reaction to this admixture of blood that was going on unchecked that the more ethnocentric of those Aryans promoted the idea of a four-fold caste system that has persisted in India to this day, so as to perpetuate the idea of Aryan racial superiority and to arrogate to themselves a high rank in the existing scheme of things which resulted not only in an enhanced social status for themselves and their offspring, but also earned them considerable material benefits. The colour bar between the Aryans and the native races was undoubtedly a major contributory factor to the evolution of casteism as is evident in the Old Indo-Aryan or Sanskritic term for caste, *varna* (li.colour). That there originally existed only two varnas, viz. the *Ārya varn*a and the *Dāsa varna* is borne out by the RV. It was the later Hindu texts that came to speak of the four varnas, classing Brāhmaṇs as white (*sita*), Kṣatriyas as red (*lohita*), Vaiśyas as yellow (*pītaka*) and Śūdras as black (*asita*).

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[89] Both these peoples appear to have been present in India at the time of the Aryan incursion C.1800-1700 B.C. A recent genetic study based on autosomal and mtDNA markers in Indian tribes speaking Austro-Asiatic and Dravidian languages has concluded that these two different language groups represent distinct founding groups, with Austro-Asiatic speakers being the most ancient inhabitants of the region (See Genomic Structures and Population histories of linguistically distinct tribal groups of India. S.Roychoudhury et al. HG. 2001). The evidence derived from autosomal markers is significant as it can help determine the continent-of-ancestry admixture in the entire genome, in other words the accumulated inheritance from one's ancestors, reflecting as it does the recombination of paternal and maternal DNA with each generation unlike gender-specific non-recombining mt.DNA and Y-Chromosome DNA which do not mix or recombine at each generation, but are passed down respectively in the direct maternal and paternal lines.

Thus the Aryan priestly class were constituted into the Brahmans while the warrior class were constituted into the Kṣatriyas. The Aryan masses who were engaged in mercantile, farming, stock-raising and other activities were constituted into the Vaiśya caste. The conquered and enslaved peoples, the Dāsa and Dasyu were accommodated into the caste system as Śudras. The first three castes were distinctly termed Aryan while the last was deemed non-Aryan [90]. That the caste system was an imposition on Indian society by Indo-European-speaking peoples hailing from Central Asia is also supported by recent genetic evidence [91].

However, it should be noted that even following the establishment of the caste system, and even after after it had become rigid and formalized, intermarriage or cohabitation with the native populations did not altogether

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[90] It has been observed that it is this process of absorption of the tribal population into the caste society that can explain the dramatic contrasting distributions of the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes in India. Whereas the tribal population is confined to the hilly and forested tracts in the Aravalli hills of Rajasthan and Gujarat, the Vindhya hills in Madhya and Uttar Pradesh, Satpura hills in Maharashtra, the Western Ghats in Karnataka and Kerala, Eastern Ghats in Andhra Pradesh and Orissa and the Chota Nagpur Plateau in Bihar and West Bengal, one finds in the alluvial plains of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu that the percentage of the scheduled tribal population is negligible and that of the scheduled castes very high (See Prehistoric human colonization in India.V.N.Misra. J.Biosci. Nov.2001).

[91] Richard Coedaux et al in their study Independent origins of Indian caste and tribal paternal lineages. CB. February 2004 conclude that paternal lineages of Indian caste groups are primarily descended from linguistically and archaeologically inferred dispersal of Indo-European-speaking pastoralists who migrated from Central Asia some 3500 years ago and that paternal lineages of tribal groups are predominantly derived from the original Indian gene pool. There is reason to believe that admixture did occur between the Indo-European newcomers and local tribal populations as is suggested by the fact that caste and tribal groups share a number of haplogroups, indicating a scenario of independent origins of Indian caste and tribal paternal lineages and subsequent bidirectional gene flow between caste and tribal groups.In contrast with this evidence provided by paternally inherited Y-chromosomes, the maternally inherited mitochondrial DNA evidence suggest a common origin of maternal lineages of caste and tribal groups, implying that caste maternity lineages mainly derive from local tribal ancestresses. Indeed it has been found that West European typical mtDNA are found only in a small fraction of caste mtDNAs (10 %) and is rare or absent in tribal groups. This would suggest that the Indo-European migration to India was male-mediated involving migrating males mixing with local females. Alternatively a more likely scenario is that this situation arose through large-scale replacement of IE female genes by indigenous ones as a consequence of the combined practices of hypogyny (i.e higher ranking male mating with lower ranking female) resulting in the spread of 'lower ranking' mtDNAs meaning those of the assimilated indigenous groups, and the practice of female infanticide which has been attested among high-ranking castes, leading to the removal of 'higher ranking' mt DNAs (i.e.those of Indo-European females) from reproduction and resulting ultimately in the replacement of non-indigenous mtDNAs by indigenous ones.

cease, since hypergamy (*anuloma*) i.e. marriage of a man with a woman belonging to a lower caste, was recognized by the Hindu Jurists. Hypogamy (*pratiloma*), i.e. the marriage or union of a woman to a man belonging to a lower caste, on the other hand, was condemned and severely penalized. Further, while the offspring of hypergamous unions where such unions were between Aryan men and native women, were held to be Aryan, those of hypogamous unions where such unions were between Aryan women and non-Aryan men were held to be non-Aryan. Says the Manusmrti: "A person born to a non-Aryan female from an Aryan man may become an Aryan through his virtues. However it is determined that a person born to an Aryan female from a non-Aryan man is indeed a non-Aryan" (*jāto nāryām anaryāyām āryād āryo bhaved guṇaih / jāto py anāryād āryāyam anārya iti niścayah*). This could be said to conform to the Indo-European idea of patrilineality which recognized the son of an ethnically Aryan man to be Aryan, regardless of the identity of the mother [92]. In a rigidly patriarchal society where descent was reckoned through the male line, *pratiloma* marriages, if it were to be permitted, would have meant that the women of the Aryan *varnas* would have borne issue that would have been considered inferior in blood to themselves and their patri-kin, an event that could not take place in the case of an *anuloma* marriage. In *anuloma* marriages the offspring could not have been considered debased as they would have taken after the father.

Thus it is not unlikely that the native peoples of India, both the aboriginal Austro-Asiatics [93] and Dravidians[94] contributed signigficantly to the Indo-Aryan gene pool.

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[92] A recent genetic study has revealed that maternally inherited mitochondrial DNA of West Eurasian origin is more frequent among the higher castes, with the frequency increasing with caste rank, which suggests that Aryan women were hardly if ever given in marriage or married outside their castes once they had been constituted. The study found that 20-30 percent of Indian mtDNA haplotypes belonged to West Eurasian haplogroups, and that the frequency of these haplotypes was proportional to caste rank, the highest frequency of West Eurasian haplotypes being found in the upper castes. In the case of paternally inherited Y-chromosome variation, each caste was found to be more similar to Europeans than to Asians, the affinity to Europeans being proportionate to caste rank, the upper castes being most similar to Europeans, particularly East Europeans. This would suggest greater west Eurasian male admixture in castes of higher rank (See Genetic Evidence on the Origins of Indian Caste Populations. Michael Bamshad et al. GR.Vol.11.2001).

[93] We find a probable Austro-Asiatic genetic marker, mtDNA haplogroup M figuring significantly in Aryan-as well as Dravidian-speaking groups. Whereas India shows a very high frequency of the haplogroup, its frequency in Iran is marginally low (5.3 %) while it is virtually absent in Europe. In contrast, the variation of HG-M among caste populations climbs from approximately 40 % in Gujarat and Punjab to 65 % in the southern states and peak at over 70 % in West Bengal. Among tribal populations, the frequency from just over 50 % in the Northern

There is however reason to believe that the Vedic Aryans were not the only Aryan-speaking folk who entered the subcontinent. It appears that other Indo-European folk speaking an Aryan dialect that preserved the PIE *l* also reached India at about the same time as the Vedic Aryans, or even perhaps shortly before. Unlike the polytheistic Vedic Aryans who revered such deities like Indra, Agni and Soma, these folk appear to have possessed a sort of monotheistic cult akin to that of the ancient Iranians. It is this Aryan people who differed so much from the Vedic Aryans in religious belief who appear to have been designated as Asuras by the latter. Thus, it would appear that whereas colour (*varna*) was the basis of distinction between Ārya and Dāsa, religion and perhaps speech (*vāc*) was the basis of distinction between Ārya and Asura.

States of Punjab and Himachal Pradesh was found to increase to 70-80 % in the southern states and peaked at 86 % in West Bengal (Most of the extant mtDNA boundaries in South and Southwest Asia were likely shaped during the initial settlement of Eurasia by anatomically modern humans. Mait Metspalu et al. BMC Genetics.05.2004). The frequency of HG-M in India is known to be the highest among tribal groups, particularly Austro-Asiatic tribals. Among the Austro-Asiatic tribals of Eastern India, the Munda showed 71.4 % of HG-M frequency while the Santal showed 70 % and the Lodha (Kharia) 81.3 %. Among the South Indian tribals, the Irula showed 53.3 %, the Kurumba 76.7 % and the Kota as much as 96.7 % (Ethnic populations of India as seen from an evolutionary perspective. Partha Majumdar. J.BioSci. Nov.2001). Indeed, HG-M has been found to be present even among Brahmins, as for instance among the Brahmins of Uttar Pradesh who showed a 18.5 % frequency (See Ethnic India: A Genomic View, with Special Reference to Peopling and Structure. Analabha Basu et al. GR.Vol.13.2003). The fact that this maternally-inherited trait had a significant presence even among Brahmins might suggest that it was acquired at least in some measure even before the caste system had come to be established or underwent a rigid stratification, for otherwise it would be difficult to explain the high incidence of the trait among Brahmins who are known for their aversion to intermarriage with other castes or peoples.

[94] Genetic research by Analabha Basu et al (Ethnic India: A Genomic View, with Special Reference to Peopling and Structure. GR.Vol.13, 2003) would suggest that Dravidian speakers made a higher contribution to Aryan maternal lineages than Austro-Asiatics. The team contend that Dravidian speakers now confined to Southern India may have formerly been widespread throughout India as indicated by the fact that Indo-European and Dravidian speakers share a significantly larger number of mtHVS1 (the first hypervariable segment of mitochondrial DNA) sequences compared with those between other groups, a contention also corroborated by a population structure analysis based on autosomal data. These findings they suggest are consistent with the historical view that Dravidian speakers were possibly widespread throughout India and that when the ranked caste system was formed after the arrival of Indo-European speakers ~ 3500 ybp, many indigenous people of India, possibly Dravidian speakers, embraced (or were forced to embrace) the caste system, together with the IE language and admixture. This would suggest a scenario of Indo-European dominance over the Dravidian peoples who came under their sway, which is consistent with the linguistic data as no Dravidian speech has survived in the Aryan heartland of the Madhyadesa.

We will now attempt to show that the Asuras were an Aryan-speaking folk and like their Iranian brethren had a faith which was in discord with the pagan religion of the Vedic Aryans. We will first delve into the similarity between the Asuras and the Iranians of yore with regard to their religion and their dissimilarities with Vedic religion. Such works as the Taittirīya Saṁhitā and the Śatapatha Brāhmana clearly show that the religious and ceremonial practices of the Asuras differed considerably from Vedic practice. Alfred Hillebrandt [95] has in fact cited a number of ritualistic differences between the Asura cult and the Vedic deva cult and has shown the connection of Asura ritual to that of the Iranian in the case of the *savannas* or sacrificial rites.

Although in the later Vedic period, the term Asura denoted 'demon' and an enemy of the Vedic gods and folk, it seems to have denoted a specific divinity and his votaries in an earlier period for we find the appellation Asura being applied to Varuna, a primarily ethical deity who seems to have been considered the Supreme ruler of the physical and moral world and the upholder of the moral order in Vedic belief [96]. The Vedic name Varuna seems to have been a descriptive epithet derived from the root *vṛ* meaning 'to cover', 'to encompass', or 'to check or restrain' and probably having the meaning of 'All-enveloping or All-encompassing One' or 'One who controls or binds (the workings of the universe)'. Says the Rg Veda: "The All-knowing Asura established the heavens, and fixed the limits of the earth. He rules all the worlds. These are the achievements of Varuna (*Asuro visvāveda amimlia varimanam prthivyah, asidad visva bhūvanani samrad visvet tani varunasya*)". The Atharva Veda says of him: "If one were to flee far beyond the sky, one would not escape from King Varuna. From heaven his spies issue forth to this (world) and with their thousand eyes survey the earth. King Varuna sees all that happens between heaven and earth and beyond them. The very twinklings of the eyes of men are numbered by him". He was however also a largely abstract deity and does not appear to have been revered as fervently as the other Vedic deities [97]. The Indo-Aryan war god Indra was by far the most

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[95] Vedische Mythologie (1929)

[96] Varuna is described as being omnipotent or All-powerful since his power is unlimited with both the rising of the dawn and fall of darkness being at his command. He is described as Universal Monarch (*samrāj*) and as Guardian of the Cosmic Order (*ṛta*). Although compassionate to those not transgressing his ordinances (*vratāni*) and vouchsafing security to those maintaining order (*ṛta*), his wrath is aroused by disobedience and only he is capable of forgiving such sinners, so much so that we find the penitent beseeching Varuna to release him from the Divine wrath like a charioteer unyoking a yoked horse

[97] In later Indian mythology, we find Varuna being regarded as the god of the ocean. The RV in a probable reference to Varuna refers to him as "Our father, the Asura who sprinkles down the

popular deity in the Rg Vedic pantheon, followed by Soma (the deified *Soma* plant, probably *Ephedra* [98], whose intoxicating juice is said to have been drunk by Indra and his votaries) and Agni (the fire, Indra's aid in the war against the Dāsas).

In fact, in the Vedas, one notices a clear contrast between the characters of Varuna and Indra. Whereas the former rules by laws to which he demands obedience, the latter figures as a Soma-imbibing warrior and as wielder of the thunderbolt whose favour such as booty gained in battle is secured by offerings and not ethical actions. In fact, Indra seems to represent the amoral, arrogant, archetypal Aryan warrior who thrives in war at the expense of weaker peoples and may perhaps be a deified warrior of old living perhaps at a time even before the Indo-Aryans and the Iranians went their separate ways. In the RV we have Varuna declaring: "Lordship belongs to me, the perpetual sovereign..... I let the dripping waters rise up, through ṛta, I uphold the sky". To this Indra retorts: "Men who ride swiftly, having good horses, call on me when surrounded in battle. I provoke strife, I the bountiful Indra. I whirl up the dust, my strength is overwhelming. All things have I done. No godlike power can check me, the unassailable. When droughts of Soma, when songs have made me drunk, then both the unbounded regions grow afraid". Little wonder then that the monotheistic faith of Zarathustra demonized Indra as a *daeva* or evil spirit.

The ancient Iranians on the other hand appear to have realized a truer monotheistic ideal and knew the Supreme Being as Ahura-Mazda or the 'Wise Lord' or simply as Ahura 'Lord' [99]. They also relegated the other pagan deities to the position of daevas, a derivative of the Proto-Indo-European * *deiwo* or

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waters". He was therefore regarded as one who dispensed rain or water from heaven in Vedic times. In post-Vedic times, however, he had been evolved to become 'god of the water, and of the sea'. This is not surprising when we consider the fate that befell his Iranian counterpart Ahura Mazda among certain Iranian-speaking tribes who had come to regard him as the sun or a solar deity. Both the Khotanese Saka term Urmaysda as well as the Khwarezmian Remazd used for the sun have their origins in the Avestan Ahura Mazda 'The Wise Lord'.

[98] Reisebriefe aus Persien. Bornmuller. MTBV (1893)

[99] This is borne out by the early gāthās attributed to the Iranian Prophet Zarathustra where this deity who is said to be the Creator of All Things (Yasna 44.7) is said to know best the purposes that have been wrought already by demons and by mortals, and that which shall be wrought in the future. It goes on to add: "He Ahura, is the Decider. So shall it be as He shall Will" (Yasna. 29.4). That Zarathustra's religion was strictly monotheistic there can be no doubt. The dualism it later came to be associated with may have arisen due to the dislike of attributing to the Supreme Being the creation of evil or anything inimical to man, or due to the notion of the twin mainyu, the two aspects of the human mind, viz.good and evil from which men have to choose to gain salvation or suffer damnation.

god which in Iranian assumed the meaning of 'demon'. For instance, Indra is described as a *daeva* or demon in the Avesta.

All this shows that there existed significant religious differences between the Iranians and Vedic Aryans, despite the fact that they may have formerly shared a common home and culture. Whereas the term *Asura* meant 'demon' in the Vedas, its Iranian cognate *Ahura* meant 'Lord' and it is this appellation that forms the first part of the Avestan term for the Supreme Being – Ahura Mazda. The term Ahura is a development of an earlier Proto-Aryan form * *Asura* and there has been considerable dispute as to who this *Asura* was. In the early Vedic period, it evidently meant 'lord', 'god' and not 'demon' as seen in the form *asurya* meaning 'divine'. Thus there is reason to believe that the Iranian Prophet Zarathustra merely revived the ancient Asura religion which had existed among the Proto-Indo-Iranians at some point or other and which was later superseded by the worship of anthropomorphic and nature deities like Indra and Soma.

What we do know is that both Ahura Mazda in the Zend Avesta and Varuna in the Rg Veda share similar traits. Both figure as omniscient or All-knowing supreme deities. While Ahura Mazda is described as All-knowing (*vispo vidvah*) in the Avesta, Varuna is described likewise in the RV (*viśvavedāh*). Varuna as the All-knower is said to know not only one's past actions, but also one's future actions (RV) and in the gāthās of the Avesta attributed to Zarathustra himself we find Ahura Mazda being described as the First and the Last, the Giver of Life and the Knower of all actions performed in the past and indeed of those which will be performed in the future. The *ṛta* or cosmic order of which Varuna is guardian finds a parallel in the Avestan *aša* or cosmic order encompassing the order of nature and mankind created and upheld by Ahura Mazda.

James Darmesteter [100] holds that the supreme deity of the ancient Indo-Iranian religion was called Asura 'The lord' or Asura Mazdha 'the lord of high knowledge' after his spiritual attributes. He notes: "The Supreme Asura of the Indo-Iranian religion, the Heaven god, is called in the Avesta Ahura Mazda, 'the all-knowing lord'; his concrete name Varana, which became his usual name in India (Varuna), was lost in Iran, and remained only as the name of the material heaven, and then of a mythical region, the Varena, which was the seat of the mythical fight between a storm god and a storm fiend". He also notes: "The word Asura, which in the Avesta means 'the lord' and is the name of the Supreme god means 'a demon' in the Brahmanical literature, but in the older religion of the Vedas it is quite as august as in the Avesta, and is applied to the

[100] Introduction to the translation of the Zend-Avesta. SBE (1880)

highest deities, and particularly to Varuna, the Indian brother of Ahura. This shows that when the Iranians and the Indians sallied forth from their common native land, the Asura continued for a long time to be lord in India as well as in Persia, and the change took place, not in Iran, but in India".

B.K. Ghosh[101] is however of the view that the term Asura, perhaps borrowed from the Assyrians [102] superseded the old Indo-European term * *deiwo* (Indo-Iranian * *daiva*) as the latter term (which denoted nature-deities) was considered inappropriate for the new "abstract and ethical deities" of the undivided Indo-Iranians. Says Ghosh: "Varuna was the chief of these ethical deities just as Indra was the chief of the older nature-gods". He holds that it is hardly to be doubted that the parting of the Indian and Iranian Aryans "was more the effect than the cause of the cultural contrast revealed in religion". Ghosh believes that Zarathustra was responsible for changing the name of the chief Asura god Varuna into Ahura Mazdāh "while retaining and raising to the highest honour the personality of this god", apparently because in former times –at the time of the Boghaz-köi tablets at any rate – "he had lived in the corrupt company of the Daiva-god Indra".

Be it as it may, it is likely as held by A. Christensen[103] that the Asura religion was practiced by the more cultured and steadier elements of the primitive Indo-Iranian society whose chief occupation was agriculture and cattle-breeding, while the older Daiva religion continued to find favour with the less civilized sections of these folk to whom the primitive predatory habits were more congenial. It may also be that the Asura-Varuna cult of the Proto-Aryans or an important section of them underwent a transformation with the Vedic Aryans or their immediate ancestors whose lifestyle based on war, plunder and pillage would have prompted them to yearn for a new god, a tribal god, whom they would have felt was more suited for their life of conquest and colonization, rather than a universal divinity who demanded morality of his subjects. This would have perhaps led them to deify a deceased hero among them, Indra, to help them in their confrontation with hostile peoples and

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[101] Indo-Iranian relations. The History and Culture of the Indian people. The Vedic Age . Ed. R.C. Majumdar (1951)

[102] Ghosh believes the term to be the personal designation of the tutelary deity of Assyria used as a generic name by the Indo-Iranians. It is more probable, however, that the term Asura has Indo-European antecedents, and has perhaps to be derived from the PIE **heshos* 'Lord (Lit.He that Is) derived from the root **hes* 'to be', reflexes of which are found in Hittite *ešhaš* and Latin *erus* 'lord' (< **esus* 'master' as inferred from Old Latin *esa* 'mistress') and Old Norse *as* 'god'(Pl.*aesir*).

[103] Kulturgeschichte des alten orients

natural calamities such as drought which are precisely the reasons for which Indra is invoked by the Vedic Aryans.

We also have evidence to show that the Asuras were regarded as the elder brothers of the Devas in both Vedic and Puranic tradition. The Tandya Brahmana states that the devas and Asuras were the sons of Prajapati (*Devasca va asurasca prajapater dvyayah putra asan*) while the Śatapatha Brahmana has it that the Devas were the younger and the Asuras the elder sons (*Kaniyasa eva deva, jyayasa asurah*). In the Mahābhārata, it is said that in the Devasura battles of yore, there were Devas and Asuras, and of them the Devas were younger and the Asuras were elder (*Yuddhe devasure pura asura bhrataro jyestha, devascapi yaviyasa*). This would suggest that the Vedic Aryans had preserved a memory of the Asuras being their kin and the old Asura religion being a part of the early Aryan tradition. It is therefore likely that a large proportion of the ancient Aryans adhered to the Asura cult.

It appears that it was not only the Iranian Aryans (who had turned the PIE *l* into *r* in common with the Vedic Aryans) who followed the Asura religion, but also other ancient Aryan-speaking peoples who did not participate in this phonetic change, including the so-called Asuras of India. This is suggested by the Śatapatha Brāhmana which cites two words used by the Asuras, viz. *he 'lavo* which appears to be a version of the Vedic *he 'rayah* 'O enemies'. The speech is represented as unintelligible, barbarous and Asura talk leading to destruction (*te 'surā āttavacaso he' lavo he' lava iti vadantah parābabhuvuh tatraitām api vācam ūduh upajijñasyām sa mlecchas tasmān na brāhmano mlecched asuryā haiṣā vāg*). This would indicate that the Asuras, or at least a section of them, employed an *l* instead of the Vedic *r*. There is even reason to believe that a few Rg Vedic Aryans would have descended from the Asuras. Pūru, the eponym of one of the Aryan clans is described in the RV as *mṛdhra-vāc* (insultingly, unintelligibly or neglectfully speaking) and in the SB as an Asura. However by the time of the battle of the ten kings (*daśarājña*) fought on the banks of the Paruṣnī (Rāvi) both the Bharatas and their foes the Purus appear to have been votaries of Indra as may be gathered from the RV.

The Rg Veda, it should be noted, deals with several generations of Aryan warriors so that it is quite possible that the Asura cult if it ever existed among some of their ancestors would have been superseded by the Vedic cult shortly afterwards. For example, of the Pūru chiefs mentioned in the RV, Trasadasyu is the fourth in descent, the first three being Durgaha, Girikṣit and Purukutsa. Trasadasyu's son Tṛkṣi also finds mention in the RV. Thus it is perhaps not too farfetched to suppose that some of the early Rg Vedic folk such as Pūru might have been Asuras, while their descendants would have subscribed to the Indra-Agni-Soma cult, which eventually ousted the Asura religion.

This contention is also supported by internal evidence in the RV. Thus, although we find that Indra is called Asura-killer (*Asura-han*) and is invoked to scatter away the 'godless Asuras' (*Asurā adevah*) in the older hymns of the RV, we afterwards find him making a request to Varuna to join the ranks of the devas, probably after the defeat of the Asuras at some battle. The relevant Rg Vedic hymn attributes the following words to Indra: "*The Asuras have now lost their magic power. If you, Varuna, will love me, then, O King who distinguishes the wrong from the right, come to the overlordship of my kingdom!*". This may be an attempt on the part of the Vedic Aryans to incorporate the only or principal deity of the subdued Asuras so as to secure their loyalty and undermine the power of the Asura religion.

In another Rg Vedic hymn, we find the following words attributed to Varuna: "I Varuna, am the sovereign; it was I who was first destined to be Asura", though he is also said to admit that Indra is right in saying that he is the unparalleled god of war, insuperable in his fury created by Soma and by hymns of praise. The above hymn was evidently composed on behalf of King Trasadasyu (whose very name means 'He who makes the Dasyu tremble') of the Purus to both Indra and Varuna which suggests that the adoption of Varuna into the Vedic pantheon took place while the fights with the Dāsas and Dasyus were still taking place.

The fact is that like later Hinduism, the degenerate Vedic religion was accustomed to incorporating numerous deities into its pantheon. That such an incorporation did take place is attested by the following Rg Vedic hymn evidently composed for the Bharata leader Sudās: "Slay both the Dāsa enemies and the Aryan; protect Sudās with your aid, O Indra and Varuna".

As pointed out by Hillebrandt (1929), the association of Varuna and Indra in the Veda, "may be regarded as an artificial product, the elements of which belonged historically and ethnically to mutually exclusive groups. They are the representatives of two different worlds: On one side a god who holds sway over his kingdom in all his majesty and avenges sin and injustice and on the other a wild warrior and conqueror who is conceived in a different spirit". The fact that the Hittite-Mitanni Treaty (C. 1380 B.C.) mentions both Indra and Varuna suggests that the amalgation of the two cults took place before this period. Parpola (1988) believes that the adoption of Varuna into the Vedic pantheon took place very early in the history of Vedic religion; during the short stay of the invading Aryans in Bactria (Northern Afghanistan) around 1800 B.C.

We will now cite evidence to show that many of the folk designated as Asuras by the Vedic Aryans found their way into Eastern Indian regions like Magadha and were later admitted into Indo-Aryan Brahmanical society through a ceremony known as the *Vrātyastoma*. As seen earlier, the Śatapatha

Brāhmana has preserved a few Asura words which suggest that it was a dialect that not only preserved the PIE *l* but also made it the regular representative of *r*. This feature is also found in certain Eastern Indo-Aryan dialects such as Eastern Asokan (C. 3rd century B.C.) and Dramatic Māgadhī.

However whether all Asuras went so far as to make *l* the regular representative of *r* is unclear. It is more likely that the change would have extended only to a particular group of Asuras and not the people as a whole. Vedic literature which knew the dental *l* cites a number of Asura names occurring with r, suggesting that the change was not universal among them. Besides, the change *r* > *l* does not even appear to have been universal among the Eastern Indo-Aryans or Magadhas as borne out by the personal and place names furnished by the classical Greek accounts as well as the existence of Eastern Indian dialects possessing *r* such as that of Rāḍha or West Bengal. Nevertheless this feature does provide us with some evidence connecting the Asuras to Eastern India.

The Śatapatha Brāhmana clearly connects the Asuras with the Easterners as evident from the following passage: "Now the gods and Asuras, both of them sprung from Prajāpati, were contending in the four regions. The gods drove out the Asuras, their rivals and enemies, from the regions, and, being regionless, they were overcome. Wherefore the people who are godly make their burial-places four-cornered, whilst those who are devilish, the Easterners and others (make them) round, for they (the gods) drove them out of the regions". This may refer to the prototype of the stupas of Eastern India which are round in form and possibly a development of the round type of burial mound. The description may also fit the Zoroastrian towers of silence, the dakhmas, large raised circular structures open to the elements, in which the dead were exposed. Indeed, another factor that seems to connect the Asuras with these edifices for exposing the dead is that they had three concentric chambers, in which men were laid on the outer circle, women in the middle circle and children in the innermost circle. A fortified ceremonial structure with three concentric circular walls has also been found in the oasis of Dashly-3 in northern Afghanistan and it is said on the evidence gleaned from a similar edifice in Kutlug Tepe that the tradition of building forts with three concentric walls survived in Bactria until Archaemenid times [104].

This is quite interesting since it may agree with the three-fold fort (*tripura)* described in Hindu mythology as the abode of the Asuras. The *tripura* or 'three forts' collectively personified as an Asura are said to have been built by Maya in the heavens (of gold); in the space between heaven and earth, that is,

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[104] See The problem of the Aryans and Soma in The Indo-Aryans of ancient South asia. George Erdosy (1995)

the sky (of silver) and on earth (of iron). When the Asuras were about to destroy the three worlds, the gods are said to have importuned Siva, who responded by burning the three cities and slaying the Asuras who lived there. It is also a curious fact that Durgā, a goddess much worshipped in certain parts of Eastern India such as Bengal and whose name literally means 'fortification' should also be known as *Tripurā*. Curiously, the RV knows of no such forts and it is not unlikely that a knowledge or reminiscence of these forts had been preserved by a non-Vedic Aryan people, perhaps akin to the Iranians or Zoroastrians, who had settled in Eastern India [105].

The SB's reference to the Asura adherents being Easterners (*Prācyāh*) is also significant as it can be connected with the Magadha country. According to Megasthenes, the city of Pālimbothra (i.e. Pāṭaliputra, the capital of Magadha) was situated in the country of Prasioi, which is probably a Greek transliteration of the Indian word *prācyāh* or a connected term. Among other indications suggesting a connection between the Asuras and Easterners is the reference to Bhagadatta (Lit.Given by God), King of Prāgjyotisa (North East Bengal) who is called an Asura in the Mbh. We also know that in later times, Buddhists and Jains were called Asuras [106] probably because these non-Brahmanical faiths had their origins in Eastern India.

Thus there can be little doubt that it was those Aryan or Indo-European folk settled in Eastern India who were later considered Vrātyas and permitted admission into the Vedic Brahmanical fold, probably on account of their Aryan speech and physical similarity to the Vedic Aryans.

The Vrātya book of the Atharva-Veda implies a close connection between the Vrātyas and the people of Magadha and as noted by Benoychandra Sen [107], it appears quite probable that Magadha was an important stronghold of the Vrātyas. Besides, we know that the *Vrātyastoma* ritual specified that the Vrātya apparel be given to a Brahman (*Brahmabandhu*) hailing from Magadha (*Māgadha-deśīya*) while the *vipatha* chariot of the Vrātyas is said to be a *prācya-ratha* 'chariot of the easterners' [108].

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[105] That these Asuras were a civilised people who were adept at architectural feats we occasionally gather from later literature. For instance, in the Mbh we hear of the Asura Maya, the architect of the Pāndavas who had been saved from the fire of the Khāṇḍava forest building a great hall at Indraprastha, a kind of longhouse for men to hold council. In this epic, Maya is said to have built the edifice on a command by Kṛṣṇa who ordered him: " Build an assembly hall, Maya, where the designs of the gods are laid out, and the designs of Asuras and men".

[106] See Ancient Indian Historical tradition. F.E.Pargiter (1922)

[107] Some historical aspects of the inscriptions of Bengal (1942)

[108] LSS

The earliest reference to Magadha is said to occur in the Atharva-Veda where fever (*takman*) is wished away to certain peoples, viz. The Balhikas, Gandhāris, Mujāvants, Aṅgas and Magadhas. This would indicate that this eastern folk were treated as being outside the pale of Vedic Brahmanical society at the time of the composition of this hymn. Other peoples who did not conform to the tenets of Brahmanism were also designated Vrātya. The Mahābhārata for instance, calls the Vāhīkas and Madras who were residing in the Northern Panjab beyond the borders of orthodox Brahmanism, Vrātyas. These folk are described as lawless and impure. However, it was in Eastern India where the Vrātyas predominated. As noted by Sen (1942), "all the available evidence seems to point to the conclusion that the Vrātyas were originally distributed over a wide territory (in the east) outside the pale of the Vedic society, mythology and rituals to whose influence they ultimately succumbed".

The appellation Vrātya, it is possible, is connected with the Vedic *vrata* which seems to be particularly associated with Varuna. The term gives the sense of oath or vow with which Varuna is concerned as the moral deity and has cognates in the Avestan *uruuata* 'deal' or 'contract (between god and man)' and perhaps to the Pahlavi *var* and *varestān* meaning 'oath' and 'place of oath-taking'. It may also imply those who favoured vowed religious observances as against adherence to rituals such as sacrifices that characterized the Vedic Aryans. It is also possible that it could have derived from PIE **wrētos* 'flock' 'herd', a derivative of the root **wr* 'bind' 'array' as attested in Gothic *writhus* 'herd', OE *wearn* 'troop', 'crowd', Olr. *foirenn* 'band' 'troop'. Thus the Vrātyas appear to have comprised of pre- or non-Vedic tribes who moved about in troops and who seem to have rejected Vedic rituals and sacrifices that sought to bestow upon its practitioners worldly glory and material possessions such as wealth and cattle.

Let us now consider the society and culture of these Vrātyas, who were evidently a nomadic tribe (Vrāta). According to the Pañcaviṁśa Brāhmana the Vrātyas did not practice agriculture (*kṛṣi*) or trade and had a different code of law (*adaṇḍyaṁ daṇḍena ghnantaś caranti*). They also had a different speech characterized by peculiarities not found in the Vedic Aryan speech (*a-dur-ukta-vākyam dur uktam āhur*). Further aspects of Vrātya lifestyle have been reconstructed by Sen (1942) from available sources. "The outfit of the Vrātya grihapati (householder), which seems to have been a local form of dress, consisted of a turban (Ushnīsham tiryannaddha) and a black garment (kṛishnaśaṁvāsa) and he used to be equipped with certain weapons, including a goad (pratoda) and a kind of bow (jyāhroḍo)". Vrātya social organization does not appear to have differed significantly from that of the Vedic Aryans as

Arhants and Yaudhas who are mentioned among the Vrātyas seem to correspond to the Brahmans and Ksatriyas in the Brahmanical hierarchy [109].

Pusalker (1951) holds that the speech of the Vrātyas, though Aryan, had apparently resembled Prakrit rather than Vedic Sanskrit, as they softened hard consonants, while A.B. Keith [110] interpretes the Vedic reference to the Vrātyas calling what is easy to say difficult as "a point indicating at the least a Prakrit speech in which conjunct consonants had been softened". It may however be that this refers to the eastern aversion to the *r* sound, especially in conjunct positions.

The *Vrātyastoma* ceremony, whereby the Vrātyas secured the rights and privileges of the twice-born castes, viz. Brāhmans, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas, finds mention in the Tāṇḍya-Pañca-Viṁśa Brāhmana of the Sāma-Veda and the Lātyāyana Śrauta Sutra. The latter work clearly states that the *Vrātyastoma* ceremony transformed the Vrātyas into *dvijas* (i.e. the three Aryan or twice-born castes). It is generally agreed that the original purpose of the sacrifice was to enable its performer to secure admission to the Vedic circle [111].

According to the Mānava-Dharmaśāstra, those persons whom the twice-born beget on wives of equal caste, but who omit the prescribed rites, and have abandoned the *gāyatri* are to be designated as Vrātyas. Much reliance cannot however be placed on this statement since it is known that the present reclensions of the Manu-Saṁhita go back to about the 2nd century B.C. – 1st Century A.C. Besides, the work goes to the extent of describing such peoples as the Yavanas (Greeks), Cīnas (Chinese), Kāmbojas (Zoroastrians) and Draviḍas (Dravidians) as Kṣatriya jātis who have sunk to the position of Vṛṣala (Śūdra) due to the omission of the prescribed duties and the neglect of the Brāhmanas. It is evident here that Manu seeks to ascribe to these non-Brahmanical foreign peoples (both Aryans and non-Aryans) a low status because of their neglect of Hindu ritual. It could also be regarded as an explanation for the existence of these national groups from the standpoint of later Hindu tradition. It therefore does not reflect the old Indo-Aryan position as to the nature and status of the Vrātyas. The *Vrātyastomas* however appear to have become obsolete fairly early, for we hear of no such ceremony in later literature. At any rate, this process would have been completed well before the Christian era so that the Vrātyas would have been assimilated into mainstream Hindu Indo-Aryan society by this period, a development facilitated by North India's geographical unity in the form of a continuous riverine plain from Sind

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[109] See Aryan settlements in India. A.D. Pusalker. Majumdar (1951)

[110] The Vratyas. JRAS. GB & I (1913)

[111] See Sen (1942)

to Bengal and constant inclusion in a common cultural space with the stabilizing influence of Sanskrit emanating from the Indo-Aryan heartland of North India.

There can be little doubt that the Eastern Indian countries such as Bengal and Bihar were considered as Aryan or rather Aryanised regions despite the contrary assertion among certain quarters of orthodox Brahmanism that did not regard the regions towards the east as belonging to the Āryāvarta or Aryandom. Consider the case of Patañjali's Mahābhāṣya and the Dharmasāstras which claim that the Aryans mainly reside in the Region of Āryāvarta which lies to the east of the Ādarśa Mountains, to the west of the Kālaka Forest, to the South of the Himalayas and to the north of the Vindhyas, an area roughly encompassing the Ganges-Yamuna Doab and the plain of Kurukṣetra to the north of Delhi. This definition of Aryandom however seems to be quite a narrow one. Contrast this with the Aryan regions of the Jainas as stated in texts such as the Paṇṇavanāsutta of C.1st century B.C. which mention as Aryan lands Vaṅga, Lāḍha, Magadha and Kaliṅga among others such as Kuru, Kosala, Kosambi, Videha, Pañcāla and Sūrasena.

Ancient Indian historical tradition also suggests that the Eastern Indian nations such as Aṅga (Bhāgalpur or Eastern Bihar), Vaṅga (East Bengal), Suhma (West Bengal) and Kaliṅga (Orissa) were deemed to be Aryan. Bimala Churn Law [112] is of the view that the five tribes, Aṅga, Vaṅga, Suhma, Puṇḍra and Kaliṅga lived conterminously and had their distinct entities within respective geographical boundaries to which they gave the names of their respective tribes. According to Puranic tradition, Aṅga, Vaṅga, Kaliṅga, Puṇḍra and Suhma, the sons of the Rg Vedic sage Dīrghatamas and King Bali's Queen Sudeṣṇā were the founders of the five countries bearing their respective names. According to the Viṣnu Purāna, the wife of Bali (who was the fifth in descent in the male line from Purūravas) begot the Bāleya Kṣatriyas (i.e. Kṣatriyas of the race of Bali) named Aṅga, Baṅga, Kaliṅga, Suhma and Puṇḍra by Dīrghatamas while according to the Harivamśa these five were Kṣatriyas and the heads of races upon the earth. Dīrghatamas is said to have been an Angirās Brahman while Bali also appears to have been connected to the Aryans. According to Puranic tradition, Bali's ancestor Purūravas was the progenitor of the Aila or Lunar dynasty. He also finds mention in the Rg Veda where he is called Aila and is said to have been born to Ilā, the female personality of Manu's son Ila.

Now it is evident that Manu figures in the Rg Veda in the sense of the 'Aryan man' as when it says that Indra "subjected the black skin to Manu" and contrasts the 'human peoples' (*manuṣīr viśah*) meaning Aryans with the 'black

[112] Tribes in Ancient India (1943)

peoples' (*asiknīr viśah*). Manu was also considered to be the progenitor of the Solar dynasty – the foremost Indo-Aryan dynasty in ancient times – through his son Ikṣvāku and grandson Vikukṣi. This, coupled with the fact that a Rg Vedic hymn alludes to Purūravas taking part in an extermination campaign against the Dasyus suggest that he was considered an Aryan. What is also interesting is the fact that the Aila or lunar dynasty founded by Purūravas seems to have had some connection with the Asuras, for we find in the SB Pūru, the fourth in descent in the male line from Purūravas being called an Asura. The descendants of Pūru's brother Yadu, the Yādavas are also described as Asuras in Puranic tradition. For instance, Madhu, the great Yādava King from whom Krṣna obtained the patronymic Mādhava is called an Asura. The Ānavas who ruled and gave their name to the Ānava kingdom in the east were held to be the descendants of Anu, yet another of Puru's brothers.

What is also interesting is that not a single Brahman was connected as priest with any of the early Aila or lunar kings. The earliest Brahmans were prists to the solar dynasty, but never to the early Ailas. Furthermore, tradition knows of the earliest Aila kings actually opposing Brahmans but does not know of any of the solar dynasty doing so. It was only in later times that the Brahmans associated with the Ailas while some Aila princes even became Kṣatriya-Brahmans or Brahman priests [113].

The inferences drawn from the aforementioned mythical/legendary accounts though by no means conclusive may nevertheless provide us with an idea of the ethnic scenario of pre-and proto-historic India. Such legends would have possibly developed from some germ of reality and if interpreted historically, may indicate that the Vedic writers considered Eastern India to be peopled by a folk genetically akin to them.

As to the racial affinities of the Vrātyas, it is probable, as suggested by K.L. Barua [114] that they were a brachycephalic Alpine stock. Says Barua: "The Vrātyas were no other than the Alpines who possessed a fairer complexion, a prominent nose and above all spoke an Aryan language, though of the Piśāchi variety". These characteristics, he notes, clearly distinguished them from the Australoids and the Mediterraneans who were non-Aryan in speech. Barua holds that the Aryan culture and speech of the Alpines called for sympathy and fraternity from the Vedic Aryans. "It is for these reasons that the Vrātyas were quickly Aryanized. The Alpine priests became Brahmans and the ruling classes became Kshattriyas". He adds: "The idea that the Vrātyastoma was a mass conversion of non-Aryans into the Aryan fold cannot be accepted. This conversion was perhaps confined only to the kindred in language and culture".

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[113] Pargiter (1922)

[114] Alpines in Eastern India. IC (July 1936)

Barua notes that a number of cultural traits similar to old Iranian customs have survived in the Assam valley due to its isolation from the rest of India and these he attributes to a remote Alpine influence. For instance, he compares the Assamese custom of exposing the dead body in the open to be eaten up by vultures, jackals etc which had not died out completely in his time to a similar custom that prevailed among the ancient Iranians and which survives among the Parsis, the Zoroastrian inhabitants of India. He also compares the Assamese custom of avoiding menstruous women which was rigidly observed to the old Iranian prejudice against menstruous women as reflected in Zoroastrian scripture such as the Zend Avesta [115].

He also cites a number of Assamese words to show that the language has preserved a number of Piśāchi (Dardic) and Indo-European forms not found in Indo-Aryan. Cf. Assamese *boga* 'white' and *selek* 'lick' which may be related to Slavonic *bogu* and Icelandic *sleikja* respectively. Besides, the Assamese of the common masses like Iranian and Dardic is characterized by the absence of retroflex sounds, which has also been cited as a point indicating its distinctiveness from Vedic Sanskrit where retroflex sounds are commonly found. All this would suggest that the original culture of the Indian Alpines has been preserved to a greater degree in Assam than the rest of India where it would have been gradually superseded by Vedic Brahmanical culture.

Available linguistic evidence suggests that Bengali, Bihārī and perhaps Assamese are descended from the ancient Māgadhī, Bihārī, the direct descendant of Māgadhī, being spoken in its original home [116].

This ancient speech evidently had much in common with some remote northwestern languages as well as the Nuristani and Dardic speeches of Afghanistan and Pakistan. A major similarity between the extreme NW dialect of Gāndhāri and Māgadhī is the nominative singular ending – *e* instead of the usual western ending – *o*, both of which appear to have arisen from a Proto-Aryan * *az*. As suggested by A.Parpola (1988), the isoglosses between Māgadhī and the Gāndhāri Prakrit of the northwest might reflect a real genetic connection.

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[115] Indeed the uncleanliness of women during their menses receives special attention in the Vendidād. Menses were believed to have been sent by Ahriman and therefore a woman as long as they lasted was deemed to be unclean and possessed by the demon. She was to be kept confined, apart from the faithful, whom her touch would defile. Such women were confined in an *armestgah* or place of confinement known as *dashtānistān*. What is also interesting is that the Sinhalese who trace their origins to Eastern India also traditionally segregated their menstruous women (See An Historical Relation of the Island Ceylon. Robert Knox (1681). B. Clough in his Sinhalese-English Dictionary (1892) gives *kilipāla* as "kind of small hut connected with the residence of families in which females are forced to reside during the flow of their menses".

[116] See LSI. Vol. V. Pt. 1. G.A. Grierson (1903)

This may suggest that our hypothetical Asuras who remained in the northwest like their kin who migrated eastwards to Magadha had managed to preserve some of their linguistic peculiarities. At any rate, it seems likely as contended by Barua (1936) that when at a later period Vedic Sanskrit reached Eastern India, the original Piśāchi (i.e.Dardic) of the region became heavily Sanskritised. He opines that in the case of such speeches like Bengali, "the overlay of Sanskrit has been so great that it is now difficult to trace their ancient Pisāchi origin".

Another important linguistic feature that suggests a connection between Eastern Indo-Aryan and the Nuristani languages is the fact that Proto-Nuristani like Eastern Prakrit obtained single retroflex stops through combinatory developments such as **rt* > *ṭ* and **rd* > *ḍ* (E.g. Kati *woṭ* and Waigalī *wāṭ* 'stone', but Skt.*varta*). Yet another linguistic feature suggesting a connection between Eastern Indo-Aryan and the Nūristānī and Dardic speeches is what appears to be the palatalization of the initial aspirated *dh* of PIE * *dhughater* 'daughter' at some remote period. Cf. Bengali *jhi*, Oriya *jhia* and Assamese *zi* 'daughter'. The Nūristānī speeches Baśgalī and Waigalī have *jūk* and *zū* respectively while among the Dardic speeches Khōwār has *zhūr*, Kalaṣa has *jhūr* and Gawar-Bātī has *zū*.

Khōwār is especially deserving of our consideration since anthropological evidence shows the speakers of this language, the Khōs of Chitral (Northern Pakistan) to be a decidedly brachycephalic folk [117] . This speech, although classed as a North-Western Indo-Aryan Dardic tongue, besides showing much in common with Nūristānī such as the preservation of the IE term for 'wasp' (Eg: Kho. *bispi*, Wai. *wašpik* and Bas.*wušpi*, all of which go back to PIE * *wespi* or **wobhse* as attested by L.*vespa,* OCS *osa* and O.Prus.*wobse)* also appears to have shared a common origin with the Eastern Iranian Ghalchah languages of the Pamirs [118], the speakers of which, such as the Wakhi and Sarikoli are also decidedly brachcycephalic. The speakers of another Dardic tongue, the Kashmiris, also appear to be a mesaticephalic folk, perhaps a

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[117] See Barua (1936)

[118] See LSI. Vol. 1 Pt 1. G.A. Grierson (1927). Says Grierson: "The Kāfir and Dard groups are much more nearly related to each other than either is to Khōwār" despite the fact that the last is found between the two other groups thrusting them apart. He notes: "The Khōwār language of the Chitral Valley – easily accessible from the Pāmīrs- has much closer connexion with the Ghalchah languages than have the other Dardic languages spoken in the more inaccessible Gilgit and Kafiristan". He however notes that in spite of its independent character "Khōwār is nowadays certainly a Dardic language, and cannot, like the Ghalchah languages, be classed as Eranian".

mixture of the Alpine folk of Central Asia and the Indo-Aryans of the Punjab, as contended by G.S.Ghurye [119].

Now it is well known that the Bengalis are a broad-headed people and it is probable that they derive from the Pamir Alpines as held by R. Chandra [120]. Besides Bengal, an Alpine infiltation also appears to have entered Gujarat. Anthropometric data indicates some affinity between the Nāgar Brahmans of Gujarat and the Kāyasthas of Bengal, suggesting a common origin of their brachycephaly (Sen. 1942). Besides, the Alpines of both Bengal and Gujarat are also characterized by leptorhinity (Chatterji. 1951). We would therefore probably have to agree with Chanda who argued that the peoples of both Bengal and Gujarat derived from a brachycephalic Pamirian race represented by the Galchas or Hill Tajiks of the Pamirs and the Tajiks of Turkestan, Khurasan and Afghanistan who were akin to the Alpine race of Europe. Chanda described this brachycephalic Homo Alpinus type as follows: "A white-rosy race, very brachycephalic, stature above the average, with thin prominent nose, varying from aquiline to straight, long. Oval face, hair brown, usually dark, always abundant and wavy, eyes medium".

As for linguistic evidence, Gujarāti is the only Aryan language other than the eastern languages, Nūristānī and Dardic to possess what appears to be a palatalized form of the IE term for daughter, namely *jhī*, which closely resembles such eastern forms as Bengali *jhi* and Oriya *jhia*. The peculiar Gujarati form *vāru* 'all right' may perhaps be connected to a similar form occurring in the extreme east-the Assamese *bāru* which is used in the same sense. Barua (1936) believes that the original Piśāchi of the western coast introduced by the Alpines became heavily Sanskritised due to the influence of Vedic Sanskrit in the region, so that in Gujarati just as in Bengali the overlay of Sanskrit has been so great that it is now difficult to trace its ancient Piśāchi origin .

Onomastics may also be taken into consideration here. D.R. Bhandarkar [121] postulates a racial connection between the Kāyasthas of Bengal and the Nāgar Brahmans of Bombay Gujarat on the basis that no less than ten of the thirteen *sarmans* or family names of the latter are found as surnames among the

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[119] Caste and Race in India (1932)

[120] The Indo-Aryan Races (1916)

[121] Foreign elements in the Hindu population. IA (1911)

former, corresponding to Datta, Gupta, Nandi, Ghosh, Śarmā, Dās, Barmā, Bhut, Mitra and Deb [122].

Chanda (1916) has suggested that when the Alpine migration arrived in India, they found the middle Gangetic plain in possession of the dolicocephalic Aryans; they therefore passed by and reached Orissa in the east and Kathiawar in the west, while Sen (1942) contends that it is not improbable that the broad-headed Alpine race proceeding through the north-western frontier of India at first deposited considerable settlements along the western coast from Gujarat to Coorg while at a later period others advanced through the Central Indian Plateau and made their way to Bengal. It is however more probable that the Alpines first entered Eastern India from the north-west (probably the vicinity of Chitral) while at a later date some made their way into Gujarat through the Central Indian Plateau. It is perhaps only such an explanation that could account for how both the Bengalis and Gujaratis possess similar *padavis* or surnames, especially since they represent name suffixes that are typically Brahmanical. Such *padavis* appear to have been acquired following the *Vrātyastoma* ceremony which we know took place not in Western, but in Eastern India.

Besides, anthropological evidence in connection with the distribution of the Alpine type in India also supports this view. Whereas brachycephaly in the west is mostly confined to a few isolated western regions in Gujarat and Coorg, it is much more pronounced in the east. Brachycephaly is indicated at Rewa in the Central Indian Plateau and the Gangetic valley areas including Bihar while its maximum strength is to be found in the Ganges delta (Sen. 1942). It is therefore easier to suppose that a group of Alpine folk broke away from the main Alpine body in the east and migrated westwards rather than suppose that a mass movement of Alpines from west to east took place.

How far we can connect this thesis to the two-invasion or multiple wave theory propounded by some scholars also remains to be seen. Rudolf Hoernle [123] basing his conclusions on the phonemic and morphological features that distinguished the Modern Indo-Aryan Vernaculars, postulated a distinction bwtween an inner and outer band of Aryan languages, which he termed

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[122] Also interesting is the fact that the Nāgar Brāhmaṇ sarman (family name) Deva (Bengali Deb) is a name suffix of Brāhmaṇs while Varman (Bengali Barma) is that of Kṣatriyas and Datta and Gupta those of Vaiśyas (see Bhandarkar. 1911). This would suggest that castes such as the Kāyasthas and Nāgar Brāhmaṇs represent a curious blend of Brāhmaṇic and non-Brāhmaṇic elements which would support our contention that these folk were sprung from the Vrātyas who at the time of the Vrātyatoma we may suppose were absorbed as different Aryan varnas depending on their social status at the time

[123] A Grammar of the Gaudian Languages (1880)

respectively, the Sauraseni Prakrit and the Magadhi Prakrit. He envisioned this situation coming about by assuming that the Magadhi Prakrit which had once been in close connection or even perhaps one tongue with Kafiri (Nūristānī), became separated at some remote time by the intrusion of the Sauraseni Prakrit, like a wedge, cleaving them asunder and gradually pushing the Magadhi further and farther away towards the east. It was from the second wave of Aryans speaking the Sauraseni tongue that Vedic literature had its origins. The inner band of MIAVs that had its origins in this intrusive speech, according to this theory, comprise of languages such as Pañjābi, Rājasthāni, Gujarāti and Hindī while the outer band includes Kāśmiri, Bihāri, Bengali, Oriya and Assamese.

George Grierson [124] who has expanded on Hoernle's theory, envisioned the Aryan invasion taking place over centuries in multiple waves, and taking the first and the last of suich waves as reference points, proposed that the earlier comers spoke a non-Sanskritic Indo-Aryan dialect and the new comers a Sanskritic one. The later invaders, he believes, forced their way to the Punjab which they wrested from the earlier settlers, pushing them to the surrounding areas. He infers that the tribes who composed this later invasion expanded as time went on, and thrust outwards in each direction the members of the earlier group. He also points out that the MIAVs fall into two main families, one of which is spoken in a compact tract of country, almost exactly corresponding to the ancient Madhyadesa (regarded by mediaeval Sanskrit geographers as the home of the Indo-Aryans) centred in modern-day Uttar Pradesh, and the other surrounding, commencing in Kashmir and running through the Western Punjab, Sind, Maharashtra, Orissa, Bihar, Bengal and Assam. These two areas, he holds, represent the offspring of the two waves of Aryan incursions.

We however believe that Grierson has overstated his point when he genetically connects the speakers of the two bands directly to the two invading groups, for it is possible that linguistic boundaries can change with time, which is to say that extensive linguistic or dialectal borrowings could obscure the boundaries between two given speeches over time, making it difficult to pinpoint exactly who its original speakers were. What is relevant to our discussion however is that there seem to have been two different waves of Aryan migrations into the subcontinent, the earlier of which we may perhaps connect to the Asuras and Vrātyas mentioned in Vedic and Brahmanical sources as being located to the east of the Madhyadeśa. That some of them at least were brachycephalic or broad-headed is quite likely.

Having cited considerable evidence to show that an Alpine immigration into Eastern India did actually take place at some remote period, we will now

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[124] The Imperial Gazetteer of India: The Indian Empire (1907-1909)

attempt to show how the Bengalis who would have originally belonged to a Central Asian Alpine stock have been modified in physical type due to miscegenation with Austro-Asiatic elements, namely, the Munda-speaking peoples of Eastern India.

We will first consider the cephalic indices of the two races that have contributed to the making of the Bengali type and show that the Bengali man represents a type intermediate between these two. The mean cephalic indices recorded for the Chitrali, Sarikoli, Mastuji and Wakhi are 80.26, 81.88, 80.57 and 84.81 respectively (Joyce 1912). The mean cephalic index recorded for the folk of Turfan is 85.07 and that for Khotan folk 84.21 (ibid.). The mean cephalic index given for the Ghalchah is 86 [125]. Thus the Central Asian Alpines are a decidedly brachycephalic folk.

The Munda-speaking folk on the other hand represent a decidedly dolicocephalic type. The mean cephalic indices for the Munda tribes has been given as 74.5 for the Munḍā, 74.4 for the Korwa , 74.5 for the Kharia and 76.0 for the Bhuiya [126].

The mean cephalic indices of the Bengali castes has been given as 78.7 for the Brahman, 78.2 for the Kāyastha, 77.6 for the Sadgop and 77.3 for the Goala (Risley. 1891), suggesting that this character has arisen from a combination of Alpine and Austro-Asiatic elements.

The same could be said of the nasal index. The mean nasal indices recorded for the Chitrali, Sarikoli, Mastuji and Wakhi are 64.27, 71.95, 72.54 and 71.32 respectively (Joyce. 1912).

The mean nasal indices for the Munda tribes has been given as 89.9 for the Munḍā, 92.5 for the Korwa ,88.5 for the Kharia and 88.7 for the Bhuiya (Risley. 1891).

The mean nasal indices of the Bengali castes has been given as 70.4 for the Brahman, 70.3 for the Kāyastha, 73. 9 for the Sadgop and 74. 2 for the Goala (ibid).

As for stature, which is however not a very reliable racial criterion, we find that the mean statures recorded for the Chitrali, Sarikoli, Mastuji and Wakhi are 168.45, 163.77, 166.61 and 168.00 cm respectively (Joyce. 1912).

The mean statures of the Munda tribes has been given as 158.9 for the Munḍā, 160.1 for the Kharia,157.7 for the Bhuiya and 159.2 for the Bhumij (Risley. 1891).

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[125] Mission Scientifique en Russie, Siberie, et dans le Turkestan. Vol. 1. Baron Mezö-Kövesd Ujfalvy

[126] The Tribes and Castes of Bengal. H.H. Risley Vol 1. (1891)

The mean statures of the Bengali castes have been given as 165.6 for the Brahman, 163.6 for the Kayastha, 163.3 for the Sadgop and 164.6 for the Goala (ibid).

Complexion, a very important racial character may also be taken into consideration in this connection. The skin colour of 100 per cent of Chitrali and Sarikoli, 95 per cent of Wakhi and 93 per cent of Mastuji have been described as rosy (Joyce. 1912). They are therefore a very fair-skinned race.

The Munda-speaking peoples on the other hand are relatively dark-skinned (usually of a deep chocolate brown hue). The Bengalis are generally of a light brown complexion, thus representing a type intermediate between the Alpine and Austro-Asiatic with regard to skin colour.

As for hair and eye colour, the occurrence of fair-medium hair and light eyes among the decidedly Alpine folk of Central Asia such as the Chitrali, Sarikoli, Mastuji and Wakhi and the folk of Khotan and Turfan (Joyce. 1912) would suggest that the Bengalis would have also possessed such characters.

However the absence of such characters among the modern-day Bengalis is easily explicable as there is evidence to show that fair hair tends to be recessive to dark hair and light eyes to dark eyes. Hereditary studies suggest that in the case of hair colour, the deeper shades of melanic pigment are dominant over the lighter [127], while in the case of eye-colour, a pigmented iris is dominant to a non-pigmented iris [128]. Thus, hair –and eye – colour, though excellent racial criteria, could be lost within a few generations due to miscegenation. The influence of climate also cannot be ruled out.

The origins of the Sinhalese nation

1) The linguistic and epigraphic evidence

We will hereunder cite linguistic evidence to show that the basic or inherited vocabulary of the Sinhalese, that is, the genuine core of the language, the indispensable stock of words of the large mass of the people, is an Indo-Aryan one having affinities with the Eastern Indo-Aryan speeches such as Bengali, Bihārī and Oriya. Sinhala, like the other Modern Indo-Aryan Vernaculars has evidently undergone two main stages before reaching its present state, viz. the Old Indo-Aryan stage and the Middle Indo-Aryan or Prakritic stage.

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[127] Heredity of hair colour in man. Davenport AS. April 1909

[128] Hurst (1908)

Though it is likely that Sinhala ultimately derives from an Old Eastern Indo-Aryan dialect closely akin to Vedic or Classical Sanskrit, it is fairly safe to assume that the forms as we have it in Sanskrit, save for a few exceptions, furnish us with the prototypes that would have ultimately developed into Sinhala due to its remarkably conservative character, even when compared to other ancient Indo-European languages.

However, in tracing the evolution of Sinhala, it is best that we designate the oldest attested forms from which Sinhala may be supposed to have derived, Old Indo-Aryan (OIA) which we shall represent by the Sanskrit. As for the intermediate Prakritic forms, this is to a large extent provided by Pāli, the liturgical language of the Buddhist clerical establishment. This highly conservative Prakritic speech has been largely preserved in ancient and mediaeval works compiled by the Buddhist clergy of India and Sri Lanka.

There has been some dispute as to the origin of Pāli. R.C. Childers [129] believes that Pāli was the spoken language of Magadha during the Buddha's time, though originally a "mere provincial idiom". Nilakanta Sastri [130] opines that although the earliest versions of the Buddhist canon were in the eastern dialect, the language lost the prestige attaching to it with the fall of the Mauryan empire, resulting in the discourses of the Buddha being rendered in the midland dialect as it prevailed in Mathura and Ujjain, thus becoming the Pāli canon. Since Pāli shares the characteristics of both Eastern and Western Prakritic speeches (e.g. the possession of *r* and *l* forms and the representation of Sanskrit *–kṣ* – by both- *kkh*-and *–cch*-), it is likely that it represents a Midland or Central Indian Prakrit.

Be it as it may, Pāli is a remarkably conservative and archaic Prakrit speech so that its forms may to a large extent be taken to represent the Prakritic prototype of Sinhala. Thus we shall term the Prakritic forms from which Sinhala evolved middle Indo-Aryan (MIA) which we shall represent by the Pāli. Following such a method is perhaps the safest means by which we can trace the evolution of Sinhala and avoid the pitfalls such a study not uncommonly entails.

We shall hereunder cite a few examples to show how Sinhala which is a New or Modern Indo-Aryan language has evolved from Middle and Old Indo-Aryan. For instance, Old Indo-Aryan forms had a profusion of *r* sounds, a feature that was modified in the Prakritic stage so that the cognate forms came to possess a repletion of conjunct consonants, a characteristic modified in Sinhala by simplification.

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[129] Preface to his dictionary of the Pāli language (1875)

[130] History of India , part 1(1953)

OIA *rāṣṭra* > MIA *raṭṭha* > Sinh. *raṭa* 'country'
OIA *mārga* > MIA *magga* > Sinh. *maga* 'path'
OIA *carma* > MIA *camma* > Sinh. *hama* 'skin'

Sinhala has also shortened the long vowels of Old and Middle Indo-Aryan:

OIA *dīrgha* > MIA *dīgha* > Sinh.*diga* 'long'

Other notable phonetic changes from Old and Middle Indo-Aryan include the de-aspiration of aspirated consonants:

OIA *sthāna* > MIA *thāna* > Sinh. *täna* 'place'

the change *p* > *v*:

OIA *dvīpa* > MIA *dīpa* > Sinh. *duva / diva(ina)* 'island'

and the sibilization of the palatal *c*, which later underwent aspiration:
Cf. OIA *candra* > MIA *canda* > Sinh. *haňda* 'moon'.

We will now consider the views of some past scholars with regard to the origins of Sinhala. The famous German philologist Max Müller was perhaps the first modern scholar who clearly suggested that Sinhala belonged to the Indo-European family of languages. Müller [131] proclaimed that "careful and minute comparison" had enabled him "to class the idioms spoken in Iceland and Ceylon as cognate dialects of the Aryan family of languages"[132]. James Alwis [133] suggested that Sinhala was an Aryan -and not a Dravidian- dialect, and derived from the Pāli or the Prakrit. He later elaborated on his thesis[134] and cited linguistic evidence to show that Sinhala was an Aryan language derived from Sanskrit and Pāli.

Alwis contended that Sinhala derived from Pāli through "that natural process of change which we see exemplified in Europe in the corruption of the Latin into the Italian and the French". He cited numeral terms, personal pronouns,

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[131] The Science of Language (1861)

[132] By Aryan, Müller means Indo-European

[133] On the 'origin of the Sinhalese language'. Read before the Royal Asiatic Society of Ceyon on 31st October 1863 and published in the JRAS. CB. 1865-66

[134] On the Origin of the Sinhala Language. JRAS. CB. 1867-70

body parts, kinship terms, etc, to prove his point. The German philologist Ernst Kuhn came closer to the truth. Kuhn in his treatise on the oldest Aryan element of the Sinhala vocabulary[135] traced the Indo-Aryan origins of Sinhala in a very scientific manner and formulated the etymological principles of the language. Prof. Kuhn held that the oldest elements of the greatly preponderating Aryan vocabulary of Sinhala "through their phonetic relations, exhibit, as the only possible basis, an old Prakrit dialect, which must have passed wholly and entirely through similar phonetic changes to the Pāli ". He also noted that a Prakritic dialect "represented substantially by the Pāli, really forms the basis of the Sinhalese".

Ancient epigraphic evidence clearly showed Sinhala to be an Aryan dialect. The country's first Archeological commissioner, the German Dr. Paul Goldschmidt [136], and following his death in 1877, his compatriot Edward Muller [137] proved beyond all doubt the Sinhala language to be an Aryan dialect, by the decipherment of some of the earliest extant Pre-Christian inscriptions in the country.

There has however been considerable dispute as to whether Sinhala derives from an Eastern or Western Indo-Aryan Prakrit Wilhelm Geiger, who once summarized his conclusions on Sinhala thus; "it is a purely Aryan dialect as is demonstrated by its linguistic history and constitutes a direct continuation of Pāli" [138], later revised this position in respect of the relationship between Pāli and Sinhala, contending that Sinhala originated from Western India. Geiger[139] held that it was a North-Western Indo-Aryan language that was originally spoken in Sri Lanka and that it was considerably influenced by later immigrants from North Eastern India who brought their own dialects to the country. Muhammad Shahidullah [140] held that Sinhala was derived from an old Rāḍha (West Bengal) dialect of the 6th century B.C. and cited linguistic evidence supporting his thesis.D.J. Wijayaratne [141] also cited evidence to show the close relationship of Sinhala with the Eastern Indo-Aryan languages.

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[135] Über den ältesten arischen bestandtheil des Sinhalesischen wortschatzes. SKBAW (1879)

[136] Report on the inscriptions found in the North-Central Province (1875)

[137] A Report on ancient inscriptions in the North-Western Province (1879)

[138] Singhalesisches. Gurupūjākaumudi. Festschrift. Albert Weber (1895)

[139] A Grammar of the Sinhalese Language (1938)

[140] The First Aryan colonization of Ceylon. IHQ (1933)

[141] History of the Sinhalese noun (1956)

Sukumar Sen [142] pointed out that the language of the early Sinhala inscriptions agreed to a large extent with the Eastern Prakrit dialect groups.

We will hereunder undertake a comprehensive linguistic study based largely on the contentions of the above mentioned scholars to show that the Sinhala language had its origins in Eastern India. Much of this can be inferred from a comparison of Sinhala Prakrit (i.e. Sinhala of the earliest attested Brahmi inscriptions of C. 3rd century B.C. – 4th century A.C.) with the Prakritic Asokan dialects in which the edicts of the Indian Mauryan Emperor Asoka were promulgated sometime during the 3rd century B.C.

As Prof. S.K. Chatterji [143] notes, it is very probable that the Middle Indo-Aryan (Prakrit) stage was arrived at in the Ganges valley earlier than it had manifested itself in the Panjab. This is borne out by the Western Asokan inscriptions such as at Shāhbāzgarhi, Mānsehra and Girnār, all of which retain a number of Old Indo-Aryan consonant combinations intact.

An important feature that Sinhala Prakrit shares with Eastern Asokan is the simplification of compound consonants or syllables containing the Old Indo-Aryan *r* :

Cf. Western Asokan (Girnār)	Eastern Asokan (Jaugaḍa)
prāna	*pānā* '(animal) life'
sarva	*sava* 'all'

It is evident here that the cognate Old Sinhala *sav* 'all' and modern Sinhala *pana* 'life' agree with the eastern forms.

Sinhala also shares the characteristic of representing the OIA *jñ* by the dental *n* in common with the Eastern Asokan dialects. Whereas in the western dialects (Girnār, Shāhbāzgarhi) the OIA *jñ* and *ny* become the palatal nasal *n*, the eastern dialects (Dhauli-Jaugaḍa, Kālsi) represent these by the dental nasal *n*. Cf. Eastern Asokan (Dhauli) *nāti* and *aṁna* occurring for the Sanskrit *jñāti* 'kinsman' and *anya* 'other' respectively (P. *ñāti* and *aññā* respectively), its equivalents in Western Asokan (Girnār) being *ñāti* and *[a]ña* respectively. Its Sinhala equivalents are *nā̃* and *an* respectively.

Another characteristic that connects Old Sinhala with Māgadhī and the Eastern Asokan dialects of Kālsī, Dhaulī and Jaugaḍa is the nominative singular ending – *e* in the case of masculine and neuter nouns. This is very evident in the earliest Sinhala Brahmi inscriptions (3rd century B.C - 2nd century A.C.). Cf. *pute* 'son' (P.*putto*), *lene* 'cave' (P. *lenaṁ*) and *dane* 'gift'

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[142] Comparative Grammar of Middle Indo-Aryan (1960)

[143] The tertiary stage of Indo-Aryan. PTSAIOC

(P. *dānaṁ*). These may be compared with the characteristically eastern forms possessing the nom. sg. ending –e of masc. and neu. nouns such as Asokan *acariye* and *upāsake*, Ardha-Māgadhī *putte* and *thane* and such forms as *devadine* and *lupadakhe* occurring in the Jogimāra inscription of the Sirguja district in Chota Nagpur assigned to C. 3rd century -2nd century B.C. In the Prakrits, whereas the nominative singular of masculine *a* – bases end in *e* in the east, they end in *o* in the west. Cf. Māgadhī *pulise* 'a man' but Śauraseni *puriso*.

Wijayaratne (1956) has quite correctly suggested that the earliest inscriptional Sinhala appears to have possessed grammatical gender consisting of two classes, viz. masculine – neuter and feminine, and observes that it resembles Ardha-Māgadhī and that form of Asokan which Prof. A.C. Woolner [144] describes as Eastern. As Wijayaratne notes, the tradition of the merging of the neuter nominative singular with the masculine nominative singular in –e found in the Eastern Asokan and also in dialectal forms of Ardha-Māgadhī and Māgadhī is fully in evidence in early inscriptional Sinhala. He cites such instances as *Bahike*, *Puśagute*, *Tise* (all proper names), *pute* 'son' – *raje* 'king', *amete* 'minister' occurring in the early inscriptions (C. 1st century B.C. – 2nd century A.C.) for animate nouns and *dane* 'gift', *lene* 'cave' and *senasane* 'lodging' (C. 3rd century B.C. – 1st century A.C.) for inanimate nouns. Geiger (1938) has us believe that the termination – *e* to be a 'Magadhism' "brought to Ceylon by immigrants who came from Eastern India", which is however not at all convincing.

Another ancient dialectal feature shared by Sinhala Prakrit with Eastern Prakrit is the concurrent occurrence of the genitive singular terminations *a-śa* and *a-ha*. As noted by Wijayaratne (1956), the occurrence of *a-śa* and *a-ha* side by side from the earliest times in the ancient Sinhala inscriptions bears a remarkable likeness to the Māgadhī *-a-śśa* and *-a- ha*. Geiger describes *–asa* and *–aha* as 'Magadhisms' in his Sinhalese Grammar, which again is not convincing. Further, as pointed out by Wijayaratne, the locative *–śi* in early inscriptional Sinhala is connected with a cognate form occurring in the eastern dialect of Asokan. This locative *–śi* (as occurring in such forms as *gamaśi* 'in the village', *nagaraśi* 'in the city') occurring from the 3rd century B.C. closely resembles the - *si* occurring in the Dhauli Jaugaḍa *olodhanasi gabhāgalasi vacasi* and not the – *mhi* of the Girnār *orodhanamhi gabhāgaramhi vacamhi* nor the – *spi* of the Shāhbāzgarhi *orodhanaspi grabhāgāraspi vracaspi*. Whereas it is the form – *si* that occurs in Eastern Asokan, the typical forms of

[144] Asoka Text and Glossary (1924)

Western Asokan are – *e* and – *mhi* and Northwestern Asokan – *e*, - *si* and – *spi*.

Sinhala also agrees with the Eastern Asokan in having undergone a greater degree of retroflexion as noted by Shahidullah [145]. As shown by M.A.Mehendale in his study of early inscriptional Prakrits [146] the retroflexion of dentals in the environment of *r* is predominant in the eastern inscriptions and the western dialect is the least affected by retroflexion. This is very evident when we consider the Asokan development of the Old Indo-Aryan *ṛ* where we find that words where the vowel *a* has developed from the OIA *ṛ*, followed by an original dental surd turned into a retroflex surd, are Magadhan [147]. Cf. Skt. *kṛta* 'done'; where Girnār has *kata* and Dhauli *kaṭa*. Now it is very evident that it is the eastern form (whose dental *t* has undergone retroflexion) as found in Dhauli that has given rise to the Sinhala *kaḷa* 'done'. The same could be said of the Sinhala *maḷa* 'dead' (Skt. *mṛta*, P. *mata*). The intermediate form between the eastern Prakritic *ṭ* and the Sinhala *ḷ* was very likely * *ḍ* as is found in modern Bengali *maḍā* 'dead'. Shahidullah (1962) also cites a number of other Sinhala words which have undergone retroflexion and therefore agree with Eastern Indo-Aryan. For instance, he connects the Sinh. *māṭi* 'earth' (Skt.*mṛttikā*) with Bengali and Oriya *māṭi*, whereas Marathi has *mātī*. He also connects Sinhala *toṭa* 'ford' (Skt. *tīrtha*, P.*tittha*) with the Oriya *tuṭha*.

Further, as observed by Shahidullah (1962), the fact that in Old Sinhala, the palatal *ś* is often written instead of the dental *s* is proof of its eastern origin. In Old Indo-Aryan (Sanskrit), there existed three sibilants, namely, the dental sibilant (*s*), the palatal sibilant (*ś*) and the lingual sibilant (*ṣ*). In Pāli, the three sibilants of Old Indo-Aryan are represented by the dental *s*. However, in the vast majority of the earliest Brahmi inscriptions in Sinhala Prakrit (C. 3rd century B.C. – 1st century A.C.), we find the palatal *ś* figuring as the regular sibilant even in words whose Sanskritic or Prakritic equivalents show a dental *s*. Cf. *śaga* 'Order of Buddhist monks'occurring for the Sanskrit *saṁgha* and Pāli *saṅgha*. It was in later times that the palatal was reduced to a dental sibilant. The dental *s* occurs regularly after the 2nd century A.C. until the influence of Sanskrit in later times. The propensity for the palatal sibilant is probably not a graphical peculiarity and it is likely that as noted by S.

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[145] The origin of the Sinhalese Language. JRAS.CB (1962)

[146] Historical Grammar of Inscriptional Prakrits (1948)

[147] Linguistic Notes on the Shahbazgarhi and Mansehra redaction. Truman Michelson. AJP (1909)

Paranavitana [148], the palatal *ś* was predominant in the oldest stage of the language as testified by the inscriptions, and was by degrees ousted altogether by the dental.

Although all the three OIA sibilants (*s*, *ś* and *ṣ*) have seemingly become dental *s* in the dialects of Dhauli and Jaugaḍa, this may be merely graphical as there is evidence to show that Eastern Asokan *s* was pronounced rather like a palatal sibilant, showing that in the third century B.C. Māgadhī did possess the sound *ś* [149]. The palatal *ś* also occurs in the Jogimāra inscription of C. 3rd century B.C. – 2nd century B.C. Bhāsa's Māgadhī (2nd – 3rd Century A.C) also commonly replaces the OIA *s* and *ṣ* by *ś*. To this day, there exists no dental *s* in the pure Bengali language, its place being taken by the palatal *ś*. As for Bihārī, although it is the dental *s* that is used today, this appears to have been a later development as the *dantya* (dental) *s* pronounced by Biharis is written as the *talavya* (palatal) *ś* in the Kaithi script, suggesting that it was the palatal sibilant that was formerly used. It is therefore very evident that the *ś* of our early inscriptions is due to Eastern Indian influence.

Further, as pointed out by Shahidullah (1962), the Sinhala *api* 'we' and *topi* 'you' evidently derive from the *aphe* and *tuphe* found in Eastern Asokan (Dhauli and Jaugaḍa).The Sanskrit equivalents of these forms are *asmad* and *tvam* and their Pāli equivalents *amhe* and *tuvaṁ*. Gujarātī has *ame* and *tume* while Hindī has *ham* and *tum*. The modern Bengali forms *āmrā* and *tomrā* appear to have derived from the west.

Shahidullah also cites the case of the Sinhala *hiṭ* 'to stand' and *dak* 'to see' which agree with the Eastern Asokan *ciṭh* and *dakh* respectively, the Western Asokan forms being *tiṣṭ* and *paś* respectively. The Sinhala terms *hiṭinna* and *hiṭa* (as in *hiṭa-ganna*) 'to stand' are evidently a regular development from the Pkt. *ciṭṭha* 'to stand', which seems to have been originally confined to the eastern parts of India, its Sanskrit and Pāli equivalents being *tiṣṭhati* and *tiṭṭhati* respectively. The form with *c* is attested in the Asokan inscriptions of the east and in inscriptions which have come under the influence of the eastern dialects. Cf. Dh. Man. Ka. *ciṭha*, but Gir. *tiṣṭa*, Shb. *tiṭha*. Although the form with *c* is found in all the major Middle Indo-Aryan dialects except Pāli, from Ardha-Māgadhī in the east to Kharoṣṭhī in the west, this seems to have found its way into the western languages subsequent to the Asokan inscriptions [150]. A similar development appears to have taken place with the Sinh. *sahinava* 'to chip, pare' (Skt. *takṣati*) and Sinh. *his* 'empty' (Skt. *tuccha*). Sinhala *hoṭa*

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[148] Inscriptions of Ceylon. Vol. 1 (1970)

[149] See The dialects in which the Buddha preached. K.R. Norman. Die Sprache der Ältesten Buddhistischen Überlieferung (1980)

[150] See Some 'unusual' sound changes in Prakrit. L.A. Schwarzschild. JAOS. Jan-March 1972.

'beak, bill' (Skt. *cañcu*) also agrees with the eastern (Oriya and Bengali) *cōṭ* rather than the western (Hindī and Marāṭhī) *cōc*.

Shahidullah is perhaps also correct in connecting the Sinhala numeral *tuna* 'three' (Old Sinh. *tini*) with eastern forms such as Bengali and Nepali *tin* and Oriya and Assamese *tini* which are very much similar to one another than they are to western forms such as Gujarātī *trin* and Sindhi *tre*. Such differences are evident from at least Asokan times where we have the eastern *tiṁni* in contrast to the western *tri* and *ti*. The Sinhala term for 'twelve' *doḷaha* (Skt. *dvadaśa*, P. *dvādasa*) also suggests an eastern origin. The term occurs as *doḷasa* around the 3rd century and as *doḷos* around the 10th century.Although in the Eastern Asokan dialects of Dhauli and Jaugaḍa, the corresponding form appears as *duvādasa*, we find the form *du[v]āḍasa* occurring in the Kālsī dialect. It is only such a form as that of Kālsī which has undergone retroflexion that could have given rise to the Sinhala *doḷaha* The Sinhala form could certainly not have arisen from a form such as the Girnār *dbādasa*.

Shahidullah also cites the Sinhala term for 'river' as evidence that the "original speakers of Sinhalese came from a country near the Ganges". The Sinhala term *gaṅga* which denotes 'river' in general and not specifically the Ganges would suggest that the early Sinhalese originated from the Gangetic plains of Bengal. In Sanskrit and Pāli, *gaṅgā* specifically means the river Ganges, the general term for 'river' being *nadi*. In Sinhala, however, the cognate *gaṅga* has come to assume the meaning of 'river'. Such a designation would have no doubt been familiar to those early settlers from the Gangetic regions, especially the Ganges delta where the many branches of the Ganges would have been known by one and the same appellation, viz. *gaṅgā*. It is therefore not surprising that in Sinhala and Bengali, terms derived from *gaṅgā* should have been synonymous with river.To this day, the Bengali term for 'river' is *gāṅg* while in Sinhala we have evidence to show that the term has been in existence since ancient times. For instance, the Mōlāhiṭiyavelēgala inscription of king Abaya (C. 1st century B.C. – 1st Century A.C.) alludes to an area named *ataragaga* (lit. between the two gangas), evidently referring to the area between the Mahaväli river and Māduru Oya. It is also possible that Sinh. *doḷa* 'stream' is related to such peculiar Bengali terms like *jola*, *joli*, *joṭa*, *joṭikā* meaning 'channel, water course, river, water' etc, which occur as suffixes of place-names.

Sinhala Prakrit also shares with Eastern Indo-Aryan, the absence of the retroflex *ḷ* Vedic *ḷ* an *ḷh* are represented in Classical Sanskrit (which was greatly influenced by the Old Indo-Aryan speech of the Madhya-desa and Eastern India) as *ḍ* and *ḍh* respectively. This has been attributed to the absence of *ḷ* and *ḷh* in the more easterly parts of India, especially in the region of the Ganges. This characteristic is also found in Sinhala Prakrit. Cf. Sinh. Pkt. *cuḍa*

'little' as in *Cuḍa – Naga* 'little Naga' (P. *Cūḷa-Nāga*) and *dameḍa* 'Tamil' (P. *damiḷa*). The modern Sinhala derivatives from these forms are *suḷu* and *demaḷa* respectively, the change *ḍ* > *ḷ* having been effected in the language by around the 3rd century A.C.

Another feature that Sinhala shares with the Eastern Indo-Aryan speeches is the preservation of what appears to be a palatalized form of the IE term for daughter [151]. This is borne out by O. Sinh. *jhita* 'daughter' which occurs for instance in a Vessagiri cave inscription of C. 2nd century B.C. The inscription in Brahmi characters reads *aya abayaśa jhita abi anuradi* (Princess Anuradi, the daughter of the Prince Abaya). This *jhita* is no doubt related to the Bengali *jhi*, Oriya *jhia* and Assamese *zī* 'daughter'. The term also occurs as *jita* in the Timbirivāva rock inscription of C. 4th century A.C. It is probably this that evolved into the modern Sinhala *duva* or *diyani* and South Divehi *diye*. Although it is true that a cognate palatalized form is found in a notable western Indo-Aryan speech, namely Gujarātī (in the form *jhī*), this appears to be a survival of our postulated Alpine migration from Eastern to Western India. The palatalized forms are largely confined to the Eastern Indo-Aryan speeches. Among the Bengali dialects alone, the form *jhi* occurs in the South-Western, South-Eastern and Chakma dialects while in the Haijong dialect of Mymensingh which has turned the IA *j* into *z* we find the form *zhiu* [152].

Geiger (1938) has attempted to connect Sinhala to the western group of Indo-Aryan languages on the basis of its preservation of the Old Indo-Aryan initial *v*. The Western MIAVs such as Marāṭhī, Gujarātī, Kāśmirī and Sindhī have preserved the OIA initial *v* in contrast to the Eastern MIAVs or those languages that have come under eastern influence such as Hindī, Bengali, Bihārī and Oriya which have turned it into *b*. In this respect Sinhala resembles the western group:

Cf. Sinh.*val*'hair'(as in *as-val* 'horse-hair) with Skt.P.*vāla* and Guj.*vāḷ* but H.Bg. *bāl*. Also Cf. *vama* 'left' with Skt.P.*vāma* and Guj.M.*vām* but Or.Bg.*bāṁ*

The OIA *v* occurring in other positions was also preserved in Sinhala in common with the Western MIAVs:
Cf. O.Sinh.*sav/hav*'all' with Skt.*sarva* and Guj.*sav*, but H.Bg.*sab*

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[151] Although Shahidullah (1933) who connected these forms believed that they arose as a result of the palatalization from *dhītā*, it is more likely that such a process took place in a much older form as seen earlier.

[152] See LSI Vol..V, Pt.1. Ed. G.A. Grierson (1903)

Also compare Sinh. *nivanna* 'to extinguish' with Skt.*nirvāna* and M. *nivānem.* We find that even in Pāli the term finds expression as *nibbāna* suggesting that in certain positions the change of *v* > *b* is quite ancient.

Geiger (1938) states that the beginnings of the change must be sought for in the Middle Indian period "While in the west the pronunciation of initial *v* remained unaltered, it gradually changed in the Eastern Provinces, though the change was not recorded in the inscriptions. We know, for one thing, that script is nearly always behind the development of the spoken language. If Bengali were the parent of Sinhalese we fail to understand why the latter did not share the development of the former although there was always a lively intercourse between Ceylon and Bengal. But the subject is clear if we suggest that later immigrants coming from an Eastern Province met in Ceylon with the old pronunciation of the sound *v* and simply adopted it".

However, as pointed out by Dr. Shahidullah (1962), the change *v* > *b* is later than the separation of Sinhala from the parent speech. The change of initial or non-initial *v* > *b* is not even attested in the Asokan inscriptions of Dhauli, Jaugaḍa and Kālsī which are distinctly eastern dialects. Thus we would have to conclude that the change *v* > *b* took place in Eastern India after the separation of Sinhala from the parent speech.

Another feature of Sinhala that would at first glance suggest some connection with the Western Indo-Aryan speeches is the preservation of the Prakritic *c* (< OIA *kṣ*) in the form *s* especially since there seems to have been a dialectal division in the Asokan inscriptions of those words derived from OIA *kṣ*, *-ch* - in the west and *–kh-* in the east [153].

Cf. Sinh. *äsa* 'eye' (P. *acchi*, Skt. *akṣi*)
käsa 'armpit' (P.*kacchā*, Skt.*kakṣā*)
kusa 'womb' (P. *kucchi*, Skt. *kukṣi*)
mässā 'fly' (P. *macchika*, Skt. *makṣika*)

However, the fact is that forms with *k* (< OIA *kṣ*) are no less common.

O.Sinh. *ak* 'eye' (P. *akkhi*, Skt. *akṣi*)
Sinh.*uk* 'sugar cane' (P. *ucchu*, Skt. *ikṣu*)
aka 'axle' (P.*akkha*, Skt.*akṣa*)
mäkkā 'fly' in *balu-mäkkā* 'flea' lit'dog-fly' (P.*makkhika*,Skt. *makṣika*)

It would appear that either the parent Prakrit speech of Sinhala possessed a mixture of both *c*-and *k*- forms due to some remote western dialectal influence

[153] See La formation de la Langue Marathi. Jules Bloch (1920)

or that the *c-* forms arose as a result of the immigration of a Western Indo-Aryan folk subsequent to the Eastern Indo-Aryan colonization. Dialectal intermixture in this connection is not unknown even in Asokan. Although OIA *kṣ* invariably becomes *kh* in Dhauli-Jaugaḍa and *ch* in Mānsehra there do exist instances where this isogloss has been transgressed in Asokan itself and in so ancient a language like Pali we find both forms occurring, showing that such dialectal mixture was a very ancient feature of the linguistic landscape of that part of the subcontinent.

In Eastern MIAVs such as Bengali and Oriya we find forms with *ch* such as *machi* 'fly' while in Western MIAVs like Sindhī and Pañjābī we find forms with *kh* such as *makhi* and *makkh* 'fly' respectively. Interestingly, Sinhala *äsa* 'eye' has preserved the vestige of a *c*-form found only in a limited number of Aryan languages, namely the Dardic languages (Eg.Ksm.*achi*, Kalāsā *ech* and Khowar *ec*) which are absent in the MIAVs (E.g.Si.*akhi*, Guj.H. *ākh*, Bg.*ākhi*, Nep.*ākho*). In the ancient Brāhmī inscriptions in Sinhala Prakrit we come across many instances of personal names which have apparently derived from OIA forms with *kṣ* having *c* (*Cema*, *Lacī*) as well as *k* (*aka* in *Macaka*, *Raka*). It is however a *k-* form that occurs as the oldest attested Sinhala noun deriving from OIA *kṣ*. viz. *laka* 'hundred thousand' (Skt. *lakṣa*) which occurs in an ancient Brāhmī inscription in the compound form *nava-laka* 'nine hundred thousand'.

Another problem that has to be dealt with is the preservation in Sinhala of the OIA semi-vowel *r* which occurs in Eastern Prakrit (e.g. Māgadhī) as the semi-vowel *l*. Compare Sinh.Pkt. *rajha* and O. Sinh. *rada* 'king' (Skt. P. *rāja*) with Gir. *rājā* where Ka. and Dh.-Jau. show *lājā*. However as suggested earlier, such *l*-forms would have existed only in a particular eastern dialect or group of dialects and may not have been characteristic of the eastern group as a whole. Even if it were, many such forms would have been superseded by the *r*-forms derived from Vedic Sanskrit by the early Prakritic period. We find that in the Mysore Asokan edicts (Brahmagiri, Śiddapura and Jatiṅga-Ramēśvara) which otherwise strongly resemble the Magadha dialect, it is the *r-* forms that occur. The same could be said of the Yerragudi inscription in the Kurnool district. Even in modern Eastern Indo-Aryan languages like Bengali, it is the *r*-forms rather than those with *l* that survive. Shahidullah (1933) holds that the fact that the Sinhala *r* has not become *l* is in favour of his supposition that the first Aryan colonization originated from Rāḍha or West Bengal since in that dialect as also in Standard Bengali, Assamese and Oriya, the Old Indo-Aryan *r* is never replaced by *l*.

At the same time, however, we should remember that the MV calls Rāḍha Lāḷa suggesting that this country was probably earlier known as Lāḍha and it is not unlikely that at an earlier period, before Sanskritic influence took place, the

language of this eastern region was characterized by an *l*-dialectal form which would have possibly have been the case even at the time Sinhala branched off from it, in which case we may suppose that there was considerable dialectal variation within it with both *l*- and *r*-forms co-existing side by side at that point of time which would explain why Sinhala has forms with *r*. What we must also remember is that the name of one's native place cannot be as easily changed as a word such as for 'king' and the fact that both the Mahāvaṁsa and the Dīpavaṁsa have preserved an appellation for the country of origin of the Sinhalese beginning with *l* (Lāḷa) rather than *r*, gives this view added credibility. We also find that there exist a number of widely established *l*-forms in Sinhala such as *lē* 'blood' where both Sanskrit and Pāli have the dual forms *rohita/lohita*, and *lom* 'wool' 'hair', 'fur' where Sanskrit has the dual forms *roman/loman* and Pali the forms *roma/loma*. This would suggest that Sinhala has in some instances preserved the hypothesized *l*-forms of its Eastern Indian parent language.

Thus all the available epigraphic and linguistic evidence bearing on the origins of the Sinhala language leads us to but one conclusion, and that is that Sinhala belongs to the eastern group of Indo-Aryan languages and shows affinities especially with Bengali and Oriya.

II) The historical, geographical and anthropological evidence

According to the Mahāvaṁsa (lit. Great Chronicle or Dynasty), a 5th century chronicle of Sinhalese royalty written in the Pāli language, the early Sinhalese settlers led by the legendary prince Vijaya hailed from the Lāḷa country or present-day West Bengal, i.e. that region today known to the Bengalis as Rāḍh.

Despite the clear evidence in favour of an Eastern Indian origin for the Sinhalese in the chronicle, a school of thought favouring a Western Indian origin for the race has arisen among a good number of scholars. H.W. Codrington [154], S.K. Chatterji [155], Wilhelm Geiger [156], A.L. Basham [157] and S. Paranavitana [158] have all held that the first Sinhalese settlers hailed from

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[154] A Short History of Ceylon (1926)

[155] The Origin and Development of the Bengali Language (1926)

[156] A Grammar of the Sinhalese Language (1938)

[157] Prince Vijaya and the Aryanisation in Ceylon CHJ. Vol. I (1952)

[158] Aryan Settlements and the early kings of Ceylon. CHC (1961)

Western or North-Western India. The arguments of the theorists of the West India school, save for W. Geiger (1938) have been mainly based on historical and geographical grounds. The contentions of the theorists of the East India school such as Dr. E. Muller [159], M Shahidullah [160], P.B.F. Wijeratne [161], D.J. Wijayaratne [162] and S. Sen [163] have, on the other hand, been based mainly on linguistic and epigraphic evidence.

We will hereunder recapitulate the Mahāvaṁsa story relating to the origins and settlement of the Sinhalese in Sri Lanka, and having considered the relative veracity of the chronicle with regard to the origins of the race, get on with demolishing the West India hypothesis in favour of an Eastern Indian origin for the Sinhalese on historical and geographical grounds. We will also be considering the Vijaya legend as occurring in a still earlier work, the Dīpavaṁsa (C. 4th –5th century A.C.) which however is not as detailed as the MV.

The essence of the story as related in the MV is as follows:

A certain king of Vaṅga who had his capital in the city of Vaṅga (*Vangesu Vaṅga nagare Vaṅgarāja ahu*) has a very beautiful and exceedingly lustful daughter by his wife, a princess of Kaliṅga (*Kaliṅgaranno dhītasī mahesī tassa rājino*). Desiring to live an independent life, the girl joins a caravan proceeding to Magadha (*agā Magadha-gāminā*) and arrives in the Lāḷa country (*Lāḷa raṭṭhe*) where a lion attacks the party in a forest (*aṭaviya*). The lion, having been aroused by the princess, carries her off to his cave and mates with her. The couple have twins, a son named Sīhabāhu and a daughter Sīhasīvalī. The boy, when he grows up escapes with his mother and sister to a border-village (*paccanta gāmam*) where they meet the general of the Vaṅga king in charge of the frontier territory (*paccanta-sādhane*). The general, who is the son of the maternal uncle of the princess (*mātulassa suto*) marries her and takes her with him to Vaṅga. The lion, enraged at the stealthy departure of his offspring, ravages the countryside, as a result of which the Vaṅga king offers Sīhabāhu the Lāḷa country for its capture. Sīhabāhu, having confronted the lion and slain him, proceeds to Vaṅga to claim the reward but finds that the king had died seven days earlier. The king's ministers, delighted with Sīhabāhu's deed and on hearing that he is the late king's grandson, offer the kingdom to

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[159] Contributions to Siṁhalese Grammar. IA (1882)

[160] The first Aryan colonisation of Ceylon. IHQ (1933)

[161] Phonology of the Sinhalese Inscriptions (1944)

[162] History of the Sinhalese noun (1956)

[163] Comparative Grammar of Middle Indo-Aryan

him, which he accepts but subsequently cedes to his step-father. Returning to the land of his birth, Lāḷa, with his sister, Sīhabāhu establishes villages and a city by the name of Sīhapura and having made Sīhasīvalī his chief consort sires 16 pairs of twin sons. His eldest son, Vijaya is in due course appointed sub-king (*uparāja*) but on account of his wicked deeds, is placed on a ship along with his 700 followers and banished. The same is done with the women and children of the party. The children land at Naggadīpa and the women at Mahilādīpa. The men disembark at Suppāraka and following a brief stay, embark and land in Lanka where they go on to establish the first Sinhalese city state – Tambapanni. Settlements are also built by Vijaya's followers, one city (Vijita-Nagara) and four villages (viz. Anurādhagāma, Upatissagāma, Ujjeni and Uruvela). After having vanquished the Yakkhas and repudiated his Yakkha mistress named Kuveni, Vijaya, as well as his followers obtain brides from the Pāṇḍya country in South India. Vijaya, having abandoned his former evil way of life, reigns righteously for 38 years at Tambapanni and is succeeded by his nephew Paṇḍuvāsudeva, the youngest son of his twin brother Sumitta, who arrives in the country with 32 followers from Sīhapura. Paṇḍuvāsudeva, having espoused a Sakya princess named Bhaddakaccānā reigns for 30 years and is succeeded by his descendants. Thus is established the Sinhalese royal line.

In the Dīpavaṁsa , however, we find that the Vijayan episode is devoid of much of the fanciful elements found in the Mahāvaṁsa . The DV describes Sīhabāhu as the son of Sīha of Lāḷa by Susimā of Vaṅga and unlike the MV, does not attribute to Sīha the characteristics of a lion. Although it is true that the work states that the princess cohabited with a lion dwelling in the wilderness (*vanagocaraṁ sīhasaṁvāsam*), it also adds that the father of Sīhabāhu was called the lion (*Sīhasavhayo*), implying that this Sīha was not necessary the beast but probably a man of leonine disposition.

The DV also makes no mention of Sīhabāhu's visit to Vaṅga, his mother's marriage with its king's general, Sīha's destructive deeds in that country and their sequel, and Sīhabāhu's temporary occupation of its throne.It merely states that Sīhabāhu, having departed from his cave when his sixteenth year had elapsed built a most excellent town called Sīhapura. Besides, unlike the MV which attributes to Sīhasīvalī the female sex, the DV states that Sīhabāhu and Sīvalī were beautiful youths (*kumārā cārudassana*). The work also makes no mention of the struggle against the Yakkhas, Vijaya's union with Kuveni or the matrimonial alliance with the Pāṇḍyans. Besides, the DV, unlike the MV, does not precisely date Vijaya's arrival in the country on the day of the Buddha's death and states in a somewhat more general way that Vijaya landed in Laṅkādīpa at the time of the *parinibbāna* of the Buddha (*parinibbānasamaye*). The rest of the narrative is similar to the MV story. The

geographical evidence that may be adduced from the DV account, viz. the references to the daughter of the Vaṅga King (*Vaṅgarājassāyam dhītā*) cohabiting with a lion dwelling in the wilderness and Sīhabāhu ruling over a great kingdom in Lāḷa raṭṭha in the most excellent town of Sīhapura, would appear to corroborate the geographical details of the MV account which point to Eastern India as the place of origin of the early Sinhalese settlers.

Before we proceed any further to delve at length on the matter, it is thought here necessary to discuss the veracity of the chronicles. With regard to the authorship of the MV, the commentary of the Mahāvaṁsa, the Vaṁsatthappakāsini (C. 8th – 13th century) has it that it was written by Mahānāma, a monk residing at the Mahāparivena built by the commander Dīghasanda. According to the Cūlavaṁsa, this same Mahānāma was king Dhātusena's uncle (i.e. mother's brother) and was offered the pabbata Vihāra at Sīhagiri by King Moggallāna I, so that the composition of the MV could be roughly assigned to the 5th century A.C. As for the Dīpavaṁsa which is of anonymous authorship, it was probably written as contended by Hermann Oldenberg [164] between the beginning of the fourth, and the first third of the fifth century A.C; at any rate before the composition of the MV. The DV, like the MV ends with the death of King Mahāsena (C.274-301 A.C.) . It is nevertheless likely that both the works derive from the same source. viz. the Sīhalaṭṭhakathā – Mahāvaṁsa which was probably composed in the Sinhala language and which is now lost to us [165] .

The DV however appears to have preserved a more factual recollection of the original foundation legend of the Sinhalese than the MV. The MV on the other hand appears to have been somewhat subject to what may be termed poetic embellishment, especially in the case of the Vijayan episode and those portions immediately following it. We would certainly have to agree with Oldenberg (1879) who avers that while the DV is more faithful to the original, the MV had proceeded "*with much greater independence and perfect literary mastership*". As noted by Oldenberg: "*The Dîpavaṃsa, as regards its style and its grammatical peculiarities, betrays the characteristics of an age in which the Sinhalese first tried to write in the dialect of the sacred texts brought over from India; there are passages in the Dîpavaṃsa which remind us of the first*

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[164] Introduction to the Translation of the Dipavamsa (1879)

[165] According to the Vaṁsatthappakāsini, the Mahāvaṁsa was based on the Sīhalaṭṭhakathā, composed formerly in the Sinhala language (*pubba-Sihabhasikaya Sihalatthakathaya*) and as noted by Oldenberg (1879), the fact that both chronicles, the MV and DV should end with the death of King Mahasena is nothing but a consequence of the two works being derived form the same source.

clumsy attempts of the ancient German tribes to write Latin". "*The Mahâvaṃsa is composed very differently; its author masters the Pali grammar and style with a perfect ease which cannot have been acquired but after many fruitless attempts, and which may be compared with the elegant mastership of Latin composition by which the Italian poets and scholars of the renaissance excelled*".

As for the veracity of the chronicles, it must be said that the Vijayan legend is remarkably brazen for an origin legend of a race, considering the elements of nymphomania, bestiality, incest, parricide and infidelity that figure in it. Although there is certainly an element of bias in the chronicles with regard to religious matters, the same cannot be said of temporal events. For instance, the MV's emphasis on the just rule of the Dravidian usurper King Eḷāra before his death at the hands of prince Duṭṭhagāmani in single combat – in sharp contrast to the evil deeds attributed to such Sinhalese monarchs like Coranāga – speaks well of the veracity of the chronicle with regard to temporal matters. Not so religious matters. Indeed so vindictive is the author of the MV that he even goes to the extent of passing judgement on the fates of men in the afterlife. For instance, when he declares that Duṭṭhagāmani departed to the Tusita-heaven and Coranāga was reborn in the Lokantarika hell.

There however does seem to have been some interpolation in the Vijayan legend, which appears to have been influenced to some extent by the Buddhist Jātaka tales. G.C. Mendis [166] mentions three Jātaka stories that may have possibly influenced the local chronicles.

1) The Padakusalamānava Jātaka – where there is reference to a mare-faced Yakkhini who attacks a caravan and carries away a handsome Brāhman youth, whom she keeps prisoner. The son of the couple, when grown up, escapes with his father to the haunts of men.

2) The Cetiya Jātaka –where a Brāhman tells the third prince: "you leave by the west gate and go straight on till you see a maned lion; that will be the sign that you are to lay out a city there and dwell in it; and it shall be called Sihapura".

3) The Ghata Jātaka – where a king's nephews rouse the anger of the people by committing wicked deeds.

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[166] The Vijaya legend. PFV (1965)

Mendis also cites other Jātaka tales such as the Suppāraka Jātaka (where reference is made to a Suppāraka Kumāra who lived in Bhārukaccha). The resemblances are too close to have been accidental. There also seems to have been some interpolation in the case of certain numeral figures such as 32 (Sīhabāhu's 32 sons, Paṇḍuvāsudeva's 32 companions and Bhaddakaccānā's 32 women-friends) and 700 (the number of Vijaya's followers) which as shown by John Seneviratne [167] was expressive or rather descriptive of a multitude of persons in Buddhist literature. Reliefs in the 3rd century B.C. tombstones of Sāñcī, Amarāvati and Bhārhut depict scenes from the Jātakas and this probably represents the lower limit of the period when the Jātakas were put into circulation, for Prof. Bühler has, in his Indian Studies [168] cited evidence to show that the Jātakas originated in a still earlier age. We may therefore have to assume that the author of the MV had derived certain elements of the Vijayan episode, either directly or indirectly, from the Jātakas.

However at the same time there is nothing to preclude us from supposing that the Jātakas themselves reflect, or were influenced by Eastern Indian historical tradition of about the Buddha's age, in which case we may have to presume that the local chronicles had not necessarily been subject to interpolation from the Jātaka tales, save of course, for apparently obvious discrepancies such as the earlier cited numeral inexactitudes.

At any rate, much of the Sinhalese narrative goes beyond the Jātaka tradition. For instance, there is no mention of Vaṅga, Lāḷa or other topographical details pertaining to Eastern India as found in the MV and DV in the Jātakas. Mention in the local chronicles of Western Indian toponyms such as Suppāraka and Bhārukaccha on the other hand seems to bear the hallmark of Jātaka influence. It is therefore likely that the toponyms bearing on Eastern India in the local chronicles had some historical basis. It would thus appear that the nucleus of the Vijayan legend had some historical basis and that this had been embellished with elements drawn from the Jātaka tales.

Since the linguistic evidence in favour of an Eastern Indo-Aryan origin for Sinhala has already been dealt with, it is not thought necessary to deal with it here. We will hereunder deal with the contentions of the West India school and make an attempt to counter them. We will then proceed to corroborate the hypothesis in favour of an Eastern Indian origin for the Sinhalese on a number of grounds – historical, geographical and archaeological.

Codrington (1926) who propounded the theory of a Western Indian origin for the Sinhalese, held that the Vijayan legend was merely symbolic of two streams of immigration, one from the western, and the other from the eastern

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[167] Notes on the Mahavamsa , CALR (1922)

[168] SWA. Vol. 132

side of India. This he opined could account for the confusion surrounding the geographical origins of Vijaya.

Geiger (1938) held that the first Aryan colonists, under the guidance of Vijaya, came to Sri Lanka from North-Western India, but that immediately after this event, a lively intercourse began to take place between the island and the provinces of North Eastern India. Geiger has based his conclusions on the two place names Suppāra and Bhārukaccha occurring in the chronicles, which he says "clearly point to North-Western India". He notes that as far as the places of Eastern India (i.e. Vaṅga, Lāḷa, Sīhapura, Magadha and Kaliṅga) are concerned, "the story is merely mythological and totemistic, describing as it does, the miraculous descent of the Sīhaḷa clan from a lion". "As compared with this tradition, the other, which refers to North-Western India, is dry and simple. At the head of a gang of adventurers Vijaya embarks at one of the well-known harbours near the mouth of the Nerbudda river, in order to search for a new home, and finally arrives in Ceylon". Geiger states that he cannot help thinking, therefore that "the historical kernel of the Vijaya story is implied in this part". He avers that the motive which led to the blending of the two traditions is quite intelligible. "It took place when, beginning from the time of Vijaya's successor Paṇḍuvāsudeva, later immigrants into Ceylon from Kaliṅga, Magadha and Bengal increased in number, and finally when the Buddhist doctrine was introduced in the third century B.C. Then the desire became manifest to connect the story of Vijaya with Eastern India, and he was made the son of Sīhabāhu, the mythical ancestor of the Sīhaḷa clan". Geiger's contention is that whereas the first stream of Indo-Aryan immigrants led by Vijaya hailed from N.W. India, the national appellation Sīhaḷa was introduced from Eastern India.

Basham (1952) identifies Lāḷa with Lāṭa (present-day Gujarat) considering the reference to Kaliṅga as a later accretion. Paranavitana [169] suggests that "if Lāṭa be taken to correspond to Gujerāt, the Siṁhapura in that region may be represented by the modern Sihor in Kāthiāwār". He also suggests that it is possible that "the ancient Lāṭa comprised the region of the Indus delta, for it is still called Lar", and that the Siṁhapura of Sinhalese tradition was located in that area. He suggests that Hingur, a ruined site some forty miles to the east of the apex of the Indus delta may very well be taken as a corruption of an original Siṁhapura. Paranavitana takes this view further in his essay on 'Aryan settlements'[170]. He opines that the band of immigrants who gave their name Siṁhala to the composite people, their language and the island, seems to have come from North-Western India. "At the time of their immigration to Ceylon,

[169] Aryan settlements. UCHC. Vol. 1 (1959)

[170] A Concise History of Ceylon.C.W.Nicholas & S.Paranavitana (1961)

they were settled in the region then called Lāṭa, but it appears that their original habitat was on the upper reaches of the Indus river". As evidence, he cites the references in the island's early Brāhmī inscriptions to a community known as Kambojas who lived in the country at the time. The ancient Kambojas, it is believed, occupied the territory in the borderland between present-day Pakistan and Afghanistan. Says Paranavitana: "If they migrated southwards, ultimately arriving and settling down in Ceylon, it must have been in the company of the Siṁhalas". He further says: "the statement in the chronicle that Sumitta, Vijaya's brother, espoused a princess of the Maddas, a Kṣatriya tribe in the Punjab, also indicates that the original Siṁhalas were connected with the lands of the upper Indus. The leaders of the early Sinhalese bore the title of Grāmanī and the Sanskrit epic, the Mahābhārata, informs us that there were powerful chieftains who bore the title of Grāmaneya on the banks of the Indus".

We will firstly make an attempt to refute the contentions of Geiger who favours a Western Indian origin for the Vijayan settlers.

It is indeed unfortunate that in the first place Geiger should have attached so much weight on the place-names Suppāra and Bhārukaccha which no doubt were located in Western India. Suppāraka may be identified with the modern Supārā in the Thana District, north of Bombay about 5 ½ miles north of Vasāi, while Bhārukaccha may be identified with the modern Bharuch near the mouth of the Narmadā. Geiger's supposition that the part of the legend pertaining to the eastern toponyms is mythological is not very convincing. As seen earlier, it is possible that the mention of the western Indian toponyms (Suppāra and Bhārukaccha) had been influenced by the Jātaka literature. Not so the Eastern Indian toponyms (Vaṅga and Lāḷa) which do not figure in the Jātakas.

In any case one cannot place too much emphasis on the western toponyms as they figure merely as stopovers during the course of Vijaya's voyage. It is significant that the DV, in narrating Vijaya's maritime journey, states that the ship in which the exiled prince and his male attendants embarked "went, sailing on the sea, losing her way and her bearings, to the port of Suppāra" (*vippanaṭṭhā disāmūḷhā gatā Suppāra-paṭṭanam*). It adds that they stopped three months at Bhārukaccha, went again on board the ship and "driven away by the violence of the wind (*ukkhitta – vāta –vegena*) came to Lankādīpa". As suggested by the DV, Vijaya's ship was not originally bound for Sri Lanka. Its voyage to Suppāra and Lankā were merely accidental while it follows that the trip to Bhārukaccha was the result of circumstances. The allusion to the ship losing her way and bearings is also significant.

A consideration of the place-names Mahilādīpa and Naggadīpa which are said to have been the landing places of the women and children of Vijaya's party will also demonstrate the futility of Geiger's thesis in laying undue

emphasis on insignificant geographical details. Mahilādīpa may simply mean 'women's island' and Naggadīpa 'children's (lit. naked) island' and may have been so-called after the above mentioned event.

However at the same time there is reason to believe that these names denoted actual geographical localities, the former to the west, and the latter to the east of Sri Lanka. Mahilādīpa may possibly refer to the Maldive islands, its capital Māle or the island of Minicoy (maliku), the southernmost island in the Lakshadweep archipelago. The Maldive islanders are evidently descended from Sinhalese emigrants and speak a language named Divehi bas which appears to have branched off from Sinhala around or after the 5th century A.C. What is interesting is that the name of the Maldive islands is written in Arabic as *Mahaldibu* which bears a striking resemblance to our Mahilādīpa. The term however seems to have been formerly applied to its capital male, for the 14th century traveler Ibn Battuta [171] refers to the island as Mahal, the seat of the Sultana Khadija. The inhabitants of Minicoy also speak a form of Divehi bas known as Māhl, which again suggests a connection with our Mahilādīpa. The Maldive islands appear to have had a strong matriarchal tradition in the past. Sulaymān Al-Tājir in the Ahbar as-sīn wa-l-Hind (9th century) refers to a ruling queen as do Al-Mas'ūdi (10th century) and Al-Idrīsī (12th century).

Mas'ūdi, the author of the Murujudhdhahab has recorded that the Maldivians are subject to a queen, "for from the most ancient times, the inhabitants have a rule never to allow themselves to be governed by a man". This tradition even continued after male kingship had gained recognition, for we hear of four Maldivian *sultānas* (queens) from the 14th – 16th century, though it had evidently ceased by the 17th century when we come across Francois Pyrard (who spent five years in the Maldives from 1602-1607) stating that "the kingdom there (i.e. Maldives) never goes to females". Minicoy, though having come under Islamic influence, still retains vestiges of a matriarchal society. To this day, the island's women play an important role in society. Island law decreed that no man could have any claim to a house. It vested in the woman of the family and the men had only the right of residence and maintenance till marriage, whereupon a man passed to his wife's house and took his wife's family name [172]. It is therefore possible that Mahilādīpa refers to the Maldive islands or its capital Māle or Minicoy and would have been so-called due to its matriarchal tradition.

The ancient Naggadīpa (lit. naked island) may with some certainty be identified with the Nicobar islands in the Andaman sea to the south of the Bay

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[171] Ibn Battuta. Travels in Asia and Africa. 1325-1354. Trans.H.A.R.Gibb (1929)

[172] See A Short Account of the Laccadive islands and Minicoy. R.H. Ellis (1924)

of Bengal. G.E. Gerini [173] identifies the Naggadipa of the MV with what he calls the archipelago of the naked people, viz. and Andamans and the Nicobar islands, as according to him, the two were not distinguished in olden times. The term *Nikobar* appears to have derived from the Sanskritic *nagna-vāra* 'naked people', and the 13th century Venetian traveller Marco Polo [174] informs us that the inhabitants of Necuveram (Nicobar) went about naked.

Thus here too, as in the case of Suppāra and Bhārukaccha we seem to be faced with confounding geographical details. But we need not be unnecessarily concerned with them. According to the DV, the ships in which the children and women embarked were 'helplessly driven' to the islands of Naggadīpa and Mahilāraṭṭha, making them unsuitable for determining the place of origin of the Vijayan settlers.

The appellation Lāḷa employed by the author of the MV to denote Vijaya's homeland is probably a Pāli term and may well represent the Sanskritic Rāḍha and Ardha –Magadhi Lāḍha, i.e. West Bengal. It is also possible that the term Lāḷa as occurring in the MV is an old Sinhala term that had developed from a form like Lāḍha since there is evidence to show that MIA intervocalic *ḍ* had become *ḷ* in Sinhala by around the 3rd century A.C. It is therefore possible that Mahānāma employed a term in current use in his time. It is also possible however that the term may have applied to Lāṭa since we have evidence to show that the retroflex *ṭ* of Lāṭa had been softened to *ḍ* by around the 1st century A.C. For instance, Ptolemy (C.150 A.C.) gives the term Larike for the Lāṭa country showing that in his time the country was known as Laḍ or Lāḍ [175] (the –ike of Larike being but the Greek termination denoting locality). It is thus possible that the term Lāḷa could have also denoted the Lāṭa country. Lāṭa is known to have comprehended the central and southern part of present-day continentə' Gujarat [176].

However, the entire context of the story clearly suggests that it was not Lāṭa that was meant but Rāḍha. Rāḍha appears to have comprised Howrah, Hooghly, Burdwan, and the northern and eastern portions of Midnapore and Birbhum (Sen.1942). The MV clearly states that the caravan was proceeding from Vaṅga (East Bengal) to Magadha (Southern Bihar) when it was attacked by the lion in the Lāḷa country, showing that Lāḷa must have been located

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[173] Researches on Ptolemy's Geography (1909)

[174] The Travels of Marco Polo. Trans. Ronald Latham (1958)

[175] The classical writers, it should be noted represented retroflex *ḍ* by *r*

[176] A History of important ancient towns and cities in Gujarat and Kathiawad. A.S. Altekar. IA (1924)

between East Bengal (i.e. Bangladesh) and present-day Bihar; in other words Rāḍha or West Bengal. Further, the MV in narrating Sīhabāhu's flight from the lion's cave in Lāḷa with his mother and sister states that they came to a border village where they met the general of the Vaṅga King in charge of the frontier territory i.e. the borderland between Lāḷa and Vaṅga, showing the contiguity of the two regions.

The theory propounded by Paranavitana (1961) that the original homeland of the Sinhalese settlers was in North-Western India is a far-fetched one and is supported by neither the linguistic nor the anthropological evidence. Paranavitana's claim that the Kāmbojas settled in Sri Lanka must have arrived in the island from N.W. India in the company of the Sinhalese also does not carry much weight. There can of course be little doubt that the Kāmbojas hailed from North-Western India. Ernst Kuhn [177] has cited literary evidence to show that the Kāmbojas were an Iranian tribe. Of particular interest is the evidence found in the Bhūridatta Jātaka implying that these folk were wont to kill snakes, frogs, flies, ants and reptiles, showing that the Kāmbojas were probably Zoroastrians among whom the destruction of noxious or 'Ahramanic' creatures was held to be a duty. G.A. Grierson [178] has also cited linguistic evidence connecting the Kāmboja speech to Iranian. J.N. Vidyalankar [179] has identified the ancient Kāmboja janapada in the Pamir Badakshan region. Although it is true that the Kambojas were a North-Western Indian folk, the fact that they were in Sri Lanka in ancient times suggests nothing as to the origins of the Sinhalese.

Paranavitana [180] has cited ancient epigraphic evidence to show that the term was connected with South-Eastern Sri Lanka. We come across a reference to a *Kabojhiya-Mahapugiyana* (Great corporation of Kambojiyas) in an ancient Brāhmī inscription at Bōvattegala, while the Sīhalavatthu (C. 4th century) alludes to a *Kamboja gāma* (village of Kāmbojas) in the province of Rohana. Paranavitana (1970) notes: "From the fact that they had organised themselves into corporations, we may infer that they had a definite identity, and that they were probably engaged in trade". Thus considering the available evidence, we may infer that the Kambojas were a distinct community like the Yonas and Dameḍas and were constituted into corporations, probably for mercantile

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[177] Das Volk der Kamboja. DSMV

[178] The language of the Kambojas. JRAS. GB & I (1911)

[179] Bhāratīya Itihāsa kī Rūparekhā

[180] Inscriptions of Ceylon. Vol. I (1970)

pursuits. We may therefore conclude that their existence in ancient Sri Lanka does not provide us any clue as to the origins of the Sinhalese.

There can be little doubt that in ancient times both North-Western and North-Eastern Indian nations had commercial intercourse with the island. Onesicritus (4th century B.C.) who participated in Alexander's campaign in India mentions that the inhabitants of North-Western India reached Sri Lanka in 20 days from the mouths of the Indus, showing that there is nothing peculiar about the Kāmbojas being in Sri Lanka.

The contention of Paranavitana that the early Sinhalese leaders bore the title Grāmanī also proves nothing. The title *Gamani* occurring in the early Sinhalese inscriptions seems to have been borne by members of the Royal family. The term seems to be very old, for we find an ancient Brāhmī cave inscription at Mihintale referring to a king named Gamani Uti Maharaja, evidently King Uttiya, the younger brother and successor of King Devānampiya Tissa (C. 3rd century B.C.). The Skt. term *grāmanī* literally means the leader of a *grāma*, the usual meaning of which is a village, but also connotes community, group, troop, etc. Its Pāli equivalent *gamani* occurs in the Jātakas and connotes the head of a mercantile corporation as noted by Paranavitana (1959) himself.The Mahāvānija Jātaka, for instance, alludes to the chief of a company of merchants who bore the title *gāmanī*. Thus, the appellation *grāmanī* or *gāmanī* would not have been confined to N.W India, but would have been a widespread and common title in ancient India.

The idea that Vijaya's brother Sumitta's marriage to a Madda princess from North-Western India indicates that the Sinhalese are to be connected with the lands of the upper Indus, as propounded by Paranavitana is not very convincing. Matrimonial alliances between royal houses do not necessarily imply that they be geographically close to one another.

It has also been pointed out that the non-existence of lions in Eastern India can be used as an argument in favour of the hypothesis that the Sinhalese had originally migrated from Western India [181]. However this contention will be rendered invalid if we consider the former distribution of lions in the sub-continent. According to R.G. Burton [182], lions were still common in India from Haryana in the north to Allahabad in the east at the beginning of the 19th century, while in the early 5th century A.C., Fā-Hien [183] reported the existence of lions in the region of Kapilavastu.

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[181] India and the Hellenistic world. K. Karttunen. SO (1997)

[182] The book of the Tiger (1933)

[183] A record of Buddhistic Kingdoms. James Legge (1886)

Indeed, of the eleven clans of Bengali Kāyasthas, one is known as Singh (lit.lion), the others being Ghose, Bose, De, Dat, Das, Sen, Kor, Mittr, Guha and Palit. Although this may not necessarily point to a connection between the ancestors of the Sinhalese and this particular clan, it only goes on to show the futility of placing emphasis on the term Siṁha or Sīha to support a Western Indian origin for the race. There is even evidence to show that there existed a town by the name of Siṁhapura in the east, namely, the Kaliṅga country [184]. Although this does not seem to have been the Siṁhapura of the Vijayan tradition, it nevertheless shows that toponyms bearing the appellation Siṁha or Sīha were not unknown in Eastern India.

Thus, having refuted the contentions of the theorists of the West India school, we will now consider the tenability of the hypothesis favouring an Eastern Indian origin for the Sinhalese.

Müller (1882) supported the theory that the Sinhalese emigrated from Lāḷa (which he believed to be situated in or adjacent to Magadha) not because he was of opinion that more faith ought to be placed in the legends of the Sinhalese than of the Hindus, but because he could "see no reason whatever why they should choose a small and insignificant kingdom as the native country of their ancestors".The views of the other East India theorists have however been largely based on the linguistic evidence already dealt with so that it is not thought necessary to deal with it here as well. Rather, we will attempt to demonstrate below the historicity of the Vijayan legend by citing historical, geographical and archaeological evidence in favour of an Eastern Indian origin for the early Sinhalese.

Firstly, we will consider the origin of the appellation *Siṁhaḷa* (Skt. *Siṁhala*, P. *Sīhaḷa*) which is the ethnic term for the Sinhalese race in the Sinhala language. Unlike the Sanskritic *Siṁhala*, the Sinhala term *Siṁhaḷa* has not been traditionally spelt with a dental *l* and appears to be connected with the Prakritic *sīhaḷa* and its derivative *heḷa*. We find the lingual *ḷ* figuring even in Sanskritic forms occurring in Sinhalese inscriptions such as the Galpota slab inscription of Nissanka-Malla (12th century) where we come across the form *Tri-Siṁhaḷa* 'the three Siṁhaḷas' i.e. the three divisions of mediaeval Sri Lanka) and Sahasa-Malla's slab inscription of the same century where we find the phrase. *Siṁhaḷa-Pati* 'Master or Ruler of Siṁhaḷa or the Siṁhaḷas'. We also come across the term *Siṁhaḷa* figuring as the name of the people in the Gaḍalādeṇiya rock inscription of the 14th century. Indeed even in Divehi, the speech of the Maldive Islanders which branched off from Sinhala C.6th-8th

[184] Sen.1942. This Siṁhapura is perhaps to be identified with the modern Siṅgupuram between Chicacole and Narasannapeta (ibid)

century A.C. we find that it is a form with the lingual *ḷ* that occurs in the ethnonym *Siṅgaḷa* 'Sinhalese'.

The MV states that since the King Sīhabāhu captured the lion, he was called Sīhaḷa. It adds, "Hence all those who are connected with him are also Sīhaḷa". According to the commentary of the MV, the Vaṁsatthappakāsinī, the 700 members of Vijaya's retinue and all their descendants "up to the present day" are called Sīhaḷas because of their association with the prince called Sīhaḷa who is evidently Sīhabāhu since he had caught the lion (*Sīhaṁ gahitvā iti*). The Dīpavaṁsa merely states that the island was called Sīhala on account of the lion (*Laṅkādīpo ayam ahū sīhena sīhala iti*). As seen earlier, the lingual *ḷ* does not occur in the Brāhmī inscriptions in Old Sinhala, its place being regularly taken by *ḍ*– the predecessor of the later Sinhala *ḷ*. It is therefore possible that the appellation *Sīhaḷa* was pronounced as *Sihaḍa* or *Śihaḍa* by the early Aryan settlers. It is quite possible that our postulated Old Sinhala term * *Sihaḍa* or * *Śihaḍa* actually meant '(one who) seized the lion' and arose from the compound * *si* 'lion' (Skt. *Siṁha*, P.*Sīha*) and * *haḍa* 'seized' (Skt. *hṛta*, P. *haṭa*).Such a term could have also denoted 'lion-heart' (*si-haḍa*) in Old Sinhala.

As for our identification of the natal land of the Sinhalese, Lāḷa, with Rāḍha, besides the MV, we also have the support of Jaina tradition. As may be inferred from the MV, Lāḷa had been a forested region in the time of Sīhabāhu's youth, and the Jaina tradition which probably goes back to the same period alludes to the Lāḍha country as being a forested area, though this per se is not conclusive. The first of the eleven Jaina aṅgas, the Ācārāṅga sūtra (book 1, 8th lecture) [185] states of Mahāvīra, the founder of Jainism (C. 6th –5th century B.C.): "He travelled in the pathless country of the Lāḍhas, in Vajjabhūmi and Subbhabhūmi .... Many natives attacked him... they cried '*chucchū*' and made the dogs bite him". Now, the mention of the pathless country which Mahāvīra traversed implies that it was a forested area. Further, the term *chucchū* with which the natives addressed their dogs appears to have been a Munda word for canine. The MV clearly alludes to Lāḷa being a forested country when it states that having handed over the kingship of Vaṅga to his mother's husband, Sīhabāhu proceeded to Lāḷa with his sister, where he built a city called Sīhapura "and in the forest over a hundred *yojanas* [186] he founded villages".

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[185] The Ācārāṅga sūtra, though written after Mahāvīra's time is regarded as an authentic authority on Mahāvīra and his religion. According to Hermann Jacobi (Jaina sūtras. Trans. from Prakrit. SBE. 1884) book 1 is the oldest part of the sūtra and probably the old Ācārāṅga sūtra itself to which other treatises have been added.

[186] A *yojana* may roughly be taken to be 7-8 miles

Further, the name Suppādevī given to Sīhabāhu's mother in the MV ṭīkā[187] appears to have been more of a title than a personal name; the first element of which, *Suppa*, seems to be an Eastern Prakritic form connected with *Sumha* (the old name for Rāḍha), the Ardha-Māgadhī version of which is *Subbha*. It seems to have undergone similar phonetic changes to that of Sinhala *topi* and Eastern Asokan *tuphe* (Skt. *tvam* and AMg. *tubbha*). According to Nundolal Dey [188] Subbhabhūmi appears to have comprised the southern part of Rāḍha, as Vajjabhūmi included portions of Aṅga. We may also have to agree with Dey who opines that at the time of the Buddha, Sumha appears to have been an independent kingdom and that it extended as far as the sea to the south. though in later times, from the 4th century B.C. onwards it seems to have formed part of the Magadha empire of Chandragupta and his successors.

It has been suggested that the capital of Lāḷa, Siṁhapura (P. Sīhapura) may be identified with modern Singur, about 10 miles from Tārakeswar in the Hughli district. Dey (1910) who identifies the Siṁhapura of the MV with Singur cites the foundation legend of the village in support of his contention. According to the legend, Singur was founded by a Kṣatriya whose surname was Sinha. He is said to have cleared the jungle in the area and founded a settlement named Siṁhapura. Dey notes that in ancient times, Singur was of considerable size, having comprised some ten villages, and was a flourishing commercial town when the Sarasvati used to flow by its eastern side. It is well established that in Modern Indo-Aryan, the Old Indo-Aryan suffix – *pura* 'city' where it does not retain the form *pur*, is changed to *wār*, *ura*, *ur*, *or*, *ora*, *ār*, *aur* etc., so that it is quite possible that Singur may have developed from an older Siṁhapura.

As for Vaṅga, the native land of Vijaya's grandmother, in ancient times this denoted the region that was once East Bengal (i.e. the modern-day Republic of Bangladesh) and must have comprised the districts of Murshidabad, Nadia, Jessore, Pabna, Faridpur and parts of Rājshāhī [189]. The Vaṅganagara of the MV where reigned Vijaya's great grandfather could perhaps be identified with the ancient Hindu capital of Baṅga which lies in the neighbourhood of Sonargaon (Suvarnagrama), 12 miles to the south east of Dhakka. As for the political situation of Bengal during the 6th century B.C., we may have to agree with Sen (1942) who holds that Bengal probably consisted of some

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[187] The DV calls her Susimā

[188] Notes on the History of the District of Hughli. JASB (1910)

[189] See Ancient countries in Eastern India. F.E. Pargiter. JASB (1897)

independent kingdoms during this period, which again agrees with the MV account.

All this does not necessarily mean that Vijaya was an actual historical personage, but is rather an atempt to show the tenability of the historicity of the Vijayan legend, in its application to Eastern India. Vijaya, whose name literally means 'victorious, conquering, mastering' may well be representative of some obscure Aryan-speaking chief or invader who overthrew the native polity and established Aryan rule in the island. Although it is possible that this adventurer was of royal stock, there is also a possibility that he as well as those who succeeded him were intimately connected with maritime commerce, as is suggested by the title *gamani* borne by the early Sinhalese leaders. As seen earlier, its Pāli equivalent *gāmanī* denotes the head of a mercantile corporation. We also find in the Divyāvadāna, a Sanskrit work assigned to the 3rd - 4th century A.C, the eponymous hero of the Sinhalese figuring as the son of a merchant who came to the island as the leader of a band of merchants. Here, Siṁhala, the founder of the Sinhalese nation is a trader who is elevated to kingship by the people.

As for the exact date of the Vijayan conquest, this remains as obscure as the legendary Vijaya himself. The Sinhalese chronicles would have us believe that the Vijayan invaders arrived in the island at or around the time of the death of the Buddha, the date of which is uncertain. The earlier held date of 543 B.C. as the year of the Buddha's death appears no longer tenable. Wilhelm Geiger [190] and Don Martino De Silva Wickremasinghe [191] hold that the Buddha passed away in 483 B.C., while Heinz Bechert [192] dates the death of the Buddha to C. mid-fourth century B.C.

Be it as it may, there can hardly be any doubt that the people who introduced the Sinhala language to the island were an Aryan-speaking folk hailing from Eastern India who arrived in the island sometime during the 6th – 4th centuries B.C. This may not necessarily mean that the Eastern Indian or Vijayan invasion constituted the first or only Aryan migration to the island, but that given its place in local tradition and its role in the introduction of the Sinhala language and the formation of the Sinhalese nation, it would have been by far the greatest and the most significant of the early Aryan migrations into the island.

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[190] Introduction to the translation of the Mahāvaṁsa

[191] EZ. Vol. I (1912)

[192] Die Lebenszeit des Buddha. NAWG (1986)

Another matter that has aroused much controversy is the ethnic affinities of the brides of the Pāṇḍya country of South India who were wedded to Vijaya and his companions. According to the MV, the Paṇḍu king's daughter was anointed Vijaya's chief consort while the daughters of the Pāṇḍyan ministers and others were given in marriage to Vijaya's ministers and people. Although there have been attempts to assign a Dravidian origin to these Pāṇḍyans, historical evidence suggests otherwise. The Pāṇḍyan kingdom, though situated in the extreme south was probably an Aryan state, ruled by a North Indian Aryan aristocracy. The name of the dynasty and their capital Madura appear to be of Aryan origin. The city appears to be but a toponymic duplication of the more famous city of Mathura in the north (present-day Muttra on the banks of the Yamunā in Uttar Pradesh), Madura being merely the Dravidian Tamil manner of pronouncing the Aryan Mathura or Madhura.

Indeed, there is reason to believe that Mathura was actually pronounced Madhura in the olden days, at least during the first few centuries of the Christian era. Ptolemy called Mathura of the north Madoura ton thēon. Besides, according to the Prakrit Grammarians, an intervocalic *t* becomes *d* (and *th* > *dh*) in Śauraseni which was apparently spoken in the region of Mathura. This would also explain why the MV goes to the extent of distinguishing the Madura of the Pāṇḍya country by calling it *Dakkhinaṁ Madhuraṁ* or Southern Madhura, which would not have been necessary in case the northern city was called Mathura at the time.

Although there have been attempts to identify the Madhura of the MV with the Northern Mathura, this is hardly possible as the chronicle distinctly calls it *Dakkhinaṁ Madhuraṁ* (Southern Madhura) clearly distinguishing it from the more famous Mathura of the north. V. Kanakasabhai [193] identifies the ancient Madura with the ruined Pala Madura (Old Madura) situated about six miles to the south-east of the modern Madura town on the northern bank of the Vaigai.

Be it as it may, there is reason to believe that the Pāṇḍyans were connected to the Pāṇḍavas, i.e. the five Pāṇḍu brothers who figure in the Mahābhārata as the opponents of the Kauravas in the plains of Kurukṣetra. According to Kātyāyana's Vārtika on Pānini (C. 4th century B.C) *Pāṇḍya* is derived from *Pāṇḍu*, while O. Von Hinüber [194] has pointed out that the name might well represent **Pāṇḍeyā* 'daughter of Pāṇḍu', which is quite possible considering the fact that the Greek account of Megasthenes refers to the Pāṇḍyan kingdom being founded by a woman named Pandaia. The C.2nd century Tamil epic Cilappatikāram refers to a goddess named Maturāpati in Madura in the

[193] The Tamils eighteen hundred years ago (1904)

[194] Arrian. Der Alexanderzug Indische Geschichte (1985)

Pandyan Kingdom. She is referred to as the family deity of the Pandyan King and described as having matted locks with the left half of her body dark blue and the right half golden with a terrifying sword in her right hand. It is not unlikely that this Pandyan goddess had her origins in the mythical ancestress of the Pandyans.

Megasthenes, the Greek (Seleucid) Ambassador to the Mauryan court of Pāṭaliputra (4^{th} – 3^{rd} century B.C.) has narrated an old tradition connecting the Pāṇḍyans with North India. He records that Herakles begot a daughter in India whom he called Pandaia, and assigned to her that portion of India which lies southwards and extends to the sea. He is also said to have distributed the people subject to her rule into 365 villages. Arrian (C. 200 A.C.) in the first part of his Indika (based largely on the works of Megasthenes) states that this Herakles entrusted his daughter with the sovereignty of the land called after her, Pandaia and that she received from the hands of her father 500 elephants, a 4000-strong force of cavalry and another of infantry consisting of about 130,000 men. He also states that this Herakles was held in special honour by the Sourasenoi, an Indian tribe who possessed two large cities, one of which was named Methora (the other being Kleisobora)[195]. Now, it is evident that Megasthenes' allusion to that part of India which lies southwards and extends to the sea is none other than the Pandyan country which extended southwards right up to Cape Comorin (Kanya Kumari). Arrian's Sourasenoi appears to be none other than the aristocracy or inhabitants of that country known as Sūrasena, the area around Mathura.

There is considerable confusion as to the identity of the Herakles of the Greek writers. It is likely however that this is a Greek corruption of the Indian Hari-Kṛṣna who appears to have originally been a North Indian personage who was later deified. The connection of Kṛṣna and Herakles with Mathura as well as the fact that Kṛṣna worship appears to have been some sort of local hero cult in Mathura (Hinuber. 1985) also supports such a view. According to Puranic tradition, Kṛṣna was a scion of the Yādava dynasty, the first Lunar dynasty to rise into Prominence [196].The same tradition holds that the Yādavas are the descendants of Pururavas (the progenitor of the Lunar dynasty) through his great-great-grandson Yadu [197].They were therefore considered to be

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[195] See Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian. J.W.McCrindle (1926)

[196] See Traditional history. A.D. Pusalker. Majumdar (1951)

[197] ibid.

descendants of Manu and hence connected to the Aryan stock. It is also significant that the Puranas should call the Yādavas Asuras [198].

As evident in such works as the Mbh, Kṛṣna was no more than human. It was the Purānas that deified him and made him to be an incarnation of Viṣnu. All this would indicate that Kṛṣna was some sort of local hero later deified. The Mbh testifies to the close relations between Kṛṣna and the Pāṇḍavas. In this epic, Kṛṣna figures as an aide of the Pāṇḍavas during the Bhārata War (C. 1400-1000 B.C.) and it is said that it was mainly, if not solely, due to the important role played by him in the great war that the Pāṇḍavas emerged victorious (Pusalker. 1951).The appellation Kṛṣna which literally means 'black' does not appear to pose any problem as it seems to be connected not with skin colour, but with clothing, namely the black (*kṛṣna*) clothing of the Vrātyas. We find that in the Aitareya Brahmana, Rudra, who was revered by the Vratyas, being described as a man in black garments (*kṛṣnasavāsy*) coming from the north, and it is likely that this tradition was continued by his votaries or followers, the Yādavas and others. This is also supported by the epithet *hari* (literally 'yellow', 'tawny') which is usually prefixed to Kṛṣna. This would suggest that Kṛṣna was a light-haired or fair-complexioned personage, and not the dark-complexioned personality he is commonly believed to be. Indeed the fact that *hari* is prefixed to Kṛṣna only goes on to prove that the appellation Kṛṣna has nothing to do with a dark skin colour, for one cannot be fair-complexioned and dark-skinned at the same time. It is therefore very likely that the ancient Pāṇḍyans, and especially its ruling strata, constituted an early Aryan migration from the north and were connected with the Pāṇḍavas or the Yādavas, both of whom belonged to the Lunar race.

The ancient Tamils evidently believed the Pāṇḍyans to be connected to the the Lunar race. The Tamil epic Cilappatikāram (assigned to C. 2nd century A.C.) refers to the Pāṇḍyan prince being of the Lunar line, thus implying a connection with the Pāṇḍavas who belonged to the Lunar dynasty, while another Sangam age work, the Puranānūru refers to the Pāṇḍyans as *Pañcavar* implying descent from the 'five (Pāṇḍu brothers)'. Further, the Āyar (i.e. the shepherds and cowherds) of the Pandyan kingdom are said to have had a tradition that they arrived in the Tamil land along with the founder of the Pandyan dynasty (Kalittokai). The favourite deity of this folk is said to have been their national hero Krsna whose liaisons with shepherd girls and feats celebrated in the MBh formed the theme of their festive songs [199]. The tradition clearly implies that the Pāṇḍyans were a foreign people who had

[198] ibid.

[199] Kanakasabhai (1904)

invaded or found their way to the extreme south of the Tamil country of peninsular India.

We also come across in the Sangam age literature of the early centuries of the Christian era allusions to the Pandyans which suggests that they possessed an Aryan culture. For instance, the first Pāṇḍya king whom we notice in the odes of this period is Mutu Kuṭumi Pera Vaḷuti who although possessing a Dravidian name was given to Vedic sacrifices (Puranānūru) implying that he belonged to a Ksatriya clan. One poet says of him: "You drove your chariots through their (enemies) territories; across their well known fertile fields where birds were chirping, jumped the hoofs of your noble horses whose manes were waving". In another poem we come across a reference to the well famed chariots and horses of the Pandyans and to the Pāṇḍiyar who possesses a beautiful chariot to which are yoked beautifully trotting horses (Akanānūru). These references to Vedic sacrifices and fine chariots and horses possessed by the Pandyans would suggest that they were originally an Aryan dynasty that was later Tamilised in succeeding centuries beginning from about the early centuries of the Christian era.

It is also significant that Ptolemy's geography does not include Madoura Regia Pandionis (Madura) under Limyrike (the Tamil country), but under Pandionis Regio or the Pāṇḍyan kingdom. Furthermore, Gunasagara in his commentary to the Yapparunkalam of Amrithsagara gives the limits of Cen-Tamil-Nātu or the country where pure Tamil was spoken as 'north of the Vaigai river, south of the Maruta river, east of Karyuvar and west of Maruvar' which according to Kanakasabhai (1904) would include approximately the northern half of the modern district of Madura and the Tanjore and Trichinopoly districts, but would exclude Madura, the capital of the Pāṇḍyas. Besides, the MV never describes the Pāṇḍyas as Damiḷas or Dravidians as it does the Cōlas. Such a supposition is also supported by the epigraphic evidence. The earliest Brahmi inscriptions in Tamil Nadu are concentrated in the Pandyan country in which the area around Madura appears to have been the epicentre for its spread. There are no such early epigraphs, apparently, in northern Tamil Nadu or to the west and south of Tiruchirappalli [200]. Thus the Pāṇḍyans like the Sinhalese, were familiar with the Brāhmī script and employed it around the 3rd century B.C.- 1st century A.C. in the Madurai and Tinnevelly districts (which constituted the domain of the ancient Pāṇḍyans).The language employed in many of them appears to have been Tamil, with an admixture of words of Sanskritic origin. One such inscription,

[200] See Brahmi inscriptions of Tamil Nadu. K.V.Raman. SLJSAS.1976

in fact, refers to a householder (*kuṭumbika*) from *Īḷa* (evidently Sri Lanka, being a corruption of the Prakritic *Sīhaḷa*).

The Mahāvaṁsa also suggests that the Pāṇḍyans were of Aryan lineage. The chronicle narrates that having founded settlements in Sri Lanka, Vijaya's ministers came together and told the prince "Lord, be consecrated in Kingship".Vijaya however declined consecration without a Kṣatriya maiden (*Khattiya-kaññā*). It was then that the daughter of the Pāṇḍu king was obtained for Vijaya. This would imply that the Pāṇḍyan princess belonged to the Kṣatriya or Aryan royal caste, clearly showing that she belonged to a North Indian Aryan stock. Strictly speaking, there exist no Kṣatriyas and Vaisyas in traditional Dravidian society, only Brāhmans and Śudras. The South Indian Brāhmans evidently represent an Aryan imposition on the south as may be inferred from their title *Ayyar* which is derived from the Sanskritic *Ārya*. The Dravidian masses on the other hand including the aristocracy were considered to be non-Aryan Śudras, the fourth and lowest-ranking of the *varnas* in the four-fold Brahmanical caste system.

However, whether the Pāṇḍavas belonged to the Vedic Nordic stock is doubtful. It is more likely that they were an Alpine folk akin to the Vrātyas. Parpola, who links the Pāṇḍyas with the Pāṇḍavas of North India, postulates that they were a new wave of marauding Aryans (as distinct from the Vedic or Pre-Vedic Aryans) who hailed from Central Asia and established themselves in Northern and Western India around the eighth or ninth century B.C. Says Parpola (1988): "the white skin-colour of the Pāṇḍavas, reflected in the names Pāṇḍu [201] and Arjuna and the associated myths, together with their polyandry which is new in India but has parallels among the Saka tribes, suggests that they belonged to a new wave of Aryans, which had recently arrived in India". The emphasis on the white colour of the Pāṇḍavas may perhaps refer to a white-rosy complexion (characteristic of such peoples as the Pamir folk) which would have certainly been more whitish than that of the Vedic Aryans whose complexion would have been somewhat modified due to miscegenation and the hot Northwestern Indian climate.

Thus, having considered the historical, geographical and linguistic evidence, let us now turn our attention to the anthropological evidence. There can be little doubt that the early Sinhalese were a fair-skinned, fine-featured folk. The modern-day Sinhalese, though modified in physical type due to miscegenation with Veddoid elements have preserved these characters to a great extent. James Alwis (1863) made a strong case for the Sinhalese to be considered an Aryan race on the basis of literary evidence (the colonisation from Lāḷa), the

[201] The very name Pāṇḍu is said to mean 'white', whitish' as first attested in the relatively late Sanskrit literature of around 800 B.C.

complexion ('copper colour') and features of the Sinhalese and the facility with which they are able to pronounce European tongues in contrast to Dravidian speakers. Dr. E. Muller (1882) has in his learned treatise on Sinhala, showing the Indo-Aryan origins of the language, noted that not only is the Sinhala language Sanskritic, "but the vast majority of the higher castes of the Sinhalese have unmistakably the Aryan type of faces". This observation is a fairly accurate one. The Sinhalese have to this day preserved the regular Indo-European physical type to a remarkable extent, though modified significantly in pigmentation. The skin colour of the Sinhalese is usually of a light brown hue while among some it takes on a reddish or golden colour. The dark brown colour of a good many Sinhalese is evidently due to a heavy infusion of Vedda blood.

The following description of the Sinhalese by an early British observer aptly sums up the main physical characters of the race: "*The Cingalese, in general, are of slender make and rather below the middle stature. Their limbs are slight, but well shaped: their features regular, of the same form as those of Europeans: and their colour of various shades, but not so dark as that of the Indians on the continent*". He adds: "*Many of the higher classes of people who are not exposed to the rays of the sun have complexions so extremely fair, that they seem lighter than the brunetts of England*"[202]. Another observer notes: "*Their features are in general regular, and the eye and nose of the same form as those of the European; and the colour is of various shades, from a deep brown to a pale sallow, approaching to white. They have always however, black eyes and long black hair*" [203]. That some of the early Sinhalese had managed to preserve their original Indo-European traits is suggested in the Sigiri graffiti of the 8th-10th centuries where we come across expressions like *nuvan ind-nil-mini topa dakut* (When we saw the blue sapphires of your eyes) and *topa nuyuna-mahanela* (The blue lilies which are your eyes) and in medieval Sinhalese literature like the 12th century Butsarana which refers to blue eyes (*itā nilvū äs deka*) and golden complexion (*ranvan pähä*) as signs of beauty. The leptorrhine (aquiline or eagle-like) nose was another trait that was preserved by the purer-blooded Sinhalese as seen in the accounts of writers and notions of Sinhalese beauty [204].

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[202] A Description of Ceylon. James Cordiner (1807)

[203] A picturesque illustration of the scenery, animals, and native inhabitants of the island of Ceylon. Samuel Daniell (1808).

[204] The Sarasins (JRAS.CB.1886) could observe that the Sinhalese have often "*very well-formed eagle-shaped noses*". This is also reflected in traditional Sinhalese views of beauty as seen for instance in the account of John Davy (Account of the Interior of Ceylon.1821) who tells us that the Sinhalese would not allow a woman to be a 'perfect belle' unless of the following character:

We could infer some basic details concerning the racial composition and probable origins of the Sinhalese by a study of physical anthropology. The Sinhalese show a marked affinity to the peoples of Bengal and Central Asia in physical type and have preserved their original racial traits to a considerable extent due to caste endogamy (i.e. intermarriage within one's caste) which has traditionally been the rule. The ancient Indo-Aryan notion of hypergamy which permitted a man of higher rank or caste to marry or cohabit with a woman lower to his, has however facilitated the entry of other racial elements, especially the Austro-Asiatic element which has in turn affected the racial composition of the Sinhalese to no mean extent.

We will hereunder make an attempt to show that the modern-day Sinhalese represented by the dominant Govi caste constitute a mixed race and has arisen from miscegenation between a fair-skinned, broad-headed, fine-nosed Alpine stock that very likely originated in Central Asia, and a dark-skinned, long-headed, broad-nosed Austro-Asiatic stock that had found its way to Sri Lanka during pre-historic times, viz. the Veddas.

The people to-day designated as Sinhalese (*Siṁhala*) when taken as a whole with their various castes such as the Govigama, Karāva, Durāva, Salāgama, etc., comprise what is known as an ethnos (a folk with a common language and culture not necessarily having a close genetic relationship) and not a race proper. As such it is pertinent to inquire as to which of the Sinhalese castes represent the early Sinhala-speaking Aryan element that gave the island and its people the name of Siṁhala. Thus, in this study, caste considerations, too, would have to be taken into account, however much it is desirable to let such sensitive matters rest.

Available evidence suggests that it is none other than the country's numerically largest caste group, viz. the Govigama caste [205] whose ancestors would have comprised the early Sinhalese settlers from North India, probably Bengal. Besides, there is sufficient evidence to show that other major Sinhalese caste groups such as the Karāva, Durāva and Salāgama are but relatively recent immigrants from peninsular India who arrived in the country during the 13th-17th centuries. This is not to say that these castes are not of Aryan ancestry. Indeed, there is evidence to show that the claims of the Karāva

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"*Her hair should be voluminous, like the tail of the peacock; long, reaching to the knees, and terminating in graceful curves; her eyebrows should resemble the rainbow; her eyes, the blue sapphire and the petals of the blue monilla flower. Her nose should be like the bill of the hawk*".

[205] The Govigama comprise over 50 per cent of the total Sinhalese population. A rough estimate is 50-60 per cent.

and the higher rungs of the Salāgama to Aryan descent – the former to Kṣatriya, and the latter to Brahman ancestry - are not wholly unfounded [206].

The Govigama, however, it is certain, have had their roots in the island from very early times and may be taken as being largely representative of the early Sinhala-speaking Aryan element in the form of Vaiśya settlers who arrived here with the Vijayan migration C.6th-5th century B.C. Although we have no early records to show that this was indeed the case, later records certainly testify to it. For instance we have the Janavaṁsa, an account of the various Sinhalese castes by Buddha-Rakhita (C.15th century) [207] tracing the origins of the Govi to Vijaya's followers. The work has it that Vijaya appointed for cultivation those possessed of skill, energy and strength from among the seven hundred heroes who reached Lakdiva with him. This is supported by John Davy [208] who records that the Sinhalese maintain that "their island was colonized from the eastward about 2363 years ago" and that "the first settlers, with the exception of their leader of royal descent, were of the Goewanse".

The appellation Govi is probably derived from the Prakritic Gahapati which literally means 'householder'[209]. We find in the 13th century Saddharma-Ratnāvaliya of Dharmasena, the Pali term gahapati being rendered as Govi (*gahapatika = Govi kulehi upan tänättō*). *Gahapati* occurs in ancient Pāli literature as the third ranking class after the Khattiya and Brāhmana and appears to have been synonymous with the Vessakula (i.e.Vaiśya)[210]. This is also supported by the fact that the Govigama have been traditionally subsumed under the Vaiśya varna which is the third ranking Aryan caste after the Brāhmaṇ and Kṣatriya. For instance we find Davy (1821) giving the Goewanse (cultivators) as belonging to the Wiessia Wanse (Vaiśya vaṁsa). The traditional occupation of the caste as cultivators [211] also suggests a Vaiśya origin.

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[206] See Caste in Sri Lanka. From ancient times to the present day A.Hussein (2013)

[207] See The Janawansa. Ed. & Trans.Hugh Nevill. The Taprobanian. Feb.1886

[208] An Account of the interior of Ceylon (1821)

[209] As noted by S. Paranavitana (Inscriptions of Ceylon. 1970) the word *gahapati* in the local context appears to have been specialized to denote the Vaiśya caste "for *govi*, now in use to designate the class corresponding to the Vaiśya, is derived from *gahapati*".

[210] See H.Oldenberg. ZDMG . Band.LI

[211] So much so that today the term Govi is synonymous with farmer. The term goviyā denotes a farmer irrespective of caste or nationality. The more specific term used to denote the caste is Govigama where the suffix –gama, a derivative from the Old Indo-Aryan *grāma* seems to have retained the original sense of 'horde', 'multitude' and not village as is commonly understood in

Thus it would appear that it were the Vaiśya ancestors of the Govigama who were largely representative of the early Sinhala-speaking Aryan element that introduced the Sinhala language and Sinhalese culture and civilization to the island. In fact, available evidence would suggest that the ethnic term Sinhala was originally applied to the early *Kṣatriyas* who ruled the island as well as to the Govigama and not the other Sinhalese castes such as the Karāva, Durāva or Salāgama. According to the MV, all those who are connected with Sīhabāhu, the father of Vijaya who captured his leonine father are called Sīhaḷa and the commentary of the MV, the Vaṁsattappakāsini elaborates on this further when it states that the 700 members of Vijaya's retinue and all their descendants "up to the present day" are called Sīhaḷas because of the association with the prince called Sīhaḷa, who is evidently Sīhabāhu as he had caught the lion (*sīhaṁ gahitva iti*). As such the appellation would have applied to the early Kṣatriya rulers of the Sinhalese as well as to their Vaiśya subjects who formed the vanguard of the early Aryan colonization of the island. As seen earlier, the JV traces the origins of the Govi to Vijaya's followers whom we can reliably infer from the VP were also called Sīhaḷa on account of their association with Sīhaḷa or Sīhabāhu. This is also supported by the fact that the Veddas, the country's aboriginal inhabitants have traditionally applied the ethnic term Sinhalese solely to the Govi caste. Says Hugh Nevill [212]: "Vaeddas apply the name Sinhalese, in the form Singala, to the Goyiya caste alone".

The Govi or rather their Gahapati antecedents evidently comprised an important class in ancient Sinhalese society. A class known as Gapatis (The Old Sinhala or Sinhala Prakrit equivalent of Pali Gahapati) figure prominently in the country's Brahmi inscriptions dated to C.3rd century B.C.-1st century A.C. For instance, the son of a Gapati named Avirada, Deva had even risen to the position of a chief (Parumaka). Others held such positions as Dutaka (Diplomat) while yet others were engaged in lesser occupations such as Manikara (Lapidary) and Naṭa (Actor or Dancer).

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modern Sinhala. As shown by the German Indologist Wilhelm Rau the term *grāma* seems originally to have referred to a nomadic group, its train of vehicles and its band of warriors. The train of wagons formed a barricade in the form of a circle whenever the group took a rest. This may explain why an ancient Brahmana text refers to the two ends of the grama coming together. It may also explain the etymology of the Sanskrit word *saṁgrāma* a (fr.*sam* 'coming together' + *grāma* 'horde', 'Group') which is taken to mean war, but which must have originally meant a meeting of two or more *grāma* which in other words meant a fight. It was in later times when the Vedic folk settled down and moved from carts to houses that the term came to refer to a village. Likewise a gramani, originally the leader of a train of vehicles or warriors (who may have well been a Kṣatriya) eventually came to refer to the mayor of a village who was usually a Vaiśya (See Kulke and Rothermund.1998).

[212] Taprobanian. Dec.1885

Later mediaeval records indicate that the Govi had grown extremely powerful and were regarded as a potential threat to Kṣatriya claims to the Sinhalese throne. It was evidently such a development that led King Nissanka-Malla in his Polonnaruva Slab Inscription to vehemently denounce the aspirations of the Govi caste to the Sinhalese throne in the following terms: "People of the Govi caste (*Govi kulehi ättan*) should never aspire to the dignity of kingship (*rāja-līlāvaṭa no-pätuva mänäva*), for this would be like the crow (*kākayā*) aping the swan (*haṁsa*), or the donkey (*koṭaluvā*) the Saindhava Steed (*saindhavaya*), or the worm (*gäṅḍahulā*) the Cobra King (*nāga-rājaya*), or the firefly (*kanamandiri*) the sun (*sūryya*), or the snipe (*vaṭu*) the elephant (*hastīn*), or the jackal (*känahilā*) the lion (*siṁhaya*). However powerful the people of the Govi caste may be (*kese balavat vuva-da*), they should not be elected to rule the kingdom (*rājyayaṭa balā no-gata yuttāha*)". The strong language used by the reigning monarch shows to what extent the Govi caste were considered a threat to the claims of the Kṣatriyas. By Kandyan times, beginning from about the 16th century, the Govi had established themselves as the most powerful caste in Sinhalese society, even to the exclusion of the traditional Kṣatriyas whom they seem to have absorbed, save for a very few members of the ruling class [213]. Robert Knox [214] noted thus of the social organization of the Kandyan Kingdom of his time: "The highest are their noblemen called Hondrews, which I suppose comes from the word Hondrewne, a title given to the King, signifying Majesty: these being honourable people. 'Tis out of this sort alone, that the King chooseth his great officers and whom he imploys in his Court and appoints for Governors over his Countrey". He also relates a Kandyan proverb: "Take a ploughman from the plough, and wash off his dirt, and he is fit to rule a Kingdom" and explains that it is spoken of "the people of Cande Uda, where there are such eminent persons of the Hondrew rank".

The term Hondrew used for the Govi by Knox is probably the same as the Sinhala expression *Hāmuduruvane* which literally means 'children of lords', but generally conveys the meaning of 'Honoured Sir'. The term which is today an exalted honorific applied to a Buddhist monk, is no longer applied to the Govigama or even their high sub-caste Radaḷa, save perhaps by a very few regional groups where caste consciousness still remains strong. The term *hāmu* which may well be a shortened form of *hāmuduruvane* may still be used by servants when addressing their *Radaḷa* masters. Davy (1821) likewise

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[213] Indeed, there is reason to believe that the higher rungs of the Govigama caste such as the Baṇḍāra and Radaḷa had their origins in the Ksatriya families of old as suggested by geneaological, linguistic and epigraphic evidence (See Hussein 2013)

[214] Historical Relation of Ceylon (1681)

describes the Goewanse as being "raised by caste above the rest of the people". The Goewanse, he says, are a privileged people and monopolise all the honours of church and state, and possess all the hereditary rank in the country.

As will be seen below, the contention that the Govigama are largely representative of the earliest Sinhalese immigrants is also supported by anthropometrical data. Although a truly comprehensive anthropological survey of the country has as yet to be undertaken, we have a notable contribution to the field by a well known authority, the Physical Anthropology of Ceylon (1961) by Howard W. Stoudt (Ed. P.E.P. Deraniyagala) which is based on the data collected during the Ethnological Survey of Ceylon (1937-1939). The work contains physical anthropological data pertaining to a total of 1456 Sri Lankan adult males (643 Sinhalese, 593 Tamils, 138 Veddas, 35 Malays, 32 Moors and 15 Kaffirs).

The work classifies the Sinhalese into low-wet zone (Matara, Colombo, Ratnapura, Kegalle and Kurunegala Districts), up-wet zone (Kandy and Nuwara-Eliya Districts) and low-dry zone (Badulla District). The Govigama are enumerated as constituting 100 per cent of the low-country Sinhalese population in the low-wet zone areas of Matara and Colombo, 74.4 per cent of the Kandyan Sinhalese population in the low-wet zone area of Ratnapura and 47.6 per cent of the Kandyan Sinhalese population in the low-wet zone area of Kurunegala. The Govigama are said to constitute 72.1 per cent and 55.4 of the Kandyan Sinhalese population in the up-wet zone areas of Kandy and Nuwara-Eliya respectively, while in the low-dry zone (Badulla), they are said to constitute 62.5 per cent of the Kandyan Sinhalese population. Thus, we see a preponderance of Govigama folk in the Sinhalese majority areas covered in the ethnological survey, which is ideally suited for an anthropometric study of the Sinhalese population, especially of its formative stages.

We will firstly consider a very important physical character, viz. complexion. According to the Physical Anthropology (1961), the skin colour of the Sinhalese ranges from light-light brown through light brown to dark-light brown. At any rate, the Sinhalese are certainly fairer-complexioned than either the Tamils or the Veddas. The work describes the skin colour of the Sinhalese as being more evenly distributed through light-light brown, light brown and dark-light brown than the Tamils, over half of whom are classified as dark-light brown. The Veddas are said to be the darkest skinned of the three, the great majority being described as dark-light brown and a large minority as dark brown.

Of the total number of Sinhalese measured for skin colour (612), 30.1 percent had light-light brown skin, 24.2 percent had light brown skin, 37.9 percent had dark-light brown skin and 7.4 percent had dark brown skin. Of the total number of Tamils measured (592), 20 percent had light-light brown skin,

16.4 percent had light brown skin, 52.5 percent had dark-light brown skin and 10.6 percent had dark brown skin. The Veddas measured (134) showed as many as 70.9 percent in the dark-light brown category and 21.6 percent in the dark brown category.

The up-wet zone Sinhalese (Kandy and Nuwara Eliya) had the highest proportion of light-skinned individuals with 52.6 percent being categorized as light-light brown as compared to 19.0 percent from the low-wet zone and 17.2 percent from the low-dry zone. This would suggest that the last group, namely, the low-dry zone group from Badulla had undergone greater admixture with the Veddas, thus resulting in the darker skin colour of this category [215].

We will now consider another important physical character, namely head form. The Physical Anthropology (1961) gives the mean for head breadth of all Sinhalese subjects measured (638 subjects) as 141.97 mm and the mean for head length as 181.63 mm. The mean cephalic index for all Sinhalese is given as 78.33. The mean for the low-wet zone (298 subjects) is given as 79.22, for the up-wet zone (209 subjects) 78.96 and for the low-dry zone (131 subjects) 75.31.

Thus it can be seen that the Sinhalese are a decidedly mesaticephalic folk verging on brachycephaly. The average Sinhalese cephalic index of 78.33 differs considerably from the mean cephalic indices of the dolicocephalic Tamils (592 subjects) and Veddas (138 subjects) which are given as 74 .68 and 73.46 respectively. The Physical Anthropology (1961) states that the Sinhalese are a broad-headed people. It says: "Up-wet zone Sinhalese are only very slightly, and not significantly, broader headed than those from the low-wet zone. They are however, much broader than those from the low-dry zone, as are those from the low-wet zone. The differences are significant in the latter two cases. The two individual Sinhalese groups with the broadest heads are those from Colombo and Matara, both of the low-wet zone". The last statement is significant as it shows that the broadest heads are found in Colombo and Matara, places in which the Govigama caste predominate. The Sinhalese population of the dry zone (Badulla) that verges on dolicocephaly is probably the result of intensive miscegenation between broad-headed Sinhalese and long-headed Vedda folk.

As for nose form, another important physical character, the mean nasal index of the Sinhalese is given as 70.35; the low-wet zone Sinhalese mean being

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[215] At any rate, there can be little doubt that this fair-skinned element of the Sinhalese was largely derived from the ancestors of the Govigama caste. Hugh Nevill in the Taprobanian of April 1888 could thus observe that the natural skin colour of the Sinhalese of Goyi race was light. He pointed out that "when a Sinhalese of Goyi race wears clothes from youth his body is usually very light in colour, far lighter than his face and neck or hands. This proves that the natural colour is light".

given as 70.37 and the low-dry zone Sinhalese mean being given as 71.35. The Sinhalese are therefore a decidedly mesorhine folk verging on leptorhinity. As evident from the above figures, a greater degree of miscegenation has taken place between the low-dry zone or Badulla Sinhalese and the Veddas, whose nasal index is given as 73.93. Such miscegenation may have also contributed to lowering the stature of the low-dry zone Sinhalese whose average stature is given as 159.21 cm and is therefore intermediate between the mean statures of the Veddas (156.78 cm) and the low-wet zone Sinhalese (160.74 cm).

A consideration of other anthropometrical studies could also add weight to this survey. One of the earliest anthropometrical studies concerning the origins of the Sinhalese was Freiherr von Eickstedt's Rassenkunde und Rassengeschichte der Menschheit (1934) which gave the means for stature, cephalic and nasal indices for 30 male Sinhalese and 31 Veddas. Von Eickstedt assigned the Sinhalese to the Aryan race and distinguished them from the Veddas whom he assigned to the Weddid race. Von Eickstedt's study was however a fragmentary one (mainly due to the small number of subjects measured) and cannot in itself help us arrive at any solid conclusions concerning the racial affinities of the Sinhalese.

According to an anthropometrical study conducted on 50 male Sinhalese and 50 male Tamil students of the Department of Anatomy, University of Colombo over a period of three years by P.K. Chanmugam [216], the Sinhalese and Tamils differ significantly in the case of maximum cephalic length (where the Tamils have longer heads) and maximum cephalic breadth (where the Sinhalese have broader heads). The Sinhalese mean cephalic index is given as 82.54 and the Tamil mean cephalic index as 77.86, while the Sinhalese mean nasal index is given as 74.17 and the Tamil mean nasal index as 75.29 .

Another somewhat detailed survey has been undertaken by Dr. Nandadeva Wijesekera [217]. Wijesekera has evidently based his data on the information gathered during the Ethnological Survey of Ceylon in which he played a prominent part, as well as independent field inquiries, observations and investigations [218]. Wijesekera categorized the Sinhalese into two types, viz. the brachycephalic and dolicocephalic types. The average cephalic and nasal indices of the Sinhalese brachycephalic type is given as 80.8 and 69.9 respectively while the average stature is given as 1,609 mm. Wijesekera states that the Sinhalese brachycephalic type comprises the bulk of the Sinhalese population and opines that they are "probably the Vijayan type". He adds: "In

[216] Anthropometry of Sinhalese and Ceylon Tamils. CJS. Anthropology. Vol. IV. Pt. 1 (1949)

[217] The People of Ceylon. (1949)

[218] See introduction to his People of Ceylon

general appearance a man of this type looks an aristocratic noble with a provocative affinity to the Bengalis of today".

As for Wijesekera's Sinhalese dolicocephalic type (average cephalic and nasal indices 75.3 and 74.9 respectively and average stature 1,592 mm), he states that the type is common in the Vanni and amongst the upcountry Sinhalese peasantry of the dry zone, which also supports our contention that they represent a pronounced Vedda-Sinhalese hybridization, with a greater infusion of Vedda blood. As evident from Wijesekera's figures, the brachycephalic Sinhalese type has a mean nasal index of 69.9 indicating that the type is decidedly leptorhine. It also indicates that the Sinhalese dolicocephalic type with its mean nasal index of 74.9 has been affected by miscegenation with the broader-nosed Veddas which has tended to raise the nasal index.

Thus all the available evidence suggests that there does exist a definite correlation between brachycephaly and leptorhinity among the Sinhalese. We may therefore conclude that the Sinhalese, represented by the Govigama, are characterised by, or show a marked tendency towards brachycephaly as well as leptorhinity in common with the Bengalis, and like them appear to have derived these traits from the Central Asian or Pamir Alpines. It is also likely that the mean cephalic indices and statures of the Bengalis and Sinhalese have been lowered due to miscegenation with long-headed Austro-Asiatic elements, while their mean nasal indices have been raised due to the same process. The skin-colour of the Sinhalese and Bengalis which is usually a light brown may also be similarly explicable, being intermediate between the white-rosy complexion of the Central Asian Alpines and the dark chocolate brown hue of the Austro-Asiatics. Although it is likely that the greater part of the Austro-Asiatic element entered the Sinhalese via intermixture with the Veddas, it is possible that a certain component of it was acquired by the Sinhalese anterior to their emigration from the sub-continent.

It is also possible however that the dolicocephalic element may have obtained to some extent among the Pandyan Aryans with whom the early Sinhalese settlers are supposed to have had marital relations. Literary evidence however suggests that they were probably a brachycephalic folk as they seem to have been connected with the legendary Asuras and Vrātyas. Although certain Gujarāti peoples like the Nāgar Brahmans are brachycephalic and possess certain racial and linguistic peculiarities in common with the Bengalis and Sinhalese as seen earlier, we would have to settle for Bengal or Eastern India as the point of departure of the Sinhalese from the subcontinent considering the available historical and linguistic evidence.

That the core or nucleus of the Sinhalese nation was formed by immigrants from Bengal is also supported by the little available genetic evidence. A study

based on genetic markers in blood proteins by R.L.Kirk [219] found the Sinhalese to be genetically closer to the upper caste groups of Bengal than to populations in Gujarat or the Punjab, which was further corroborated by the studies of J.Tay and N.Saha [220]. More recent studies employing hypervariable molecular genetic markers [221] and *Alu* polymorphisms [222] have also confirmed the affinity of the Sinhalese to Bengalis.

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[219] The legend of Prince Vijaya. A study of Sinhalese origins. AJPA.1976. This genetic distance analysis study was based on blood proteins which provide information about gene structure as they are the main product of genes and vary in form in different individuals. The variations in these genetic markers comprising of glycoproteins such as blood group antigens, blood serum proteins and red blood cell enzymes are taken into consideration to determine the genetic distance between peoples. The genetic markers considered in this case were ABO, MN and Rh blood group red cell antigens, red cell enzymes, haptoglobin, a globulin or serum protein that functions in the binding of haemoglobins in the bloodstream, and transferrin, a globulin or carrier protein in the blood serum that transports iron to body tissues.

[220] Gene differentiation and admixture among the Sinhalese and Tamils of Sri Lanka.1989

[221] S.S.Papiha and S.S.Mastana (Classical to Molecular Polymorphisms. Population Genetic Studies from the Indian Sub-continent. In Genomic Diversity. Applications in Human Population Genetics. Ed.Surinder Singh Papiha et al. 1999) basing their conclusions on hypervariable molecular markers of the human genome comprising of minisatellites or Variable Number of Tandem Repeats (VNTRs) have demonstrated the close genetic affinity between the Sinhalese and Bengalis. Basing their contentions on four VNTR loci (D2S44, D7S22, DI2SII and DIS80) they have demonstrated the very close affinity for all these four VNTR data between Sinhalese and Bengalis. The data of 11 classical markers and 15 combined markers further support the affinity between the Bengali and Sinhalese populations. Affinity of Sinhalese with the population of North-Eastern India was further confirmed by admixture analysis. An analysis applying to two parental populations (Bengali and Tamil) and the Sinhalese showed that 70 % of the gene pool originated from the Bengali. When the analysis included Gujarati as the third parental population, the proportion of the Bengali genes in the Sinhalese increased to 72 %. VNTR data were available on Bengali, Panjabi and Gujarati and when these three populations were considered as parental populations, the VNTR results indicated that 82 % of the Sinhalese genes originated from Bengali admixture confirming that the present-day gene pool of the Sinhalese seems to have originated largely via migration from the northeastern region of India.

[222] Thirty *Alu* polymorphisms in a sample of 121 Sinhalese collected from Colombo were analysed and the overall pattern of genetic relationships pointed towards a substantial Bengali contribution. A number of genetic admixture calculations using Tamil, Bengali, Gujarati and Panjabi as parental populations showed that when the parental populations were used, the Bengali contribution remained strong (50-66 %), followed by Northwestern (20-23 %) and the rest contributed by Tamils (See Molecular Anthropology: Population and Forensic Genetuc Applications. Sarabjit Mastana. Anthropologist Special Volume. 2007).

The Sinhala language

1) The origins and affinities of Sinhala

The foundation of the Sinhalese nation is traditionally assigned to the legendary prince Vijaya of the Lāḷa country (present-day West Bengal) and his 700 compatriots, who having been exiled from their homeland, landed upon the shores of Lanka. Although this legend, which occurs in the 5th century chronicle of Sinhalese royalty, the Mahāvaṁsa, has been subject to some mythical and fanciful embellishment, it nevertheless appears to contain a kernel of historical truth and there remains a possibility that a great Aryan immigration from Eastern India did actually take place sometime during the 6th- 4th centuries B.C. This contention is supported by the linguistic evidence which indicates that Sinhala, the speech of the Sinhalese, is derived from an Old Indo-Aryan dialect (a speech closely akin to Vedic and Classical Sanskrit) through an Eastern Middle Indo-Aryan or Prakritic dialect resembling Pāli, the language of the Buddhist scriptures.

However, Sinhala is a member of not only the Aryan group of languages which includes Sanskrit, Pāli, Hindi and Bengali, but also of a larger linguistic group, the Indo-European family of languages which includes Greek, Latin, German, French, English, Russian and Lithuanian among others.The parent Indo-European speech from which all these languages derive, was evidently spoken somewhere in Europe, probably Southern Russia around 4500-3500 B.C. This Proto-Indo-European speech appears to have been a highly developed language with a rich and complex vocabulary. It would have however also been a very human language; the speech of an unlettered people unfettered by the rules of grammarians who had reached a fair level of political, social and cultural development.

The original speakers of this language were also no doubt an intelligent and industrious people and it were their innovations such as the use of the horse and wheel that led them to conquer much of the then known world, which in subsequent centuries and millennia their descendants who had by then formed into different nations expanded further, to such an extent that today the Indo-European family of languages is by far the largest and most widely dispersed language group, having a presence in every inhabited continent, in Eurasia, the Americas, Australia and even in the south of Africa where there exists to this day a language known as Afrikaans – an offshoot of Dutch. However to suppose that it is only people who were originally descended from the ancient Indo-Europeans who speak this language today would be a mistake. Many were the peoples whom the ancient Indo-Europeans conquered or influenced in

other ways to such an extent that they adopted Indo-European speech, perhaps after a certain period of bilingualism where their native speech and that of their Indo-European conquerors existed side by side for some time before the latter displaced the former. This expansion of the Indo-European family of languages is generally attributed to the fact that its speakers had the ability to offer material benefits (viz. goods, status, ritual or security) to the populations with whom they came into contact [223].

August Schleicher's Compendium der Vergleichenden Grammatik der Indogermanischen Sprachen (1861) represented the first attempt to reconstruct the Proto-Indo-European language (*Ursprache*), laying the foundation for later authorities such as Julius Pokorny (Indogermanisches Etymologisches Worterbuch. 1948-1969) to reconstruct the language with further accuracy. It was Schleicher who initiated the practice of distinguishing the hypothetical reconstructed forms with an asterisk. He also went on to publish a fable composed in the *Ursprache*, which has however been subject to some revision.

Phonological change has been somewhat pronounced in the Indo-European family and this is attributable to a number of factors including perhaps climatic changes, miscegenation with other peoples, and linguistic wear and tear with the passage of time. Compare Sanskrit *bhrātṛ*, Latin *frāter*, Old High Germanic *pruodar* 'brother' where the original PIE form seems to have been**bhratēr* or Sanskrit *pitṛ*, Gothic *fadar*, Dutch *vader* 'father' where the original PIE was apparently **patēr* or Sanskrit *śvaśura*, Welsh *chwegr*, Cornish *huiger* 'father-in-law' where the original PIE was something like **swekʷros*. Vowel changes have also been pronounced. Consider the following Indo-European terms for fire, each of which begins with a different vowel. Skt. *agni*, L. *ignis*, Lith. *ugnis*, OCS. *ogni*. The original PIE form seems to have been **hgʷnis*. Likewise Skt.*mṛta*, L,*mortis* and Lith.*mirtis* 'dead' have different vowels despite being reflexes of the same PIE form **mertis*.

Although Sinhala has undergone significant phonetic changes, it is not an altogether difficult task to connect its vocables with cognate Indo-European forms. With regard to numeral terms which constitute an important part of the basic vocabulary of a people, we can easily demonstrate that Sinhala *hatara* 'four' is related not only to the Sanskrit *catvar* and Pali *cattaro*, but also Latin *quattour*, Old Prussian *ketwir*, Lithuanian *ketturi*, Irish *ceathair*, French *quatre*, Spanish *cuatro*, Polish *cztery*, Russian *četyre*, Persian *cahār*, Hindi *cār* and Assamese *sār*. All these forms go back to the Proto-Indo-European **kʷetwor*. Likewise Sinhala *paha* 'five' could easily be shown to be related to the Hindi *pāc*, Kashmiri *panc*, Sanskrit *pañca*, Lithuanian *penki*, Persian *panj*,

[223] In search of the Indo-Europeans. J.P. Mallory (1989).

Tocharian *pic*, Polish *piec*, Albanian *pesë* and Wendish *pĕs*, all of which go back to the PIE **penk^{w}e*. Similarly Sinhala *hata* 'seven' is related to the Hindi *sāt*, Pāli *satta*, Sanskrit *sapta*, Avestan *hapta*, Persian *haft*, Greek *hepta*, Latin *septem*, Lithuanian *septyni*, French *sept*, Gothic *sibun* and Dutch *zeven*, all of which go back to the PIE **septm*. Sinhala *aṭa* 'eight' could similarly be shown to be connected to the Hindi *āṭh*, Kashmiri *öth*, Pāli *aṭṭha*, Sanskrit *aṣtau*, Greek *okto*, Latin *octo*, Gothic *ahtau*, Italian *otto*, German *acht* and Lithuanian *aštuoni*. These forms go back to the PIE **hoktou*.

As for anatomical terms we only have to consider the major terms such as Sinhala *ähä* 'eye' which is related to the Sanskrit *akṣi*, Avestan *aši*, Latvian *asz*, Lithuanian *ākis*, Latin *oculus*, Gothic *augo*, Russian *oko*, Kashmiri *achi* and Hindi *ākh* and which are reconstructable to the PIE **hok^{w}s* and Sinhala *data* 'tooth' related to the Hindi *dāt*, Sanskrit *danta*, Latin *dentis*, Lithuanian *dantis*, French *dent*, Dutch *tand* and German *zahn* and reconstructable to the PIE **dent*. Sinhala *nahaya* 'nose' could similarly be connected to the Sanskrit *nāsa*, Latin *nasus*, Lithuanian *nosis*, German *nase*, Dutch *neus*, Italian *naso* and Russian *nos*, all of which go back to the PIE **nas* while Sinhala *paya* 'foot' could be shown to be related to the Hindi *pāv*, Sanskrit *pāda-s*, Greek *pod-os*, Latin *pedis*, Avestan *pad*, Gothic *fotus*, Tocharian *paiyye*, Spanish *pié* and French *pied* which go back to the PIE **pods*. Sinhala *niya* '(finger or toe) nail' is likewise related to the Sanskrit *nakha*, Lithuanian *nagus*, Latvian *nags*, Russian *nogot*, German *nagel*, Persian *nākhun* and Hindi *nah*, all of which go back to the PIE **nog*.

In like manner we could connect other basic terms in Sinhala to cognates in other IE languages, as for instance Sinhala *dora* 'door' which we could easily show to be connected to the Sanskrit *dvāra*, Gothic *daura*, Lithuanian *durys*, Irish *doras*, Russian *dver*, Dutch *deur* and Persian *dar*. The PIE form seems to have been **dwor*. Then take Sinhala *nama* 'name' which we could easily connect with the Sanskrit *nāman*, Latin *nōmen*, Gothic *namo*, German *name*, French *nom* and Hindi *nām*. The PIE form was evidently **nom*. Likewise we would not have much difficulty in connecting Sinhala *ginna* 'fire' with Sanskrit *agni*, Latin *ignis*, Lithuanian *ugnis*, Latvian *uguns*, Russian *ogon*, Nepali *āgo*, Sindhi *āgi* and Hindi *āg*, all being reflexes of the PIE **hg^{w}nis*. We would likewise not have any great difficulty in connecting Sinhala *duma* 'smoke' to the Sanskrit *dhumas*, Lithuanian *dumai*, Latvian *dumi*, Old Prussian *dumis*, Old Church Slavonic *dymŭ*, Gujarati *dhūm* and even Old Irish *dumacha* 'mist' all of which are reflexes of the PIE **dhumos*.

A good part of this Proto-Indo-European lexicon does not seem to have arbitrarily come into existence, but rather appear to have had some underlying meaning. For instance Sanskrit *mātṛ*, Latin *māter*, Avestan *mātar*, Persian *mādar*, German *mutter*, Dutch *moeder*, Spanish *madre*, French *mere*, Hindi *mā*

and Sinhala *mava* all go back to the Proto-Indo-European * *mater*, the first syllable of which, *ma* appears to be primarily connected with suckling and the female parent, and one which with the passage of time would have assumed the connotation of 'to produce' or 'to measure or mete out' though it could be ultimately said to have had a nursery origin. The suffix of the actor * *ter* added to it would thus have given rise to * *mater* 'producer' (of children)' or 'the one who metes out (food to the household)', which is what it is supposed to have originally meant. Skt *pitṛ*, Persian *pedar*, Latin *pater*, Gothic *fadar*, Dutch *vader*, German *vater*, Spanish *padre*, French *père*, Pañjābī *piō* and Sinhala *piyā* 'father'all go back to the Proto-Indo-European * *pater* which seems to have originally meant 'protector'. The *pa* of * *pater* would have assumed the sense of 'to provide', 'to protect' in keeping with the patriarchal tradition of the Urvolk and the suffix of the actor **ter* added to it would have given rise to * *pater* 'protector (of the family)'.

In like manner, the Sanskrit *bhrātṛ*, Avestan *brātar*, Persian *barādar*, Gothic *brōthar*, Dutch *broeder*, German *bruder*, Welsh *brawd*, Irish *brathair*, Czech *bratr*, Russian *brat*, Lithuanian *brólis* Hindī *bhāī*, Kāśmīrī *bōy* and Sinhala *bǟya* 'brother' all go back to the Proto-Indo-European term * *bhrater*. This term * *bhrater* appears to have originally meant 'supporter' as it seems to be connected with the root * *bhr* 'to carry, to support' to which has been affixed the agent suffix * *ter*. This is quite logical since in a patriarchal society the brother would have been regarded as the stay of the family, especially of his mother and sisters, following the demise of the paterfamilias. Similarly the Sanskrit *duhitṛ*, Avestan *dugdar*, Persian *dokhtar*, Gothic *dauhtar*, Dutch *dochter*, German *tochter*, Lithuanian *dukter*, Old Prussian *duckti*, Russian *doch* and Sinhala *duva* 'daughter' all go back to the Proto-Indo-European * *dhughater* 'milker' (from PIE * *dhugh* 'milk'and the agent suffix * *ter*, hence 'milk-maid') which appears to have been a pet name originally given by the Proto-Indo-European cowherds and shepherds, and by them alone, to the daughters of their house, though it is also possible that it could have been a diminutive meaning 'milkling', 'one who draws milk (from her mother)'.

Likewise Sinhala *taruva* 'star' together with its cognates such as Sanskrit *stṛ*, Avestan *star*, Greek *aster*, Hittite *hašter*, Latin *stella*, Armenian *astl*, Persian *sitārā*, Gothic *stairno*, German *stern* and Dutch *ster* go back to the PIE **haster*, the root **str* from which it appears to derive probably meaning 'to strew', 'to scatter' and hence applied to the stars as being strewn over the sky or as being scatterers or spreaders of light. We can expand this list further. For instance Sinhala *hāvā* 'hare' with its cognates such as Panjabi *sasā*, Gujarati *saso*, Sanskrit *śaśa*, Old Prussian *sasins*, Old High Germanic *haso*, Dutch *haas*, German *hase* and Greek *kasia* all go back to the PIE **kasos* which probably meant 'the grey one' after its colour, while Sinhala *mīyā* 'mouse'

with its cognates such as Sanskrit *mūs(ika)*, Greek *mūs*, German *maus*, Persian *mūs* and Hindi *mūsā* go back to the PIE **mus* which apparently meant 'the stealer'.

Although Sinhala terms such as *duva* 'island' and *doḷa* (*-duka*) 'pregnancy craving' are in themselves not reflexes of Proto-Indo-European (which lacks terms having these meanings) they nevertheless preserve within them roots of Proto-Indo-European origin. Take for instance the case of *diva* or *duva* 'island' which has evolved from an earlier *dvīpa* (as found in Sanskrit) which in turn has been formed from a combination of *dvi* 'two' + *ap* 'water' hence *dvīpa* meaning '(land between) two waters' which also applied in an extended sense to an island. The form *ap* we know is derived from the PIE **hep* 'flowing water' whose cognate IE forms include Hittite *hapa*, Avestan *āfš*, Gothic *ahva*, Lithuanian *uppe*, Old Prussian *ape* and Old Irish *ab*, all meaning 'river' as well as *–affa-* which figures as a part of river names in Old High Germanic.

As for the Sinhala term for pregnancy craving *doḷa* (*-duka*), it is little doubt derived from an older form which occurs as *dvihṛda* in an ancient Sanskrit medical text by the renowned physician Suśruta through an intermediate form such as *dohaḍa*. In this term too, we may discern two elements, namely, *dvi* 'two' + *hṛda* 'heart. It therefore literally means 'two hearts', namely, the heart of the mother and of her unborn child. *Doḷa* (*-duka*) would therefore mean '(the craving of) the two hearts'. The form *hṛda* as found in Sanskrit goes back to the PIE * *kerd* 'heart' whose reflexes include the Greek *kardia*, Latin *cordis*, Avestan *zeredaya*, Lithuanian *sirdis*, Russian *serdce*, Gothic *hairto*, German *herz*, Irish *croidhe* and French *coeur*.

A few Sinhala vocables have also undergone semantic changes or changes in meaning when compared to other Indo-European speeches. For example Sinh. *ina* 'waist, loins' is in fact cognate with Skt. *śroni* 'buttock', 'hip', 'loin', L. *clūnis* 'buttock', Gk. *klonis* 'os sacrum' ON. *hlaun* 'loin', 'buttock' and O.Prus. *slaunis* 'hip', 'thigh'. The parent form from which it has derived **klounis* evidently meant 'the lower portion of the body between the navel and the knee'. We also find a similar development in the Sinh.*kihi(lla)* 'armpit' whose cognate forms in other IE languages include Skt.*kakṣa* 'loins', 'armpit', Av.*kaša* 'armpit', L.*coxa* 'hip', Toch. *kakse* 'loins' and OHG *hahsa* 'hip', 'back of knee' all of which go back to the PIE **kokso* which seems to have meant the hollow beneath the joints of a limb (as the groin or armpit).

Yet another interesting case of such semantic change is seen in Sinh.*hīna* 'dream' which is cognate with Skt.*svapna* 'sleep', 'dream', Gk.*hupnos*, L.*somnus* for *sop-nus*, Olc.*svefn*, Rus.*son*, Port.*sono* 'sleep', the PIE form being **swepnos* 'sleep'. Interestingly Lith.*sãpnas* 'dream' has undergone the same semantic development as Sinhala. Another such example is seen in *rā*, the Sinhala term for toddy, an intoxicating beverage obtained from the flower

of the coconut palm, which has a respectable predecessor in the PIE **ros* 'dew' with cognate forms seen in L.*ros*, Lith.*rasa* and Russ.*rosá* 'dew' and Skt.*rasa* 'sap', 'juice'. It is from the Sanskritic *rasa* meaning 'sap', 'juice' as well as 'flavour', 'essence', 'taste' that Sinhala derives both its word for 'toddy' *rā* as well as its term for 'taste' *raha*. Yet another example is seen in Sinhala *kimi* 'worm', 'small monkey' and its variant *kūmbi* 'ant' which have cognates in the Skt.*krmi* 'worm', 'insect', 'spider', 'ant', Pers.*kirm* 'worm', Olr.*cruim* 'worm', O.Prus.*girmis* 'maggot', 'mite', Latvian *cirmis* 'worm', 'maggot', 'caterpillar' and Lith. *kirmis*, *kirminas* 'worm', 'snake', 'dragon', all of which go back to the PIE * $k^{w}rmis$ 'worm', 'insect'.

August Schleicher's Proto-Indo-European Tale

Avis akvasas ka

Avis, jasmin varna na a ast, dadarka akvams, tam, vagham garum vaghantam, tam, bharam magham, tam manum aku bharantam. Avis akvabhjams a vavakat: kard aghnutai mai vidanti manum akvams agantam. Akvasas a vavakant: krudhi avai, kard aghnutai vividvant-svas: manus patis varnam avisams karnauti svabhjam gharmam vastram avibhjams ka varna na asti. Tat kukruvants avis agram a bhugat

We may on the basis of the latest linguistic evidence reconstruct the fable as follow

Howis hekwos $k^{w}e$

Howis k^{w}esyo wlhneh ne hest, hekwons speket, hoinom gheg^{w}rum woghom weghontm, hoinom kwe megham bhorom, hoinom k^{w}e manum hoku bherontm. Howis tu hekwobhos wew^{w}kwet: kerd heghnutor moi kekwons hegontm manum widntbhos. Hekwos tu wew^{w}wont: kludhi, howei, kerd ghe heghnutor nsmei widntbhos, man, potis, hewiom r wlhnehm sebhi k^{w}rneuti nu g^{w}hermom westrom. Neghi howiom wlhneh hesti. Tod kekluwos howis hegrom bhuget

A quite literal translation would run thus:

[The] Sheep [the] Horses and

[A]sheep, on which wool not was, horses saw, one [a] heavy wagon bearing, [another] one a great load, [another] one [a] man swiftly carrying. [The] sheep to the horses said: Heart pains me horses driving a man seeing. [The] horses said: Listen, sheep, heart pans us seeing man, [the] master, sheep's wool for himself makes a warm garment [when] not sheep wool is. That [having] heard [the] sheep [to the] plains fled

While a freer translation would run:

The Sheep and the Horses

A sheep that had no wool saw horses – one pulling a heavy wagon, another one a great load, and another swiftly carrying a man. The sheep said to the horses: "It hurts me seeing a man driving horses". The horses said to the sheep: "Listen sheep! it hurts us seeing man the master making a warm garment for himself from the wool of a sheep when the sheep has no wool for itself". On hearing this, the sheep fled into the plain.

Evolution of Sinhala from Proto-Indo-European

When we compare Sinhala vocables with their hypothetical reconstructed parent forms in Proto-Indo-European we would find that they have been subjected to some very profound phonetic changes over the centuries and millennia, so much so indeed that it would be a difficult task to trace their origins if not for the science of comparative Indo-European linguistics which has made it possible. We give here a few examples of Sinhala vocables that have derived from Proto-Indo-European (PIE) through Old Indo-Aryan (OIA) with the sound changes that underlie them.

Sinhala has aspirated the sibilants of PIE that had been retained in OIA:

PIE **septm* > OIA *saptan* > Sinh.*hata* 'seven'
PIE **nas* > OIA *nās* > Sinh.*nahaya* 'nose'

And has also aspirated the sibilants of OIA that had developed from the PIE palato-velar * k:

PIE **dekm* > OIA *daśan* > Sinh.*dahaya* 'ten'
PIE **kasos* > OIA *śaśa* > Sinh.*hā* 'hare'

Though there have also been instances where the aspirates so obtained have been de-aspirated in Sinhala:

PIE **klounis* > OIA *śroni* > O.Sinh.*hina* > Sinh.*ina* 'loins'
PIE **kern* > OIA *śṛṅga* > O.Sinh.*haṅga* > Sinh.*aṅga* 'horn'

Among other notable changes may be included the sibilization or subsequent aspiration of the OIA palatal *c* which in turn had developed from the PIE palato-velar **k*^{w} :

PIE **k*^{w}*e* > OIA *ca* > O.Sinh.*sa* > Sinh.*ha* 'and'
**k*^{w}*etwor* > OIA *catvar* > O.Sinh.*satara* > Sinh.*hatara* 'four'

And the dentalization of the OIA palatal *j* which in turn had developed from the PIE palato-velar **g* and the labio-velar **g*^{w}:

PIE **gonu* > OIA *jānu* > Sinh.*dana* 'knee'
PIE **g*^{w}*iwos* > OIA *jīva* >Sinh.*divi* 'life'

Among the other innovations of Sinhala may be included the dropping of the OIA nasal which had been inherited from PIE:

PIE **penk*^{w}*e* > OIA *pañca* > Sinh.*paha* 'five'
PIE **dont* > OIA *danta* > Sinh.*data* 'tooth'

And the dropping of the conjunct consonants of OIA also inherited from PIE:

PIE **host* > OIA *asthi* > Sinh.*aṭa* 'bone'
PIE **pstenos* > OIA *stana* > Sinh.*tana* 'female breast'

11) Phonological and Semantic changes in the evolution of Sinhala

The pure Sinhala language free of foreign borrowings such as Sanskrit loans is known as *Eḷu*. This appellation is believed to be a development from the Prakritic *Sīhaḷa* through the intermediate forms *Heḷa* and *Heḷu*. These terms which may be employed in literary Sinhala to this day are in fact synonymous with Sinhala. Consider *heḷa-diva* 'the Sinhala island' and *heḷu-bas* 'the Sinhala language'[224]. Nevertheless the Sinhala language is for all practical purposes, whether in colloquial or formal speech or often even in literary usage simply known as *Siṅhala* and not *Eḷu*.

Eḷu vocables which could be said to comprise the inherited vocabulary of the Sinhalese have undergone significant phonological changes throughout the centuries before acquiring their present form. Many such changes could be easily discerned through a study of comparative linguistics. For example, the Sinhala *ata* 'hand' could without much difficulty be shown to be cognate with the Hindi *hāth* and derived from the Middle Indo-Aryan *hattha* and the Old Indo-Aryan *hasta*, and ultimately from the Proto-Indo-European * *ghostos*. It could also be shown to be connected with other cognate Aryan forms like Avestan *zasta*, Old Persian *dasta* and Wasi-Weri *lust*. Likewise Sinhala *divi* 'life' could be shown to be cognate with the, Kashmiri *zīv*, Sanskrit *jīv* Lithuanian *gywas* and Gothic *quivs*, all of which go back to the PIE *g^{w}iwos.

Some Sinhala forms have however been subject to far-reaching sound or phonetic changes. This is perhaps best exemplified by the Sinhala *iṅdi* 'needle' which is cognate with the Hindī *suī* and derives from the OIA *sūci*. Similar is the case with the Sinhala *api* 'we' which is cognate with the Hindī *ham* and derives from the OIA *asmad*. It is evident that the above vocables have been subject to considerable phonetic change before assuming their present form.

Jules Bloch [225] has described Sinhala as the most aberrant Indo-Aryan language, which however does not do justice to the language, for Sinhala has not been unruly in its development and has to a large extent been subject to more or less regular phonetic changes during the course of its evolution. Such changes were more profound at certain times than others. Significant changes were particularly evident during the period from about the 3rd century B.C.- 8th century A.C. This situation may be attributable to a number of factors. D.J.Wijayaratne[226] attributes the rapid changes the Sinhala language

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[224] The terms *heḷu* or *eḷu* are today generally employed to designate the language of Sinhala verse due to its conservative character

[225] L' Indo-Aryen du Veda aux temps modernes (1934)

[226] Preface to the History of the Sinhalese noun (1956).

underwent during this period to a non-Aryan substratum introduced by the country's aboriginal inhabitants who freely adopted and used Sinhala on a mass scale. He notes that this becomes strikingly significant when we compare the extent of changes during this period with that gone through by the language during the subsequent period of twelve centuries from the 8th-20th century A.C. Says Wijayaratne: " compared to the vast changes of the former, the changes in the latter become almost negligible". There may however well be other factors that contributed to this situation. For one thing, Sinhala was geographically far removed from the Indo-Aryan heartland so that the pressure to conform to the conservative tendency would have been minimal, if not absent. Another contributory factor would have been the absence of a strong literary tradition which could have exercised a profound influence in conserving the language against phonetic change. However at the same time, owing to its geographical isolation, the Sinhala language has also preserved a number of Indo-Aryan archaisms that have been lost in the Modern Indo-Aryan Vernaculars.

For instance, whereas Sinhala has preserved the initial *y* of Old and Middle Indo Aryan, this has been changed to *j* in all the MIAVs save for Kāśmīrī whose status as an Indo-Aryan language (as distinct from Iranian or Dardic) is however disputed.

Skt. P. *yāti* 'to go'
H. *jānā*, Bg. *jāy* but Sinh. *yanna*

Besides preserving this Old Indo-Aryan semi-vowel, Sinhala has also managed to retain the original meanings of Old and Middle Indo-Aryan words which have been lost in the MIAVs.

Skt. *yoni* 'female sexual organ', primarily 'vulva'. P. *yoni* 'womb', 'place of birth'. H. *jon*, Bg. *joni* 'womb' but Sinh. *yon* 'vulva', 'vagina'.

It is apparent that the Sinhala *yon* is closer in meaning to its Sanskritic cognate than the cognate MIAV forms. Similarly, Sinhala *yuvala* 'pair, couple' has retained the Sanskritic and Prakritic meaning (Skt. P. *yugala* 'pair, couple') unlike those cognate MIAV forms which have acquired the sense of 'twins' (Guj.*jol*, M. *jul* 'twins') though Hindī has *jolā* 'pair'. Also consider the case of Sinhala *ya(-kaḍa)* 'iron' which has derived from the MIA *aya* and the OIA *ayas* 'metal' (as in the form *kṛṣṇāyas* or 'black metal', viz.iron, the PIE form **heyes* apparently having meant 'metal' in general and not 'iron' in particular as suggested by its Latin reflex *aes* 'copper', 'bronze'). The MIAV terms for 'iron' *loha* on the other hand seem to have originally meant 'copper'

as it appears to have derived from the Sanskrit *lohāyas* or 'red metal', viz.copper/bronze.

In general, we would find that Old Sinhala preserved in classical prose and poetical works has been more faithful to its Indo-European roots. We need cite only a few examples to prove this. Take for instance the *dasa-bā̄-radun* 'the ten brother kings' who find mention in Sinhalese literature such as the 13th or 14th century Dhātuvaṁsa of Kakasandha and whose antecedents go back to OIA *daśa-bhrātr-rāja* and PIE * *dekm-bhrater-reĝs*. Its modern Sinhala spoken equivalent would be *raja sahōdarayo daha-denā* where only the numeral *daha* 'ten' could be deemed a pure Elu term that has preserved the PIE usage, the rest of the sentence being made of the Sanskritic loans *raja* 'king' and *sahōdara* 'male sibling'. Another interesting case is provided by an 8th century Sigiri verse which refers to the raining of tears (*as-väsli*) where *as* means 'tears', a form that no longer exists in Sinhala, its place being taken by the form *kaṅdulu*. This old usage however has Indo-European antecedents, related as it is to Hindi *āsu*, Sanskrit *aśru*, Avestan *asrū*, Hittite *eshahru*, Lithuanian *ašara* and Latvian *asara*, the PIE form being **akru* 'tear'.

Also consider the case of the obsolete Sinhala form *nuba* 'sky' occurring in the 13th century poetical work Kavsiḷumina attributed to King Parākrama-Bāhu II:

nuba-kus vi gana nil
hasa sara vigum gata
(The sky-womb became a dark blue
and the geese making a noise took off)

The form *nuba* occurring here in the compound *nuba-kus* or 'sky-womb' and its later nasalized variant *nuṁba* occurring in the phrase *mihi nuṁbaturu* (between earth and sky) in the 15th century Guttila Kāvyaya of Vättäve is related to a number of other forms occurring in Indo-European tongues such as Skt.*nabhas* 'sky', Av. *nabah* 'sky', Gk.*nephos* 'cloud', Hitt.*nepis* 'sky', OCS *nebes* 'sky' and Rus.*nebesa* 'heaven' all of which go back to the PIE **nebhos* 'cloud', 'mist', 'sky'. What is also interesting is that the reflexes of this PIE form hardly survive in Indo-European languages today, one of the very few examples being Russian where the word is well attested in both Old Russian as in the part of a fable found in a Novgorod birch bark fragment *estĭ gradŭ mežu nobomŭ i zemleyu* (There is a city between heaven and earth) and in the well known modern Russian metaphor *nebesnyi svod* 'celestial vault' which finds expression in Pushkin:

no tam uvy gde neba svody
siyayut v bleske golubom
(But there alas ! where the heaven's vaults
shine in blue splendour)

The development of the Sinhala language may be roughly divided into four periods as suggested by Prof. Wilhelm Geiger in his Grammar of the Sinhalese language (1938):

1) The Prakritic Sinhala period (3rd century B.C.- 4th century A.C.).

a knowledge of which has been gained from ancient cave and lithic inscriptions in Brāhmī characters. The language of this period somewhat resembled the Prakritic languages of India such as Pāli, Māgadhī and Ardha-Māgadhī.

2) The Proto-or early Sinhala period (4th century A.C.-9th century A.C.)

when many of the phonetic changes peculiar to Sinhala took place. A considerable knowledge of this stage has been obtained from lithic inscriptions in Brāhmī characters and the graffiti inscribed on the 'Mirror wall' of Sīgiriya.

3) The Middle Sinhala period (Mid-9th century-mid-13th century)

where we have the earliest extant Sinhala literature such as the Siyabas lakara (assigned to the 9th century) and the Dhampiyā-aṭuvā-gātapadaya (assigned to the 10th century).

4) The Modern Sinhala period

which could be said to have begun with the composition of the Sidat Saňgarā, the oldest extant Sinhala grammar, around the mid-thirteenth century during the Dambadeniya period. The work brought to a standard the Eḷu or pure Sinhala literary language, which, in its general characteristics remains so to this day. Besides, the major phonetic changes that have characterized modern Sinhala had taken place by this time, so that the mid-thirteenth century could be roughly taken as the starting point of the modern Sinhala language.

We will hereunder deal with the major phonetic changes that have taken place in Sinhala when compared to Old and Middle Indo-Aryan.

One of the main characteristics of Sinhala is the simplification of the conjunct consonants of Middle Indo-Aryan which had in turn evolved from Old Indo-Aryan forms containing *r*:

Sinh.*maga* 'path' (P. *magga*, Skt. *mārga*)
hama 'skin' (P. *camma*, Skt. *carma*)
kana 'ear' (P.*kanna*, Skt. *karna*)
kam 'work' as in *kam-hala* 'factory'/*hora-kam* 'theft' (P.*kamma*, Skt. *karma*)

Or the simplification of conjunct consonants of Middle Indo-Aryan that had evolved from Old Indo-Aryan forms having sibilant-dental clusters:

Sinh. *raṭa* 'country' (P.*raṭṭha*, Skt.*rāṣṭra*)
häṭa 'sixty' (P.*saṭṭhi*, Skt. *ṣaṣṭi*)
äṭa 'bone' (P *aṭṭhi*, Skt. *asthi*)
miṭiya 'hammer' (P.*muṭṭhi*, Skt.*muṣṭi*)

Or the sibilization of the palatals, conjuct or otherwise, of Middle Indo-Aryan that had developed from Old Indo-Aryan forms having dental-sibilant clusters:

Sinh. *vasu* / *vahu* (*-pätiyā*) 'calf' (P.*vaccha*, Skt.*vatsa*)
masuru (*-kama*) 'niggardliness' (P.*macchara*, Skt.*matsara*)
saru 'hilt (of a sword' (AMg.*charu*, Skt.*tsaru*)
O.Sinh (*diya-*) *mas* 'fish' (P.*maccha*, Skt.*matsya*)

Or the sibilization of the conjunct palatals of Middle Indo-Aryan that had developed from Old Indo-Aryan forms having velar-sibilant clusters:

Sinh.*äsa* 'eye' (P.*acchi*, Skt.*akṣi*)
kusa 'womb' (P.*kucchi*, Skt.*kukṣi*)
käsa / *kihi*(*lla*) 'armpit' (P.*kacchā*, Skt.*kakṣā*)
(*val-*) *as* / *aha* 'bear' (P.*accha*, Skt.*rkṣa*)

Or indeed even the dentalization of the conjunct palatals of Middle Indo-Aryan that had in turn evolved from Old Indo-Aryan forms having clusters with dentals:

Sinh. *mäda* 'middle' (P.*majjha*, Skt.*madhya*)
vedā 'physician' (P.*vejja*, Skt.*vaidya*)
vada 'torture' (P.*vajjhā*, Skt.*vadhyā*)

vidu (*-liya*) 'lightning' (P.*vijju*, Skt.*vidyut*)

Another characteristic of Sinhala is the shortening of the long vowels of Old and Middle Indo-Aryan:

Sinh. *pana* 'life' (P.*pāna*, Skt. *prāna*)
gama 'village' (P.*gāma*, Skt. *grāma*)
hisa 'head' (P. *sīsa*, Skt. *śīrṣa*)
kiri 'milk' (P.*khīra*, Skt. *kṣīra*)

Another salient feature of Sinhala is the de-aspiration of aspirated consonants (*mahāprāna*) of Old and Middle Indo-Aryan:

Sinh. *täna* 'place' (P. *thāna*, Skt. *sthāna*)
gäba 'womb' (P. *gabbha*, Skt. *garbha*)
diga 'long' (P. *dīgha*, Skt. *dīrgha*)
uduna 'oven', 'furnace' (P.*uddhana*, Skt.*uddhāna*)

The simplification of conjunct consonants, shortening of long vowels and the de-aspiration of aspirated consonants have been graphically represented in the Old Sinhala inscriptions of the Prakritic Sinhala stage (3rd century B.C.- 4th century A.C.). For instance, the Vessagiri cave inscriptions of about the 2nd century B.C. furnish us with forms such as *puta* 'son' (P.*putta*), *upaśika* 'female lay devotee' (P.*upāsikā*) and *bariya* 'wife'(P.*bhariyā*).There is however some dispute as to whether this was so in actual pronunciation. Geiger (1938) is of the view that the simplification of conjunct consonants and the shortening of long vowels in the early inscriptions are merely graphical. Although Geiger's contentions with regard to the latter development is not very convincing, his views on the graphical representation of conjunct consonants as simple consonants is deserving of some consideration. Geiger states that this becomes clear from the different treatment in the Proto-Sinhala period of such consonants which are double in Middle Indian and of such that are originally single.

He cites the case of O. Sinh. *sata* 'seven' (P. *satta*) occurring in a Brāhmī inscription which has remained *sata* (more commonly *hata* in modern spoken Sinhala), while O. Sinh. *sata* 'hundred'(P.*sata*) has become *siya* (often articulated today as *sīya*). He notes that up to that period, the pronunciation of the two forms graphically represented as *sata* must have been different: *satta* and *sata*.

Further linguistic evidence could be cited to substantiate this view. We know that those Sinhala forms which have developed from MIA forms with intervocalic *p* have had these softened to v, a change which had already taken place by the 2nd century A.C. This is borne out by such forms as *avan* 'drinking' (P.*āpāna*) and *väva* 'reservoir' (P.*vāpi*). On the other hand, the *p* has survived in an intervocalic position in those Sinhala forms that have developed from MIA forms containing conjunct *pp* as borne out by such forms as *kapu* 'cotton' (P.*kappāsa*), *upula* 'lotus' (P.*uppala*) *hapanna* 'to bite' (P.*cappeti*) and *kapanna* 'to cut' (P.*kappeti*). This would imply that Sinhala Prakrit did maintain the distinction between single and conjunct consonants in actual pronunciation and that conjunct consonants were graphically represented as single in the early inscriptions.

This is also supported by the fact that Sinhala forms which have developed from MIA forms with conjunct *ḍḍ* such as *aḍa* 'half' (P. *aḍḍha*) and *vaḍuvā* 'carpenter' (P.*vaḍḍhaki*) have not undergone the change *ḍ* > *ḷ* which took place sometime during the 3rd century A.C. or perhaps even earlier.The former is represented in a C. 4th century inscription as *aḍa* and in a C.10th century inscription as *aḍ*. Prakrit forms showing a simple intervocalic *ḍ* on the other hand have had these changed to *ḷ*. Consider Sinh. Pkt. *dameḍa* 'Tamil'> Mod.Sinh. *demaḷa*. It is also very evident that Sinhala has preserved the retroflex *ṭ* in cases where the Middle Indo-Aryan displays conjunct consonants (Cf. P. *aṭṭha*, Sinh. *aṭa* 'eight') while it has changed the single retroflex *ṭ* occurring in an intervocalic position in MIA to *ḷ* (Cf. P. *paṭhama*, Sinh. *paḷamu* 'first'), a change which evidently took place through an intermediate * *ḍ*. Now we know that the change *ṭ* > *ḍ* took place sometime between the 1st – 4th century A.C. while that of *ḍ* > *ḷ* where it had developed from MIA *ṭ* occurred sometime between the 5th –10th centuries. Sinhala forms like *paḷamu* 'first' and *kukuḷ* 'fowl' which have developed from MIA forms with intervocalic *ṭ* commonly occur in the 9th –10th centuries. However, we find the modern Sinhala *aṭa* 'eight' occurring as the same *aṭa* sometime during the 3rd –5th century A.C. and as *aṭ* around the 10th century when there was a tendency for final vowels to be eliminated in nouns.

It is thus evident that Sinhala has preserved the retroflex *ḍ* and *ṭ* of MIA *ḍḍ* and *ṭṭ* while it has turned the MIA simple *ḍ* and *ṭ* into lingual *ḷ*. The different treatment of MIA forms containing *ṭṭ* and *ḍḍ* and those containing *ṭ* and *ḍ* in the Prakritic- and Proto-Sinhala periods presupposes the existence of conjunct consonants in Sinhala Prakrit. We may therefore conclude that Sinhala Prakrit did maintain the distinction between single and conjunct consonants in actual pronunciation, though this was not represented in the inscriptions.

As for the aspirated consonants of Middle Indo-Aryan, it is likely that they had undergone de-aspiration by the time of the oldest extant Brāhmī

inscriptions of the country dating from C.3rd – 2nd century B.C. Geiger (1938) inclines to the view that Sinhala Prakrit did not possess aspirated consonants, noting that there exists no conclusive argument for the supposition that the de-aspiration was only graphic . Besides, in a context where there did exist characters in the Brāhmī script representing aspirated sounds, it is very unlikely that the inscriptions in Sinhala Prakrit should have dispensed with them and employed the non-aspirated characters in their stead if indeed the language at the time did actually possess aspirated sounds. There is however a solitary exception to this rule and that is the aspirated *jh* which commonly occurs among the earliest Brahmi inscriptions of the island to the exclusion of the non-aspirated *j*. The aspirated *jh* occurs in such Sinhala Prakritic forms as *rajha* 'king'(P. *rāja*) and *jhaya* 'wife'(P. *jāyā*) and it is possible as suggested by Paranavitana [227] that " the sound represented by the Brahmi symbol for *jh* was that which is transliterated in Avestan by z, and not the *jh* sound as it is pronounced to-day". This sound would have possibly been articulated as an *zh* sound found for instance in French words such as *jolie* 'pretty' or *jardin* 'garden'.

Another common phonetic change that has taken place in Sinhala is the sibilization of the palatal *c* in both initial and medial positions. Many such forms have undergone aspiration in the modern language.

The change of the initial MIA *c* > *s* > *h* is seen in

Sinh. *haňda* 'moon' (P.*canda*)
hatara 'four' (P. *cattaro*)
haya 'six' (P. *cha*)
horā 'thief' (P. *cora*)

while that of medial MIA *c* > *s* or of *c* > *s* > *h* is borne out by

Sinh. *ähä* 'eye' (P. *acchi*)
gaha 'tree' (P.*gaccha*)
usa 'tall' (P.*ucca*)
kusa 'womb' (P.*kucchi*)

Epigraphic evidence suggests that the sibilization of the Prakritic *c* had already taken place around the eighth century A.C. The preservation of the palatal c is certainly attested in the inscriptions of the early Christian period such as for instance the Hiňguregala rock inscription of the Uva Province

[227] Inscriptions of Ceylon . Vol.1. (1970)

dated to the 4th-5th century A.C. which has *catalasa* 'forty' (P.*cattālīsa*) where modern Sinhala has *hataliha*. We also find that the palatal *c* has been preserved in the Nilagama inscription of the late 6th century. The Nāgirikanda rock inscription of about the late 6th or early 7th century gives *catara* (*veva*) 'four (tanks)' where modern Sinhala has *hatara*. A century or so later however we find that it is consistently changed to *s* as in the Gäraṅḍigala inscription of the early 8th century. In a Sigiri inscription of about the 9th century we have a poet referring to the one with a roguish smile (*sor-sinā*) while in another graffiti of about the same period we find the poet alleging that the woman concerned is adorned fior the sake of a paramour (lit.thief) living in the vicinity (*vasana jene ho äta mihi vehi sor gänä säräsiyā*) where the word *sor* 'rogue', 'thief' has its origins in the Prakritic *cora* as found in Pāli. At any rate, the process seems to have been completed by the 9th or 10th century when we commonly come across such forms as *sand* 'moon' (P. *canda*) which occurs as the second member of the compound *hir-sand* (sun and moon) in the Kaludiyapokuna inscription (C.9th century) and *satar* (*-sīmāyen*) 'four (-boundaries)' (P.*cattaro*) occurring in the Mädirigiriya inscription (C.10th century).

Aspiration of such forms does not seem to have taken place even by the 15th century when we come across the form *sada* 'moon'. However it had certainly taken place by the late 17th century when Robert Knox (1681) gives the form *handa*. It is very rarely that modern Sinhala forms derived from OIA and MIA *c* have undergone de-aspiration after having undergone the change *c* > *s* > *h*. There appear only to be two examples of this, viz. *iṁbinna* 'to kiss' (P. *cumbati*) and *ira* 'line' (P. *cīra*).

As for MIA forms with sibilants, these have first undergone aspiration and then de-aspiration in their passage to Sinhala:

Sinh. *ira* 'sun' (P. *suriya*)
iṅguru 'ginger' (P. *singivera*)
iṁbul 'silk cotton tree' (P. *simbalī*)
ima 'boundary' in *kaḍa-ima* 'boundary of a district' (P. *sīmā*)

There also exist a few Sinhala forms with an aspirate where the cognate Prakritic forms show a sibilant:
Sinh. *hā* 'hare' (P. *sasa*)
häṭa 'sixty' (P. *saṭṭhī*)
himi 'master' (P. *sāmī*)
hak in *hak-geḍi* 'conch' (P. *sankha*)

It is nevertheless evident that it is only the initial sibilants of the Prakritic forms that have been so aspirated in their passage to Sinhala, while those in the medial position have been retained, as for instance in Sinh.*hisa* 'head' (P.*sīsa*) and *hasuna* 'message' (P.*sāsana*), a feature also seen in the Sigiri graffiti of the 8th - 9th centuries where we come across the forms *giri-hisa* 'on the summit (lit.head) of the rock' and *ek hasnak* 'a message'.

As to the date of this aspiration, it evidently took place quite early in the history of the language. Aspiration had already taken place in Sinhala by the 3rd century A.C. when we find *hala* 'hall' occurring for the P. *sālā* in the Jetavanārāma inscription of Maḷu-Tisa. We also find *hamika* 'proprietor' (P. *sāmika*) in the form *vapi-hamika* 'proprietor of a reservoir' occurring in an ancient inscription at Avukana C.1st century A.C., so that such aspiration could have taken place well before the 3rd century A.C. Aspiration becomes commonplace from about the 4th –6th centuries A.C., during which period we come across forms such as *hasa* 'crop' (P. *sassa*) and *hoya* 'brook' (P. *sota*). In a Sigiri graffiti of about the 9th century we find the poet asking a woman *kima da himiyā hiṇa higa dä* (Is your husband's waist empty ?) where the term for waist, *hiṇa* (P.*soṇi* 'buttock') probably meant 'money' as people in the olden days carried their money or valuables with them in the folds of the cloth at the waist. Also consider O.Sinh.(10th century) *hiñgur* 'ginger' (P.*singivera*) and *him* ' boundary' (P.*sīmā*) as well as *hūrā* 'pig' (P.*sūkara*) and *havurudda* 'year' (P.*saṁvacchara*) occurring in the 13th century SdR.

It is however certain that de-aspiration took place before or around the 15th century. The MIA *suriya* 'sun' had become *hir* by about the 9th-10th century, *hira* by the end of the 12th century and *ira* by the 15th century.

The aspirate of MIA forms has all but disappeared in modern Sinhala:

Sinh. *ata* 'hand' (P.*hattha*)
ätā 'elephant' (P. *hatthin*)
īyē 'yesterday' (P. *hīyo*)
araḷu 'yellow myrobalan' (P.*harītakī*)

Such de-aspiration evidently took place very early, for we find *ata* 'hand' (P.*hattha*) occurring as early as the 2nd century A.C. in the Thūpārāma inscription of Gajabāhu 1 though we find that in some rare instances it seems not to have taken place by the 13th century when we come across the form *has* 'goose' in the plural form *hasun* 'geese' (P.*haṁsa*), though here it is possible that Sanskritic influence has played a role just as O.Sinh.*rada* 'king' was frequently replaced by the Sanskritic *raja* in epigraphs and which survives to this day in Modern Sinhala.

Considering the developments from the MIA palatal *c* and sibilants we may conclude that the change *c* > *s* took place around the 7th century while that of *s* > *h* first occurred during the early centuries of the Christian era and continued till about the 6th –7th century. Those forms derived from MIA c evidently escaped the latter change and did not undergo aspiration till about the 16th or 17th century. Meanwhile, those aspirated forms derived from Prakritic forms containing sibilants had been de-aspirated by around the 15th century. The de-aspiration of aspirated forms derived from MIA *c* evidently took place after the 16th century.

Modern Standard Sinhala also furnishes us with forms that are more conservative than colloquial forms. Whereas Modern Standard Sinhala has *hisa* 'head', the de-aspirated form *isa* not uncommonly occurs in colloquial speech, a tendency also seen in compound forms such as *is-sori* 'dandruff' and *is-väsma* 'head cover'. Even in medieval Sinhalese literary works like the 14th century Sdl we find *is* occurring for 'head' as in the phrase: *bisavu suvaňdapänin is sōḍā* (The queen washed her head with scented water). We also have Knox (RKSV) giving the form i*ssarudda* (*isa-rada*) for headache, the modern standard form being *hisa-rada*. While Modern Standard Sinhala has *usa* 'tall', Knox (ibid) gives the form *ouah* (*uha*). In fact it has been found that among the Sinhalese folk of Haňguranketa *uha* means 'tall' [228].

Another notable phonetic change in Sinhala is the softening of the MIA intervocalic *p* to *v*:

Sinh. *pav* 'sin' (P. *pāpa*)
ruva 'shape' (P. *rūpa*)
duva 'island' (P. *dīpa*)
avan in *avan-hala* 'restaurant' lit.'drinking hall'(P.*āpāna* 'drinking place')

This change had apparently not taken place in the earlier period of Sinhala Prakrit for we find the MIA *vāpi* 'reservoir' occurring as *vapi* in the Pre-Christian (C.3rd century B.C.-1st century B.C.) Maňḍagala inscription while even in the later Brahmi (C.1st century A.C) Avukana inscription we still come across the form *vapi-hamika* 'proprietor of the reservoir'. However it would appear that the change took place shortly afterwards, for by about the second or third century A.C. we come across the term occurring as *vavi* in the Nā-Ulpata rock inscription at Riṭigala where there is a reference to the 'Great King Tisa having caused the construction of the monastery dedicated the Abadaḷaka

[228] Janapravāda saha janavahara. Sirisena Devapriya (1993)

tank to the Sangha' (*Tisa maharaji vihara karavaya abadaḷaka-vavi saga dini*). By the 8th century or so it seems to have become regular as seen in the compound form *heḷa-divi* 'Sinhala island' in the Sigiri graffiti of that period.

In some instances the *v* obtained thus has been lost.Consider the case of Sinh. *hīna* 'dream' < *sīna* < * *suina* < **suvina* (P.*supina*). A similar process seems to have taken place in the case of Sinh. *hāt* in *hāt-pasin* 'in every respect' which appears to have derived from a Prakritic * *savattha* (Skt. *sarvatra*) through an intermediate * *saatta*.

Yet another notable phonetic change that has taken place in Sinhala is that of MIA *j* > *d* which occurs in both the initial

Sinh. *diva* 'tongue' (P. *jivhā*)
daṇa 'knee' (P. *jāṇu*)
däla 'net' (P. *jāla*)
dal in *dal-vanna* 'to inflame' (P.*jalati*)

and medial positions

Sinh. *ada* 'today' (P.*ajja*)
veda 'physician (P. *vejja*)
mäda 'middle' (P. *majjha*)
varadinna 'to do wrong' (P.*aparajjhati*)

This phonetic change was such a far-reaching one, that it seems to have completely banished the palatal *j* from Sinhala speech and it was only in later times that it entered colloquial Sinhala as a result of the adoption of Sanskrit loans or semi-tatsamas such as *raja-tumā* 'king' (fr.Skt *rāja*) as well as certain contractions which resulted in intervocalic dental *d* being turned into *j*, as for instance in the case of *kara-diya* 'sea water' which became *karijja*, *miri-diya* 'fresh water' which became *mirijja* (as in the place name *mirijja-vila* in Hambantota District), *teli-diya* 'sweet toddy' which came to be called *telijja* in certain areas and *sulu-diya*, the classical Sinhala term for 'urine' which probably reflected actual usage at one time which became *hulijja* before being further contracted to *hujja*.

An instance of a similar change is seen in the colloquial *jūl* (*-kiri*) 'woodapple (juice)' a southern regional usage which has arisen from the usual Sinhala form *divul* (Skt.*dadhiphala*) probably through an intermediate **diyul*. Sinhala is also known to have acquired the *j* spontaneously as in *giju(-lihiniyā)* 'vulture' (P.*giddha*, Skt.*grdhra* 'greedy', 'vulture'), a feature also seen, albeit very rarely, in the Sigiri graffiti of the 8th and 9th centuries where we come across forms like *jū* 'islands' where Mod.Sinh. has *div* / *divayin* (P.*dīpa*) and

varaja 'fault' where Mod.Sinh.has *varada* (P. *aparaddha*). That such forms could have existed side by side with forms possessing the dental is borne out not only in the Sigiri graffiti where we come across the name *heḷa-diví* 'Sinhalese island' (8th century) and the form *varada* occurring in the phrase *tā kaḷa varada* 'the offence committed by you' (10th century) but also in the modern Sinhala *jamburu* 'deep' which exists side by side with *gämburu* (Skt.P. *gambhīra*) and from which it probably arose.

The first trace we have of the change *j* > *d* is perhaps *made* 'middle' (P. *majjha*) occurring in the Tōṇigala Rock inscription of the fourth century A.C. where it occus in the compound form *made-hasa* 'middle crop'. The change however does not appear to have been completed even by the eighth century when we come across the expression *piyovur mäjä* 'between the breasts' occurring in an 8th century Sigiri verse where *mäjä* literally means '(in the) middle (of)' (P.*majjha*) nor as yet by the ninth century when we come across in the Sig.gr. such forms as *vija-li* 'flashes of lightning' in place of the modern *viduli* (P.*vijju*) and *jolanna* 'to set aflame' in place of the modern *dal-vanna* (P.*jalati*). In the 10th century DAG we find that whereas the initial *d* has been turned into *d* (*dälpū* for *jālapūva* 'net cake') it has retained *j* in intervocalic positions as in *biju* 'eggs' and *kan-vijuna* 'ear-piercing'.

The change, whether in the initial or intervocalic position seems to have become regular from about the 10th century as subsequent epigraphs testify. For instance, we find in the Mädirigiriya pillar inscription of the 10th century the compound form *pas-denā* 'five persons' where the form *denā* 'persons' has derived from the Prakritic *jana* as found in Pāli. Likewise in the Jetavanārāma slab inscription of Mahinda IV (11th century) we come across the phrase *rad-ge-dorhi* 'at the gate of the palace (lit.royal house)' where the form *rad* has its origins in the Prakritic *rāja* 'royal' as found in Pāli. We also find in classical Sinhala literature the ten brother kings whom Gōṭhābhaya had slain at Kadaragama (Kataragama) being referred to as *dasa-bā̆-radun*, the term *radun* having derived from the OIA and MIA *raja*.

The dental *d* obtained thus has also undergone a further development into *t* in the final position as is suggested in Sinh. *behet* 'medicine' (P. *bhesajja*) which presupposes an earlier *d* . In fact, we come across this in the form *behed-ge* 'dispensary' (lit.medicine house) occurring in the Kiribat vehera pillar inscription assigned to the 10th century, as well as in the form *behedin* 'with the medicine' occurring in the 13th century Saddharma-Ratnāvaliya. All this would indicate the presence of the sonant during an earlier period. Indeed, there has been a tendency in Sinhala to harden final sonants to the corresponding surds in the case of words that form prefixes in compound terms. Consider Sinh. *gäba* 'womb' (P. *gabbha*) which becomes *gap* in *gap-sāva* 'abortion', *heba* 'pond' (P.*sobbha*) which becomes *hepvila* in its

compound form when *vila* 'lake' is suffixed to it and *diga* 'long' (P. *dīgha*) which becomes *dik* as in *dik-äl* or *dik-häl* 'a type of paddy probably so called on account of its elongated shape'. In a C.9th century Sigiri inscription we come across the verse *nava-bag-ḷa-sand duṭ minisak* (a man who has seen the new tender moon of (the month of) Bag) where the month in which the Sinhala New Year falls *Bag* (< OIA *bhāgya* 'prosperity' or *bhaga* 'the name of a Vedic solar divinity') is presently known as *Bak* (*-maha/māsa*) '(the month of) Bak'. The same process seems to have influenced the formation of words like *ittā̆vā* 'porcupine'and *pattā̆yā* 'centipede' which seem to have derived from O.Sinh.*hid* 'needle' and *pad* 'foot' respectively, the porcupine being regarded as the 'needled one' and the centipede as the '(multi-) footed one'.

Such a development could have also taken place in the case of certain terms that by their nature tend to be used in the plural and where the final *a* is dispensed with (on the lines of *gaha* 'tree'/*gas* 'trees' and *mala* 'flower'/ *mal* 'flowers') as for instance in the case of *bik* 'pieces of citrus fruit' which probably has its origins in the Prakritic *bhāga* 'portion' as found in Pāli.

We also have final *t* (for an earlier *d*) occurring in such Sinhala expressions as *rajat mehesit* 'the king and queen' which derives from Prakritic *ca* (P. *rājā ca mahesī ca*) through an intermediate **ja.* The form *da* is to be found in such classical Sinhala expressions as *rajada mehesida.* This change is not an uncommon one and is known to have occurred in such languages like German.

Another notable phonetic change in Sinhala is the softening of MIA *c* to *j*. The *j* obtained thus was later turned into *d* :

Sinh. *vadan* 'words' < O. Sinh. *vajana* (P. *vacana*)
godura 'fodder' < O. Sinh. *gojura* (P. *gocara* 'pasture' 'food')
maduruvā 'mosquito' < O. Sinh. * *majura* (Pkt.*macchara*)
iňdi in *iňdi-kaṭuva* 'needle' < O Sinh. *hidi* < O.Sinh.* *suji* (P.*sūci*)

The softening of intervocalic *c* > *j* seems to have taken place by about the 5th century when we come across the form *[pa]jina* 'eastern' (P.*pācīna*) in the Labuäṭabäňdigala inscription, which is also corroborated by the Rāssahela rock inscription of C.8th century where we find the term *vajanin* 'by the word of'(P.*vacana*). Since we know that the dentalization of *j* >*d* had taken place sometime before the 10th century, we could be fairly certain that the process also affected the forms derived from Prakritic c during this period.

As Geiger (1938) notes, the change (*c* > *j* > *d*) never occurs at the beginning of a word, but regularly when the single *c* (seldom *cc*, *cch*) stands between vowels. He explains the change *ca* > modern *da* as due to its being enclitic, forming a unity with the preceding word as attested by the form *ica*

occurring in inscriptions of the 4th century. Geiger (ibid) believes that the regular development of *c* > *s* was interrupted by the immigration into Sri Lanka of people who spoke an Eastern Indian dialect wherein unvoiced mutae were softened between vowels. Says Geiger: "In their dialect *c* had become *j*, and this rule extended over the majority of words with internal single *c*. The farther development of *j* > *d* coincided with that of original *j* ".

As for the date of this supposed immigration, Geiger states that it is impossible to ascertain its exact date, but cites *ajara* 'teacher' (P. *ācariya*) occurring in an inscription assigned to the 2nd century and *pajina* 'eastern' (P. *pācīna*) occurring in an inscription assigned to the 5th century. It is also possible however that this peculiar situation arose due to dialectal variation within the Sinhala language itself in ancient times. Such a situation could have arisen as a result of the isolation of one group of Sinhala speakers from another for a considerable period, perhaps a century or two. In later times, when the speakers of these dialects intermingled, it is possible that the two forms-one with *c* or *s* and the other with *j* or *d* - existed side by side for some time, before the one ousted the other and vice versa till they came to be established in the language.

That this was probably the case is borne out by the different forms assumed by the Prakritic conjunction *ca* (used in the sense of 'and') in the North Central and North Western Provinces. This *ca* had become transformed as early as the 4th century, on the one hand into *ica* as found in an inscription from Tōnigala in the North Central Province, and on the other to *ja* as found in an inscription from Koyikāvala in the North Western Province. The form *ica* was evidently the precursor of the modern Sinhala *hā* through an intermediate *isā*. The form *ja* on the other hand would have given rise to the modern Sinhala *da*. At least two other instances of alternate forms with *s* and *d* (<MIA *c*) are attested in Sinhala, namely. *kavasa* and *kavada* 'armour' (P.*kavaca*) and *milis* and *miliňdu* 'savage' (Pkt.*miliccha*, Skt.*mleccha*).

The change of MIA intervocalic retroflex *ṭ* > *ḷ* [229] is also common in Sinhala and had taken place by the 9th or 10th century :

Sinh. *kukuḷā* 'cock' (P.*kukkuṭa*)
makuḷuvā 'spider' (P. *makkaṭaka*)

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[229] This retroflex *ḷ* is however no longer pronounced as a distinct sound in Sinhala and is today simply articulated as a dental liquid *l*. This has been so for quite some time. Charles Carter noted in his Sinhalese-English Dictionary (1924) that the celebral (i.e.retroflex) *ḷ* 'does not now differ in pronunciation from the dental l'. It nevertheless occurs in written Sinhala. The sound is still known to exist in Divehi, an offshoot of Sinhala where it is pronounced as a deep *l* with the tongue reverting to the palate.

piḷimaya 'idol' (P. *paṭima*)
piḷikul 'abominable' (P.*paṭikūla*)

It is likely that the intermediate sound between the MIA *ṭ* and *ḷ* was *ḍ* as noted by Geiger (1938). The change seems to have taken place sometime between the 5th –10th centuries A.C. This becomes evident when we consider the development of Sinhala *paḷamu* 'first' from MIA *paṭhama*. The intermediate form *paḍama* occurs in a Jētavanārama inscription of C.3rd or 4th century A.C. while we commonly find the form *paḷamu* occurring in inscriptions of the 9th-10th centuries. Also consider the development of Sinh. *yāḷa* 'cart-load' from MIA *sakaṭa*, the intermediate forms being *yahaḷa* (C. 10th century) < *yahaḍa* (C. 5th or 6th century) < * *hayaḍa* < *hakaḍa* (C. 4th century) < *hakaṭa* (C. 4th century). The form *kaḍa* (P. *kaṭa* 'done') however occurs in a Tissamahārāma inscription assigned to C. 1st century A.C. so that we may have to suppose that the change *ṭ* > *ḍ* had taken place as early as the 1st century of the Christian era. This *kaḍa* had become *kaḷa* by around the 8th century as borne out by the Garandigala rock inscription. It is however certain that the change *ḍ* > *ḷ* where it had developed from MIA *ṭ* had taken place by the 10th century as is borne out by such forms as *paḷamu* 'first' and *kukuḷ* 'fowl' which commonly occur in the 9th –10th centuries. We also find that in some cases where Sinhala has *ḷ* the cognate Pāli forms show a dental *d* rather than a retroflex *ḍ* such as in *ḷaya* 'heart' (P. *hadaya*) and *doḷaha* 'twelve' (P. *dvādasa*) and sometimes even a dental *t* rather than a retroflex *ṭ* as in *maḷa* 'dead' (P. *mata*) and *araḷu* 'yellow myrobalan' (P.*harītaka*).

The Sinhala forms appear to have derived from an eastern dialect which had undergone a greater degree of retroflexion than the Pāli. For instance, in the Eastern Asokan dialect of Kālsī we come across the form *duʃvʃāḍasa* 'twelve'.It is only such a form that could have given rise to the Old Sinhala *doḷasa* (C.3rd century) and *doḷos* (C. 10th century) and modern Sinhala *doḷaha*. We also find the form *haḍa* 'heart' which has undergone a greater degree of retroflexion when compared to the P.*hada* occurring in a Jētavanārāma inscription of C.3rd or 4th century A.C. It is evidently this form that gave rise to the *ḷa* which occurs in the Sigiri graffiti of the 8th-10th centuries as for instance in the phrase *ḷa-koḷ-heḷillambuyun* 'heart-shattering fair damsels'.

There have also been a number of irregular phonetic changes such as that of intervocalic *p* > *b*:

Sinh. (*his-*)*kabala* 'skull' (P.*kapāla*)
käsubu/käsbāvā 'turtle' (P.*kacchapa*)
tuṁba 'lead' (P.*tipu*)
tabanna 'to place on' (Skt.*sthāpayati*)

Although we cannot say for certain when this irregular change took place, we find at least one such form attested as early as the 2nd century A.C. in the Pālu-Mākiccāva inscription of Gajabāhu I which mentions a monastery called *Tubaraba* (P.*Thūpārāma*), a similar form of which also occurs in the 10th century Kiribat Vehera Pillar inscription in the phrase *Tumbarab-behed-ge* 'The dispensery of the Thūpārāma'. Other instances are not lacking in the early epigraphs. In the Sigiri graffiti of about the 8th century we come across the royal name *Kasub-raj* 'King Kasub' meaning King Kāśyapa (P.*Kassapa*) to whom is attributed the construction of the Sīgiri or 'lion rock' fortress.

In like manner the change of intervocalic *v* > *b* has also taken place, but very rarely, instances of this being seen only in Sinhala *pabaḷu* 'coral' (P.*pavāḷa*) and *veḷamba* 'mare' (P.*vaḷavā*)

Yet another irregular change is seen in intervocalic *k* > *v*:

Sinh. *avul* 'confused' (P. *ākula*)
havula 'partnership' (P.*sākhalla*)
mevula 'girdle' (P. *mekhalā*)
sivumäli 'delicate' (P.*sukhumāla*)

and of intervocalic *g* > *v* :

Sinh. *nuvara* 'town' (P. *nagara*)
yuvala 'pair' (P. *yugala*)
hivalā 'jackal' (P. *sigāla*)
guvana 'sky' (P. *gagana*)

The change of *g* > *v* is not in evidence in early Sinhala Prakrit, as for instance in the Kok-Ebe inscription of C.2nd century AC which refers to deer as *maga* (Mod.Sinh.*muvā* < *Skt.mrga,P.miga*). The change seems to have taken place by the 9th century, for we find in a Sigiri inscription of the period, the form *suvand* 'fragrance', the precursor of the modern Sinhala *suvañda*, which appears to have derived from the compound *su-ganda* meaning 'pleasant smell'. Another inscription of the same period found in Sigiri refers to *navar* 'city' which has no doubt derived from MIA *nagara*. In the Anuradhapura slab inscription of Nissanka-Malla (12th century) too we come across forms like *suvanda* 'sweet smelling' and *nuvara* 'city. Medieval Sinhala literature like the 15th century Sälalihini Sandeśa refers to the hips of dancing girls being decked with *mini-mevul* (jewelled girdles) which derives from the Prakritic *mani-mekhalā.*

Another irregular change-albeit an insignificant one - is the change *m* > *v* :

Sinh. *navanna* 'to bend' (P. *namati*)
ov 'yes' (P.*āma*)
av (-miris) 'raw (-chillies)' alongside *amu* (P. *āma*)
niviti 'omen' alongside *nimiti* (Skt. *nimitta*)

There have also been instances where an original *v* has become *m* such as in the case of Sinh. *namaya* 'nine'(P. *nava*) and *hāma* 'all' (Skt.*sarva*) while we also have *pāmina* 'having arrived'(P. *pāpuniya*) where it is likely that the intervocalic *p* occurring in the Prakritic form had become *v* before turning to *m*.
Yet another insignificant change is that of *n* > *l* :

Sinh. *val* 'wild' (P. *vana*)
asal 'near'(P. *āsanna*)
polos 'tender jakfruit' (P.*panasa*)
velaňda 'trader' (P.*vānija*)
The dropping of intervocalic dentals is another characteristic feature of Sinhala since very early times. The dentals so dropped have been replaced by the semi-vowel *y*. This process has affected voiced dentals:

Sinh.*paya* 'foot' (P.*pāda*)
piyayura 'woman's breast' (P.*payodhara*)
piyuma 'lotus' (P.*paduma*)
miyuru 'sweet' (P. *madhura*)

As well as voiceless dentals :

Sinh. *piyā* 'father' (P.*pitā*)
bāyā'brother' (P.*bhātar*)
riya 'carriage' (P.*ratha*)
siya 'hundred' (P.*sata*)

This change we do not find in the early Brahmi inscriptions in Sinhala Prakrit which have preserved these dentals of Old and Middle-Indo-Aryan. For instance in an insciption of Mihintale in Anuradhapura District belonging to the period C.3rd century B.C.-1st century B.C. we come across the compound *mata-pita* 'mother and father' which is the equivalent of the Mod.Sinh.*mav-piyō* 'parents' (Lit.mother and father'. The change had nevertheless taken place by the time of the Sigiri graffiti of the 8th-10th centuries where for

instance we find *siya* 'hundred' (P.*sata*) in the compound form *pansiya agnan* 'five hundred damsels' and *giya* 'went' (P.*gata*) in the form *giya-davas* 'days gone by'.

Another tendency that has characterized Sinhala from very early times is the dropping of nasals such as the dental *n* and the anusvāra (*ṁ*):

Sinh. *mas* 'flesh' (P. *maṁsa*)
pas 'soil' (P. *paṁsu*)
data 'tooth' (P.*danta*)
paha 'five' (P. *pañca*)

This seems to have taken place as early as the Prakritic stage. For instance, we find the form *saga* 'Buddhist clergy' (P.*saṅgha*) occurring in the Vessagiri cave inscriptions of about the 2nd century B.C., *paca* 'five' (P.*pañca*) in the Pālu Mäkiccāva inscription of Gajabāhu 1 C. 2nd century A.C and *mas* 'flesh' (P.*maṁsa*) in the Kok-Ebē inscription also of the 2nd century AC. This feature was commonplace in the time of the Sigiri graffiti of the 8th -10th centuries for in a Sigiri inscription of about the 8th century we come across a poet referring to women with breasts resembling golden geese (*tana rana hasu*) where *hasu* refers to geese (P.*haṁsa*) while in another graffiti of about the same period we find the poet saying: *mahanela sapu-kusumaka atini gata heḷilambuyuka* (A fair damsel who has taken in her hand water lilies and a Sapu flower) where *sapu* refers to the flower *Michelia Champaka* (Skt.*campaka*) showing that by this time the lack of the nasal had become a characteristic feature of the language. In many cases however we find that the nasals were re-instated later, as far as forms with intervocalic sonants or voiced plosives were concerned. For instance, we find *cada* 'moon'(P. *canda*) occurring in the Timbirivāva rock inscription of the fourth century A.C while we also come across inscriptional forms such as *gaga* 'river' (P. *gaṅgā*) and *taba* 'copper' (P. *tamba*) where modern Sinhala has *haňda, gaňga* and *taṁba*. Similarly in the Sigiri graffiti of the 8th - 9th centuries we have *agur* 'charcoal' where modern Sinhala has *aňguru* (P.*angāra*) and *piḷibiḃ* 'picture' modern Sinhala has *piḷibiṁbu* (P.*paṭibimba*).

Indeed, there is reason to believe that the nasals of Sinhala had been dropped and inserted many times before reaching its present state. We get the form *sand* 'moon' occurring in the place of the earlier *cada* by around the 9th century which would suggest that a nasal had been inserted in the case of the former, unless we assume that such a nasal had been in existence throughout, though not attested in the inscriptions. Again, whereas the nasal in the 9th century *sand is* retained in a 12th century inscription as *sanda* it seems to have

been dropped by or around the 15th century when we come across the form *sada*. The modern Sinhala *haňda* seems to have arisen from the insertion of a semi-nasal to the intervocalic *d*, a process which apparently took place by the late 17th century, as is suggested by Knox's *handa* 'moon'.

Geiger (1938) opines that the absence of nasals as well as the anusvāra in the early inscriptions are graphical. In support of his contentions we may argue that the Prakritic Sinhala prototypes of modern Sinhala forms such as *daḍa* 'fine'(P.*daṇḍa*) and *kaṭuva* 'thorn' (P.*kaṇṭaka*) did possess nasals – whether inherited from the MIA period or added later on – for otherwise it would be difficult to explain why these should not have been subject to the change of intervocalic *ḍ* > *ḷ* which we know took place sometime around the 3rd century or perhaps earlier, and that of intervocalic *ḷ* > *ḍ* which evidently took place during the 1st – 4th centuries or even earlier. This may suggest that the nasals of Middle-Indo-Aryan had survived in the Sinhala Prakrit of the 3rd century B.C.-4th century A.C. and that their absence in the early inscriptions are merely graphical.

Dr. E Müller (1882) however believes that the period of the oldest inscriptions destroyed the nasals just as it did the long vowels. He notes that most of these nasals were never reinstated in their places (Eg. *pas* 'five' < *pañca*, *visi* 'twenty' < *viṁsati*), but that later on "the inclination of the language totally changed and was very much in favour of a nexus; in that way, not only were nasals inserted before single consonants to form a group, but consonants also after nasals to support them". He observes that whereas we find analogies of the first process in Pāli, Prakrit and Gipsy, the second seems to be a peculiarity of Sinhala.

Although we may agree with Müller with regard to the later insertion of the nasals we certainly cannot agree with him in view of the above facts that the period of the oldest inscriptions destroyed the nasals. It is more likely that the nasals that were later inserted took the form of semi-nasals (pre-nasalised stops). Such semi-nasals occur not only in cases where MIA forms show a nasal as in Sinh. *vaňda* 'barren' (P. *vañjha*), *haňdun* 'sandalwood' (P.*candana*) and *äňgili* 'finger' (P.*anguli*) but also in cases where the cognate MIA forms do not, as for instance in Sinhala *laňga* 'near'(P.*lagga*), *veḷaňba* 'mare' (P.*vaḷavā*) and *diḷiňdu* 'poor' (P.*daḷidda*).

Indeed it would seem that nasalization was not an infrequent occurrence in the Sinhala of the olden days. In the Kataragama Pillar inscription of Dappula V (C.10th century) we come across the phrase *numba gaňga* for 'celestial river' where we find that a nasal has been inserted in the form *numba* 'sky' (P.*nabhā*). We also find in the Sigiri graffiti instances of forms with and without nasals, as for instance in a 9th century sig.gr. where we come across the poetess referring to herself as *Mahamet himiyā abu Nāl himiyabuyun*

(Lady Nāl, wife of lord Mahamet) where *abu* stands for modern Sinhala *aṁbu* 'wife' (P.*ambakā*) while in another sig.gr. of the same period we come across the form *vandabuyun* for Mod.Sinh.*vändaṁbuvan* 'widowed women' (P. *vidhavā* 'widow' + *amba* 'woman'). Similar forms with nasals are also known to occur in the Sig.gr. of the same period as for instance in the phrase *himiyambu sihigiri beyandhi* (Lady on the mountain side of Sigiri) and the verse *väla-bib van lavan pähäpat heḷillambuyun* (Radiant fair damsels whose lips are of the colour of (the fruits of) the Bib (Momordica Monadelpha) creeper) where *himiyambu* 'lady' has its origins in *himi* 'lord' +*ambu* 'wife' 'woman' and *heḷillambu* in *heḷi* 'white','fair' + *ambu* 'woman', 'wife'. Indeed in one particular Sig.gr. of about the 9th century we come across alternating forms with and without the nasal: *kavar dese āma maṁg me mä pänini yat ko da bähär mag* (In whatever direction (one) came, this very path presented itself; when going away, there is another path) apparently an apology addressed to the ladies in the painting for intruding upon them. Here we would find two alternating forms *maṁg* and *mag* for 'path' occurring alongside each other in the same record where modern Sinhala usually has *maga* (P.*magga*) as in expressions such as *magadi* (*-hambavunā*) '(met him) on the way' or *nomaga-yavanna* 'to misguide' (lit.to send on the wrong path). We also come across in a Sig.gr. of C.9th century the form *muhundä* (*-gini*) '(fires in the) sea' and in the 14th century Sdl *muhuṁdu (-vällehi)* 'sea(shore)' where modern Sinhala has *muhuda* (P. *samudda*). Such nasals seem to have existed until fairly recent times, for Knox (RKSV) gives the form *moondah* 'sea'. He also gives *mondia* 'fool' where modern Sinhala has *mōdayā*.

Such spontaneous nasalization occurs only in cases where the affected consonants are intervocalic sonants. This process is similar to the spontaneous nasalization that has affected the Aryan speech of India. Eg.H. *naṁgā* 'naked' (P. *nagga*, Skt. *nagna*) so that we may suppose that this tendency was common in Indo-Aryan during the later Prakritic or Apabhraṁśa stage. In many instances where it has taken place in Sinhala, we may suppose that it took the form of semi-nasals or pre-nasalised stops rather than full nasals. Semi-nasals proper are however peculiar to Sinhala and its offshoot Divehi and are absent in other Indo-Aryan, Dravidian and Munda tongues. Divehi, in common with Sinhala, possesses semi-nasals such as *ṁb*, *ṅd* and *ṅg*. E.g: Div.*daṁbu* 'purple' (Sinh.*daṁba*), *haṅdu* 'moon' (Sinh. *haṅda*) and *iṅgili* 'finger' (Sinh.*äṅgili*) and since Divehi probably split off from Sinhala sometime between the 6th-8th centuries A.C., we would have to assume that such pre-nasalised stops had come into being in Sinhala by about the 8th century A.C.

The insertion of sonants as a secondary support after the nasals inherited from Middle Indo-Aryan has also taken place in Sinhala, as for instance in Sinh. *baṁbarā* 'wasp' (P. *bhamara*) and *vaṅdurā* 'monkey' (P.*vānara*). The

same possibly holds true of Sinh.*kūmbi* 'ant' (Skt.*krmi* 'worm', 'insect', 'ant') in which case we would have to postulate the intermediate forms * *kumi* > * *kumbi* > * *kuhuṁbi*. Such Divehi forms like *taburu* 'lotus' (Sinh.*taṁburu*, P.*tāmarasa*) and *kaburu* 'blacksmith' (Sinh.*kaṁburā*, P.*kammāra*) would indicate that the process took place before Divehi branched off from Sinhala (C. 6th – 8th century A.C.) and indeed there is evidence to show that at least one such term existed in Sinhala Prakrit of the Pre-Christian period in the form *kabara* 'ironsmith' found in an inscription in Brahmaṇayāgama.

Dropping of an initial vowel (apheresis) due to want of stress is also known to have taken place in Sinhala:

Sinh. *hena* 'lightening' (P.*asanī*)
vaḷa 'pit' (P. *āvāṭa*)
pōya 'full moon' (P.*uposatha*)
ho (*-gaha*) '*Fonesia Asoca*' (P. *asoka*)

We also come across a few instances where initial aspirated syllables have been lost, as for instance in O.Sinh.*ḷa* 'heart' (P.*hada*) and mod.Sinh. *ran* 'gold' (P.*hiraññā*). it is however very likely that the initial syllables in both these cases initially lost the aspirate *h* thereby retaining only the vowels which in the course of time also fell into disuse leaving behind the liquid sounds *r* or *l* to commence the word. This is all the more so since it is only an intermediate form with an intervocalic *ḍ* such as * *aḍa* which could have given rise to the *ḷa* of Old Sinhala. These changes seem to have been effected quite early in Sinhala since we come across the forms *ḷa* and *ran* in the Sigiri graffiti, the former occurring in the expression *ḷa -jolanna* 'set (your) heart aflame' (9th century) and the latter in the phrase *tana-ran-mali-himabuhu* 'ladies who wear golden chains on their breasts' (8th century). W also come across an instance where a syllable containing an initial sibilant has been subjected to the same process, probably after being aspirated. This seen in Sinh.*muḷu* 'whole', 'entire' (P.*samudāya*) which probably arose from an intermediate **hamuḷu*.

There have also been instances in Sinhala where aspirated syllables seem to have been inserted:

Sinh. *dahama* 'religion' (P. *dhamma*)
muhuda 'sea' (P. *samudda*)
sihiya 'wakefulness' (P.*sati*)
ahasa 'sky' < **āsa* (P. *ākāsa*)

Geiger (1938) believes Sinhala forms such as *daham* ' righteousness' (P.*dhamma*) and *adahas* 'intention' (P.*ajjhāsa*) to be loanwords from some Prakritic dialect more or less adopted to Sinhala phonology . He however says that they became current at a time "when aspirates were already unknown in Ceylon so that in the loanwords they were felt by the ear as two separate sounds : gh as g + h, dh as d + h etc.". It is however more likely that the aspirated syllables were inserted to indigenous Sinhala words as is suggested by such forms as *sihina* 'dream' (P.*supina*). This feature is not peculiar to Sinhala and is found even in Middle and Modern Indo-Aryan [230].
The feature is quite old, for we find it occurring in the 8th-9th century Sigiri graffiti as for instance in the form *pahas* 'touch' (P.*phassa*) which occurs in the verse: *Pilibib e ran-vanun duṭ äsin ḷa sihil vat ki-vännä ho siri-bar e komuḷ avuda ḷen tana-pahas* (If the heart becomes refreshed when the pictures of the golden-coloured ones are seen with the eyes, how would it be having received with one's breast the touch of the breasts of that tender one of abundant splendour ?).
Metathesis of consonants has also taken place in Sinhala, but very rarely:

Sinh. *avurudu* 'year' < *havurudu* < *havajara* (P. *saṁvacchara*)
ruvala 'sail' < **luvara* (P. *lakāra*)
viya 'yoke' < **yiva* (P. *yuga*)
veraḷu 'cat's eye' (P. *veḷuriya*)

Such metathesis seems to have taken place at different periods. To cite just one example, we find *havajara* 'year' occurring in a rock inscription from Labuāṭabāňdigala dated to C.5th century A.C. while a few centuries later we find the metathesized form *havurudu* 'year' occuring in the Mihintale slab-inscription of Mahinda IV (11th century) which survives today in the form *avurudda*. The Sinh. *neraḷu* 'coconut' (P.*nālikera*) which commonly occurs in literary works of the mediaeval period such as the Sidat Saňgarā provides us another classical case of how metathesis has affected Sinhala in those rare instances it has. The form *naḍira* occurs in a 1st century B.C. inscription at Mihintale while the form *näruḷ* which has been subject to metathesis occurs in a 10th century inscription at Anuradhapura. Also consider the case of Sinh.*līl* or *lihil* 'to loosen' (P.*sithila*) where the intervocalic *–th-* of the Prakritic form seems to have become *–ṭ-* and *–ḍ-* before becoming *ḷ* which subsequently underwent metathesis. Thus the development here would be *sithila>*siṭila>*siḍila >*siḷila > *hiḷila >*ḷihila > *lihil > līl*. In the case of others such as *rälla* 'wave' (Skt.*laharī*) and *veraḷu* 'cat's eye' (P. *veḷuriya*), the

[230] See The euphonic – glide h in Prakrit. S.N.Ghosal. JOI (B) 1960.

change is a straightforward one where the place of the two liquid sounds *r* and *l* have interchanged. This process is not a difficult one to explain since in speaking hurriedly *r* tends to exert a greater pull in its articulation in the presence of a preceding *l* thereby replacing it in the process and jettisonning *l* to the position it had formerly held. In the 10th century DAG we find the following description of valuables: *ranridi mutumänik velaru* (gold and silver, pearls and precious stones and cat's eyes) showing that even at that time the Sinhala term for cat's eye had not been subjected to metathesis.

Sinhala, it is evident, has to a large extent retained the vowel system inherited from Old- and Middle-Indo-Aryan. At the same time, however, it has also undergone considerable vowel changes when compared to its cognate forms in Prakrit or Middle Indo-Aryan. Although in some instances they follow a more or less regular pattern, this is not always so and it would appear that Sinhala is perhaps the most irregular of all MIAVs when it comes to vowel changes from Middle- and Old Indo-Aryan.

A certain amount of regularity could be seen with regard to the following forms with the high front vowel (*i*) which have arisen from MIA forms having a low central vowel (*a*):

Sinh.*riya* 'carriage', 'vehicle' (P.*ratha*)
niya '(finger) nail' (P.*nakha*)
siya 'hundred' (P.*sata*)
biriya 'wife' (P.*bhariyā*)

and those forms with the low front vowel (*ä*) which have arisen from an elongated low central vowel (*ā*) seen in MIA:

Sinh. *dän* 'now' (P.*dāni*)
täna 'place' (P.*thāna*)
näba 'nave' (P.*nābhi*)
väli 'sand' (P.*vāluka*)

One also comes across forms with the high front vowel (*i*) where the corresponding MIA forms show a high back vowel (*u*):

Sinh. *ira* 'sun' (P.*suriya*)
bima 'land' (P. *bhūmi*)
aviya 'weapon' (P.*āvudha*)
minihā 'man' (P.*manussa*)

It would however be a mistake to believe that such changes are invariably regular, for if this were so, we should expect to find *pila* instead of *pala* 'fruit' (P.*phala*) and *tina* instead of *tana* 'female breast' (P.*thana*) or *päna* instead of *pana* 'life' (P.*pāna*) and *dära* instead of *dara* 'firewood' (P.*dāru*) or *hin* instead of *hun* 'empty' (P. *suñña*) and *pin* instead of *pun* 'full' (P. *puṇṇa*)

Wilhelm Geiger (1938) holds that the shortening of long vowels as occurring in the Brāhmī inscriptions are merely graphical. He avers that during the Proto-Sinhala period (4^{th} –8^{th} centuries A.C.) the vowels which were originally long are treated in one way and those which were originally short in another way. He notes that for example *vāpi* 'reservoir' (*vapi* of the inscriptions) becomes *väv* but *kapi* 'monkey' becomes *kivi*, *sīla* 'religious observance' becomes *sil*, but *tila* 'sesame' becomes *tala*. Says Geiger : "This clearly shows that *vāpi*, *sīla*, and *kapi*, *tila* had a different pronunciation up to the Proto-Sinhalese period, the former two words being pronounced with long and the latter with short vowels".

Geiger's contentions, though admissible, are not without fault, for if we are to follow his line of argument, we would have to assume that *himi* 'lord' (P.*sāmi*) would have become *hämi* and that *sirita* 'custom' (P.*caritta*) would have become *sarita* in the proto-Sinhala period. Such forms are however nowhere attested in literary or epigraphic sources. Even in the Sigiri graffiti of the 9^{th} century, it is the forms *himi* and *sirit* that we come across.

The fact is that vowel changes in Sinhala, unlike consonant changes, have to a great extent been irregular. For instance in the Hiñguregala rock inscription of the Ūva Province (C.4^{th}-5^{th} century A.C) we come across forms such as *vasa* 'twenty' where modern Sinhala has *vissa* (P.*visati*) and *catalasa* 'forty' where modern Sinhala has *hataliha* (P.*cattālīsa*) showing that the Sinhala of the olden days was characterized by different vowel values though much of it would have perhaps been limited to regional usage. Even in modern Sinhala we have alternate forms or doublets involving different vowels derived from the same source. Consider for instance the case of Sinh. *paḷal* and *puḷul* 'broad' (P. *puthula*), *meḷek* and *moḷok* 'soft' (Skt.*mṛduka*), *biya* and *baya* 'fear' (P.*bhaya*) and *duva* and *diva* (*-yina*) 'island' (P.*dīpa*). Indeed we find in a well known modern Sinhala lexicon [231] as many as three forms *dā-gaba*, *dā-gäba* and *dā-goba* for 'relic repository' (P.*dhāṭugabbha*) and as many as six *däviṭi*, *däväṭi*, *dävaṭi*, *dävaṭu*, *däviṭu* and *dävuṭu* for 'stick used for brushing teeth' (P.*danta-kaṭṭha*) attested in Sinhala literature.

Although Sinhala Prakritic vowels are generally represented as short in the ancient Brāhmī inscriptions, a few exceptions do occur, for example, at Gallēna where we find *mahā* (great) and *rāja* (king) and at Maharatmale where

[231] Siṁhala Śabdakōṣaya. Ed.P.B.Sannasgala (1985)

we find *yāku* (rice gruel) which may indicate the presence of long vowels in Sinhala Prakrit. It is also possible however that these represent *tatsamas* from the Sanskrit or Pāli . E. Müller (1882) opines that the occasional occurrence of forms with long vowels (e.g. *Gamini*, *Devanapiya*) arose "from a desire of the inscriber to improve the language imitating Pāli and Sanskrit or by irregular longation".

The occurrence of long vowels in modern Sinhala seems to be due to new secondary formations (e.g. contractions) resulting in compensatory lengthening of a preceding vowel. Vowel elongation in such words as *hīna* 'dream' and *hāt* in *hāt-pasin* 'in every respect' are evidently due to the loss of an older *v* in intervocalic position as occurring in the postulated forms * *suvina* (P.*supina*) and * *savatta* (Skt.*sarvatra*) respectively and the resultant contractions. Similarly, the place-name *mōdara* which signifies a river mouth seems to have developed from **muva-dora* (P.*mukha* 'mouth' + *dvāra* 'door'. *Mōrā* 'shark' has apparently arisen from the Prakritic *makara* 'mythical fish', 'sword fish' through an intermediate **muvara* while *hūnā* 'gecko' has arisen from the Sanskritic *śakunā* 'small house lizard' through an intermediate **savunā*. Elongation has also taken place by the assimilation of an aspirated syllable. For instance *hā* 'hare' (P. *sasa*) and *hūrā* 'brother-in-law' (Skt. *śvaśurya*) which appear to have arisen from the intermediate * *haha* and * *huhurā* respectively. The same holds true of terms like *mōl* 'pestle' (P.*musala*) and *lūnu* 'onion' (P.*lasuna*) where the intervocalic sibilant has evidently undergone aspiration before disappearing, leaving behind diphthongs that later coalesced to form long *ō* and *ū*.).

There have also been instances where new vowels have been formed by the coalescence of two older vowels as for instance when an *a* in one syllable is followed by a *u* in another in which case both may coalesce to become *o* as in O. Sinh.*radol* 'aristocrat' (P.*raja-kula*) through an intermediate * *rajavula* and *samanoḷa* 'Adam's Peak' (P.*sumana-kūṭa*) through an intermediate **samanavuḷa*.

The low front vowel (*ä*) which is unknown to Old and Middle Indo-Aryan probably evolved during the seventh century A.C. Whether this Sinh. *ä* evolved from an earlier *a* or *e* is however a matter of dispute. The 4th century Timbiriväva rock inscription gives the form *vavi* 'tank' (P.*vāpi*) while in the 6th century Nāgarikanda inscription we get the form *veva*. By the tenth or eleventh century we get the form *väv* occurring in a Mihintale inscription. We are however uncertain whether the *e* of our 6th century inscription was actually pronounced as such at the time or is merely a graphical representation of *ä*. Nevertheless, the *ä* had become a common feature of the Sinhala language by around the 8th century as borne out by the Gäraṅḍigala inscription where it is

met with graphically perhaps for the first time. The *ä* also occurs frequently in the Sigiri graffiti of the 8th-10th centuries.

S. Paranavitana [232] observes that in a large number of instances where *ä* occurs in the modern language, its place had been occupied by *e* at an earlier date and points out that this change of *a* to *e* is first noticed in an inscription from Periyakaḍu Vihāra in the Hiriyāla Hatpattu of the reign of Sirināga I (C.189-208 A.C). He notes that it is not possible to determine exactly the time when the *e* so obtained began to be turned into *ä*, but points out that forms with *e* were still the rule in the time of Moggallāna II (C.542-561 A.C) as borne out by the Nilagama rock inscription and that the *ä*-symbol is met with in the Gäraṅḍigala inscription of the reign of Kassapa III (C.710-717 A.C). Taking into consideration the fact that the sound itself may well have existed in the language for a considerable time before the invention of a device to represent it graphically, he contends that the *ä* sound must have evolved some time during the period between the dates of these two inscriptions, probably during the 7th century.

Paranavitana however goes further and attempts to trace the process by which the sound *e* has changed to *ä* which he seeks to show was through a hypothetical intermediate **ay*, i.e. an indistinctly pronounced *y* attached to the vowel *a*. He presents as examples attested words that have undergone a similar phonological development such as O.Sinh.*aya* (Skt.*ārya*) occurring in Brahmi inscriptions as the title of royal princes which is found in the 8th and 9th centuries as *ā̈* (*-pā*), in this case an a followed by a *y* been transformed in the first instance to *ä* which coalesced with the following vowel, after assimilation to form *ā̈*. As for the more difficult to explain preceding change of *e* to **ay*, he notes that this change is observable in Sinhala in various periods of its history in a few instances where however phonological processes other than the development of the vowel ä have taken place, as in the case of the word *kaṭaya* occurring in a Brahmi inscription of the reign of Mahācūḷi Mahātissa (C.77-63 B.C) which gives the meaning of 'for the purpose of' which he traces to the Skt.*kṛte*, in this case contending that *e* has been transformed to *aya*. He also notes that the genitive singular of the pronoun of the first person in classical Sinhala is *mā* and that of the second person *tā*, these two words being found in documents of the 8th-10th centuries including the Sigiri graffiti as *maya/may* and *taya/tay* respectively, and goes on to state that he is of the opinion that the forms ma and ta are derived from the old gentive forms *me* and *te* through the intermediate forms *maya* and *taya*, by the change of *e* to *aya*. Although we can easily agree with Paranavitana that the change of *ay* > *ä* is quite possible, particularly since we know that it has taken place in Sinhala itself as well as in

[232] Sigiri Graffiti (1956)

the Tamil of Jaffna where for instance we have *nāyi* 'dog' becoming *nā̃*, his explanation seeking to prove that Sinhala *e* became **ay* before becoming *ä* seems a bit too far-fetched, not the least contentious of his arguments by his own admission being that forms that have undergone the process are actually not attested in Sinhala, a position we believe belongs to the realm of mere conjecture than rigorous reasoning.

It is more likely in our view that the vowel *a* became *ä* spontaneously without going through the tedious process of an intermediate **ay*. Indeed we may even suppose that they need not necessarily have even gone through an intermediate **e*, the attested forms with *e* being merely represented as such due to the want of a symbol for *ä*. Of course we do come across in Old Sinhala such as in the Sigiri graffiti forms with *e* (whose later equivalents are *ä*) occurring alongside forms with *ä* in the same verse as in:

Siva yi sivipata tepula rahasa belum nättan
Geheni gaye ta ken am beyadahi adahagata siṭuvayi

(The women) who have no speech and no secret looks smiled because (others) smiled (at them). What (wonder) is it that you went away, leaving behind (your) woman on the mountain side, and were quite at ease in your mind.

We would find here the forms *belum* 'looks' and *geheni* 'woman', the equivalents of the Mod.Sinh.*bälum* and *gähäni* respectively occur alongside a form with an *ä*, namely *nättan* '(who have) no' represented as such in this epigraph. This would suggest that the two forms given above were actually articulated as such since the symbol for *ä* did exist at the time.

However at the same time this does not necessarily mean that all Sinhala forms showing an *ä* had developed from an intermediate **e*. Sinhala as we have seen above has been rather irregular when it comes to vowel change and it is not unlikely that forms with *a* became *ä* or *e* and that forms with the *e* so obtained became *ä* at a later period. But this does not mean that we have to suppose that the process of change was invariably *a* > *e* > *ä*; it could have also been *a* > *ä* for how else could we explain forms like *täna* 'place' (P. *thāna*,Skt.*sthāna*) with no attested form *tena*. Nor do we ever come across an intermediate form of the semi-tatsama *sämiyā* 'husband' (P.*sāmi*, Skt.*svāmi*) in the form of *semi*. The low front vowels in these forms appear to have arisen spontaneously. Nevertheless there can be little doubt that there is a tendency in Sinhala for *a* to become *ä* in cases where the following syllable in corresponding Prakritic forms shows an *i*. E.g. Sinh. *ähä* 'eye (P.*acchi*), *väva* 'reservoir' (P.*vāpi*), *räya* 'night' (P.*ratti*) and *päni* (P.*phāṇita*). However this is not invariably the case as seen in such examples as Sinh.*täna* 'place' (P.*thāna*) and *däla* 'net' (P.*jāla*). This is also supported by the fact that in Divehi, an

offshoot of Sinhala which very probably branched off from it sometime between the 6th and 8th centuries, we find that although the Sinhala *ä* is very often rendered as *e* as for instance in Div.*medu* 'middle' (Sinh.*mäda*) and *mehi* 'fly' (Sinh.*mässā*) there are several notable exceptions where we find *a* as in Div.*tan* 'place' (Sinh.*täna*) and *fani* 'juice', 'treacle' (Sinh.*päni*).

It is also interesting to point out that like modern Hindī, old Sinhala had a tendency to dispense with the final vowel. This is no better illustrated than in the Sīgiri graffiti assigned to the 8th –10th centuries and composed by persons such as Sang Bati, Mayli Boy and Tindi Kasub where for instance we come across verses such as the following:

äsimi dun hasun hasun seyin vil duṭ
muḷā ḷa ma sänähi pul-piyuman sey bamar duṭ

(Like geese who have seen a lake. I listened to the message given (by her). Like a bee who has seen full-blown lotuses, the bewildered heart of mine was consoled).

Here we would find nouns lacking the final vowel such as *hasun* 'message' and *bamar* 'bee' whose modern-day Sinhala equivalents are *hasuna* (P.*sāsana*) and *baṁbarā* (P.*bhamara*). Another piece of graffiti assigned to about the 8th or 9th century has it: *kumund pini-bind sand-merejin jat varaj näta* (Any fault from the water-lilies, dew-drops and the moonbeams is not known). Here too we would find nouns lacking the final vowel such as *bind* 'drops' , *sand* 'moon' and *varaj* 'fault' where the equivalent modern-day Sinhala forms are *biṁda* (P.*bindu*), *haṁda* (P.*canda*) and *varada* (P.*aparaddha*). We even find that the names of the Sigiri poets have been subjected to this development. E.g: Kasub Himiyan ge Mihind, Mahavala Väsi Daḷasen, Galagombu Mital, Magun Agboy, Vijura Kasub, Mihidal, Kital, Govăd, Vadur, Sond and Saṁg.

We also come across such forms lacking the final vowel in other lithic inscriptions dating from the 9th -11th centuries. For instance in the Kaludiyapokuna inscription of C.9th century we come across the form *hir-sand* 'sun and moon' where a somewhat later lithic record, the Koṭṭangē inscription of the 13th century gives *hira-sanda* while the modern language has *ira-haṁda*. In the Rāssahela rock inscription (C.9th century) we find the forms *hoy* 'river' and *satar* 'four' where modern Sinhala has *oya* and *hatara*. Similarly we find in the Anurādhapura Slab inscription of Kassapa V (10th century) the phrase *dakuṇ-dor asanhi raj-ved-hal* 'Royal medicinal halls near the southern gate' where the modern form would be *dakuṇu dora asala raja-veda-hal* while in the Puliyankulam Slab Inscription of Udā Mahayā (C.11th century) we come across a reference to Aba Salamevan, the great king, who plunging into the sea

of war (*yud muhund*) brought Laṅkā fame, glory and tribute where its modern Sinhala equivalent would be *yuda muhuda*.

Although this may have been the case in the past, in at least one phase of its evolution, we find that Sinhala today has a great degree of vowel harmony as is evident in so simple a sentence as:

vässa nisā gasvalin väṭunu malvala peti häli äti nisai
gähänu lamayi vunat ē peti hälunu mal ahulannē nättē

(It is because the petals of flowers that have fallen from the trees because of the rain have broken off that even girls do not pick such flowers)

It would be apparent from the foregoing that Sinhala has tended to greatly simplify the phonological structure inherited from Old- and Middle-Indo-Aryan. This process is perhaps no better exemplified than in the case of Sinhala *mī* meaning 'earth' (as in *mī-duma* 'mist', lit.earth smoke), 'honey' (as in *mī-mässā* 'bee', lit.honey-fly), 'buffalo' (as in *mī-kiri* 'curd', lit.buffalo milk) and 'mouse' (as in *mī-behet* 'rodent poison', lit.mouse-medicine) and derived respectively from the Sanskritic and Prakritic *mahi* 'earth', *madhu* 'honey', *mahisa* 'buffalo' and *musika* 'mouse'. The same holds true of *divi* which can mean 'life' (Skt.P.*jīva*) as in *divi-nasāganna* 'to take life' or 'spotted' (lit.island-like) (Skt.*dvīpa*, P.*dīpa*) as in *divi-makuluvā* 'tarantula', 'a large spider with spots' or 'oath' (Skt.*divya*) as in *divi-dos* 'evil effects of perjury'.

III) Semantic change in Sinhala

Semantic shifts or changes in the meanings of words are attributable to a number of factors, among them, changes in the environment or culture of a people and association with similar concepts or objects. When we compare Sinhala with its Old – and Middle-Indo-Aryan cognates, we find that a few vocables have undergone semantic changes due to some reason or other.

For instance, Sinhala *kaṭa* 'mouth' probably has its origins in the OIA and MIA *kaṇṭha* 'throat', 'neck'. Sinhala *ina* 'waist', 'loins' similarly has its origins in the OIA *śroni* and MIA *soni* 'buttocks'. Sinh.*papuva* 'chest' evidently has its origins in the MIA *papphāsa* 'lungs' while Sinh.*baḍa* 'belly' probably has its origins in the OIA *bhāṇḍa* 'pot'. Even in Sinhala, the term *baḍa* seems to have formerly meant 'pot' as evident from the traditional name applied to the potter caste – *baḍa -häla*. Sinh.*maḍa* 'mud' probably derives from OIA and MIA *maṇḍa* meaning 'scum of boiled rice (or any grain), 'the thick part of milk', 'cream', 'scum', 'foam', 'froth'. Sinh.*geḍiya* 'fruit'

probably derives from the OIA *genḍūka* and MIA *genḍuka* 'playing ball'. Sinh.*puḷun* 'cotton' seems to have arisen from the OIA *sphuṭana* 'bursting', 'expanding' through the MIA *phuṭana* 'blossoming out'. Sinh.*ula* 'point' it is obvious has its origins in the OIA *śūla* 'sharp instrument or pointed dart, lance, spear' and MIA *sūla* 'sharp pointed instrument', 'stake'.

Sinhala *goyam* 'standing rice' evidently derives from the OIA *godhuma* and MIA *godhūma* 'wheat'. The shift from wheat to rice cultivation might explain why in Sinhala *goyam* came to mean 'rice' and not 'wheat'. Divehi, the speech of the Maldive Islanders which branched off from Sinhala around the 6th-8th centuries has however managed to retain in the form *godan* the older sense of 'wheat'. Sinh.*piduru* 'straw' likewise probably has its origins in the OIA and MIA *piñjara* 'tawny' and probably took its name from the tawny colour that characterizes local straw obtained from the rice plant.

The Sinhala *bisava* 'queen consort' likely has its origins in the OIA *abhiṣeka* and MIA *abhiseka* 'consecration' and would have probably had its origins from the fact that a queen of Kṣatriya lineage was necessary for the inauguration of a king. Similarly, Sinh.*haba* 'lawsuit' which has derived from the OIA and MIA *sabhā*'assembly' may have arisen from the simple fact that law-suits in those days were matters brought to the village assembly for its verdict. Thus the Old Sinhala term for 'assembly' would have come to acquire the meaning of 'lawsuit' with the passage of time.

Sinh. *vada* 'torture' has very likely evolved from the OIA *vadhya and* MIA *vajjha* 'execution'. The term might have assumed its present meaning from the fact that in the olden days – as in Kandyan times – execution was commonly preceded by physical torture, so that with time, the sense of 'execution' would have lost out with the connotation of 'torture' superseding it. In like manner, the Sinhala *daḍa* 'fine' has derived from the OIA and MIA *daṇḍa* 'stick', 'rod', 'cudgel' very probably through an intermediate sense of 'punishment'. Indeed, the Sinhala term for 'punishment' *daṅḍuvama* (Skt.P. *daṇḍa* 'stick' + Skt.*karma*, P.*kamma* 'action') may perhaps still retain the older sense of 'stick' though not for long as corporal punishment is being fast done away with, in schools for instance. Interstingly, the Sinhala term for 'hunting' *daḍayama* may have also ultimately arisen from OIA and MIA *daṇḍa* or 'stick perhaps on account of clubs or cudgels being used for hunting in the olden days. The usage is a very pervasive one as we have a number of terms related to hunting connected with it including *daḍa-bima* 'hunting grounds' and *daḍa-mas* 'meat obtained by hunting'.

Sinhala *daval* 'afternoon' has likewise undergone a semantic development from OIA and MIA *dhavala* meaning 'white', 'dazzling white' probably by way of a usage such as *daval-varuva* or 'white-time' meaning the time when the sunlight is in full force. Other changes such as Sinh.*daluva* 'tender leaf'

from OIA and MIA *jālaka* 'bud' are not that difficult to comprehend, though the Sinhala term for '(peacock) feather' *(monara-) pil* certainly demands some imagination if we are to trace it to OIA and MIA *phulla* 'to blossom out' which is however not that difficult to accept given the expanding nature of the peacock's plumage.

Sinhala *gähäni* 'woman', 'female' seems in all probability to have originated from OIA *gṛhiṇī* 'mistress of a house', wife' or *gehiṇī* 'housewife'. Sinh.*dumburu* 'brown' probably derives from OIA *dhūmra* primarily meaning 'smoke-coloured' or 'grey', as well as 'purple' and 'dark red'. The shift in meaning from 'grey' to 'brown' is not difficult to imagine in such a context. Sinhala *mala* 'flower' seems to have derived from OIA *mālā* 'garland' presumably because garlands were made from flowers. This semantic shift seems to have taken place as early as the days of the Sigiri graffiti, for we find in one such inscription belonging to the 9th century, the verse: *Äya hisiṇi gu [ḷu] kes-mal su(ḷagä) ji (vi)* (The flowers in her hair which dropped from her head flew away in the wind).

In like manner Sinh.*komaḍu* 'water-melon' seems to have derived from the OIA *kuṣmāṇḍā* 'pumpkin gourd (Benincasa Cerifera)' while Sinhala *dalaṁbuvā* 'caterpillar' appears to have its origins in the MIA *jalābu* 'embryo' which would have been applied to the chrysalis before coming to denote the caterpillar or MIA *jalūpikā* 'leech'. Similarly Sinh.*kaba* 'mucus of the eye' appears to have derived from OIA *kapha* 'phlegm'. Sinhala *vihiḷuva* 'tease', 'indulge in bufoonery' probably has its origins in OIA *vikrīḍ* 'play', 'jest', while Sinh.*pihiya* 'knife' seems to have derived from the OIA *sphya* 'wooden splinter, shaped like a knife, for use at sacrifice' and the Sinh.*vatura* 'water' from the OIA *vartaraka* 'whirlpool', 'eddy'. In former times *vatura* is known to have denoted 'flood' or 'continuous flow of water' as evident in such mediaeval Sinhala lexicons like the Nāmāvaliya, Ruvanmala and Piyummala. It is very likely that the term *vatura* came to be applied as a general term for water through the influence of the Dutch *water*. Floods are known in Sinhala today as *gaṅ-vatura* or 'river waters'. The older term for water in Sinhala was *pän* (P.*pānīya*) which survives in Divehi as *fen*.

A few Old Sinhala words no longer in use also seem to have undergone semantic changes. One such is *sevata*, originally 'co-wife' (OIA *sapatni*) which seems to have later also assumed the sense of '(female) rival (for a man's affection)' as seen in its occurrence in a Sigiri verse where a lady named Sevu, Wife of Nidalu Mihid addresses a damsel painted on the wall as follows:

mahanela bara varala gela huna pihira la-rasan
ädini tamā me bäluma sevataka vi apa nuyun aga tā

(This look of yours from a corner of your eye has verily been recognized by us as that of a rival – of you whose hair laden with blue water lilies, combed in style, drops down on your neck).

There are also instances where Sinhala has extended the meaning of terms inherited from OIA and MIA. For instance Sinh.*bāṇā* which probably originally meant 'a man's sister's son' (as in Skt.*bhāgineya* and P.*bhāgineyya* fr.*bhaginī* 'sister') also came to mean a 'woman's brother's son' or 'daughter's husband', the last no doubt as a result of the practice of cross cousin marriage prevalent among the Sinhalese of old where one's nephew also became one's son-in-law. Also of interest is the old Sinhala term for 'brother-in-law' *hūrā* (Skt.*śvaśurya*, P.*sasura*) which in the folk Sinhala of the North Central Province came to mean 'male cross cousin'. That the older form meant 'brother-in-law' is seen from the fact that the 13th century Pjv employs *suhuru* (from which *hūrā* derives) in this sense. The older meaning of brother-in-law has also been retained among the Sinhalese of the Daduru Oya region where one's sister's husband is known as *hūrē*. Here too we would have to infer that with the prevalence of cross cousin marriage the old Sinhala term for 'brother-in-law' came to mean 'cross cousin' in certain parts of the country.

The Sigiri graffiti of the 9th century attests to the fact that Sinh. *doḷa* usually used in the sense of '(pregnancy) craving' which reflects its OIA usage *dvihṛda* (lit.two hearts) had also assumed the general sense of 'desire' as seen in the expression *mana-doḷa* 'mind's desire'. There are also instances where Sinhala has narrowed down on certain meanings when compared to their OIA and MIA cognates. For instance, take the case of Sinh.*muvā* 'deer' (P.*maga*, Skt.*mṛga* forest animal or game, esp. deer, stag, gazelle, antelope'), *pamuvā* 'worm' (P.*pāṇaka*, Skt.*prāṇaka* 'living being', 'animal', 'worm') and *hāva* 'skin cast by snake' (Skt.P. *chavi* 'skin', 'hide').

Sinhala terms themselves have undergone semantic changes with the passage of time. *Rājakāriya* which today signifies 'duty' formerly denoted compulsory service to the king or state, which in feudal Kandyan times was exacted from the land-holding male populace by participation in military campaigns, manual labour etc. the modern Sinhala term for 'mile' *sātapum* literally means 'ease', 'repose'. The verbal form *sātapenavā* means 'to sleep', 'to repose'. *Sātāpma* (modern colloquial Sinhala *hātāpma* 'mile') meant 'the distance at which a coolly rests, a mile' [233]. Sinhala *holmana* which is today understood in the sense of 'ghost' formerly meant 'noise'. For instance in the 13th century SdR *solmana* occurs in the sense of 'noise' while Clough (1892) gives *solmana* as 'any ominous sound, sound heard in the dead of the night, supposed to be the

[233] See Sinhalese-English Dictionary. Rev.B.Clough (1892)

roaming of demons or hobgoblins'. This sense of noise is also reflected in the name of that ingenious device known as the *diya-holmana*, a noisy contraption made of bamboo to scare creatures such as crows or mice that harm the fields. *Kanatta* 'cemetery' formerly meant 'elevated ground' or 'abandoned chena'. For instance Clough (1892) gives *kanatta* as 'elevated ground, hilly ground, field (with a little jungle). H.W.Codrington in his Glossary of native, foreign and anglicized words (1924) gives *kanatta* as 'a chena on which the jungle has just begun to grow after abandonment of cultivation'. To this day, in the Sinhala dialect of Vävgam Pattu, *kanatta* is said to refer to an abandoned chena [234]. *Pāppa* which is today applied to a thick glue made of flour and water and used to paste posters formerly meant 'child's food or food prepared for infants' (Clough).

1V) Sinhala Grammar

Of the two major components of a given language, the most important is its vocabulary. The second is its grammar – the formation of words as they are used in a sentence.

Wilhelm Geiger [235] has dealt extensively with the relationship of Sinhala grammar to that of Sanskrit, Pāli and the MIAVs. For instance, he notes that within the sentence, the order of words is quite the same as in Sanskrit,with the subject coming first,the verb or predicate at the end of the sentence and the object and adverbial determinations standing between subject and predicate. Correspondences with Old and Middle Indo-Aryan is also seen in the attribute which has its place before the noun which it qualifies.

Sinh. *mama ohu-gē bāla putā*
P.*ahaṁ tassa kaniṭṭha putto*
(I am his youngest son)

In connection with correspondences between Sinhala and the MIAVs,Geiger compares the Sinhala plural suffix for inanimate objects *–val* (as in *nuvara-val* 'the towns') with the Bengali *–sakal* (as in *gāch-sakal* 'the trees'). He also compares the Sinhala causative *va* (P.*paya*) with Hindustani *vā*. This is seen in such forms as Sinh.*karavanna* 'to cause to do' (fr.*karanna* 'to do) and H.*bulvāna* 'to cause to be called'(fr.*bulānā* 'to call') . Sinhala and Hindustani also show certain correspondences in connection with the usage of such verbs

[234] See Janavahara. S. Wijesuriya (1997)

[235] The linguistic character of Sinhalese. JRAS. CB (1937)

as *karanna* 'to do' (H.*karnā*), *yanna* 'to go'(H.*jānā*), *denna* 'to give'(H.*denā*) and *venna* 'to be'(H.*honā*).

Dr. Shahidullah (1962) has cited a number of morphological similarities connecting Sinhala with the Eastern Indo-Aryan languages. This includes the suffix-*lā* added to the stem in the case of plural nouns (Cf. *dulā* 'daughters') which appears to be connected to the-*lā* of Bengali, which he believes to derive from Skt. *lokāh* used by Kālidāsa to denote the plural as in *rajalokāh* 'kings'. This usage is evidently connected to the plural suffix-*log* of Eastern Hindī as in *tum log* 'you' and the-*loa* of Old Bengali as in *tumhe-loa* 'you'. Shahidullah (1962) also compares the Sinhala affix *dena* 'person' with the Bengali-*jana* which is similarly used after numerals preceded by the substantive denoting an animate object:

Sinh. *lamayi tun denā*
Bg. *chhele tin jana*
(the three children)
He also cites the following correspondence in syntax between Bengali and Sinhala:

Bg. *ei gāchh ai gāchh theke baḍa ucu*
Sinh. *mē gaha ara gaha-ṭa vaḍā usa-yi*
(This tree is bigger than that tree)

As borne out by the history of Sinhala grammatical cases, Sinhala grammar has by no means been stable. A detailed study of the evolution of Sinhala grammatical forms by Wijayaratne (1956) has shown this to be the case with many elements of Sinhala morphology. The modern Sinhala genitive-*gē* (as in *ma-gē* 'my'; *apa-gē* 'our') probably arose from the MIA *geha* 'house' and would have originally signified 'house of' indicating the possessor. It replaced an earlier form *–ha* which existed from C. 3rd century B.C. - 8th century A.C. The genitives in the MIAVs differ as much from each other as they do from Sinhala. Cf.Hindī *kā*, Pañjābī *da*, Sindhī *jo*, Marāṭhī *cha* and Bengali-*er*.

The modern Sinhala dative-*ṭa* (as in *ma-ṭa* 'for me'; *api-ṭa* 'for us') appears to have arisen from the Old Sinhala *aṭa* or *aṭaya* (P. *aṭṭhāya*) of the 2nd –6th century A.C. This form appears to have replaced the older-*śa* occurring in cave inscriptions from the 3rd century B.C. The modern Sinhala locative-*e* (e.g. *game* 'in the village', *nagare* 'in the city') appears from the 2nd century A.C. An earlier form – *śi* (as in *gamaśi*, *nagaraśi*) occurring from C.3rd century B.C. had all but died out by the 3rd century A.C.

The loss of grammatical gender which characterizes Sinhala is also shared by the eastern MIAVs. Grammatical gender is a condition where nouns whether

animate or inanimate differ in gender, while adjectives and verbs change their gender in concord with nouns. For instance, compare the following Hindustani sentences constructed with masculine and feminine nouns represented by *pul* (bridge) and *qamīz* (shirt) respectively:

kālā pul acchā hai (The black bridge is good)
but *kāli qamīz acchī hai* (The black shirt is good)

In Sanskrit and Pāli, gender is three-fold, viz. masculine, feminine and neuter. For instance, Pāli *cando* 'moon' is masculine, *bhūmi* 'ground' is feminine and *vammaṁ* 'armour' is neuter. Amongst the MIAVs, Hindī, Sindhī, Pañjābī and Kāśmīrī possess two genders, viz. masculine and feminine, having merged the Sanskritic neuters with the masculines; Gujarātī and Marāṭhī have managed to retain all the three Old Indo-Aryan genders, while Bengali and Oriya have lost them. Grammatical gender appears to go back to the period of the undivided Indo-European home. Among the European languages, German like Gujarātī preserves the three genders; French like Hindī possesses the two genders masculine and feminine while Armenian like Bengali is devoid of grammatical gender.

D.J. Wijayaratne (1956) is of the view that grammatical gender did exist in the earliest inscriptional Sinhala of C. 3rd century B.C. - 2nd century A.C. and that this was subsequently replaced by what is known as natural or notional gender, where rationalisation of gender to bring about conformity between male and masculine, female and feminine and inanimate and neuter takes place. Wijayaratne avers that Sinhala Prakrit seems to have possessed grammatical gender consisting of the two classes, viz. masculine-neuter and feminine. He cites such instances as *dane* 'gift', *lene* 'cave' and the personal names *Bahike* and *Puśagute* which terminate in the masculine nominative singular ending-*e*. As for feminine nouns, he cites *Citaya* (P. *Cittāya* 'of *Citta*') and *Upalaya* (P. *Uppalaya*) which he believes point to the existence of grammatical gender in the feminine *ā*-nouns as they have preserved the Middle Indian genitive singular inflexional form as in Pāli .

S.K. Chatterji [236] believes that the loss of grammatical gender in the Eastern MIAVs is due to Kol (Munda) speakers having adopted Aryan speech in North-Eastern India and it is quite possible that the loss of grammatical gender in Sinhala was brought about by a similar process, namely, the adoption of Sinhala speech by the aboriginal Veddas. It is however also possible that as suggested by Wijayaratne (1956), this simplification of grammatical gender "is only the ultimate sequel to a movement which started very early and

[236] The Origin and Development of the Bengali language (1926)

progressively asserted itself because of the increasing phonetic decay of case inflexions that maintained the grammatical distinction of different genders".

V) Foreign Linguistic Influences on Sinhala

Given the central position Sri Lanka occupies in the waterways of the east, strategically placed as it is between the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, it is not surprising that its peoples and languages have been susceptible to the manifold influences of foreign nations – nations drawn from as far west as the Iberian peninsula and as far east as the Indonesian archipelago.

The relative security afforded by the country's insularity did not prevent its being invaded by foreign powers intent on plunder and aggrandizement, namely, the Dravidians from neighbouring South India and the three European colonial powers, viz. the Portuguese, Dutch and British, all of whom had an impact on the Sinhala language in the form of loan words. The Malays who seem to have maintained some sort of commercial and cultural contact with the country even prior to their arrival as soldiers during the Dutch colonial period and the Arabs who came to the country as peaceful merchants are amongst the other foreign peoples who have made an impression on the Sinhala language, albeit in a small way. The Persians also seem to have had some mercantile relations with the country during the olden days, which is reflected in a very few words of Persian origin in the Sinhala language.

Thus, the Sinhala language of today consists of many loan words of Tamil, Portuguese, Dutch and English origin, as well as a sprinkling of Malay, Arabic and Persian loans. Abraham Mendis Gunesekera in his Comprehensive Grammar of the Sinhalese language (1891) enumerates approximately 400 loanwords from Tamil, 231 from Portuguese, 112 from Dutch and 76 from English. Whereas words of Prakritic origin which comprise the indispensable stock of words of the mass of the Sinhalese people have evolved in accordance with more or less strict phonetic laws, foreign loans have tended to change in a more capricious manner.

As will be evident from what follows, the majority of loan words in Sinhala, as in many other languages around the world, are nouns. This is because the major reason for borrowing in any given language is to extend the range or referential function of that language to include items that were previously unknown to that language, in most cases new cultural items and ideas which naturally most often are in the form of nouns, and not so much other lexical or grammatical forms whose influence is rather negligible. To put it simply, loan words often reflect what one nation has taught another. Nevertheless long term linguistic influence as a result of such factors as political power may have an impact not only on the formative new vocabulary of a language, but may at

times even replace older forms as such influence becomes more pervasive over time.

It is the Tamil language, of all foreign tongues that found their way into Sri Lanka, that has had the greatest impact on Sinhala. Recurrent Tamil invasions, peaceful mercantile intercourse and the assimilation of Tamil-speaking caste groups into the Sinhalese social system, all appear to have contributed to this situation. The impact of the Tamil language would have been profound during the period beginning with the 11th century Colan conquest of the island under Rājendra I until the arrival of the Portuguese in the early part of the 16th century, and again during the reign of the South Indian Nayakkar dynasty which occupied the Kandyan throne from 1739-1815.

Further, it should be borne in mind that the relations between the Sinhalese and the Tamils domiciled in the island as well as those of the Tamil country in South India were not always inimical, for as shown by Amaradasa Liyanagamage [237], close religious and commercial ties did exist between Sri Lanka and South India during the mediaeval period. Liyanagamage has cited epigraphic evidence to show that there existed a flourishing trade between Sri Lankan and South Indian mercantile corporations such as the Tennilankai Valanjiyar and Nanadesa Tisaiyayirattu Ainnuruvar during the 12th and 13th centuries. Religious ties were also not unknown. The Cūlavaṁsa provides instances of Buddhist monks fleeing to the lands of the Colans and Pandyans during different times such as when Magha invaded the island. The chronicle also has it that it were the Cōla bhikkhus who assisted Parākramabāhu II (1236-1270) restore Buddhism in the island shortly after Magha's expulsion.

Sinhala, in its earlier stages evidently had only a few Tamil loans, but these progressively become more numerous with the passage of time so that we have today a considerable number of Tamil loans in Sinhala. The large number of Tamil loans in Sinhala including those that have displaced their pure Sinhala equivalents in some instances suggest an intensive influence over a lengthy period of time that could only have been brought about as a result of Tamil speakers exerting considerable influence including political authority at times over the Sinhalese. It is also very likely that the adoption of Tamil loans was facilitated by the gradual assimilation of Tamil-speaking caste groups such as the Karava originating from peninsular India into Sinhalese society. The adoption of Tamil forms occurring in some place-names and in a good many piscine names are probably attributable to this development.

Perhaps the earliest usage of Tamil or Dravidian speech among the Sinhalese is *parumaka* occurring in the sense of 'chief' in the early Brahmi inscriptions of C. 3rd century B.C.-1st century A.C. The term, it would appear, has derived

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[237] A forgotten aspect of the relations between the Sinhalese and Tamils. CHJ (1978)

from Old Tamil *peru* 'big', 'great' + *makan* 'son', 'man' and therefore apparently meant 'great man'. Its feminine equivalent *parumakala* or *parumakalu* is probably derived from Old Tamil *peru* 'great' + *makal* 'daughter', 'woman', giving further support to the notion that it is of Dravidian origin. The usage is attested in a good many Brāhmi inscriptions as for instance in the following inscription from Brāhmanayāgama: *Parumaka Data jhita Parumaka baginiya Nadikaśa jhaya Parumakalu Śamaṇaya leṇe agata anagata catu diśa śagaśa dine* (The cave of the chieftainess Śamaṇa, daughter of the chief Data and wife of Nadika, nephew of the chief, is given to the Sangha of the four quarters, present and absent). Such usages would probably have arisen from the connections the early Sinhalese beginning from Vijaya had with the Pandyan kingdom of the extreme south of India where the early Aryan migrants would have been known as such by their Dravidian subjects and which would have eventually gained general acceptance.

Another early Tamil loan in Sinhala is *marumakan* 'nephew', 'grandson', 'descendant' which occurs in a Vessagiri cave inscription of about the 2nd century B.C. The inscription reads: *śoṇutara-kulaha marumakane śumanaha pute śoṇutara leṇe* (The cave of Śoṇutara, son of Śumana and son-in-law/nephew/member of the family of Śoṇutara). It is probably this early loan that has given rise to the modern Sinhala *munuburā* 'grandson' and its feminine equivalent *minibiri* 'grandaughter'. The usage is attested as far back as the 8th century in the form *munumburu* employed by a Sigiri poet named Sela Boyi. Another possible early Tamil loan is seen in the Nā-Ulpota Rock inscription of about the 2nd-3rd century A.C. where we come across the word *kubura* '(paddy)field' occurring in the sentence *Gamiṇi abaye kubura saga dine* (Gamini Abaya bestowed fields on the Sangha) whose modern form appears to be *kumburа* and which may perhaps be connected to T.*kumari* 'cultivation in hills' implying that the tracts of land so employed for the purpose were terraced (paddy) fields. Among the other loans of probable Tamil origin occurring in the Sigiri graffiti of the 8th century include *suḷag* 'breeze' (T.*cuḷi*) and *ḷa* 'young' occurring in the compounds *ḷa -däriya* 'young maiden' and *ḷa -gob-pata* 'tender leaf' (T. *iḷa* 'tender').

Other mediaeval period epigraphs too contain a few Tamil loans, as for instance the Moragoda Pillar inscription of Kassapa IV (10th century) which gives *Mala-Maṅḍulu* for the Hill country (T.*malai* 'hill') and the Vessagiri Slab inscription of Mahinda IV of about the same period which gives *kumbura* 'field'(T. *kumari*). The 13th century Saddharma-Ratnāvaliya also contains a few Tamil loans such as *munuburu* 'grandchildren' and *(navadāli) sēnē* '(a newly burnt) chena' as does the 14th century Saddharmalankāraya which gives a few Tamil loans like *pāḍagam* 'anklets' and *miriväḍi (-sangala)* '(pair of) wooden slippers' . So do some Sandēśa poems of the 15th century. For instance

in the Haṁsa Sandēśaya we hear of the geese complaining that the tinkling of the anklets (*valaḷu*) of the city women imitates the sounds they make. The term *valaḷu* used for anklets here is little doubt derived from the T. *valaiyal* though in Modern Sinhala it refers to bangles, the term for anklets being *pā- valaḷu* or 'foot bangles'.

Dravidian linguistic influence on Sinhala could be said to have reached its peak during the Kōṭṭe period in the 15th and 16th centuries, which also saw a flowering of Sinhala literary activity. Many a Tamil loan also entered Sinhala in the days of the Kandyan Kingdom, particularly during the latter part of its existence when it was ruled from 1739-1815 by the Dravidian Nayakkar dynasty. But to suppose that Tamil loans entered the vocabulary of the Kandyan Sinhalese only after the establishment of the Nayakkar power would be a mistake, for several decades before Robert Knox (1681) gives as the Kandyan Sinhalese terms for 'father' *oppa* and *oppatchi*, the latter of which survives in Kandyan Sinhalese usage as *appacci* (both derived from T.*appā* 'father') besides *pianannah* (Sinh.*piyānani*, an Indo-Aryan derived term from OIA *pitṛ*). Among the few other Tamil loans given by Knox are *vesou* 'whore' (T.*vēci*) and *amblomb* 'places built for wayfarers' (T.*ambalam*).

Tamil has influenced Sinhala in a number of spheres, among them in kinship terminology:

Sinh. *akkā* 'elder sister (T. *akkā*)
ācci 'grandmother' (T.*āycci*, *ācci* 'grandmother', 'mother')
sīyā 'grandfather' (T.*cīyān* 'ancestor', 'great great grandfather')
massinā 'cousin' (T.*maccinan*)

We also find Tamil loans referring to habitations:

Sinh. *koṭuva* 'fort' (T.*kōṭṭai*)
māligāva palace' (T.*māligai*)
valavva 'mansion' (T.*valavu* 'house)
kūḍārama 'tent' (T. *kūḍāram*)

Architectural features:

Sinh.*attivārama* 'foundation' (T.*attivāram*)
paḍi (*-pela*)'stairs' (T.*paḍi*)
tahadu 'metal sheeting' (T.*tagadu* 'plate')
vaḍimbu 'roof edge' (T. *vaḍimbu*)

Infrastructure and public amenities:

Sinh. *pālama* 'bridge' (T.*pālam*)
ambalama 'wayside shed for resting' (T.*ambalam*)
kaccēriya 'government office' (T. *kaccēri*)
piṭiya 'grounds' (T.*piṭṭi* 'elevated area or dune')

War and Defence:

Sinh. *uṇḍaya* 'bullet' (T.*uṇḍai*)
vedilla 'gunshot' (T.*veḍil* 'explosion of gunpowder')
agala 'moat' (T.*agal*)
ottu (*-sēvaya*) 'spy service' (T. *ottu* 'espionage)

Justice and Punishment:

Sinh. *naḍuva* 'lawsuit' (T.*naḍu*)
vilaṅgu 'fetters' (T. *vilaṅgu*)
kasaya 'whip' (T.*kacai*)
hira (*-geya*) 'prison' (T.*cirai* 'captivity', 'incarceration')

Trade and business dealings:

Sinh.*vaṭṭama* 'discount' (T. *vaṭṭam*)
pāduva 'loss' (T.*pādu*)
kaḍaya 'shop' (T.*kaḍai*)
sillara 'retail' (T.*cillarai* 'small amount of anything')

Financial activity:

Sinh. *salli* 'money (T. *calli*)
kāsi 'coins' (T.*kāsu*)
kuliya 'rent' (T.*kūli*)
poliya 'interest' (T.*poli*)

Agricultural activity:

Sinh. *hēnaya* 'slash and burn field' (T.*cēnai*)
pāttiya 'flower or vegetable bed' (T.*pātti*)
kuṁbura 'paddy field' (T. *kumari*)
aṭṭālaya 'hut on poles on which a watchman sleeps' (T. *aṭṭālai*)

Livestock:

Sinh. *paṭṭiya* 'cattlefold' (T.*paṭṭi*)
sokaḍa 'wooden clappers for cattle' (T. *cagaḍa* 'bullock cart')
(han)-vaḍu 'cattlebrand' (T.*vaḍu* 'scar')
lāḍama 'horseshoe, also formerly used for cattle' (T.*ilāḍam*)

Industrial activity:

Sinh.*accuva* 'mould' (T.*accu*)
sekkuva 'oil press' (T.*cekku*)
sāyama 'dye' (T.*cāyam*)
paṭṭalaya 'workshop' (T. *paṭṭatai* 'mechanic's shop')

Important household items:

Sinh. *kannādiya* 'mirror' (T.*kannādi*)
toṭilla 'cradle' (T.*toṭṭil*)
haṭṭiya 'cooking vessel' (T.*caṭṭi*)
koṭṭaya 'pillow' (T.*koṭṭai*)

Culinary fare:

Sinh.*āppa* 'crispy rice cake' (T.*appam*)
iṁdiāppa 'stringhoppers' (T.*iḍiyappam*)
piṭṭu 'steamed rice cake' (T. *piṭṭu*)
käṁda 'broth' (T.*kanji*)

foodstuffs:

Sinh. *parippu* 'lentils' (T.*paruppu*)
kaḍala 'chickpea' (T.*kaḍalai*)
sav 'sago' (T.*cav*)
sambā (*-hāl*) 'kind of rice' (T.*cambā*)

Fruits:

Sinh. *varakā* 'ripe jak fruit' (T.*varukkai*)
ānamālu 'plantain' (T.*ānavālai*)
nelli 'Phyllanthus Emblica'(T.*nelli*)
ātā 'custard apple' (T. *āttā*)

Herbs:

Sinh. *kīra* 'pot herbs' (T.*kīrai*)
sārana 'edible herb', 'Trianthema Decandra' (T.*cāranai*)
nīramulli 'edible herb' 'Asteracantha longifolia' (T.*nīrmulli*)
kuppamēniya 'Acalypha Indica consumed by cats' (T. *kuppaimēni*)

Spices and condiments:

Sinh. *sādikka* 'nutmeg' (T.*cādikkāi*)
karābu (-näti) 'cloves' (T.*karāmbu*)
kottamalli 'coriander' (T. *kottamalli*)
ulu (-hāl) 'fenugreek' (T.*uluvā*)

Various types of edible fish:

Sinh. *sālayā* 'sardinella' (T.*cālai*)
sāvālayā 'ribbon fish' (*cāvalai*)
kārallā 'pony fish' (T.*kāral*)
tondayā 'round herring' (T.*tondai*)

Medicinal preparations:

Sinh.*āḍatōḍā* 'Malabar nut tree' 'Adatoda Vasica' *(T. āḍātōḍai*)
tippili 'long pepper' (T.*tippili*)
pāvaṭṭā 'Pavetta Indica' (T. *pāvaṭṭai*)
sādiliṅgam 'vermillion' (T. *cādiliṅgam*)

Articles of dress:

Sinh.*häṭṭa* 'jacket' (T.*caṭṭai*)
hēlaya 'piece of cloth' (T.*cēlai*)
serappu 'slippers' (T. *ceruppu*)
mirivāḍi 'wooden slippers' (T.*maram-aḍi*)

Ornamentation:

Sinh. *tōḍu* 'ear-stud' (T. *tōḍu*)
mālaya 'necklace' (T.*mālai* 'garland')
valalu 'bangles' (T.*valaiyal*)
pāḍagam 'ankle-ring' (T.*pādagaḍagam*)

Metals:

Sinh *īyam* 'lead' (T.*īyam*)
pittala 'copper' (T.*pittalai*)
tuttanāgam 'zinc' (T. *tuttanāgam*)
sīnaccaṭṭi 'cast iron' (T.*cīnaccaṭṭi*)

Minerals:

Sinh. *paliṅgu 'crystal' (T. paliṅgu)*
vayirōdi ' cat's eye' (T.*vaiḍūriyam*)
ārunūl 'star-stone' (T. *ārunūl*)
kuruvindaya 'ruby' (T.*kuruvindam*)

Natural phenomena:

Sinh. *eliya* 'daylight' (T.el)
suḷiya 'whirlpool' (T.*cuḷi*)
pini 'dew' (T.*pani* 'dew', 'mist')
pāsi 'moss' (T.*pāci*)

Wildlife:

Sinh. *aliyā* 'elephant' (T.*alliyan* 'stray elephant')
nariyā 'jackal' (T.*nari*)
kokku 'storks' (T.*kokku*)
vavulā 'bat' (T.*vāval*)

Some bad practices:

Sinh. *sūduva* 'gambling' (T.*cūdu*)
hūniyama 'witchcraft' (T.*cūniyam*)
kasippu 'illicit liquor' (T.*kacappu*)
surutṭuva 'cigar' (T.*curuṭṭu*)

And even persons of ill repute:

Sinh. *canḍiyā* 'thug' (T.*canḍi* 'rogue')
takkaḍiyā 'scoundrel' (T.*takkaḍi*)
kupāḍiyā 'lecher' (T.*kuppakkāṭṭān* 'rustic')
vēsi 'harlot' (T.*vēci*)

Certain Sinhalese place-names in the south-western part of the island also betray Tamil influence, such as Kalutara and Bentara, the suffix *–tara* addded to the river names Kalu and Bem having its origins in the T.*turai* 'ford', 'ferry', 'seaport'. We also find Tamil loans occurring in compounds such as *pacca-gala* 'emerald' (T. *pacca* 'green), *podu-liňda* 'common well' (T.*podu* 'common', 'public'), *kuru-mittā* 'dwarf' (T.*kuru* 'dwarfish') and *sippi-kaṭu* 'sea shell' (T.*cippi*) and *monara-pil* 'peacock feathers'(T.*pīli*). The Sinhala term for 'finger millet' *kurakkan* has been formed from T.*kervaragu* 'millet'+ Sinh.*kan* 'ear'.

Tamil compound forms are attested since at least the 13th century, as for instance in the Dambadeni Asna where we come across references to fireworks like *dum-veḍi*, *sära-veḍi* and *gini-veḍi* which deafened those who heard them and frightened away the enemy army. These terms have been formed of the Tamil suffix – *veḍi* 'explosive'. Even the Sinh.*ḷadaruvā* 'infant' attested in the 13th century SdR is but a compound formed from the T. *iḷa* 'young' + Sinh.*daruvā* 'child'.

We also find Tamil loans being used as verbs in Sinhala by the addition of a verbal suffix such as *ella-karanna* 'to put forth' (T.*ellai*), *mella-karanna* 'to subdue' (T.*mella* 'slowly', 'gently', *meli* 'to be reduced', 'emaciated', 'weak'), *māru-karanna* 'to change' (T. *māru* 'change'), *taṭṭu-karanna* 'to knock' (T.*taṭṭu* 'knock'), *tallu-karanna* 'to push' (T.*tallu* 'push'), *visi-karanna* 'to throw' (T.*vīcu*), *naḍattu-karanna* 'to maintain' (T. *naḍattu* 'to manage', 'to regulate'), *kulappu-karanna* 'to alarm' (T.*kulappu* 'agitate'), *mūṭṭu-karanna* 'to join or sew together' *(T.mūṭṭu). kara-venna* 'to become black' (T.*karu* 'to grow black' 'to darken''), *orappu-venna* 'to become angry' (T.*uruppam* 'heat', 'anger'), *veri-venna* 'to become drunk' (T.*veri* 'drunkenness') *kolla-kanna* 'to plunder' (T.*kollai* 'plunder'), *pali-ganna* 'to take revenge' (T.*pali* 'revenge'), *pacca-koṭanna* 'to tattoo' (T.*pacca* 'green'), *sipa-ganna* 'to kiss' (T.*cūppu*) and *veḍi-tiyanna* 'to shoot' (T.*veḍi* 'explosion of a gun'). There are nevertheless at least five forms that do not employ such qualifying suffixes, namely, *tērenna* 'to understand' (T.*tēr*), *iranna* to tear' (T.*īr* 'to cut, tear or split')), *hūranna* 'to scratch (T.*curaṇḍu* 'to scratch off) *poravanna* 'to wrap (with a sheet etc)' (T.*pōr*) and *visirenna* 'to become dispersed or scattered' (T.*viciru* 'to fling' splash'), showing that these loans must be quite old. We also come across a Sinhala verb *vēlanna* 'to dry' which has very likely derived not from a Tamil verb, but from the T. *veliyē* 'outside' since 'to dry' would have meant 'to keep outside'. We also come across Sinhala vocables derived from Tamil roots such as *lamissi* 'girl' fr.T.*ilamai* 'youth', *huḷaňga* 'wind' fr.T. *cuḷi* 'whirling (as water or wind)', *cuḷalu* 'to whirl', spin', *cuḷal*

'whirlwind' and *kurullā* 'bird' fr. T.*kurugu* 'bird', *kuruvi* 'little bird', *kural* 'voice of birds'.

Similarly, Sinhala *muttā* 'great-grandfather' has little doubt derived from a Tamil root meaning 'old' (as found in Tamil *mutt-eyil* 'ancient fortress' as well as in kinship terms such as *muttappan* 'father's father', a usage also reflected in other Dravidian forms such as Telugu *mut-tāta* 'great-grandfather' and Tulu *mutt-ajji* 'great-grandmother', all of which ultimately derive from the Proto-Dravidian * *mutt-V* 'old') while *kollā* 'boy', 'lad' (and its feminine equivalent *kella* 'girl', 'lass') is in all likelihood connected to a Tamil root meaning 'young' (as found in Tamil *kolu-mai* 'freshness', Kannada *koḍa* 'tender age', Parji *koṛ* 'very young', Kui *koṛgi* 'newly sprouted' and even Brahui *xarring* 'to sprout' all of which derive from the PDr * *koẓ-V* 'young').

Among the few phonological changes which Tamil loans have been subjected to in their passage to Sinhala is the aspiration of the Tamil palatals or sibilants in the initial position. Though commonplace this has not been very regular.

Sinh. *hari* 'correct' (T.*cari*)
huṇḍuva 'a measure' (T.*cuṇḍu*)
(bulat-)hurulla 'betel leaves' (T.*curul* 'roll of betel leaves')

Among other changes may be mentioned the reduction of the terminal diphthong *–ai* to *–a*

Sinh. *iḍa* 'space' (T.*iḍai*)
puduma 'wonder' (T. *pudumai*)
moṭṭa 'blunt' (T.*moṭṭai*)

or the addition of a *y* to the diphthong *–ai*

Sinh. *urumaya* 'inheritance' (T. *urumai*)
kuḍaya 'umbrella' (T.*kuḍai*)
pāvaḍaya 'cloth for walking' (T.*pāvaḍai*)

the addition of a final *a* or *ā*

Sinh. *pāḍama* 'study' (T.*pāḍam*)
toṭilla 'cot' (T.*toṭṭil*)
karuvala 'darkness' (T.*karuval*)

the dropping of an initial *i* in some cases

Sinh. *ḷa* 'young' 'tender' (T.*iḷa*)
lamayā 'child' (T.*iḷamai*)
lēsi 'easy' (T.*ilacu*)

the dropping of an initial *v* in certain cases

Sinh.*ōnē* 'want' (T.*vēnum*)
eliyē 'outside' (T.*veliyē*)
eliya 'daylight' (T.*veli* 'to break as the day')

and the replacement of *v* by *m* in some rare instances

Sinh. *manamāla* 'bridegroom' (T.*manavālan*)
manamāli 'bride' (T. *manavāli)*
anamālu 'plantain' (T. *ānavālai*)

Among the Tamil loan words that have undergone semantic changes in their passage to Sinhala are *ayyā* 'elder brother' (T. *ayyā*. A term of respect, 'sir'), *naṅgi* 'younger sister' (T. *nuṅgai* 'your younger sister, *naṅgai* 'lady'), *malli* 'younger brother' (T. *malalī* young'), *lamayā* 'child' (T.*ilamai* 'youth'), *ilandāriyā* 'bachelor' (T.*ilandāri* 'youth'), *pillā*, *pilavā* 'young animal', 'grub', 'maggot' (T.*pīl* 'embryo', *pillai* 'young of animal'), *ukula* 'lap' (T.*ukkalai* 'hips'), *koṇḍaya* 'hair' (T.*koṇḍai* 'hair tied behind or in a bun'), *āṇḍuva* government' (T. *āṇḍai*, *āṇḍavan* 'master', 'lord'; *āṇḍēn* 'to rule'), *usāviya* 'court' (T.*ucāvu* 'inquiry'), *(raja) vāsala* 'palace' (T.*vācal* gateway'), *valaṅgu* 'valid' (T. *valaṅgu* 'to practice', 'to be in use'), *pora* 'quarrel' (T.*pōr* 'war'), *kappam* 'ransom', 'protection money' (T.*kappam* 'tribute'), *kaḍa (-ima)* 'boundary' (T.*kaḍai* 'extremity'), *kumbura* 'paddy field' (T.*kumari* 'cultivation in hills'), *vela* 'marsh' (T.*vayal* 'rice field', 'open field'), *kuruṅdu* 'cinnamon' (T.*kurundu* ' a class of trees of fragrant foliage'), *muḍukku* 'slum street corner' (T.*muḍaikku* 'winding crooked street'), *vāḍiya* 'place temporarily set apart for a particular purpose' (T. *vāḍi* 'enclosure', 'fenced place'), *hōḍiya* 'alphabet' (T.*cuvaḍi* 'ola books', 'child's alphabet on the ola'), *havariya* 'tress of false hair' (T.*cavari* 'tail hair of bos grunniens used as a fan'). *appudi* 'clap' (T.*appudu* 'sound to excite elephants'), *heṇḍuva* 'elephant spike' (T.*ceṇḍu* 'type of weapon'), *idala* 'ekel broom' (T.*idal* 'strip of palm leaf or other materials for making baskets, mats etc), *iraṭuva* 'eke', 'centre rib of palm leaf' (T.*iraṭṭai* 'two things naturally conjoined – as a double leaf etc'), *mālaya* 'necklace' (T.*mālai* 'garland'), *havaḍiya* 'waist-chain' (T.*cavaḍi*

'necklace'), *suraya* 'cylindrical amulet' (T.*curai* 'hollowness', 'tubularity'), *hoṭu* 'mucus of the nose' (T.*coṭṭu* 'to fall in drops'), *tuvālaya* 'wound' (T.*tuvālai* 'flow of blood'), *paniviḍaya* 'message' (T. *paniviḍai* 'service', 'errand'), *ādāyama* 'income' (T. *ādāyam* 'gain'), *pal* 'stale' (T.*palai* 'old'), *poronduva* 'promise' (T.*porundu* 'to contract or agree with') *parakku* 'late' (T.*parākku* 'heedlessness'), *kulappuva* 'agitation' (T.*kalippu* 'intoxication'), *nōkkāḍuva* 'estrangement' (T. *nōkkāḍu* 'pain'), *mūsala* 'miserable', 'ill-omened' (T.*mūcālai* 'devoid of beauty'), *savuttu* 'inferior' (T.*cavuttadu* 'to become weak or low in price'), *vaṅguva* 'a turn in a road' (T. *vaṅgu* 'a hole', 'a hollow', 'cave', 'space between beams or the ribs of a vessel') and *tonduva* 'noose' (T.*toṇḍu* 'block of wood suspended from the neck of an animal to prevent it from passing through hedges').

The Sinhala term for 'pumpkin' *vaṭṭakkā* is evidently of Tamil origin and probably derived from the T.*vaṭṭakkāi* or 'rounded fruit' though it is not found in this sense in Tamil. Sinh.*muruṅgā* 'drumstick' or 'horse raddish' also betrays itself as a Tamil loan as seen in the occurrence in the word of the final *-gā* which appears to be derived from the T.*kāi* 'unripe fruit' which when preceeded by a nasal becomes – *gāi* Likewise an old Sinhala term for 'slippers' or 'sandals' *miriväḍi* has its origins in the Tamil compound *maram-aḍi* or 'wooden sole'. The intermediate form *maravāḍi* occurs in the Vēvälkäṭiya inscription of Mahinda IV (C.11th century) which has it that those who efface brand-marks (of cattle) shall be made to stand on red-hot iron sandals (*ana mäkuvan rat-kaḷa ya-maravāḍiy siṭvanu*). The Divehi form *maruvaḷi* 'sandals' suggests that this Tamil loan entered Sinhala well before the 6th -8th century when the Maldivian speech separated from Sinhala.

There are also known to have existed a number of Tamil loans in inscriptional, literary and even colloquial Sinhala which have become obsolete in the modern language. For instance *his-kol* occurring in a Mihintale inscription which gives the sense of ''head-dress', the form *kol* having derived from the T.*kullā* or *kōlam* (which for instance occurs in the form *talaikkōlam* or 'headdress'). Yet another obsolete form *nara* which occurs in the sense of 'grey hair' in classical Sinhala works such as the Muva-dev-dā is evidently derived from the T.*narai*. The Sinhala word *huḷa* 'torch', flambeau' which until fairly recent times was used in forms such as *huḷu-eliya* 'torch-light', *huḷu-däl* 'sparks flying from torch light and *huḷumas* 'fish caught by torch light' (Clough) has its origins in the Tamil *cūḷ*. To this day, certain Sinhala regional usages employ some rare Tamil forms not found in the common speech of other parts. For instance *homari* 'lazy' used in the North Central Province. In Vellasse a lazy person is known as *hobiriyā* and in Kotmale

sōmāliyā [238]. All these usages appear to have derived from T.*cōmbēri* 'lazy' or *cōmāri* 'idle fellow'.
The insertion of a duplicated labial in the midst of compounded words in spoken Sinhala may also be due to Tamil influence:

janap-priya 'popular' for *jana-priya*
deśap-premi 'patriotic' for *deśa-premi*

Tamil has also somewhat influenced Sinhala syntax in colloquial usage. As for instance in the sentence *eyā āvillā apē massinā* where Tamil has *avar vanda engada maccinan* 'He is our cousin' (Lit.He comes, our cousin). It has also influenced Sinhala grammatical forms thjat still find expression in literary usage, as for instance in the use of the comparative suffix *–men* 'like', 'in the manner of' in classical Sinhala. Thus Sinh.*kumariyagē net nilupul-men babalayi* (The princess' eyes shine like blue lotuses) finds its equivalent in the T. *kumariyudeyya kankal kuruṅkuvalayyay-māna vilaṅgum*. The usage even occurs in the Sigiri graffiti of the 9th century: *balayi manga piyā vana-vū himin men ho* (She, the dear one, gazes at the road in the manner of those whose lords have been separated from them). The Sinhala *–men*, it is likely, has derived from the T.*-māna*. Also consider the following Sinhala idioms which appear to have been constructed on the analogy of Dravidian. Sinh. *hulaṅ gahayi* 'wind blows'; lit. wind strikes (T. *kāṭṭu aḍikkiradu*) and Sinh. *balā gena hiṅdī* 'keeps on looking'; lit. having looked and taken he remains (T. *pārttukkoṇḍu irikkirān*) [239] . The construction of the modern Sinhala teen numeral terms such as *daha-saya* 'sixteen' (in contrast to the O.Sinh.*soḷasa*) may also be attributable to Dravidian influence (where for instance the numeral sixteen is known as *padināra* formed fr.T.*pattu* 'ten'+ *āra* 'six' which corresponds to the Sinhala *daha-saya* formed from *daha* 'ten' + *saya* 'six') Whereas Old Sinhala seems to have observed verb preceding object (VO) order in such numeral terms, it appears to have shifted to object preceding verb (OV) word order, presumably due to the strong effect of the OV syntax of Tamil [240].

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[238] Such regional usages are found in works such as R.W.Ievers' Manual of the North-Central Province (1899), Vāg-Vidyāva by Mātalē Sāsanatilaka (1960) and Janapravāda saha janavahara by Sirisena Devapriya (1993)

[239] Hissällē Dhammaratana in his Siṅhalayē Draviḍa Balapām (1963) and Prof. D.E. Hettiaratchi in his contribution on Sinhala (UCHC. Vol.1 1959) have dealt with the Dravidian grammatical influence on Sinhala in some detail.

[240] See Historical Linguistics.W.Lehmann (1992)

Borrowings from Tamil, it is evident took place at different periods, a fact reflected in the phonetic character of Tamil loans in Sinhala. For instance the Sinhala word for Okra or ladies' fingers (Hibiscus Esculentus) *baṇḍakkā*, seems to have derived from an old Tamil form such as **beṇḍakkāi* before a hypothetical initial **b* was turned into *v* in that language which today has *veṇḍakkāi* for this item of food. In like manner, it is possible that the Sinh.*gala* 'rock', 'stone' has derived from a hypothetical Tamil **gal* whose modern form is *kal.* The form is well attested in Sinhala from a very early period as in the Sigiri inscriptions where for instance it is employed by a poet named Vajur Agboy of about the 8th century who says *gal-mundun nägī bälimi* (I ascended the summit of the rock and looked). Similarly Sinh.*dehi* 'lime' and *doḍam* 'orange' are clearly connected to T.*tēśi* and *tōḍam* suggesting that Sinhala borrowed these loans before Tamil unvoiced the initial dental of these terms, though it is also possible that these were a result of voicing on the part of Sinhala. We also have the case of the Sinh. *kälāva* 'forest' which seems to have derived from the T.*kāḍu* and Sinh.*karavala* 'dry salted fish' from T.*karavāḍu*, the change *ḍ* > *l* signifying a very early loan. Also found in Sinhala however is an evidently later loan *kaḍu* (also fr.T. *kāḍu*) which figures in place-names . E.g.*Hikkaḍuva (< sip-kaḍuva* or 'coral forest') and *Asun-gal-kaḍu* (Ahungalla forest) occurring in the Tisara Sandēśa. We also have Sinhala loans of Tamil origin which have derived from Tamil forms having an intial *c* representing it both as *h* as in *häṭṭaya* 'jacket' (T.*caṭṭai*) and as *s* as in *sāyama* 'dye' (T.*cāyam*), it being probable that the forms with *h* being earlier borrowings and those with *s* being later borrowings.

Beginning from the 16th century, the European colonial powers, the Portuguese (1505-1658), the Dutch (1658-1796) and the British (1796-1948) also made a significant contribution to the Sinhala language in the case of its vocabulary. The Portuguese, who unlike the later Dutch and British, freely intermarried with the daughters of the land, were bound to make the greatest contribution to the language among the European colonial powers. Although the Portuguese do not seem to have made much of an impact on government and administration as the later Dutch and British did, their contribution to the country's social, cultural and religious life was considerable. This influence was especially felt in new types of professions and institutions in the social sphere and dress and cuisine in the cultural sphere. In the religious sphere was seen the impact the Roman Catholic faith of the Portuguese had on the native peoples of the littoral, many of whom embraced this form of Christianity. Such influence unlike that of the succeeding colonial powers was more pervasive since the Portuguese exerted a rather direct approach when it came to governing, and in other ways, dealing with their native subjects, even to the

extent of actively promoting intermarriages which it was hoped would help bridge the gap between the foreign rulers and the native people.

Such a pervasive influence naturally meant that a good number of Portuguese loan words were adopted into Sinhala, particularly in areas which were previously unknown to the Sinhalese such as new forms of cultural items. In fact there there are no less than a hundred Portuguese loans in Sinhala which are widely used to this day though nearly a century ago S.G. Perera [241] cited around 300 Portuguese loan words in Sinhala. Many Portuguese loans would have entered Sinhala after the departure of the Portuguese from the island in 1658, through the creolized Indo-Portuguese dialect spoken by the descendants of married Portuguese settlers such as the so-called Portuguese Burghers of the eastern districts and Luso-Sinhalese domestics. The Portuguese who married local women were known as *casados* – from the Portuguese past participle *casado* meaning 'married'. From this arose the colloquial Sinhala term *kasāda* as in *kasāda -baňdinna* 'to marry'. The Port. *douscasado* was corrupted into *dikkasāda*, Sinhala for 'divorce'.

We find Portuguese loans in Sinhala referring to

Professionals:

Sinh. *āyā* 'dry nurse' (Port. *aia*)
perakadōruvā 'proctor' (Port.*procuradôr*)
miniċ'ōru ' surveyor' (Port. *medidór*)
alugosuvā ' executioneer' (Port. *algôz)*

government and military officials:

Sinh.*gavärnadoru* 'governor' (Port.*governador*)
kapitān 'captain' (Port. *capitão*)
kornēl 'colonel' (Port.*coronel*)
soldāduvā 'soldier' (Port. *soldado)*

Warfare and military activity:

Sinh.*pistōlaya* 'pistol' (Port.*pistola*)
pataroma 'cartridge' (Port.*patrâo*)
bayinēttuva'bayonet' (Port.*baioneta*)
bataroyya 'spot where canons are placed' (Port.*bateria*)

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[241] Portuguese influence on Sinhalese speech. CALR (1922)

Articles of dress:

Sinh. *kamisa* ' shirt' (Port.*camisa*)
sāya 'skirt' (Port.*saia*)
kalisama 'trousers' (Port. *calças*)
mēs 'socks'(Port. *meias*)

Items used in dress-making

Sinh. *sēda* 'silk' (Port.*seda*)
sitim (-redda) 'satin' (Port.*cetim*)
rēnda 'lace' (Port.*renda*)
bīralu 'bobbin' (Port.*bilro*)

Food products:

Sinh. *rulan* 'semolina' (Port.*rolan*)
paralu 'bran' (Port.*farelo*)
tiriṅgu 'wheat' (Port.*trigo*)
vinākiri 'vinegar' (Port.*vinagre*)

Culinary fare:

Sinh. *pān* 'bread' (Port. *pão*)
dōsi 'sweet preserves' (Port. *doce*)
salāda 'salad' (Port. *salada*)
viskōtu 'biscuit' (Port.*biscouto*)

Animal products:

Sinh. *liṅgus* 'sausage' (Port.*linguiça*)
korasma 'animal heart' (Port.*coração*)
pīkudu 'animal liver' (Port.*figado*)
kēju 'cheese' (Port.*queijo*)

Vegetables:

Sinh. *rābu* 'raddish' (Port.*rabão*)
gōvā 'cabbage' (Port.*couve*)
pipiññā 'cucumber' (Port.*pepino*)
manyokkā 'manyoc' (Port.*mandioca*)

and fruits:

annāsi 'pineapple' (Port.*ananâs*)
pēra 'gauva' (Port.*pêra)*
masan 'jujube' (Port.*maçã*)
päpol 'papaw' (Port.*papaia*)

Institutions:

Sinh. *iskōlaya* 'school' (Port. *escole*).
ispiritālaya 'hospital' (Port. *esprital*)
ōruppuva 'orphanage' (Port.*orfâo*)
istāle 'stable' (Port.*estalla*)

Parts of the house:

Sinh. *kāmaraya* 'room' (Port. *camara*)
kussiya 'kitchen' (Port. *cozinha*)
sālaya 'hall' (Port.*sala*)
barāndaya 'verandah' (Port. *varanda*)

other architectural features:

Sinh. *ārukkuva* 'arch' (Port.*arco*)
listraya 'cornice' (Port.*listra*)
kulunna 'column' (Port.*columna*)
tāppaya 'wall' (Port.*taipa*)

and appendages of buildings:

Sinh. *janēlaya* 'window' (Port.*janela*)
jalūsiya 'lattice' (Port.*gelosia*)
sīnuva 'bell' (Port.*sino*)
läntāruma 'lantern' (Port.*lanterna*)

Household furniture:

Sinh. *arumōsaṅ* 'furniture' (Port.*armação*)
almāriya 'cupboard' (Port. *armario*)
mēsaya 'table' (Port. *mesa*)
kuliccama 'matress' (Port.*colchâo*)

Sundry household items:

Sinh. *kōppaya* 'cup' (Port.*copo*)
vīduruva 'glass' (Port. *vidro*)
pīrisiya 'saucer' (Port.*pires*)
bāldiya 'bucket' (Port.*balde*)

and Kitchen items:

Sinh. *pōranaya* 'oven' (Port. *forno*)
kaldērama 'cauldron' (Port.*caldeirão*)
bandēsiya 'tray' (Port.*bandeja*)
penēraya 'sieve' (Port.*peneiro*)

and other accessories for the good life:

Sinh. *avāna* 'woman's fan' (Port.*avano*)
lēnsuva 'handkerchief' (Port.*lenço*)
tuvāya 'towel' (Port.*toalha*)
saban 'soap' (Port.*sabão*)

Terms pertaining to the Christian faith:

Sinh. *bavtisma* 'baptism' (Port.*bautismo*)
nattal 'christmas' (Port. *natal*)
pāsku 'easter' (Port. *pascoa*)
korosma (-kālaya) 'lent season' (Port.*queresma*)

Among the phonological changes undergone by Portuguese loans in their passage to Sinhala may be mentioned the change of *f* > *p* as the Sinhala language never had a sound representing the *f* characteristic of a good many European tongues which is why even the later Dutch and English loans into Sinhala were subjected to this change as well. Consider for instance the case of vocables such as *pōrakaya* 'gallows' (Port.*forca*), *punīlaya* 'funnel' (Port.*funil*), *älpenettiya* 'pin' (Port.*alfinete*) and *gāräppuva* 'fork' (Port.*garfo*). The nasalized vowels of Portuguese have also been turned into a nasal consonant, as for instance in *pān* 'bread' (Port.*pão*), *saban* 'soap' (Port.*sabão*), *bottama* 'button' (Port.*botão*), *pikama* 'pickaxe' (Port.*picão*). Portuguese loans have also been subjected to anaptyxis where an extra vowel is inserted between two consonants in their passage to Sinhala as in *gorōsu*

'course' (Port.*grosso*), *kurusaya* 'cross' (Port.*cruz*), *pādiri* 'Christian cleric' (Port.*padre*) and *bēbaddā* 'drunkard' (Port.*bebdo*).

Another development such loans have been subject to is the doubling of unvoiced intervocalic consonants, which may be due to some Dravidian influence, suggesting that these words were first borrowed into the vocabulary of Tamil-speaking caste groups that later merged with the Sinhalese such as the Karāva. Take for instance words like *bōnikkā* 'doll' (Port.*boneca*), *pāttayā* 'goose' (Port.*pato* 'duck'), *sākkuva* 'pocket' (Port.*saco* 'sack') and *karattaya* 'cart' (Port.*carreta*). That the process has not affected voiced intervocalic consonants is seen in such words like *didālaya* 'thimble' (Port.*dedal*) and *soldāduvā* 'soldier' (Port. *soldado*).

Among the few semantic changes undergone by Portuguese loans in their passage to Sinhala may be mentioned *ābārtuva* 'vacancy' (Port.*aberto* 'open), *kēntiya* 'anger' (Port.*quente* 'warm', 'sexual excitement'), *lāsti* 'ready', 'prepared' (Port.*lesto* 'quick'), *gāstuva* 'fee' (Port.*gasto* 'expense'), *pagāva* 'bribe' (Port.*paga* 'salary'), *pāna* 'pen' (Port.*pena* 'quill'), *tīnta* 'paint' (Port.*tinta* 'dye'), *rancuva* 'mob' (Port.*rancho* 'soldiers' quarters'). Also interesting is the case of Sinh.*ratiññā* 'firecracker' which very likely has its origins in Port.*ratinho* 'little rat' and was probably so-called after its appearance with a fuse for lighting it that resembles the rodent's tail. The Sinhala *mūnissama* 'small shot' derives from the Portuguese *munição* 'ammunition' and *pāppa* 'glue made of flour and hot water' from the Portuguese *papa* 'pap for children'. *Lellama* applied to a fish market in Negombo takes its name from the Portuguese *leilaõ* 'auction'.

Some Portuguese loans in Sinhala have however died out of late. Louis Nell [242] writing in the latter part of the 19th century gave such Portuguese loans in Sinhala like *sidādiya* 'fortified town' (Port.*cidadi*), *porma* 'mould' (Port.*forma*), *pariñña* 'flour' (Port.*farinha*), *kokiñña* 'concubine' (Port.*concubino*) and *alukutteruva* 'pimp' (Port.*alcoviteiro*) which are now no longer used.

The Dutch language has influenced Sinhala considerably in the fields of law, administration and commerce, which is not surprising considering the fact that it was they who were responsible for the introduction of the Roman Dutch law (which survives to-day as the general law of the land), a proper system of state administration and a typically capitalist economy to the country. Other areas were not unaffected by Dutch linguistic influence. P.B. Sannasgala [243] has cited numerous Dutch loans pertaining not only to legal, administrative and

[242] An Explanatory List of Portuguese Words adopted by the Sinhalese. The Orientalist. 1888-89.

[243] Sinhala vocables of Dutch origin (1976). A list of Dutch loans in Sinhala is also given in E.H.Van der Wall's Dutch words in the Sinhalese language, JDBU.April 1933

mercantile matters, but also to food, drink, clothing, personal ornamentation, games, household goods and utensils, etc.We find Dutch loans in Sinhala referring to officials in state service:

Sinh.*komasāris* 'commissioner' (Dut. *commissaris*)
admirāl 'admiral' (Dut.*admiraal*)
kostāpal 'constable' (Dut.*konstabel*)
sarayan 'serjeant' (Dut.*sergeant*)

and to legal officials:

Sinh. *notāris* 'notary' (Dut. *notaris*)
advakāt 'advocate' (Dut. *advokaat*)
mahēstrāt 'magistrate' (Port.*magistraat*)
polma (*-kāraya*) 'executor' (Dut. *volmacht*)

to certain types of occupations:

Sinh.*bās* 'mason' (Dut.*baas*)
bakkara 'baker' (Dut.*bakker*)
kōkiyā 'cook' (Dut.*kokkie*)
tōlka (*-mudali*) 'interpreter'' (Dut.*tolk*)

and to matters of legal interest:

Sinh. *äpäl* 'appeal' (Dut. *appel*)
äskīsiya 'execution (writ)' (Dut.*executie*)
perakalāsi 'proxy' (Dut.*procuratie*)
sitāsi 'summons' (Dut. *citatie*)

and to administration:

Sinh. *kantōruva* 'office' (Dut.*kantoor*)
nōtisi 'notice' (Dut.*notitie*)
regulāsi 'regulation' (Dut.*regulatie*)
rapōrtuva 'report' (Dut.*rapport*)
to commercial activity:

Sinh. *vendēsiya* 'auction' (Dut. *vendutie*)
kuvitānsiya 'receipt' (Dut. *kwitantie*)
taksēru 'to value' (Dut.*taxaren*)
komis 'commission' (Dut.*commissie*)

and to industry :

Sinh. *vinkalaya / benkalaya* ' workshop' (Dut. *winkel*)
mōla 'mill (Dut.*molen*)
belek 'tin' (Dut. *blik*)
iskuruppuva 'screw' (Dut.*schroef*)

to parts of the house:

Sinh. *istōppuva* 'outer verandah' (Dut. *stoep*)
soldaraya 'upper floor' (Dut.*zolder*)
tarappuva 'stair' (Dut.*trap*)
kakussiya 'privy' (Dut. *kak-huis* 'excreta-house)

to food items:

Sinh. *seṅkala* 'shin or shank of beef' (Dut. *schinkel*)
ismōru 'stew' (Dut.*smoor*)
pastōla 'pastry' (Dut.pastel)
kokis 'a kind of hard cake' (Dut.*koekjes*)

and vegetables:

Sinh. *artāpal* 'potato' (Dut. *aard-appel* 'earth-apple')
bōnci 'bean' (Dut.*boontje*)
minci 'mint' (Dut.*muntje*)
säldiri 'celery' (Dut.*selderij*)

to dress and jewellery:

Sinh. *bācciya* 'jacket' (Dut.*baadje*)
bāpanaya 'baldric' (Dut. *wapen*)
koronciya 'coronet' (Dut. *kroontje*)
harci 'brooch' (Dut.*gerchi*)

to common household items:

Sinh. *kētalaya* 'kettle' (Dut.*ketel*)
oralōsuva 'clock' (Dut. *horologie*)
istirikkaya 'smoothing iron' (Dut.*strijkijzer*)
pōcciya 'pot' (Dut.*potje*)

month names:

Sinh. *pebaravāri* 'february' (Dut. *februarij*)
mārtu 'march' (Dut. *maart*)
māyi 'may' (Dut.*mei*)
oktōbara 'october' (Dut.*oktober*)

and even names of playing cards:

Sinh. *hērā* 'king' (Dut.*heer*)
poro 'queen' (Dut.*vrouw*)
būruvā 'knave' (Dut.*boer*)
āsiya 'ace' (Dut.*aas*) [244]

One also finds Sinhala expressions of Dutch origin like *kapōti* 'finished' (Dut.*kapot* 'broken') and *kēval (-karanna)* 'to haggle' (Dut.*kibbel*). Some Dutch loans once commonly used are hardly if ever used today [245]. The Sinhala term for 'innoculation' *ennat* has its origins in the Dut.*inent*, suggesting that despite the widespread belief that it were the British who introduced inoculation to the country, the Dutch probably preceded them, inoculation being known in Holland in the 17th century.

Among the phonological changes undergone by Dutch loans in their passage to Sinhala may be mentioned prothesis, the introduction of an extra initial sound as for instance *ismōru* 'stew' (Dut.*smoor*), *iskuruppuva* 'screw' (Dut.*schroef*) and *iskōppaya* 'shovel' (Dut.*schoep*). Dutch loans have also been subjected to anaptyxis as in *paturōn* 'pattern' (Dut.*patroon*), *poroppe* 'cork' (Dut.*prop*), *suluppuva* 'sloop' (Dut.*sloep*) and *tirikkalaya* 'light three-wheeled push-cart' (Dut.*triekel*).

Borrowings from English has been somewhat limited, though it too has had a considerable influence, especially in terms pertaining to administration, professionals, food items and modern-day goods and appliances. Although it was found in the latter part of the 19th century that there were 76 English loans in Sinhala, we found in a survey that there were no less than a hundred words nativised in Sinhala today.

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[244] It must here be noted that in Dutch *heer* means 'man', *vrouw* 'woman' and *boer* 'farm-hand', the equivalent of King, Queen and Knave

[245] For instance we have Leonard Arndt (John Company. A Causerie. Ceylon Observer Annual 1935) observing: "*In any Ceylon village you will not fail to hear visite-kamer, the room where visitors are received. The dandy of the 18th century wore his mutton-chop goat's beard with an air:the Sinhalese today remembers his bokken-baardje (bokkambara)*".

English has had a considerable influence on terms relating to government and administration:

Sinh. *pārlimentuva* < Eng.*parliament*
depārṭamentuva < Eng.*department*
komisama < Eng. *commission*
kamiṭuva < Eng.*committee*

and institutions:

Sinh. *kompäniya* < Eng.*company*
bänkuva < Eng.*bank*
hōtalaya < Eng.*hotel*
sinamāva <Eng.*cinema*

Commercial activity:

Sinh. *säppuva* <Eng.*shop*
bila < Eng.*bill*
nōṭṭuva < Eng.(*bank*)*note*
avunsa <Eng.*ounce*

Industrial activity:

Sinh. *päktēriya* < Eng.*factory*
mäsima < Eng.*machine*
änjima < Eng.*engine*
pompaya <Eng.*pump*

Some types of occupations:

Sinh. *janarāl* < Eng.*general*
enjinēru < Eng.*engineer*
dostara < Eng.*doctor*
kondostara < Eng.*conductor*

Warfare:

Sinh. *rejimēntuva* < Eng. *regiment*
bankaraya < Eng.*bunker*

bōmbaya < Eng.*bomb*
misayilaya <Eng. *missile*

Vehicles and other forms of modern transport:

Sinh.*loriya* < Eng.*lorry*
bayisikalaya < Eng.*bicycle*
helikoptaraya < Eng.*helicopter*
bōṭṭuva < Eng.*boat*

And to certain types of foods or drinks:

Sinh. *jalli* <Eng. *jelly*
banis < Eng.*buns*
pudima < Eng. *pudding*
kaṭalis <Eng.*cutlet*

as well as sundry household items:

Sinh. *jōguva* < Eng. *jug*
bēsama <Eng. *basin*
dīsiya < Eng.*dish*
burusuva <Eng.*brush*

Besides these, there are other less obvious loans like *kōcciya* 'train' which has arisen from the English *coach*, *vā̆rlas (-peṭṭiya)* 'radio', a corruption of the English *wireless* and *pōlima* 'queue' which is evidently a corruption of the English *fall in line* [246]Among the other peculiar expressions derived from English which may be included in the category of the vulgar or slang are *ayisē* (Fr.Eng. *I say*) which gives the sense of 'look here!', *boru pāt* (Eng.*part*) 'to put up a false act', *śēp-karanna* (Eng.*shape*) 'to resolve a matter', *trai-karanna* 'try it', *gēmak-denna* (Eng.*game*) 'to do mischief' and *batar-gahanna* (Eng.*butter*) 'to flatter'. Many such terms seem to have entered Sinhala by the middle part of the last century. In the novel *Duppat Kella* by Ranavaka Patirana (1946) we find expressions like *Ayisē*, *boru pāt* and *trai-karalā*. The work also gives *pappalā* for 'fathers', an obvious corruption of the Eng.*papa*.

[246] Although the last derivation may seem a bit far-fetched, it is supported by J.P.Lewis brief sketch of the Ceylonese Language (Times of Ceylon Christmas Number 1909) which refers to the *pollin sinuwa* of the prison as the "fall-in" bell.

English also figures in a few compound terms such as *ṭikaṭ-pata* 'ticket', *tranka-peṭṭiya* 'trunk', *yudha-ṭānkiya* '(war)tank' and *sivil-väsiyan* 'civilians'.

There is also known to have existed some English loans in use during the British colonial period which seem to have died out to-day. Carter (1924) gave as English loanwords in Sinhala such words like *komandaya* (<Eng.command) 'troop', 'detachment', *gārdiya* 'guard', *nipula* '(gun) nipple', *busala* 'bushel', *golōva* '(glass) globe' or globe (lamp) and *botalēruvā* 'butler' which no longer appear to be used. He also gives the form *sokalat* fr.Eng.*chocolate* which has since become obsolete, the modern form of the word being no different from the English save for a slight modification in vowels as *cokolat*. Another English loan that appears to have died out today is *opisara* < *officer* which is found for instance in the name of the house where Martin Wicremasinghe was born *Punci Opisara Gedara* which takes its name after his father who is said to have been an administrative officer of the area. We also find the term *opisara* for 'officer' occurring in James Appuhami's *Sipiri Malaya* (1902).

Among the phonological changes undergone by English loans in their passage to Sinhala may be mentioned the change of final *n* > *m* which is extremely common such as *tavuma* < *town*, *gavuma* < *gown*, *ravuma* < *round*, *dusima* < *dozen*, *gäluma* < *gallon*, *bäluma* < *balloon*, *käntima* < *canteen*, *istēsama* < *station* and *petsama* < *petition*. We also find a tendency for the English *e* to become ä in Sinhala. E.g. *ästamentuva* < *estimate*, *säsiya* < *session*, *pänsalaya* < *pencil*. Another interesting phonetic feature in the passage of English loans to Sinhala is the tendency for the English dentals *t* and *d* to be turned into the retroflex *ṭ* and *ḍ* as for instance in *gēṭṭuva* 'gate' and *bōḍima* 'boarding'.which is unique only to English loans since the Portuguese and Dutch dentals do not seem to have been ever subjected to this change. Nevertheless there do exist a few exceptions such as *bōtalaya* <*bottle*, *varēntuva* < *warrant* and *lotaräyya* < *lottery* that do not seem to have ever undergone retroflexion. Sinhala has in some rare instances also tended to palatalize English loans as in *jändi* < *dandy* and *jämsan* <*damson* and in at least two instances sonatize it as seen in *būl* < *wool* and *bavundēsama* <*foundation* (of a house).

There also exist a few Sinhala vocables of Malay origin which may go back to a period anterior to the Dutch era when the country's small Malay community was being formed. Malay words occur in Classical Sinhala literary works of the Polonnaruva period (C. 1098-1234) and shortly afterwards such as the Saddharma-Ratnāvaliya and Jātaka-aṭuvā-gätapadaya.

There is evidence to show that commercial and cultural contacts formerly existed between Sri Lanka and the countries of the Sailendra empire based in

Java [247] so that it is possible that Malay linguistic influence on Sinhala could have taken place around the Polonnaruva period. Sinh. *olu* 'head' occurring in the 13th century SdR and surviving to this day as *oluva* is probably related to the Old Malay *ulu* or *hulu* 'head' or 'upper end' or Sundanese where *ulu* means 'head'. Another probable loan from the Malay world is the Sinhala word for 'kite' *sarungalaya* which seems to be connected to the Sundanese *sarenkol* 'a small tubed bamboo, crooked at each joint, diverging at some angle from the preceding one' or *sarang* 'crossed laths of split bamboo', it being understood that bamboo is ideal for making kite frames.

Amongst the other Malay loans are *varāya* 'harbour' (Mal. *barus*) and *hamban* 'small sea-going craft' (Mal. *sampan*) which are connected with seafaring and *bangasāla* 'store' (Mal.*bangsal*) and *gudama* 'storehouse' (Mal.*gudang*) connected with commerce. Other Malay loans include *rabāna* "a variety of drum used by women" (Mal. *rebana*), *sarama* 'waistcloth' (Mal.*sarung*), *karābu* 'ear ornament' (Mal.*kerabu*), *(cīna-) patas* 'dashing firecracker' (Mal.*petasan*), *piňgāna* 'plate' (Mal.*pinggan*), *hända* 'spoon' (Mal.*sendok* 'ladle'), *giraya* 'arecanut cutter' (Mal.girek), *sambōla* 'sambol' (Mal.*sambal*), *dodol* 'brownish sweetmeat' (Mal.*dodol*), *bibikkan* 'a kind of brownish cake' (Mal. *bikang* 'rice flour cake'), *maṅgus* 'mangosteen' (Mal.*manggis*) and *jambu* 'fruit of Eugenia Malaccensis' (Mal.*jambu*). It is also possible that Malay influenced the Sinhala language in giving it at least two verbs, namely, *lissenna* 'to slip' (Mal.*licin* 'slippery') and *peranna* 'to filter or sieve' (Mal. *perah* 'to squeeze) for which there are no Aryan or Dravidian etymologies.

The Arabs who came to the island as peaceful merchants and settlers also made a small contribution to the Sinhala vocabulary. Among the Arabic loans in Sinhala are *mōsama* 'monsoon' (Ar. *mawsim* 'season', 'fixed period'), *aluvā* 'confection' (Ar.*halwā*), *rāttalaya* 'pound' (Ar.*ratl* 'a measure'), *saruvālaya* 'trousers' (Ar. *sirwāl*), *bondikula* 'matchlock' (Ar.*banduqīya* 'gun'), *kasav* 'gold lace', 'gold fringe' (Ar.*qasab* 'fringe or lace a garment') and *harupa* 'word' (Ar.*harf* 'letter', though also used in the sense of 'word' in expressions like *harfan bi harfin* 'literally', 'word for word'). Also probably derived from Arabic is the Sinh. *jamāduvā / jabāduvā* 'a species of cat from which a kind of musk is obtained' as well as *jabādu* 'a kind of scent obtained from a species of cat' all of which seem to have their origins in the Ar. *zabād* 'civet', it being probable that it were the Arabs who introduced the term since musk was an article of trade in the olden days and the Arabs of old we know were astute traders.

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[247] See Ceylon and Malaysia. S. Paranavitana (1966)

The Sinhala term for 'steel' *vānē* is also probably derived from an old Arabic term for steel *wān*. Although the term is not known in contemporary Arabic, it is found in the form *hundwān* (pr.fr.Ar.*Hund/Hind* 'India' + *wān* 'steel') which the Vocabulista Arabico of C.1200 (Florence 1871) explains by *ensis*, while we also find the Arabic term *hindwāniyy* or *hundwāniyy* 'Indian steel' occurring in the Arabic-English Dictionary by F.Steingass (1884). This too was an article of trade, so much so indeed that steel originating from Sri Lanka was employed in sword-making centres in Arabia such as Yemen [248] . The other lexical items of Arabic origin too may be similarly explicable. P. Deraniyagala [249] has shown that it was the Arabs who first introduced firearms to the country. This is said to have evolved into the distinctive Sinhalese type by the 16th century. The Arab origin of such words is therefore not difficult to explain.

As for Persian loans, these are very few indeed. This includes *aspayā* 'horse' (Pers. *asp*), *gulāmā* 'dirty, mean fellow' (Pers. *ghulām* 'slave') *nāraṅ* 'mandarin' (Pers.*nārang* 'orange') and *perōsa* 'turquoise' (Pers.*firuza*). Knox (1681) gives *auspio* 'horses' and *goulammah* 'slave' showing that these terms have been in existence for quite some time. Knox also mentions that king Rājasinha II possessed Persian horses, which may perhaps account for the origin of our *aspayā*. The Sinhala term for the island's first European colonialists, the Portuguese, *Paraṅgi*, evidently derives from the Persian *farang*, literally meaning 'Frank' (A Germanic tribe), but generally used in the sense of 'European'.

Sanskritic influence on the Sinhala language has been considerable, at certain times more than others. Such influence seems to have been insignificant before the eighth century. In the Sigiri graffiti of the 8th-10th centuries we come across a solitary Sanskrit loan *madhura* 'sweet' in the verse: *madhura vajana asa asä heḷillan bala* (I looked at the fair ones, listening to sweet words) as well as a few Sanskritic *semi-tatsamas* (where Sanskrit loans have undergone certain changes, showing that they were borrowed into the language at a still earlier period) such as *saturan* 'enemies' (Skt.*śatru*) and *mihiri* 'sweet' (Skt.*madhura*).

Sanskritic influence seems to have caught on after the 12th century with such influence emanating from various royal figures and dynasties that had their origins in the mainland. Such influence does not seem to have had much of an impact on the speech of the common masses, but seems to have been largely confined to royalty, the nobility and the clergy who had access to

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[248] Al-Suyuf wa'ajnasuha. Al-Kindi (9th century). That the island had a sizeable iron and steel industry is borne out by the findings of Gillian Juleff (Early iron and steel in Sri Lanka. 1998)

[249] Some Sinhala combative, field and aquatic sports and games (1959)

education, which not surprisingly followed the classical Indian pattern in that it was based on the Sanskrit medium. Indeed Sanskrit seems to have been a medium of education of royalty since at least the 4th century A.C.for the Sārārtha Saṁgraha, a well known medical treatise attributed to King Buddhadāsa (C. 4th -5th century A.C.) is in the Sanskrit language.

We also find Sanskrit loans that had previously been insignificant in both epigraphs and literature figuring significantly in the inscriptions of the reign of Nissanka-Malla (C.1187-1196) who claims to have been born in Siṁhapura in the Kalinga country. For instance, in the Polonnaruwa Hāṭa-dā-gē slab inscription of this ruler we find a number of Sanskrit words such as *vastu* 'valuables', *pūjā* 'offering', *rakṣā* 'protection' *vastrābharan* 'clothes and ornaments', *rāja-kanya* 'royal maiden', *vana-durga* 'forest fastness', *sēna yuddha* 'army combat' and *paradēśa* 'foreign lands' while in the Hāṭa-dā-gē Vestibule inscription of the same monarch we get *rājya* 'kingdom', *rājadhāni* 'capital', *dhana* 'treasure', *yācaka* 'beggers', *niṣkaṇṭaka* 'secure', *antah-pura* 'harem', *giri-durgga* 'mountain fastnesses' and *prasiddha-sthāna* 'notable localities'.

We also find the Anurādhapura slab inscription of Queen Līlāvati (late 12th - early 13th century) refering to the country by the Sanskritic *Tri-Siṁhaḷa Rajaya* (the three divisions of mediaeval Lanka) besides employing such Sanskrit *tatsamas* like *vikrama* 'brave', *amātya* 'ministers' and *vyāpārayan* 'traders'. Mediaeval Sinhalese literature also contains a fair number of Sanskrit loans, for instance in the 13th century Saddharma-Ratnāvaliya we come across several Sanskritic loans such as *prēma* 'love', *śilpa* 'craft' and *upadrava* 'mischief' while in the 14th century Saddharmalaṅkāraya too we find Sanskritic loans like *raja* 'king', *yōdha* 'warrior', *vāhana* 'vehicle', *manuṣya* 'man', *strī* 'woman', *sēnā* 'army', *sthāna* 'place', *kṣana* 'moment', *krama* 'method', *sāgara* 'sea', *ākāśa* 'sky', *rātri* 'night' and *bhasma* 'ash'. Sometimes even long sentences in this work are replete with Sanskrit terms as evident in the following passage: *kāmatṛṣnā vasaga va strīyaka kerehi pem bāṅda vasana puruṣayek* (a man who cohabits with a woman given to lustful desires).

In later times, we find Sanskrit loans gaining in importance and even figuring in an incipient Sinhala scientific terminology. For instance in Benjamin Clough's Sinhalese-English Dictionary (1892) we come across a number of Sanskrit loans including compounds that are on the face of it rather technical such as *akṣigōla* 'eyeball', *agnikrīḍā* 'fireworks', *carmachēdanaya* 'circumcision', *caturaṅgini sēnā* 'army consiting of horse, men on elephants, men in cars and footmen', *dīrgha-parṇa* 'long-leaved', *dugdhaphēna* 'cream of coagulated milk', *drōnamukhaya* ''harbour, place for landing goods', *hrdayasthāna* 'chest', *jalayantraya* 'water work', 'machine for raising water',

kāma-tṛṣṇāva 'sensual desire', *nabhastala* 'visible heaven', *nābhināla* 'umbilical cord', *tāmra-varna* 'copper colour' and *samudra-lavaṇa* 'sea salt'.

Among the Sanskrit loans that have established themselves in modern Sinhala may be included *āśā* 'desire', *avadhāna* 'attention', *bhāṣā* 'language', *bālikā* 'girl', *chāyā* 'reflection', *deśa* 'country' , *hima*, 'snow', *himsā* 'harm', *māyā* 'illusion', *kumāra* 'prince', *krama* 'method', *krutima* 'artificial', *kṣanika* 'instant', *nivāraṇa* 'prevention', *prema* 'love', *pramāṇa* 'quantity', *pramiti* 'standard, *pravāhaṇa* 'transport', *rūpa* 'shape', *sabhā* 'assembly', *samudra* 'ocean', *saṁkalpa* 'concept', *samīkṣaṇa* 'survey', *śilpa* 'handicraft', *sundara* 'beautiful', *suraṅganā* 'nymph', *siṁhāsana* 'throne', *sthāna* 'locality', *svalpa* 'little', *svabhāvika* 'natural', *svarūpa* 'form', *svādhīna* 'independent', *trupti* 'satisfaction', *vanitā* 'lady', *varna* 'colour', *vasanta* 'spring', *vastra* 'clothing', *vāhana* 'vehicle', *viśāla* 'large', *vināśa* 'destruction', *vilāsa* 'manner', *viṣaya* 'topic', *vismaya* 'wonder', *vikalpa* 'alternative', *virodha* 'opposition', *vimarśana* 'investigation', *yantra* 'machine', *yauvana* 'youth', *yuga* 'era' and *yugala* 'pair'. We even commonly come across Sanskritic loans referring to animals such as *aśvayā* 'horse' (Skt.*aśva*), *haṁsayā* 'goose' (Skt.*haṁsa*), *siṁhayā* 'lion' (Skt.*siṁha*) and *sarpayā* 'serpent' (Skt.*sarpa*).

Sinhala also possesses a few *semi-tatsamas*- words evidently borrowed from Sanskrit which have undergone significant changes, though still recognisable as Sanskrit loans. Many such loans have been subject to *anaptyxis*, where a vowel has been added between two consonants. Take for instance Sinh. *miturā* 'friend' (Skt. *mitra*), *saturā* 'enemy' (Skt. *śatru*), *karuma* 'fate' (Skt. *karma*), *sidura* 'hole' (Skt.*chidra*), *ruduru* 'dreadful' (Skt.*rudra*), *siriyāva* 'splendour' (Skt.*śrī*) and *varusāva*'rain' (Skt.*varṣa*) Other examples of *semi-tatsamas* are *raja* 'king' (Skt. *rāja*), *räjini* 'queen' (Skt.*rājñi*), , *läjjā* 'shame' (Skt. *lajja*), *sämiyā* 'husband' (Skt. *svāmi*), *pissā* 'madman' (Skt. *piśāca* 'demon'), *soṅduru* 'pretty' (Skt.*sundara*) and *lassana* 'beautiful' (Skt. *lakṣana*). The Sanskrit *semi-tatsama perēta* (Skt. *preta*) which originally denoted departed spirit has undergone a notable semantic change to mean a 'greedy person' in the nominative singular form *perētayā*. Another semi-tatsama, *lassana* which derives from Sanskrit *lakṣana* 'special or distinguishing mark or characteristic' has come to assume the meaning of 'beautiful'. Another, *rassāva* 'employment' derives from Sanskrit *rakṣā* 'security', 'protection'. Yet another *susuma* 'sigh' evidently derives from Sanskrit *śuṣma* 'hissing', 'rushing (of water, fire, wind)', 'strength', 'vigour', 'sexual energy'. *Muddara* 'stamp' has its origins in the Sanskrit *mudra* 'seal', 'mark', 'impression' and *yatura* 'key' in the Sanskrit *yantra* 'machine''appliance', 'instrument'.

A few Sanskritic loans have been radically transformed to so as not to be recognizable, like the rare word *huriru* 'blood' (which also occurs in the

compound *huriru-pu* 'bood drinker', 'cemetery goblin') which has arisen as a metathesis of *ruhira* 'blood' (<Skt.*rudhira* 'red', 'blood').

Semi-tatsamas figure quite early in the history of Sinhala as is evident from such forms as *saturan* 'enemies' (Skt.*śatru*) and *mihiri* 'sweet' (Skt.*madhura*) which occur in the Sīgiri graffiti of the 8th-10th centuries. Such forms are also seen in classical Sinhala poetry as in the Parevi Sandesa which gives *mitura* 'friend' (Skt.*mitra*) and *samudura* 'sea' (Skt.*samudra*) and the Girā Sandesa which gives *rakusā* 'devil' (Skt.*rākṣasa*). In the Divehi speech of the Maldives which split off from Sinhala between the 6th -8th centuries we find semi-tatsamas like *haturu* 'enemy' (Skt. *śatru*), *mituru* 'friend' (*mitra*) and *fureyta/fereyta* 'phantom' (Skt.*preta*), showing that this feature would have characterized Sinhala before the split took place. Such examples suffice to show that Sanskrit has had a significant impact on the Sinhala vocabulary since fairly early times and that resorting to Sanskritic loans is not a modern development.

Sanskritic forms also figure in compound terms such as *avul-jālaya* 'a big mess' (Skt. *jāla* net'), *guvan-yāna* 'airplane' (Skt. *yāna* 'vehicle'), *jala-viduliya* 'hydro-electricity' (Skt.*jala* 'water'), *rūpa-rājini* 'beauty queeen' (Skt. *rūpa* 'shape'), *bāla-lamayā* 'young child' (Skt. *bāla* 'young', 'infantine'), *prāna-āpakaru* 'hostage' (Skt. *prāna* 'life') and *trividha-hamudā* 'the three armed forces' (Skt. *trividha ''triple' 'threefold'*).

So pervasive has the influence of Sanskrit been on the Sinhala language that we today commonly come across a number of expressions used in colloquial speech containing Sanskritic forms:

Eg: *mama eyāva viśvāsa karanavā* 'I trust him' (Skt. *viśvāsa* 'trust')
eyā svalpa velāvakin eyi 'He will come in a short while' (Skt.*svalpa* 'little')
kisi praśnayak nähä 'No problem' (Skt. *praśna* 'question', 'problem')
vinītava häsirenna balanna 'Try to behave decently' (Skt.*vinīta* 'modest')

However we find that a few such loans have undergone semantic shift as for instance *yodha* which means 'warrior' in Sanskrit but 'giant' in Sinhala. In Sinhala *pramāda* used in the verb *pramāda-venna* means 'to get late' whereas in Sanskrit proper the term means 'negligence', 'carelessness'. We also find that *viśrama* meaning 'rest','repose' in Sanskrit has assumed a verbal form *viśrāma -yanna* 'to retire (from service)' while *ghātana* meaning 'killing' in Sanskrit has taken the form *ghātana-karanna* 'to assasinate'. Also consider the phrase *sūkṣma-lesin* 'in a subtle way' whereas in Sanskrit *sūkṣma* means 'minute', small', 'fine', 'thin'. Similarly *aparāda* in the form *aparādē* is often used in the sense of '(its) a waste' whereas in Sanskrit it means 'offence' 'fault', a meaning which is also found in the Sinhala loan word *aparādaya*.

Another notable example of a semantic shift is seen in *viplava* 'revolution' whereas in Sanskrit the term means 'trouble', 'disaster', 'tumult', revolt' and we can be quite certain that it was the last sense of 'revolt' that gave the Sinhala language its word for revolution which is today used not only in a political sense, but also in a wider sense to signify a great change in areas such as technology. The Sinhala term for 'technology' gets its name from the Sanskrit *tākṣana* meaning 'carpentry'.

Sanskritic influence is also particularly seen in the titles of Sinhalese literary works mostly of a religious character which is evident since at least the late mediaeval period. For instance take the titles of works such as the *Dharma-Pradīpikāva* (The Lamp of the Good Doctrine) of Guruḷugōmi (12th -13th century), the *Saddharma-Ratnāvaliya* (Garland of Jewels of the Good Doctrine) of Dharmasena (13th century) and the *Saddharmalaṅkāraya* (Ornament of the Good Law) of Dharmakīrti (14th century). Sinhala poetical works too were not unaffected by this development as seen from the titles of a well known poem, the *Haṁsa Sandēśa* (Goose Message) composed around the 15th century. Even in later times, we find many a secular work as for instance the *Kāma-Alaṅkāraya* (Carnal Ornament) composed C.16th century which describes the passionate love of a woman for a man and the *Svapna Mālaya* (Dream-Garland), a treatise on dreams by Pandit Hisvällē (1865) employing Sanskritic titles. In more recent times we come across some famous literary works such as *Yugāntaya* (The End of an Era) (1949) and *Kāliyugaya* (The Dark Age) (1957) by Martin Wickremasinghe which used Sanskrit for their titles.

Although this practice has declined of late, we find Sanskrit being used in a number of other applications including in the names of medical remedies, as for instance *madhu-lasuna* (Skt.*madhu* 'honey' +*lasuna* 'garlic'), a popular health remedy comprising of garlic in bees' honey, *madana-mōdakaya* (Skt.*madana* 'passion' + *modaka* 'pill', 'round sweetmeat'), a well known aphrodisiac' and *bhṛṅgarāja tailaya* (Skt. *bhṛṅga* 'bee' + *rāja* 'king' +*taila* 'oil'), a brand of hair oil.

The Pāli contribution to the Sinhala vocabulary has not been as significant as the Sanskrit. Among the few Pāli loans found in modern day Sinhala are *dīpa* 'island', *sāpa* 'curse', *subha* 'auspicious', *tanhā* 'craving', *hadaya* 'heart' and *susāna (-bhūmiya)* 'cemetery'. Another well known Pāli loan, *mātā* 'mother' seems to have gained currency on account of the important place the mother has been held in Buddhist literature. Thus we would find that the national anthem of the country is known as *Śrī Laṅkā Mātā* (Mother Sri Lanka). Lay women who observe the ten precepts are known as *dasa-sil-mātā* while we also come across usages such as *gäbini mātā* for pregnant woman.

VI) Modern Sinhala

Sinhala was declared the Official Language of the country on July 7,1956 with the passing of the 'Act to prescribe the Sinhala language as the one Official language of Ceylon' and its status as such affirmed under the country's first Republican Constitution promulgated on 22nd May 1972. The language, which constitutes the mother tongue of well over 70 per cent of all Sri Lankans was thus given its due place after centuries of neglect under colonial rule, especially during the British period.

The high literacy rate of the present-day Sinhalese, the prominent place their language has come to acquire in mass media channels and closer social interaction between its speakers also means that the Sinhala language has to a large extent become standardized so that further phonetic and semantic change will hardly be possible in the future. It is however likely that the Sinhala vocabulary will continue to grow with the adoption of more and more neologisms coined from Sanskritic or Elu forms in order to meet the needs of modern scientific and technological communication. In any case, Sinhala being confined to an insular community occupying a relatively small area does not seem to have had the amount of dialectal variation that has for instance characterized Hindi in the olden days. Modern Standard Hindustani (Hindi/Urdu) it should be noted, is based on a particular dialect of Hindi, namely the Khadi boli dialect of Delhi and its environs that gained prominence during the Moghul period. Modern Standard Sinhala however does not seem to have required any such propagating agency and appears to have simply come into being from the spoken language of the masses and the more conservative literary language. It has however excluded some minor vulgar dialects spoken in the remote areas of the country that formerly formed part of the Kandyan kingdom such as the Uva and North-Central Provinces.

Scholarly interest in the Sinhala language has not been confined to its speakers. In fact, the German contribution to modern Sinhala scholarship has been considerable, especially during the latter part of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century. This includes Wilhelm Geiger's Etymologie des Sinhalesischen [250] which could be regarded as the first serious attempt by any modern scholar to compile a Sinhala vocabulary in a systematic and scientific manner.

In more recent times, the development of a scientific Sinhala prose literature has been greatly enhanced by the contribution made by governmental agencies, academia and the media. These neologisms have been largely based on Sanskrit. Thus we find modern Sinhala possessing a number of Sanskritic

[250] AKBAW (1898)

technical terms, among them those relating to modern sciences such as *rasāyana-vidyā* 'chemistry', *jīva-vidyā* 'biology', *manō-vidyā* 'psychology', *vāg-vidya* 'linguistics'; medical terms such as *śalya-karma* 'surgical operation', *harda-spandana* 'heart-beat' and *dimba-kōśa* 'ovary'; political terms such as *deśa-premi* 'patriot', *mātru-bhūmi* 'motherland', *prajā-tantra* 'democracy', *samāja-vāda* 'socialism' and *sarva-jana-chanda-bala* 'universal adult suffrage' and even those of a more general nature such as *bhūmi-kampā* 'earthquake', *sthāna-nāma* 'place-name', *śilā-lēkhana* 'lithic inscription', *sūpa-śāstra* 'culinary art', *kruṣi-karma* 'agriculture', *sūrya-bala* 'solar energy', *krumi-nāśaka* 'insecticide' and *trasta-vādaya* 'terrorism'.

Sanskrit has also come to figure in common words of everyday usage, though more often in a formal context such as *madhyasthānaya* 'centre', *pāniya-jalaya* 'drinking water', *praveśa-patraya* 'entrance ticket', *madhu-samaya* 'honeymoon'and *garbhani-kālaya* 'period of pregnancy'. We also come across usages such as *jana-śunya* 'deserted' and *divā-svapnaya* 'day dream'.

Many such forms may well be termed neo-Sanskrit as it is in only relatively recent times that they have been coined by combining together two or more Sanskritic forms in response to the burgeoning terminological needs of modern society. Coined Sanskritic terms may however sometimes be vested with a meaning quite unknown in the original language, as for instance in *viṣa-bīja* (literally 'poisonous seed') which denotes 'germ' or *cāya-rūpa* (lit.'reflection form') meaning 'photograph'. Besides, it is not only new ideas or concepts that demand neologisms. For instance, as far as we know there does not exist and perhaps has never existed a pure Sinhala term for clitoris, probably due to the simple fact that the Sinhalese never thought much of this rather obscure part of the female anatomy or its importance in the sexual arousal of the female, and hence we find the need to resort to a Sanskritic form *bhaga-maṇiya* (appropriately formed from Skt.*bhaga* 'vulva', 'amorous pleasure' + Skt.*maṇi* 'gem', 'jewel', 'globule', 'glans penis', 'clitoris') though the Greek-derived English loan *kliṭorisaya* may also be employed. If the desire ever arises for a truly indigenous form for this term, then perhaps we would have to be content with fabricating a form such as *bak-miṇiya* formed from the attested Elu forms of the constituent Sanskrit words that go to make this term.

There also exist Sanskritic usages such as *jvalanaya* 'ignition' (Skt.*jvala*) and *nagna-äsin* 'with the naked eye' (Skt.*nagna* 'naked) of which it would be difficult to employ equivalent Elu terms except to settle for terms such as *dälvīma* 'burning' and *heluväli-äsin* 'naked eye' which would however be considered ludicrous in such contexts. Indeed so profound has the influence of Sanskrit been on modern Sinhala scientific terminology that a Sinhala lexicon defines a gene (*jānaya* which itself has been formed from Sanskrit) as *āvenika*

lakṣana nirṇaya karana ēkakaya (lit. the unit that determines innate traits) almost all constituent forms of which have been formed from Sanskrit.

Modern Sinhala technological loans from Sanskrit have been considerably influenced by the glossaries of technical terms compiled by Prof. Raghu Vira who formulated technical terms for Indian scholarship based on Sanskrit. The methodology employed by Raghu Vira somewhat resembled the European model of coining complex neologisms from Greek and Latin, dead languages which nevertheless form the basis of a good number of modern scientific, medical and technological terms in some major European languages such as English.

The coining of technical terms from Sanskrit was undertaken by various academics who served in state-appointed glossary committees in the 1950s and 1960s. Among them were V.Basnayake, S.R.Kottegoda and T.W.Wikramanayake who made a strong case for adopting Sanskritic terms for scientific terminology [251], arguing that Sinhala 'has remained comparatively static in the fields of science and technology', which was precisely why they were faced with a multitude of English scientific terms for which Sinhala or Sinhalised words had to be urgently found but for which there had never been any real Sinhala equivalents. They argued that borrowing from Sanskrit was necessary in order to make the word purposefully latent so that they are uncoloured by popular association and could be made to stand for something specific. They also pointed out that the effort at learning such terms becomes minimal when they are built systematically out of roots or words which have a specific meaning such as *jaiva* 'life' (the equivalent of *bio-*) and *chēdaya* 'cutting' (the equivalent of *–tomy*).

At the same time however, many a Sinhalese neo-Sanskritic form differs from its Hindi equivalent, a case in point being *antar-jātika* 'international' (fr.Skt.*antar* 'between' + Skt.*jāti* 'nation' tribe') where Hindi has *antar-rāṣṭrīya* (fr. *antar* 'between' + *rāṣṭra* 'country') though we would find that the Eastern Indian neo-Sanskritic forms such as Bengali *antor-jātik* and Assamese *antor-zātiyo* are closer to the Sinhala form. The same holds true of the Sinhala *rūpa-vāhiniya* 'television' (fr.Skt.*rūpa* 'form', 'shape' + Skt. *vāhin* 'conveying, 'carrying', 'bearing') where Hindi has *dūr-darśan* (fr.Skt.*dūra* 'far' + Skt. *darśana* 'seeing', 'looking at', 'ocular perception').

We also find coined Sanskritic terms that are obviously calques inspired by European usage as for instance *madhya-kālīna* 'mediaeval' (Eng.*media-eval* and Ger.*mittel-alter*) *varṇa-dēha* 'chromosome' (Eng.*chromosome* fr.Gk.*chroma* 'colour' + *soma* 'body') and *dāma-pratikriyā* 'chain reaction' (Eng. *chain* + *re* + *action*) though this has not always been the case as seen for

[251] Sinhalese Technical Terms in Physiology and Biochemistry. UCR. April 1962

instance in *carma-chēdana* 'circumcision' (Skt.*carma* 'skin' + *chēdana* 'cutting') where the English term has its origins in a Latin compound meaning 'to cut round'. Similarly we would find that *candrikā*, a Sanskrit term originally meaning 'the moon going round the earth' or 'relating to the moon or resembling moonlight' is employed in Mod.Sinh. for an artificial satellite orbiting the earth whereas the Eng.*satellite* derives from L.*satelles*, *satellites* 'bodyguard' which German astronomer Johannes Kepler applied to the moons of Jupiter in the early seventeenth century.

The main problem in adopting Sanskrit loans is of course the fact that such nouns cannot be inflected to convey verbal functions in accordance with Sinhala grammatical rules, so that qualifying Sinhala verbs such as - *karanna* 'to do' would have to be employed in verb formation. Besides, a foreign verb cannot be assimilated into the language. Such a verb will generally take the attributes of a noun so that here too Sinhala verbs will have to be employed. Further, there exists a considerable lexicon in Sinhala, both extinct and extant, which could be made use of to coin scientific, medical and technological terminology suited for the modern age. Take for instance Old Sinhala words like *ļa* 'heart', *rov* 'disease', *detu* 'senior', *hiñgu* 'speedy' which could be easily employed to replace or supersede their respective Sanskritic equivalents *harda*, *roga*, *jyeṣṭha* and *śīghra* which are widely used at present, even in complex terminology. We have, by employing such a methodology proposed a number of neologisms which could go a long way in simplifying modern Sinhala scientific, medical and technological terminology. For instance *suḷu-divīn* 'microbes' instead of *kṣudra-jīvīn*, *savan-nahara* 'auditory nerve' instead of *śravana-snāyu*, *lē-kes-näli* 'blood capilleries' instead of *rudhira-keśa-nālikā* and *aturudäla* 'Internet' instead of *antar-jālaya* [252].

Aelian de Silva [253] has proposed a number of far-reaching reforms in Sinhala technological terminology. Citing the case of the Sanskritic *rūpavāhiniya* 'television' which has been unable to give rise to such terms as televise, televisional, televisionary, televisor and televisual, he has proposed the equivalent terms *teladisvayi*, *teladisiya*, *teladisiyuru*, *teladisvanaya* and *teladisiya* coined from the Eḷu, the noun form being *teladasuna* 'television'. Although De Silva's attempts in coining such neologisms are indeed laudable, especially in the present-day context, it is difficult to see why we should rid Sinhala of the well-established and pleasant-sounding *rūpavāhiniya* in favour of the relatively obscure *teladasuna*. Such a term could well exist as a

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[252] See Sanskritisms in Sinhala: Striking a balance. Asiff Hussein.Sunday Observer. 26th January 2003

[253] Paper 'Towards a viable Sinhala Technological language' presented at a lecture meeting of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka on 23rd February 1998.

synonym for *rūpavāhiniya* instead of replacing it, especially since the latter has gained widespread currency. The proposed derivative forms should however be seriously considered for wider usage in technological communication.

De Silva also advocates employing such terms as *tunäsiya* 'triangle', *panäsiya* 'pentagon' and *satäsiya* 'heptagon' which have been coined from Elu numeral terms and the suffix *as* 'side' instead of their respective Sanskritic equivalents *trikonaya*, *pancāsraya* and *saptāsraya* current today. He also questions the suitability of using such Sanskritic terms as *asthipañjaraya* (fr.Skt.*asthi* 'bone' + Skt.*pañjara* 'cage', 'ribs', 'skeleton') instead of the Sinhala *säkilla* to express such a term as 'steel skeleton' which would simply be *vānē säkilla* in coined Eḷu instead of the ludicrous Sanskritic *vānē asthipañjaraya*. "For expansion why *prasāranaya* instead of *ārima*? For contraction why *sankōcanaya* instead of *vārima*", he asks.

De Silva has proposed a number of coined technical terms pertaining to computer technology in accordance with the process of word formation in Sinhala. e.g. *ārāsiya* 'archive', *hasäriya* 'channel', *hädasavayi*, 'format', *perasarayi* 'process', *indisiya* 'index', *sihiṅgiya* 'mnemonic', *mudaṅga* 'software', *daḷaṅga* 'hardware' and *peḷasa* 'menu'.The widespread adoption of such terms could go a long way in making Sinhala a truly viable modern language.

It is certainly true that in contemporary Sinhala scientific, technological and medical terminology, Sanskritic terms often tend to be employed unnecessarily. Existing Sinhala terms like *siya-vasa* 'century', *äṭa-säkilla* 'skeleton' and *digu-siras* 'dolicocephalic' are far more simpler and pleasant-sounding than their cumbersome Sanskritic equivalents *śata-varṣaya*, *asthipañjaraya* and *dīrgha-śīrṣa*, and suffices to convey the idea as much as the Sanskrit, so that there is no reason why these terms should not be employed in preference to Sanskritic terms, since they are also well established. The solution then is to resort to Sanskritic loans when there is a need for doing so, whether for practical or aesthetic purposes and to avoid them in case they are unable to serve these purposes. Thus it is necessary that factors such as indispensability, practicality, brevity and euphony be considered when adopting Sanskritic loans into Sinhala.

At any rate, there is nothing wrong in allowing Eḷu terms and their Sanskritic equivalents to exist side by side as synonyms. Synonyms, it should be noted, invariably contribute to enriching a language. In such a context, the total elimination of Sanskritic loans as advocated by the *Hela Havula*, a Sinhala linguistic puritan movement founded by the famous Sinhala savant Kumaratunga Munidasa is not advisable and could do more harm than good.

The need for borrowing does not arise in the case of rich languages like German and Arabic which are spoken by large populations and have served as media of scholarship for a good many centuries.The same however cannot be said of Sinhala, especially in a context where serious scholastic activity among the Sinhalese has since ages past been confined to the medium of Sanskrit and Pāli .It is highly doubtful that a vocabulary coined solely from Eḷu forms would be altogether practical. Parochial attempts at linguistic purity such as that attempted by the *Hela Havula* for Sinhala and the *Nagari Pracarini Samiti* for Hindi would have probably only resulted in the impoverishment of these languages. This is exactly what happened in the case of the Turkish language following the reforms of the so-called *Dil Kurumu* (Language Establishment) which purged all Turkish words of Arabian and Persian origin. These reforms which replaced foreign loans with native forms saw such terms as *seçim* 'choice' replacing *intihap* 'election' and *azlik* 'paucity' replacing *ekalliyet* 'minority' [254], thus illustrating the futility of linguistic purity.

We may also cite the Indian experience. Hindī, the official language of India, has, like Sinhala, resisted parochial attempts at linguistic purity, in this case on the part of Hindu nationalists to purge the language not of Sanskritic, but of its numerous Perso-Arabic loans introduced by the country's Muslim conquerors. As examples of the Arabic-Persian element in Hindustani may be cited such common nouns as *dil* 'heart', *pul* 'bridge', *sāl* 'year', *zamīn* 'land', *āsmān* 'sky', *garmi* 'heat', *zindagi* 'life', *mohabbat* 'love', *hukūmat* 'government', *vatan* 'homeland', *insān* 'man', *qasam* 'oath', *zulm* 'evil', *gulab* 'rose' and *bulbul* 'nightingale' as well as the well known appellations for India, *Hind* and *Hindustan*, which figure prominently in contemporary speech. It is its numerous loans, whether from Arabic, Persian or Sanskrit that has made Hindi the rich, concise, lucid and euphonious language it is today. Even in modern Bengali we find numerous Sanskritic, Persian and Arabic loans. In conclusion, we may state that extremist tendencies at linguistic purity could do more harm than good to a language. At any rate, the adoption of neologisms is imperative, not only for the expression of modern scientific ideas but also to extend one's range of thought.

It is however saddening to note that some Elu forms have lost ground to their Sanskritic and Pāli equivalents. For example, the Old Sinhala *ḷa* 'heart' occurring in the Sīgiri graffiti has been superseded by the Sanskritic *hṛdaya* and Pāli *hadaya*. The form however survives in the Classical Sinhala *ḷaya*. Similarly we find that the Sanskritic *jīvita* 'life' has displaced the Elu *diviya* from popular usage even to the extent of being used in verb form (as in *jīvat-venna* 'to live') and the latter is rarely used except as compound forms in

[254] See The New Turkish. H.C. Hony. JRAS. GB & I (1947)

formal usage as in *divi-puda-karanna* 'to sacrifice one's life' or *divi-nasā-ganna* 'to commit suicide'.

Among the other Sinhala forms now obsolete in the spoken language may be included such usages such as *lavan* 'lip' (P.*lapana*), *biňgu* 'bees' (Skt. *bhṛnga*), *hiňgu* 'fast' (P. *sīgha*), *has* 'geese' (P.*haṁsa*) and *hav* 'all' (Skt.*sarva*) occurring in classical Sinhala literature such as the Kavsiḷumina. An 8th century Sigiri verse refers to the raining of tears (*as-väsli*) where *as* means 'tears' (p.*assu*) , a form that no longer exists in Sinhala, its place being taken by the form *kaňdulu*. Old Sinhala nouns like *dana* 'people', *dala* 'water', *puňgul* 'individual' and *rov* 'disease' have virtually died out and have been superseded by their respective Sanskritic equivalents, *jana*, *jala*, *pudgala* and *roga*.

Verbs no longer extant include *pusī* 'questions' (P. *pucchati*), *hovī* 'sleeps' (P. *supati*), *yadī* 'begs' (P. *yācati*) and *hamadī* 'sweeps' (P. *sammajjati*).

Many old Eḷu forms however survive as affixes in compound terms found largely occurring in literary Sinhala:

Sinh. *pun* 'full' (P. *punna*) in *pun-saňda* 'full moon'
sun 'broken' (P. *chinna*) in *sun-hisa* 'decapitated head'
pem 'love' (P. *pema*) in *pem-hasuna* 'love-letter'
vahan 'footwear' (P. *upāhanā*) in *pā-vahan* 'shoes/slippers'

There nevertheless do exist some rare Elu forms that do survive as affixes in colloquial speech as well, as for instance

Sinh. *läv* 'forest' (P.*aṭavī*) in *läv-ginna* 'forest fire'
väsi 'excreta' (P.*vacca*) in *väsi -kiḷiya* 'privy'
däḷi 'beard' (P.*dāṭhikā*) in *däḷi -pihiya* 'razor'
ini 'grade' (P.*seni*) in *ini-maga* 'ladder'

Other terms survive compounded with some descriptive affix. These include:

Sinh.*hik-mīya* 'musk-shrew' (Skt. *cikka*)
vahu-päṭiyā 'male calf ' (P.*vaccha*)
vaku-gaḍuva ' kidney' (Skt.*vrkka*)
doḷa-duka 'pregnancy longing' (P.*dohaḷa*)

We find quite a number of such terms. For instance the Sinhala *yakaḍa* 'iron' is but a combination of *ya* 'iron' (P.*aya*) found in Old Sinhala and the descriptive suffix *kaḍa* (P.*khaṇḍa* 'piece'). In Old Sinhala (C. 2nd century B.C.) we come across the form *aca* 'bear' (P. *accha*) and it very likely that modern Sinhala *valas* 'bear' is in fact a compound of *val* 'wild' and *as* 'bear' which would have been resorted to to distinguish it from Sinh. *as* 'horse' (P. *assa*) which has survived in such forms as *as-val* 'horse-hair', *as-hala* 'stable' and *as-govvā* 'horse-keeper'. That the O. Sinh. *aca* 'bear' became *as* is attested in the place-name *Asgiriya* 'bear rock' (P. *accha-giri*). A similar situation would have given rise to the O.Sinh. (C.10th century) *diyamas* 'fish'. Here, the prefix *diya* 'water' appears to have been added to *mas* 'fish' (P. *maccha*) to distinguish it from the term for 'flesh' *mas* (P. *maṁsa*). The form *mas* in the sense of 'fish' survives in Divehi and is even attested in Sinhalese epigraphs as for instance in the Slab Inscription of Nissanka Malla (12th century) at Ruvanväli Dāgaba where we come across the phrase *doḷos maha vā tänä masuṇa abhaya dī* (Having bestowed security to the fish in the twelve great tanks). Indeed, it is even known to be employed in Classical or Literary Sinhala though no longer used in the spoken language. Also similarly explicable is the Mod.Sinh.*allasa* 'bribe' which seems to have evolved through sound assimilation from an older *atlasa*, a combination of Sinh.*at* 'hand' and *lasa* 'bribe' (P.*lañca*), the prefix denoting 'hand' probably being added to it to give it greater emphasis as a surreptitious underhand dealing. Similarly we would find that the Mod.Sinh.*daṇissa* 'knee' is but a combination of Sinh.*daṇa* (*P.jāṇu*) + *hisa* 'head' (P.*sīsa*) though the original noun survives in a verbal form as *daṇa -gānna* 'to kneel'.

There also exist a number of other modern Sinhala words with descriptive affixes whose origins are obscure. Among these is *bittara* 'egg' whose origins seem to lie in an Old Indo-Aryan term *bīja* 'seed' (as found in Sanskrit and Pali). That this term had undergone a semantic change to mean 'egg' in Old Sinhala is attested in the SdR where we come across a reference to turtle eggs as *käsub biju*. This *biju* would have become *bidu* to which for some yet unknown reason was added a suffix such as **dara* (Pr. derived from OIA *dhara* 'holding', 'bearing') eventually becoming * *biddara* and then *bittara*, giving us the modern Sinhala term for egg. This phenomenon did not affect Divehi which has *bis* (< OIA, MIA *bīja*) for 'egg'.The modern Sinhala term for 'fire' *gindara* (Skt.*agni*, P.*aggini*) may perhaps be similarly explicable. Here again Divehi has *gini* sans the peculiar suffix that characterizes the Sinhala term.

Also interesting is the case of Sinhala *dahasa* 'thousand', whose earlier form seems to have been *hās* (P.*sahassa*) still found in Divehi in this sense, suggesting that the modern Sinhala *dahas* has been formed by adding a prefix

ja-(which later became *da*-) for some now inexplicable reason. Among the inscriptions on the steps near 'Burrows Pavilion' in Anuradhapura (C.7th century) we come across the phrase *ekajahasaka kahavaṇa* 'one thousand kahavanas'. That the palatal *j* in this word had been dentalised is seen in the Sigiri graffiti of C.9th or 10th century where we come across the words *vā-dahasak* 'a thousand years' and in the 14th century Sdl which gives *dahasa* for 'thousand'. Furthermore in a Sigiri verse of C.8th or 9th century we come across the phrase *jahas-suyuhas* 'thousands and hundreds of thousands' where *jahas* stands for the plural of thousand and *suyuhas* for 'hundreds of thousands' (Skt.*śata-sahasra*) which in modern Sinhala should have been *siya-hasa*. What this suggests is that there probably existed two forms for thousand, one denoting 'one thousand' (*jahasa*) and another employed in compound forms to denote several thousands (*hasa*) and that Divehi took its term for 'thousand' from the latter which Sinhala eventually lost when *jahasa* and its later dentalised form *dahasa* gained wide currency in the language.

More easily explicable is the modern Sinhala term for 'two' *deka* which seems to have got its second syllable from the preceding numeral term *eka* 'one'. The older form was no doubt *de* (Skt.*dvau*, P.*dve*, *dvi*) as seen for instance in the Sigiri graffiti (*de-at* 'two hands', *de-äs* 'two eyes') and its occurrence even to-day in compound forms (*de-pā* 'two feet', *de-bäyō* 'two brothers') as well as in Divehi where it still occurs as *de*, showing that the change to *deka* took place only after the 8th century. Numeral terms are known to exert an influence on one another when they immediately precede or succeed the other. Take for example the case of Marathi *don* 'two' which has been influenced by the succeeding numeral *tīn* 'three'. The Greek *okto* has a dialectal form *opto* in Elian Greek due to the influence of the preceding numeral term *hepta* 'seven' just as the Romanian *opt* (fr.L.*octo*) has been influenced by the preceding *sapte* 'seven'. Likewise in Lithuanian, the term for 'nine' *devyni* shows an initial *d* instead of *n* as it should (PIE**newn*) due to the influence of the succeeding numeral term *desimt* 'ten' (PIE **dekm*).

VII) Divehi-An offshoot of Sinhala

The Maldive islands which lie approximately 400 miles south-west of Sri Lanka appear to have been peopled by a Proto-Sinhala –speaking folk at some distant period, probably sometime between the 4th and 8th centuries A.C. This is not to say that the Maldives was not known earlier to the Sinhalese, for the Mahāvaṁsa story concerning the Vijayan migration would have us believe that the womenfolk of Vijaya and his compatriots drifted to Mahiladīpa which may possibly refer to the Maldives. It is therefore possible that the Maldives had been settled by Sinhalese folk at an earlier date.

However, such settlements, if they ever existed, would not have been large. The main migration or migrations seems to have taken place between the 4th-8th centuries A.C. as borne out by the linguistic evidence. The appellation used by the Maldivians to denote their language, *Divehi bas*, literally means 'Language of the islands' and has developed from the Sinhala *duva* or *diva* 'island' and *basa* 'language', *divehi* being the vocative form of *diva*. The language has been better preserved in the southern islands which have been less affected by foreign intercourse. Divehi is also spoken in Minicoy (Maliku) north of the Maldive islands where it is known as Māhl. Although today grouped with the Lakshadweep islands and constituting an Indian territory, Minicoy seems to have had a close connection with the Maldives in the not too distant past.

Archaeological evidence suggests that before the advent of Islam to the Maldives during the 12th century, its inhabitants were, like the Sinhalese, Buddhists [255]. W. Geiger [256], basing his views on the fact that Divehi shares with Sinhala all its major sound changes, holds that it branched off from the parent speech C. 900 A.C. Divehi shares with Sinhala the simplification of conjunct consonants (Eg: Div.*medu* 'middle' < MIA *majjha* < OIS *Madhya*), the shortening of long vowels (Div.*digu* long' <MIA *dīgha* < OIA *dīrgha*), the dropping of nasals (Div. *fahe* 'five' < MIA *pañca* < OIA *pañcan*), the de-aspiration of aspirated consonants (Div.*tan* 'place' < MIA *thāna* < OIA *sthāna*), the aspiration of sibilants (Div.*hate* 'seven' < MIA *satta* < OIA *sapta*), the sibilization of the palatal *c* (Div.*es* 'eye' < MIA *acchi* < OIA *akṣi*) and other major phonetic changes such as *p* > *v* (Div.*govi* 'caretaker' < MIA *gopa* < OIA *go-pa*) and *j* > *d* (Div.*radun* 'king', 'sultan' < MIA *rāja* < OIA *rājan*).

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[255] Monograph on the History, Archaeology and Epigraphy of the Maldive islands. H.C.P. Bell (1940)

[256] Maldivische Studien (1902)

It is however probable, as suggested by Prof. J.B. Disanayake [257], that Divehi branched off from Proto-Sinhala, the variety of Sinhala in use between the fourth and eighth centuries. As pointed out by Prof. Disanayake, since Divehi does not possess the low front vowel (*ä*), it has to be assumed that it branched off from Proto-Sinhala before the appearance of this vowel. The development of *ä* in Sinhala is believed to have begun C. 7th –8th century A.C. so that the separation of Divehi from Sinhala probably took place before this date. Divehi often has *e* in place of Sinhala *ä* as seen in forms such as *medu* 'middle' (Sinh.*mäda*) and *es* 'eye' in combinations such as *es-fiya* 'eye lashes' (Sinh. *äsa / ähä*) though in rare exceptions it also has *a* as in *fani* 'juice' 'treacle' (Sinh.*päni*).

A number of other considerations would also lead us to a similar conclusion. For instance take the Divehi *avarudu* 'year' which is well attested and even occurs in the form *avurodun* 'year' in the 13th century Haddummati lōmāfānu in connection with the foundation of a mosque in the island of Dabidu. This is no doubt a metathesis of a form represented in O. Sinh. (C. 5th century) as *havajara* as attested in the Labuāṭabāňdigala rock inscription. We know that this had become *havurudu* by around the 9th or 10th century (as for instance in the Mihintale slab inscription of Mahinda IV) and as Divehi shares this feature with Sinhala, it is likely that the split occurred sometime after the 5th century.

Divehi has also usually turned the retroflex *ḍ* that had developed from MIA *ɭ* into lingual *ɭ* (e.g *kukuɭu* 'hen', P.*kukkuṭa*), a change which evidently took place in Sinhala sometime between the 5th –10th century. The *ḍ* has however been preserved in the more conservative southern Addu dialect as borne out by the form *kakiḍi* 'crab' (Sinh. *kakuɭu*, P. *kakkaṭaka*). This is significant since we find in the Sīgiri graffiti of the 8th century, the form *kakuɭa* 'crab'. This may suggest that the split occurred at a period when there existed considerable variation between the forms *ḍ* and *ɭ* in Old Sinhala itself and we may infer from this that Divehi branched off from the parent speech sometime between the 6th –8th centuries. Another indicator is the sibilization of the palatal *c* which Divehi shares with Sinhala. The change occurred in Sinhala around the 6th or 7th century and seems to have been completed by the 8th century.

Archaeological evidence may also be taken into consideration. Carbon-dating of an ancient temple site in Nilandu island indicates that these originated C. 550 A.C. [258]. This would suggest that colonisation of at least some parts of the Maldives had taken place as early as the first half of the 6th century. Thus from

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[257] Maldivian and Sinhala: Some phonological observations. JRAS (SL) 1985/86.

[258] The Maldive Mystery. Thor Heyerdahl (1986)

the standpoint of both archaeology and linguistics we may conclude that Divehi split off from Sinhala sometime between the 6th – 8th centuries A.C.

An anthropometric survey conducted on over 100 Maldivian adult males and recorded in the Physical Anthropology of Ceylon (1961) suggests that the Maldivians could not have derived from the original brachycephalic Sinhalese type represented to-day by the Govi caste, but from some dolicocephalic, leptorhine Aryan strain with substantial Austro-Asiatic or Dravidian admixture. A considerable Berber admixture from the Barbary states and perhaps some Arab admixture also appears to have taken place. The Physical Anthropology gives the mean cephalic index of 134 Maldivians as 74.80 and the mean nasal index of 133 Maldivians as 67.16. We may therefore conclude that the Maldive islands were peopled by a Proto-Sinhala-speaking race distinct from the Govi or early Sinhalese type, probably a people akin to the Karava who are largely found in the island's western and southern littoral. The fact that the Govi caste has traditionally eschewed seafaring and fishing activities also supports such a view.

Phonological changes from Proto-Sinhala in Divehi are not many. The replacement of the labial *p* by the labio-dental *f* is however a significant phonetic change and probably arose as a result of Arabic influence [259]:

Div. *fas* 'soil' (Sinh. *pas*)
fai 'foot' (Sinh.*paya*)
fen 'water' (Sinh. *pän*)
fahe 'five' (Sinh. *paha*)

This spirantization of *p* to *f* is evidently a recent development as the Frenchman Francois Pyrard who spent five years in the Maldives (1602 – 1607) [260] gives the forms with *p* rather than *f*. Another significant change is that of retroflex *ṭ* to the peculiar Divehi sound *š* which is uttered by putting the tip of the tongue in the highest part of the palate, and letting the breath escape sideways between the teeth.

Div. *aša* 'eight' (Sinh. *aṭa*)
baši 'eggplant' (Sinh.*baṭu*)
muši 'hammer' (Sinh. *miṭi*)
našan 'dance' (Sinh. *naṭanna*)

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[259] The Arabic speech and script which was cultivated in the Maldives is devoid of the labial *p*.

[260] Voyage de Francois Pyrard de Laual. Avec Vn petit dictionaire de la langue des Maldiues (1619)

Yet another notable change is that of initial *y* > *d* which possibly took place via an intermediate **j* though this is not yet attested:

Div. *dan* 'to go' (Sinh. *yanna*)
dān 'bed' (Sinh.*yahan*)
dagaḍu 'iron' (Sinh. *yakaḍa*)
dabaru 'rust' (Sinh.*yabara*)

Divehi has also taken the aspiration of the sibilants even further than Sinhala in both initial and intervocalic positions:

Div. *hau* 'cock' (Sinh. *sävul*)
huvaňdu 'scent' (Sinh.*suvaňda*)
kahabu ' turtle' (Sinh. *kāsubu*)
ahi 'eighty' (Sinh.*asuva*)

As for vowel changes, Divehi has been wont to turn the Sinhala low central vowel (*a*) to the high back vowel (*u*), especially in the final position:

Div. *adu* 'today' (Sinh.*ada*)
magu 'path' (Sinh. *maga*)
doru 'door' (Sinh. *dora*)
haňdu 'moon' (Sinh. *haňda*)

Other vowel changes include Sinhala *a* > Divehi *i* :

Div. *diha* 'ten' (Sinh. *daha*)
vilā 'cloud' (Sinh. *valā*)
tina 'female breast' (Sinh.*tana*)
ihi 'sea crayfish/lobster' (Sinh.*issā* 'shrimp', 'prawn')

and Sinhala *u* > Divehi *i* :

Div. *kis* 'stomach' (Sinh. *kusa*)
tari 'star' (Sinh. *taru*)
fani 'worm' (Sing.*panu*)
iba 'you' (Sinh.*umba*)

Divehi has also undergone some semantic changes when compared to Sinhala. One such notable change is *devi* for 'demon' where Sinhala applies it to a '(benevolent) deity'.

Such *devis* or demons of Maldivian lore include Hamundi (a demon that molests domestic birds and pets), Kissadevi (a demon thaty lives in cemeteries) and Handi (an unclean female demon that kidnaps children) [261]. The reason for this change we could attribute to the monotheistic influence of Islam which could have transformed the *devis* or deities formerly held sacred by the Buddhist Maldivians to demons just as the monotheistic reformation of the Iranian Prophet Zarathustra did the same with the *daevas* of Iran, originally regarded as divinities like the *devas* of the Indo-Aryans, but later transformed into demons, a development that also took place in the Slavic languages of Eastern Europe. The Proto-Indo-European form from which all these forms derive **deiwos* apparently meant a celestial divinity formed from the root **dyeu* 'to shine', hence 'the shining one'.

Among the other few semantic changes Divehi underwent when compared to Sinhala is *hangun* 'the (former) Sultan's militia' which in its Sinhala form *saṅgun* (P.*saṅgha*) denoted the community of Buddhist monks though here it may be possible that Divehi has in fact retained the older meaning found in Skt.*saṁgha* meaning 'host', 'crowd', 'multitude'. We also find that in Divehi *giri* means a 'collection of coral within an atoll or lagoon'. The term no doubt has its origins in the Sinh. *giri* 'mountain'. Similarly Div.*afa* 'I', 'me' has its origins in the Sinh.*apa / api* 'we' which is however also used in the sense of 'I' in some contexts.

Divehi has also managed to preserve some Indo-Aryan forms that have been lost in modern Sinhala. Many such forms are not even attested in Sinhala epigraphs or literature. The Sinhala cognate of Divehi *huvai* 'oath' no longer exists, the Old Sinhala form (as occurring in the Sigiri graffiti) being *sava* (P. *sapatha*). The same could be said of Div. *heki* 'witness' (P. *sakkhi*), *hiki* 'dry' (P. *sukkha*), *fan* 'leaf' (P. *panna*) and *fuhen* 'to ask' (P. *pucchati*). Divehi has also managed to preserve a very archaic Sinhala form for 'facial hair' *masa* (Skt.*śmaśru*, P.*massu*) in the forms *mati-mas* 'moustache' (lit.upper facial hair) and *dam-mas* 'beard' (lit.lower facial hair).

Pyrard's Maldivian vocabulary (1619) also furnishes us with some old Divehi forms whose Sinhala cognates have been lost. Pyrard's *hours* 'father-in-law' (P. *sasura*) and *housse* 'mother-in-law' (P.*sussū*) do not find cognates in Sinhala. Sinhala probably lost these terms as a result of the adoption of cross-cousin marriage at some date subsequent to the separation of Divehi from Sinhala, when the terms for uncle and aunt became synonymous with that for father-in-law and mother-in-law as borne out by the modern Sinhala *māmā*

[261] See Dhevi. Hassan Ahmed Maniku (1988)

and *nändā*. The absence of a Sinhala cognate for Pyrard's *damy* 'son-in-law' (P. *jāmātar*) may be similarly explicable, having been superseded by the Sinhala term for nephew or sister's son today represented by *bäṉā* (P. *bhāgineyya*).

VIII) The Evolution of the Sinhala Script

The pure Sinhala or Elu alphabet (*suddha siṁhala hōdiya*) contains 33 letters (12 vowels and 21 consonants) while the mixed alphabet (*miśra siṁhala hōdiya*) which covers the entire phonetic system of both Eḷu and Sanskrit, contains 54 letters (18 vowels and 36 consonants).

The Sinhala script, in common with the Devanāgarī script in which Hindī is written as well as the Bengali, Burmese and Siamese scripts, derives from the syllabic *Brāhmī lipi* or Brāhmī script which is best known from the many edicts of Emperor Asoka of India (C.3rd century B.C.) and which very likely has its origins in the ancient Semitic script as convincingly shown by Georg Bühler [262].

The script is also found in the ancient cave inscriptions in Sinhala Prakrit of the pre-Christian and early Christian period (C.3rd century B.C.-1st century A.C.), the earliest such records so far discovered dating back to the reign of King Devanampiya-Tissa (C.250 B.C), a contemporary of Emperor Asoka. The recent discovery of potsherds in the citadel of Anuradhapura containing parts of inscriptions in early Brāhmī and dated to C.600-500 B.C. would however suggest that the script was in use in the country well before the 3rd century B.C. and may go back to the period of the early colonization of the island by Indo-Aryan speakers. These early inscriptions are apparently in Prakrit as borne out by at least one sherd which reads *...biyā Anuradha* linking it perhaps to the founder of Anuradhapura, Anurādha, a minister of Vijaya [263].

The evolution of the Brāhmī character from its original angular shape into the present rounded Sinhala script was evidently a slow but steady process of change beginning from about the fourth century A.C. due to the influence of the Gupta and South Indian Nāgārijunakonda scripts. In later times, viz. the 5th

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[262] Indische Palaeographie (1896) and On the Origin of the Indian Brahma Script (1898). More recently we have Colin Massica (The Indo-Aryan Languages.1993) observing that the resemblance of a number of Brahmi symbols to symbols in Western Asian scripts, particularly the North Semitic is too close to be entirely fortuitous.

[263] See The Prehistory of Sri Lanka.S.U.Deraniyagala (1992)

– 7th centuries A.C. the South Indian Pallava script also had a profound influence on the development of Sinhala characters [264].

It is also likely as suggested by Senarat Paranavitana[265] that the material used for writing also had an effect on the transformation of the Sinhala script. Whereas in the early stages, it was lithic material that was used, in later times (C. 8th century) stone was replaced by palm or *ola* leaves. As Paranavitana notes, writing on these leaves made it necessary to make the letters more circular in order to avoid damaging the leaves by making angular strokes. He points out that when we compare the writing of the sixth century with that of the eighth and ninth centuries, one fact that strikes us is that there must have been in the intervening period, some influence at work which accellerated the change in the form of the letters: and that this has worked in a direction somewhat different from that in which the evolution of the script during the first five centuries of the Christian era seemed to be tending. He notes that whereas up to about the sixth or seventh century, the script favoured horizontal lines and angular forms, after this period they were, as far as possible, avoided, with curved lines and circular forms coming into favour. As to why the Sinhala script assumed curved and rounded forms in the eighth century or thereabouts, Paranavitana suggests that the Pallava Grantha script may have had some influence in the sudden change. Yet, the most important factor, he avers, seems to have been a change in the material used for writing. He observes that the material used for writing before the introduction of paper to the country by the Europeans consisted of palm-leaves on which the letters were incised with a sharp-pointed stylus. "As the palm-leaves contain longitudinal fibre, they tend to split if straight horizontal strokes are incised and the studious avoidance of such strokes may be due to the adoption, at this period, of palm-leaves as the common writing material".

In support of this contention, he notes that curved and rounded forms of writing have been developed in all parts of India and the neighbouring countries which have adopted palm-leaves as materal for writing upon. In North India, where they are not so commonly used for the purpose, the development of the script has been in a different direction. It follows then that before the Sinhala alphabet assumed distinctly round and curved forms, and when horizontal strokes were not avoided as such, the common material used for writing must have been something other than palm-leaves. The present-day Sinhala characters became fixed around the 15th century during the Kotte period.

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[264] The process of development of Brahmi into the Sinhalese script. Bandusena Gunasekara SJCVUK.1986

[265] Epigraphia Zeylanica. Vol.IV.1943

In later times, from about the latter part of the nineteenth century, with the spread of colonial rule and English education, the need was felt for accommodating sounds not traditionally found in Sinhala, like *f*. It was around this time that the symbol representing *f*, like upturned breasts was proposed [266], though it is only in recent times that it has caught on, the common symbol in the intervening period being the Roman *f* placed over the character denoting *p* (*payanna*).

[266] The symbol was first proposed in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Abraham Mendis Gunasekara in his Comprehensive Grammar of the Sinhalese Language (1891) says that of late years the symbol like the lower part of the Sanskrit labial sibilant called *upadhmānīya* has been adopted by some to represent the sound of the English letter *f*. which is wanting in the Sinhala language

CHAPTER 4

THE ORIGINS OF THE SRI LANKAN TAMILS AND THEIR LANGUAGE

In Sri Lanka, Tamil, the major language of the Dravidian family, is spoken by the Tamil inhabitants of the Jaffna peninsula and other parts of the country's north and east who are largely descended from settlers, merchants and mercenaries who hailed from the Tamil country of South India. The language is also spoken by the Indian or 'Plantation Tamils' domiciled in the upcountry areas who largely comprise the descendants of South Indian emigrant workers who arrived in the country during the British colonial period. The only other Dravidian language found in the country is Telugu, which is spoken by the nomadic Ahikuntakayas or local gypsies who comprise an insignificant minority of a few hundreds.

I) The Origins of the Dravidian Peoples and Languages

The Dravidian family of languages to which Tamil belongs is spoken mainly in peninsular India, south of the river Godavari. The four main Dravidian languages are Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayālam, spoken in the South Indian states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala respectively. Some of the other lesser known Dravidian speeches of India include Kodagu (spoken in the Coorg district of Karnataka), Kolami (Adilabad district of Andhra Pradesh), Tulu (Kanara district in Karnataka and Kasaragod Taluk in the north of Kerala), Koraga (South Canara district), Irula, Kurumba, Kota, Toda and Badaga (Nilgiri hills), Gadaba (Koraput district of Orissa), Kūi, Kuvi, Pengo and Manda (Orissa), Kurukh and Malto (Bihar) and Gondi (Madhya Pradesh). An enclave of Dravidian speech is also found as far north as Balūchistān (in modern-day Pakistan) where the remnants of an old Dravidian speech, Brāhuī, still survives, though heavily overlaid with Aryan elements.

Scholarly interest in the Dravidian languages was first aroused in 1856 with the publication of Robert Caldwell's Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South-Indian family of languages. The fact that the southern languages of India represented a family of speech distinct from that of the Aryan north was however anticipated earlier by others such as the Baptist missionary William Carey of Serampore.

In 1816, Francis W. Ellis [1] proposed that Tamil, Telugu, Kannadi and Malayālam were of the "same radical derivation". However it was Caldwell who first employed the term 'Dravidian' to designate this language family. This is not to say that the distinction between Aryan and Dravidian speech was not known to the Indians of yore. The famous linguist Kumārila Bhaṭṭa (7th century A.C.) refers to the South Indian languages as *Drāviḍādi Bhāṣā* in his Tantravārttika. The fact that ancient Dravidian speech seems to have influenced Old and Middle Indo-Aryan would suggest that the ancient Dravidians occupied a far vaster area in the subcontinent than that which modern-day Dravidian peoples occupy. Dravidian influence on Indo-Aryan has however not been very significant.

A.Parpola [2] has shown that the modern Indo-Aryan terms for the traditional Indian fireplace which consists of three stones serving as a stand on which vessels can be placed over a fire (Kas. *ċŏl*, Guj. *cūl*, Or. *culli*, H. *cūlhī*) may be derived from the Dravidian (T. *ulai*, Kan. *ole*, Kon. *solu* and Ku. *hollu*). Amongst the other indications of the former influence of Dravidian on northern languages are the modern Indo-Aryan terms for horse (M.*ghoḍa*, B.*ghor*, Bg.*ghoṛa*) which have superseded those forms derived from the Sanskritic *aśva*. These terms are probably related to Tamil *kudirai* 'horse' and its cognates in other Dravidian speeches such as Telugu *gurramu*, Gond *koṛā* and Kui *goḍā*, all of which seem to have derived from a hypothetical **ghutr* which in turn appears to be connected to a Dravidian verbal root *kut/gut* meaning 'to jump, leap, trot, gallop' (T. *kudi* 'to jump', 'leap' , Kan.*gudi* 'to jump', Tu.*guttu* 'a leap', 'jump', Kur. *kuḍur kuḍur* 'at a trot') just as the Proto-Indo-European * *hekwos* 'horse' may be connected to * *hōkus*, a PIE adjective meaning 'swift' (Gk.*ōkus*, Skt.*āśu*).

The presence of Dravidian languages further north than its present area is also supported by linguistic evidence, namely the fact that the Vedic language of the early Indo-Aryans possessed retroflex sounds which is seen as evidence of substrate influence emerging from close contact of the early Aryans of India with a native, probably Dravidian people. In other words, the presence of retroflex sounds in Indo-Aryan since very ancient times is probably a result of the early Vedic speech being spoken with a Dravidian accent, obviously by speakers whose native tongue was Dravidian prior to the shift from dentals to retroflexes. It is no coincidence that Sanskrit or Old Indo-Aryan should possess retroflex sounds in the very country where they are found spoken natively by Dravidian folk in

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[1] In his 'Note to the Introduction' of A.D. Campbell's Grammar of the Teloogoo language

[2] The Sky garment. SO. (1985)

sharp contrast to the other Indo-European including Iranian languages that do not possess this series of sounds which are made with the tip of the tongue being pressed against the palate. Retroflex sounds on the other hand commonly occur in Dravidian languages and are even reconstructible in Proto-Dravidian.

Although there are those who believe that the emergence of retroflex sounds in Sanskrit may be explicable entirely out of the combinatory changes that affected certain consonant groups [3], at the same time it is likely that a non-Aryan substratum would have played a prominent role in the process. J. Bloch notes in his essay on Sanskrit and Dravidian [4] that although the action of a substratum is undeniable, it need not have necessarily been a Dravidian substratum, but even a Munda substratum or that of some other linguistic group. Nevertheless, the presence of retroflex *ḷ* in Vedic and in the Northern and Western MIAVS such as Pañjābī, Rājasthāni, Gujarāti and Marāṭhī is probably due to Dravidian influence, especially since we know that this sound is characteristic of Dravidian and is even found in the northern Brāhuī speech. All this would suggest that the ancient Dravidians occupied a far vaster area than that occupied by modern-day Dravidian peoples.

That Dravidian languages were formerly much more widely spoken is also suggested by the toponymy of the non-Dravidian-speaking parts of India including place-names with the suffix *–koṭ* which figures prominently in the names of cities and towns in the Indus valley and other parts of modern-day Pakistan (E.g. Sialkōṭ in Panjab Province) which appear to have derived from Proto-Dravidian *kōṭṭay* 'fort' and those with the suffix *–vali* in Sindhi, *-oli* in Marathi as well as some with the suffix *–ivli* in the Maharashtra region (E.g. Borivli in the vicinity of Bombay) all of which seem to have originated from PDr.**palli* 'settlement', 'hamlet', 'village'. This is also supported by a consideration of archaeological evidence. The ancient Indus valley civilization of the Sind and Pañjāb, which consisted of highly advanced urban centres like Harappa and Mohenjo-daro appears to have been Dravidian though no finality has been reached with regard to the linguistic affinities of the pictographs connected with the culture.

John Marshall [5] suggests that the language of the Mohenjo-daro seals might be Dravidian. In support of his contention, he cites three reasons,

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[3] The Sanskrit language. T. Burrow (1959)

[4] BSLP. XXV

[5] Mohenjo-daro and the Indus civilization (1931)

firstly, the Dravidian-speaking people were the precursors of the Aryans over most of Northern India and "were the only people likely to have been in possession of a culture as advanced as the Indus culture". Secondly, at no great distance from the Indus valley, the Brahuis of Balūchistān in Southwestern Pakistan have preserved among themselves an island of Dravidian speech in the midst of a sea of Aryan speeches which may well be a relic from Pre-Aryan times, when Dravidian was perhaps the common language of these parts, and thirdly, because the Dravidian languages, being agglutinative, it is not unreasonable to look for a possible connection between them and the agglutinative language of Sumer in the Indus valley, which had close ties with Sumer.

This view is supported by S. Natesan's observations in his paper on the Tamil language [6] where he points out to references made in the Cilappatikāram (an old Tamil work assigned to C. 2nd century A.C.) to pictographs (T. *kanneluttu*) used by merchants in sealing their merchandise. He also notes that the Tamil word for writing, *elududal*, means also the drawing of pictures. What is also interesting is the appearance of Indus valley characters as graffiti in the post-1900 B.C.period (when the civilization is believed to have declined) in late Harappan sites in Gujarat and in still later times in iron age sites of the first millennium B.C. in Peninsular India. Further, evidence from inscribed pottery from Kodumanal and Uraiyur in the Kaveri basin indicates that such graffiti co-existed with Tamil Brāhmī between the 3rd century B.C. and the 3rd century A.C. [7]. Furthermore, evidence from the segmentation of the Indus Valley texts may also suggest that the Harappan language was agglutinative, commonly using suffixes like Dravidian, rather than inflected like the early Indo-European languages, which if confirmed would strengthen the case for its identification with Dravidian [8].

Another indication of the Dravidian origin of the Indus valley culture is suggested by the ingenious theory put forth by Mikhail Andronov [9] that the Dravidian numeral system was octonary rather than decimal , the number 'eight' (T.*eṭṭu* 'eight <**eṇ-ttu* from *eṇ* 'number', 'eight', *eṇ* 'to count') being the last one in the series of known digits (the two other

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[6] UCHC. Vol. I (1959)

[7] Inscribed Pots, Emerging Identities. Himanshu Ray, in Bertween the Empires. Ed.Patrick Olivelle (2006)

[8] The ancient Indus valley. New Perspectives. Jane McIntosh (2007)

[9] Some distinctive characteristics of the vocabulary of Dravidian languages. Lexicologie. D.A. Cruse & P.R.Lutzeier (2005)

numerals *pattu* 'ten' <*pal* 'many' and *onpatu* 'nine' < *on-pat* 'incomplete ten' being added at a later time), thereby suggesting a connection with the octonary system which was evidently in vogue among the inhabitants of Mohenjo-daro, the scale weights found there forming a series of numbers divisible by eight, viz. 1:8:16:32:64:160:320 and so on.

Indeed recent research studies on the script by Russian and Finnish Indologists also tend to suggest that the Indus script was Dravidian though this proposed decipherment has yet to be accepted by the larger academic community. One notable theory that has gained some acceptance is that propounded by Asko Parpola who argues that the Indus Valley script was Dravidian based on the premise that the pictographs represent homonyms of the object so depicted, that is to say, words with a similar phonetic shape but a different meaning to which he seeks to fit in Dravidian forms on the grounds that it is only such forms that could adequately explain this trait of the script, a trait also shared in the early Sumerian where for instance the picture of an arrow meant not only 'arrow', but also 'life' and 'rib' as all three words were pronounced alike in this language as *ti*. This development was a step ahead of the early pictorial scripts where each sign was originally a picture denoting the object represented by it and overcame to some extent the difficulty in expressing many other things including abstract concepts which the pictorial scripts could not. On this premise, he contends that the Indus Valley seals are written in an early form of the Dravidian language, citing a number of examples to show how Dravidian alone could explain the peculiarities of the script [10].

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[10] See for instance Asko Parpola's Religion reflected in the Iconic signs of the Indus Script, in The Image in Writing. Hans G.Kippenberg et al (1988) where Parpola attempts to show that the symbol of the fish which very commonly occurs in the seals represent the names of divinities which were borne by their devotees as personal names or priestly titles. As a case in point he cites the Dravidian word for fish *mīn* which is not only found in most Dravidian languages, but could also be reconstructed in the parent Proto-Dravidian (PDr) speech. He notes that a homonym *mīn* denoting ' star' is also known in PDr and that both words refer to a glittering object, and appear to be derived from the PDr root **min* 'to glitter, sparkle'. He points out that it is significant that painted Indus potsherds combine the motifs of fish and star, adding that such an association, thus attested for the Indus people, is natural for the speakers of Dravidian languages who use the same word for both things. The Tamils of South India, for example, have been reported to imagine the stars as fish swimming in the ocean of the night sky. He then proceeds to infer that the 'fish' pictograms of the Indus script could be interpreted as denoting gods and then proceeds to adduce evidence to show that stars were used as symbols of deities in a number of ancient cultures including the fact that in the cuneiform script the pictogram of 'star' is prefixed to every divine name as a symbol of divinity and that the Mesopotamians associated their divinities with specific heavenly bodies, for instance Inanna-Ištar, the goddess of love and war who was symbolised by the planet Venus. In like manner, he attempts to show that the fish symbol with a stylised roof above it means Saturn or the 'Black Star' (PDr **may-mīn*), the inference being supported by the fact that in Dravidian the term for roof and black are homophonous

There is also reason to believe, based largely on linguistic correspondences between Tamil and the ancient pre-Aryan Elamite language of southern Iran, that the Dravidians are related to the Elamites and that these once belonged to a common stock designated by historians as the Proto-Elamo-Dravidians. These Proto-Elamo-Dravidians are believed to have been a pastoral folk moving into Iran sometime about 6000 B.C., engaging in the herding of goats, sheep and cattle and cultivation before splitting into two branches, a Proto-Dravidian branch that moved eastwards towards Afghanistan and Baluchistan, and a Proto-Elamite branch that settled in Southern Iran including the Zagros mountain region. Indeed, pre-urban Elamite cultural sites such as Susa reveal a pattern of female figurines and goddess worship while painted pottery at these sites reveal a related concern for serpents as objects of religious veneration – a combination found also in the Dravidian villages of South India [11].

Moreover, there are grounds for supposing that the Elamites, at least in the lowlands were dark-skinned like the Dravidians since some warriors, probably Elamites, are represented as dark-skinned in the Achaemenian glazed tile reliefs of the 5th century B.C.[12] a view corroborated by the fact that a rather dark-skinned human type is to be encountered in southern Khūzistān [13], Elam broadly having occupied this Iranian Province centred on the city of Susa in its heyday. H.R.Hall [14] has in fact suggested an ethnic connection between the Sumerians, the Elamites and the Dravidians

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(**mey/may*) and the fact that Saturn is a dim planet, which is significant in a context where *may-mīn* is actually attested as the name of the planet Saturn in one of the oldest available Dravidian texts, the Puranānūru assigned to the early centuries of the Christian era. Similarly he observes that the fish symbol with six vertical strokes representing the numeral six refers to the Pleiades or 'Six stars' which in Old Tamil texts actually occur as *aru-mīn* 'six-star' (PDr.**caru-mīn*) and which even in later Hinduism held a prominent place as the wives of the seven sages identified with the seven stars of the Great Bear whose Old Tamil name *eḷu-mīn* 'seven-star' corresponds to the combination of the pictograms 7 + fish and which alone constitute the entire text of one finely carved Indus seal. Thus what Parpola would have us believe is that the seals contain theophoric personal names, that is names based on divinities such as astral or planetary deities, which is also in accordance with the traditions of Hindu name-giving which survive to this day.

[11] Indus Valley Religion. Thomas Hopkins and Alf Hiltebeitel. The Encyclopedia of Religion. Ed.Mircea Eliade.1987

[12] The Cambridge History of Iran. Ilya Gershevitch and William Bayne Fisher (1985)

[13] Das Reich Elam. Walther Hinz (1964)

[14] The Ancient History of the Near East (1913)

on anthropological grounds. Hall observed that the ethnic type of the Sumerians, so strongly marked in their statues and reliefs was as different from those of the races which surrounded them as their language from the Semites and Aryans. He goes on to add that it is to the Dravidian ethnic type of India that the ancient Sumerian bears most resemblance, so far as we can judge from his monuments. He notes that there can be little doubt that the non-Aryan peoples of ancient Persia (the Anariakoi of the Greeks) were of the same race, forming a connecting link between Babylonia and India, to which he also connects the culture of Elam.

All this would indicate that Pre-Semitic Mesopotamia, Pre-Aryan Iran and the ancient Indus Valley region shared many common features including physical traits and cultural traditions and that they were peopled by peoples who were perhaps genetically related, at least partly.

As for anthropological evidence, craniological data obtained from the skeletal remains of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro indicates dolicocephaly or long-headedness and mesorrhiny-platyrrhiny which is to say that the population had medium to broad noses. The Harappan remains also indicated acrocephalic or high-domed skulls with a breadth-height index for the skull vault at 98.35 [15]. All this suggests that the peoples of the Indus Valley civilization bore a striking similarity to the modern-day Dravidians, particularly the Tamils, the majority of whom belong to that type designated Mediterranean.

The Dravidian-speaking peoples of today appear to constitute two basic types – a dolicocephalic Mediterranean type with high cranial vault and a mesaticephalic (and probably an originally brachycephalic) Armenoid type characterized by an especially flat occiput. Given the present state of our knowledge, it is difficult to say with certainty which of these elements introduced Dravidian speech into India, though it is likely as has been generally held Dravidian was originally spoken by the Mediterraneans and that the Armenoids probably came with the Mediterraneans and spoke their language [16]. Miscegenation between these two and other elements, especially the Austro-Asiatics, would have contributed to the making of the modern Dravidian type.

It has been shown that the dominant human type among the Dravidian-speaking peoples of South India at the present day is the Proto-Mediterranean type with long narrow head and face, straight nose and

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[15] See Ancient Races of India and Pakistan. D.K.Sen. Ancient India (1965)

[16] See Race movements and prehistoric culture. S.K.Chatterji. The History and Culture of the Vedic People. Vol I. Ed. R.C. Majumdar (1951)

medium length and dark brown hair [17]. The type has been in existence in South India for a considerable period of time and was the prevailing type at Ādichanallūr and in the iron age cairns of the Deccan. The microlithic-mesolithic man of Gujarat and of South India – and the microlithic industry, coastal as well as inland, is merely an extension of that of the Sabarmati Valley and Sind – was Proto-Mediterranean with marked Negroid characteristics. This is seen from the skulls found at Langhnaj in Baroda (Mesolithic) and at Chanhu-Daro from the Harappa level (C.3000-2600 B.C) [18]. The Negroid traits in these skulls, Sastri believes, were not due to an admixture with Negroids in India, but to an inheritance from their ancestral stock. This stock, it is likely, had its origins in Africa. As shown by J.L. Myers [19], it is likely that the Mediterranean race of Southern Europe had its origins in North Africa, so that it is perhaps there that we have to look to for locating the primitive homeland of the Mediterranean peoples.

The theory of a Mediterranean origin for the Dravidians is supported by Chatterji (1951). According to Chatterji the word from which Tamil is derived was in all likelihood * *Dramiza* in the first half of the first millennium B.C. and it was this that was adopted into Sanskrit as *Dramiḷa*, *Dramiḍa*, *Draviḍa* before the Christian era. Chatterji (ibid) connects the Dravidians with the Mediterraneans of the west on the basis of their national appellation and religious beliefs. Says Chatterji: "We find that the Lycians of Asia minor, a Pre-Indo-European Mediterranean people, called themselves in their inscriptions (written in their own speech in a script allied to the ancient Greek) *Trmmili*. Herodotus has noted that the Lycians originally came from the island of Crete, and that in Crete the Pre-Hellenic Asianic people were known by a name which the Greeks wrote as *Termilai*. It would not perhaps be too much to assume that some at least of the Dravidian speakers of India who came ultimately from the Eastern Mediterranean tracts brought with them one of their national or tribal appellations *Termilai-Trmmili-Dramiza* which became transformed into the modern name *Tamil* by the middle of the first millennium A.D." Chatterji opines that the Dravidians had as their original homeland, the islands of the Aegean and the tracts of mainland along the Aegean sea – Greece and Asia minor, and that it was thence that they brought their concept of the great mother goddess and her male counterpart which were

[17] See A History of South India. Nilakanta Sastri (1955)

[18] Ibid

[19] Prehistoric man in the Eastern Mediterranean. I-III. Science Progress. 1896-1897.

equivalent to the ancient Mediterranean Ma or Kubēle (Cybele) and Attis, or Hepit and Teshup.

The Mediterranean connection of the Dravidians is also suggested by archaeological evidence, namely, a prehistoric burial site in Ādichanallūr on the banks of the Tambraparni in the Tinnevelly district which was inhabited by a Proto-Mediterranean people. This burial site characterized by urn burials such as mentioned in the ancient Tamil work Puranānūru has been found to contain artifacts similar to those found in the Mediterranean area including Cyprus and Palestine. For instance, gold mouth-pieces from Ādichanallūr show a striking similarity to similar mouth-pieces found at Enkomi in Cyprus in tombs of the late bronze age. Gold frontlets found in Gerar in Palestine likewise show a marked similarity to diadems in Ādichanallūr. These frontlets were found in association with kohl-sticks which also have their parallels in Ādichanallūr again. Metal hoes similar to those of Ādichanallūr have been found in Palestine and in several localities in Cyprus. The number, complexity and closeness of these similarities suggests a strong possibility of connection between the culture of Ādichanallūr and that of the Eastern Mediterranean [20].

Given the above, it seems fairly likely that it were the Proto-Mediterraneans who introduced Dravidian culture and speech into India, but there are those who argue that it was in fact an Armenoid stock originating in West Asia that introduced Dravidian speech into the subcontinent. It has been found that in certain parts of South India, the basic long headed element represented by the Proto-Mediterranean has been overlaid by a short-headed element, its occurrence being greatest in Maharashtra and traceable through the Mysore Plateau into Tamilnad beyond. It has affected Andhradesa slightly but has left Kerala untouched. The type is found especially among the Tamil-speaking people of South India. The fact that Andhradesa and Kerala-Andhradesa to a lesser degree than Kerala- are free from the round-headed element shows that it came by way of Sind, Gujarat and Maharashtra, and broke into Tamilnad over south-eastern Mysore. If numbers be any criterion, the round heads who constitute a small percentage when compared with the basic long-heads are later arrivals in India – a conclusion supported by the evidence on the succession of race strata elsewhere [21].

This type Sastri (1955) attributes to the Armenoid, a short-headed type with markedly convex high-bridged nose and a high-vaulted head rising

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[20] See Sastri (1955)

[21] Ibid

steeply from the nape of the neck which seems to have evolved in South-West Asia. The present home of this type –the wide tract of Asia stretching from the Pamirs to the Levant – must have been its original home, that is to say, the area of its characterization, he infers. These characteristics, he notes, are found among peoples inhabiting the mountainous tract extending from the Pamirs and the western flanks of the Himalayas to the mountains of Anatolia and along the western shores of the Adriatic. He adds: "The ancient Hittites were typical members of the Armenoid race. The pre-historic inhabitants of Shah-Tepe in Asterabad, the province bordering the Caspian on its south-east were short-headed. In Luristan, the highland of Persia on the border of Mesopotamia between Hamadan and Sushan, in the second millennium B.C. we have a short-headed people. The basic stocks of the highland zone, Herzfeld's 'Caspian' from which the Hurrians, Kassites, the Elamites and the Mitanni were derived, was round-headed". Besides western Asia, the type is said to be common in Asia Minor, the Middle East and some parts of Central Asia and is especially prominent among the Arabs, Jews and Maronites. It has been contended that the Armenoid type may be connected with the Alpine race of Central Europe, and it is possible that these two brachycephalic types branched off from a common stock during some remote period [22] .

Sastri (1955) is of the view that it were the Armenoids who introduced Dravidian speech into India. He notes that round-headedness among the Tamils can be traced through the Deccan, Gujarat and Sind into the eastern portions of the Iranian Plateau where there is a striking group of round heads. These round-heads are also more numerous in the Iranian uplands than in the plains. He infers from this that there is a connection between the round-heads of the Iranian plateau and uplands and the Dravidian speakers of India, a contention borne out by the resemblances between the culture of the Caspians, the earliest inhabitants of the highlands of Iran, and Dravidian speakers. He notes that as the languages spoken by the Mitanni, Hurrians and Kassites who were round-headed, possess a clearly demonstratable affinity with Dravidian, it must have been the speech of the Armenoids. He notes that the parallels between Mitanni and Dravidian are so many as to bring Mitanni well within the group. These, he says, are seen to extend over the whole field of phonology, grammar and vocabulary [23].

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[22] The Early Inhabitants of Western Asia. Felix Von Luschan. JRAI. GB & I (1911)

[23] Here he refers to G.W.Brown's study 'The possibility of a connection between Mitanni and the Dravidian languages. JAOS.1930

At any rate, it is the Mediterranean element that predominates among the Dravidian-speaking peoples, whether in South India or Sri Lanka, and it is probably this type that is representative of the true Dravidians who termed themselves Dramida/Dravida and who introduced Dravidian speech into India. The Armenoid type also found among the Tamils appears to have been a later admixture into the Dravidian-speaking Mediterranean stock. There has been no finality reached regarding the relationship between Dravidian and the languages spoken by peoples of Armenoid stock and the available evidence would suggest that there do exist a few correspondences though these do not suffice to establish a conclusive relationship. Nor can any conclusive affinity be demonstrated between Dravidian and the languages spoken by the Mediterranean peoples of old. As such, it is perhaps not too far-fetched to suppose that Dravidian speech is a mixed language formed from the speech of the Mediterraneans and Armenoids that coalesced during remote times to be constituted eventually into a single language, the early or Proto-Dravidian [24].

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[24] Recent genetic advances suggest that the Dravidian-speaking peoples of South India have a diverse genetic background. One possible Dravidian marker is the mtDNA U haplogroup, especially U7 said to be the most prevalent U lineage in Tamil and Andhra castes, and which is also common in Iran, Pakistan and Northern India, suggesting an affinity between Dravidian populations from South India and populations to the North and West (See Genetic Variation in South Indian castes:evidence from Y-Chromosome, mitochondrial and autosomal polymorphisms. W.S.Watkins et al. BMC Genetics.Dec.2008). A notable between-caste difference observed for the mtDNA haplogroup U data is that the Tamil lower caste sample showed a lower frequency of U haplogroups than Tamil upper castes or middle castes (ibid). Significantly, the U-7 lineage is also found, though at low frequencies in Western Asia though rare or absent in Europe (See The Genetic Heritage of the Earliest Settlers persists both in Indian Tribal and Caste Populations. T.Kivisild et al. AJHG. Feb.2003). The coprescence of most haplogroup U subclusters (U1-U8) in populations around the Middle East suggest that differentiation of HG U occurred mostly West of India (Ibid) and it is perhaps in this region that we may have to look for the origins of the lineage, which it is possible was associated with the dispersal of an Armenoid stock that later found its way to India. Another possible Dravidian marker is the Y-DNA J haplogroup which is believed to have originated in the Levant and is perhaps to be associated with the spread of Neolithic farming culture. J2 particularly is present in significantly higher frequencies among Dravidian castes (19%) than among Indo-European castes (11 %) and is nearly absent among Indian tribals, except among Austro-Asiatic tribals (11%). It is moreover confined to upper castes with little occurrence in the middle and lower castes (See Polarity and Temporality of High-Resolution Y-Chromosome distributions in India. Sanghamitra Sengupta et al. AJHG. Feb.2006). It is possible that J2 (M172) was a part of the 'neolithic gene' package that invaded the Indian subcontinent with Dravidian agriculturalists since a very high STR (Short Tandem Repeat) diversity for J haplogroup has been observed in Dravidian tribal populations (See Genetic affinities among the lower castes and tribal groups of India; inference from Y Chromosome and mitochondrial DNA. Ismail Thanseem et al. BMC Genetics. August 2006). Significantly it has been found that the M172 haplogroup is more common among present-day populations in regions of Mediterranean South Eastern Europe, Asia Minor and the Levant which during the Neolithic period

Whichever group introduced the basic elements of Dravidian language into India, there can be little doubt that both had become amalgamated into a common Dravidian ethnos, so to say, by about the beginning of the second millennium B.C. There is also reason to believe that the Dravidians in the course of their migrations and settlement in India absorbed a considerable infusion of Austro-Asiatic blood. Although as seen earlier, those peoples designated Dravidians constitute of two basic types, a dolicocephalic Mediterranean type with high cranial vault and a mesaticephalic (and probably originally brachycephalic) Armenoid type characterized by an especially flat occiput, one not infrequently comes across many Tamils with an Austroloid strain including very dark skin, prominent browridges and even some degree of prognathism.

This miscegenation with Proto-Australoid elements very likely began around 2000 B.C. or perhaps even earlier, for the Indus Valley civilization which was probably Dravidian in origin knew of an Australoid element. There can be little doubt that the bronze figure of a dancing girl from Mohenjo Daro has unmistakeable Proto-Austroloid features and that her coiffure is strongly reminiscent of the coiffure of the present-day Proto-Australoid jungle folk of Central and Southern India [25]. The Dravidian migration to the south would have resulted in further miscegenation as there is evidence to show that the aboriginal peoples of this region who later went on to constitute the exterior or depressed castes were Australoid in origin. It has been shown that striking similarities do exist between the depressed castes of the Deccan and Bengal [26]. Further, as pointed out by Sastri (1955) in South India the Australoid element which forms the basis of jungle folk like the Malayans, Kādars, Kurumbas and Yeruvas generally entered into the composition of the so-called exterior castes. However it is not only the lower castes in Dravidian India that had Australoid blood. To this day one comes across many Tamils, and not just low caste folk, who possess rather dark complexions which may have been acquired by admixture with Australoid elements in the distant past. There

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constructed anthropomorphic figurines and painted pottery (See Congruent distribution of Neolithic painted pottery and ceramic figurines with Y-Chromosome lineages. Roy King and Peter Underhill. Antiquity.September 2002). Also significant is the fact that the Neolithic site of Mehrgarh near the Indus Valley displays the presence of a similar material culture co-related with the spread of J2 in Pakistan (Sengupta 2006). This marker may therefore perhaps represent the Mediterranean type that went on to figure significantly in the composition of the Dravidian peoples.

[25] Sastri (1955)

[26] E.Mc.Farlene. JRASB.1940

can be little doubt that the early Dravidians were relatively dark-skinned, but they were very probably not as swarthy as the Austro-Asiatics, a contention borne out by an ancient Tamil Sangam age work, the Naṟṟinai which refers to upper class Tamil women whose complexion was like in colour to tender mango leaves which we know is a sort of maroon or reddish-brown. It is also known that Munda languages are found as far south as the Godāvari and must have prevailed at one time over the whole of the Deccan, as Bhili shows Munda affinities [27]. Linguistic evidence also suggests that Munda lexical items have had an influence on the Dravidian languages of the south. For instance Proto-South Dravidian **ariki* which gave rise to T. *arici* and Ka.*akki* likely has its origins in the Munda **arig* 'millet' 'panicum militare' and not PDr. **warinci* (T.Ma.Te. *vari*, Parji *verci*, Gadaba *varci* and Gondi *wanji* 'rice', 'paddy'). Similarly, T.*ñāñcil*, Ka.*nēgal*, Gadba *nāngal* all probably go back to Munda **nankel* (Santali *nahel* and more distant forms such as Makassar *naṅkala*).

There is also some reason to believe that a people of African origin too would have, at least to some extent, contributed to the making of the Dravidian man, which may explain the physical characters of certain Dravidian-speaking tribes.

Certain crania ascribed to the ancient Dravidians are known to possess marked Negroid characteristics though Sastri (1955) holds that they are of the Proto-Mediterranean type, albeit possessing Negroid features, which he believes is an inheritance from their ancestral Mediterranean stock. Although this is plausible, we also cannot exclude the possibility of a separate Negro strain that would have contributed to this type, originating perhaps from the Negritos who are believed to have inhabited India and other parts of South Asia in prehistoric times, or a Negro people of African origin. In fact, Giuffrida-Ruggeri [28] has suggested a close physical affinity between the Ethiopians and certain Dravidian tribes whom he distinguished from the earlier Australoid Pre-Dravidians who showed affinity with the Veddas. He has pointed out that these Dravidians, although dark-skinned, were mesorrhine, the nose form being less wide and not so deep at the root as in the platyrrhine Veddas and the profile much less prognathous. As typical representatives of this Homo Indo Africanus Dravidicus he gives the Badaga and Kuruba of Mysore who showed an average stature of 164.1 and 163.6, an average cephalic index of 71.7 and 77.3 and an average nasal index of 75.6 and 73.5 respectively, which differ from the Australoid tribes of Chota Nagpur and its neighbourhood who have decreased statures and increased nasal indices as

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[27] See Sastri (1955)

[28] The First Outlines of a Systematic Anthropology of Asia (1921)

for instance the Munda with a stature of 158.9, cephalic index of 74.5 and nasal index of 89.9 and the Korwa with a stature of 159.5, cephalic index of 74.4 and nasal index of 92.5.

Unlike the platyrrhine (broad) noses possessed by the true Austro-Asiatics or Sub-Saharan African Negroes or mesorrhine noses of other African peoples like the Ethiopians, many Tamils are known to possess short and snub noses which is very likely a result of intensive in- and in-breeding, probably acquired as a result of consanguineous marriages, a long established custom amongst Dravidian peoples.

The Dravidians seem to have been well established in South India from very early times. F.C. Southworth [29] suggests that Proto-Dravidian was probably spoken in the Lower Godavari River basin in Eastern Central India where Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra adjoin each other, a hypothesis based exclusively on the current geographical distribution of the linguistic sub-groups of Dravidian. He however suggests that Proto-Dravidian may have been spoken in a wider area, extending perhaps into Central India or the Western Deccan region which are now occupied mainly by Indo-Aryan languages, and that other forms of early Dravidian, including Pre-Proto-Dravidian possibly been spoken in these same areas. He adds that the suggested location for Proto-Dravidian in the Godavari basin would not preclude the possibility that speakers of an earlier stage of Dravidian entered the subcontinent from Western or Central Asia, as has often been suggested.

In an attempt to locate the Proto-Dravidian homeland Southworth seeks to co-relate the linguistic data with the available archaeological evidence and notes that the most promising archaeological complex which might be connected with the Dravidian languages is the Southern Neolithic Complex which made its first appearance in the mid-3rd millennium B.C. in a core area encompassing the present Gulbarga, Raichur and Bellary districts of Karnataka, and Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh which thereafter spread –judging by similarities in pottery styles, house construction, plant remains and other features to a very vast area from the Krishna-Tungabhadra in the north to the Kaveri in the south and from the Krishna-Godavari mouths in the east to Dharwar in the west. This core area he observes is located in the vicinity of the Upper Krishna river, not far from the area assumed on linguistic grounds to be the home of Proto-Dravidian. The dwellings found in these early southern Neolithic sites were one-room houses with low mud walls surmounted by reed screens and thatched roofs, constructed on rock terraces linked by some sort of

[29] Proto-Dravidian Agriculture. Paper presented at the 7th ESCA Conference, Kyoto, June 2005

drainage system. The tools included stone axes, adzes and lithic blades, and in some areas copper axes and the range of pottery forms was impressive. Some sites were associated with nearby ashmounds, presumably remnants of livestock pens. Animal remains included cattle (Bos Indicus), buffalo, goat and sheep at many sites. Wild pigs, elephant, chicken and rodent bones were also found along with remains of fish and freshwater mussels and snails. Ornaments included bead-necklaces and perhaps ear-pendants of shell, semi-precious stones, terracotta, gold and copper. The list of faunal remains here is said to compare favourably with those listed for Proto-Dravidian, though canids, felids, bears and primates along with smaller animals such as mongoose, squirrel and porcupine are unreported from the archaeological side while chickens found in some sites are missing from the linguistic inventory. Evidence for ploughing which is supported by the linguistic data is also absent in the archaeological sites.

Southworth's contentions are supported by Peter Bellwood [30] who observes that the Dravidian languages cover the region of the Southern Neolithic with its villages of circular houses, cattle pastoralism and domestication of a number of cereals and legumes. Bellwood in his attempts to trace the origins of these settlements to still earlier times, queries whether a number of sites in the North Western region of India which have been noted as having unusual basal features, for instance, the circular houses at Navdatoli and Balathal could represent a Dravidian presence. Based on this thesis, he contends that the pastoralist Dravidians originating from the north moved southwards through Maharashtra towards the Deccan, Karnataka and Southern India where they developed their unique millet agriculture and cattle corralling. In support of this postulated movement he cites the presence of Dravidian loan-words in northwestern India which indicates a former presence of Dravidian speech in those parts.

In contrast are the views of those like Bhadriraju Krishnamurti [31] who argues that most of the proposals that the Proto-Dravidians entered the subcontinent from outside are based on the notion that Brahui was the result of the first split of Proto-Dravidian and that the Indus civilization was most likely to be Dravidian. He observes that there is not a shred of concrete evidence to credit Brahui with any archaic features of Proto-Dravidian, the most archaic features of Dravidian in phonology and morphology being still found in the southern languages, such as the Early

[30] First Farmers. The Origins of Agricultural Societies (2005)

[31] The Dravidian Languages (2003)

Tamil *āytam*, the phoneme ẓ, the dental-alveolar-retroflex contrast in the stop series, lack of voice contrast among the stops, verbal paradigm incorporating tense and transivity etc. He adds that since the Indus seals have not been deciphered as yet, it is best for the time being to consider Dravidians to be natives of the Indian subcontinent who were scattered throughout the country by the time the Aryans entered India around 1500 B.C.

This thesis nevertheless has a major drawback. It is difficult to hold that Dravidian had its origins in India for the simple reason that the members of the Dravidian language family do not show any great divergence from one another, suggesting that they split from one another in fairly recent times, perhaps even as late as 2500- 2000 B.C. in the earliest instance. This would indicate that Dravidian was a single language occupying a relatively small area before this period and could not have been indigenous to the country, for had it been so the differences between the members of the Dravidian family of languages would have been much more pronounced than we find today.

Be it as it may, it is in South India that the early Dravidians came to predominate by virtue of their numerical strength and their relatively advanced culture which we can be fairly certain was achieved well before the Aryan invasion C.1700 B.C. or thereabouts. A strong Dravidian national and political consciousness in South India appears to have been forged by at least the second century B.C. The Hathi-gumpha inscription of Emperor Khāravela (C. 173 B.C. - 160 B.C.) refers to his breaking the league of the Dravidian states (*Tramira-deṣa-sanghātaṁ*) which had been in existence for 113 years, showing that the Dravidian nations possessed a strong ethnic consciousness even at this early date. The Cilappatikāram, an ancient Tamil work assigned to C.2nd century A.C. also refers to a war waged by the Cēra King Cenkuttuvan destroying the valorous soldiers of the northern Arya kings celebrated for their death-dealing chariot forces and swift-footed horses. The battle referred to here was evidently one between the Cera monarch and a confederation of northern Aryan kings who had boasted "Let us see the prowess of the southern Tamil kings" only to be defeated in this crucial battle [32].

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[32] This animosity of the Dravidian South towards the Aryan North was perhaps in existence at a much more earlier period. Genetic evidence suggests that although the early Dravidian-speaking peoples probably located in North India contributed significantly to the Aryan gene pool, particularly in the area of maternal lineages, the Dravidians of South India do not seem to have absorbed any maternally-inherited mitochondrial DNA originating from the north. Although this is quite understandable in a scenario of a rigid caste system which prevented Aryan women from co-habiting with non-Aryan men, this need not have necessarily been the case earlier. Indeed, it has been found that West Eurasian mtDNA haplogroups H, J, T and W represent as much as 6-7 % of north and central tribes located in

The Dravidian or Tamil country also seems to have had a well defined geographical area, showing that South India has been predominantly Dravidian since very early times. The outline of geography (Geographike Hyphegesis) of Klaudios Ptolemaios (Ptolemy) C. 2nd century A.C. refers to the Tamil country as *Lymirikē* (which is probably a copyist's error for *Dymirikē* as the Greek capital letters *Delta* and *Lambda* are similar). The portion of India to which this name is applied is called *Damirice* in the Indian segment of the Roman maps known as the Peutinger tables (Tabula Peutingeriana). The Greek termination *–ikē* signifes locality and therefore the *Damirikē* of the classical writers evidently meant the land of the Damirs or Tamils. According to the author of the Cilappatikāram, Ilankōvaṭikal, (who is believed to have lived around the same time as Ptolemy), the Tamil land was bounded by the sea on the east and west, Kumari (Cape Comorin) on the south and the Tirupati hills on the north.

It appears that in the olden days, the appellation *Tamilan* or Dravidian was conferred exclusively upon the Dravidian Sūdras represented by the higher South Indian castes such as the Vellālars and denoted neither the Brahmins nor the low or untouchable castes such as the Pallans or Paraiyans. Tamilan is defined in the Tamil language as 'one whose mother-tongue is Tamil' as well as a Tamilian as distinct from Āriyan and a 'caste man' as distinct from Paraiyan [33]. Similarly, Dennis Mc.Gilvray [34] found that a high caste man in Sri Lanka such as a Vellalan or Mukkuvan would refer to himself simply as 'a Tamil' (*Oru Tamilan*) in semantically unmarked contrast to any low caste person who would be unequivocally marked as 'a Paraiyan' for instance. Lower castes, he says, adopted the same convention, so that when he inquired in low-caste neighbourhoods about "Tamil customs" he was told he should go ask some "Tamil people" rather than them about such unfamiliar concerns.

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the area where Indo-European languages are spoken. However these mtDNA types are virtually absent in the South tribes which are located where the Dravidian languages are spoken. This it is contended might reflect different responses of local people to the Indo-European (i.e.Aryan) settlement in India. In the north and centre, Indo-Europeans may have admixed with local people, concomitant with the spread of IE languages. In contrast, in the southern part of India, local populations may have challenged the arrival of Indo-European newcomers, resulting in limited admixture and retention of their original languages, thus explaining why Dravidian languages survived the spread of IE languages in South India (See Mitochondrial DNA analysis reveals diverse histories of tribal populations from India. Richard Cordaux et al. EJHG.Vol.11.2003).

[33] See UMTL.Vol.III.1929

[34] Crucible of Conflict. Tamil and Muslim society on the east coast of Sri Lanka (2008)

The definition is significant as it suggests that the term Tamil may have originally referred to a racial stock distinct from both the Aryans and the so-called low castes. The term 'caste man' referred to in the Tamil Lexicon obviously refers to the high Dravidian castes such as the Veḷḷāḷars who in Sastric terms were deemed to belong to the Śūdra varna, a class which in South India enjoyed a high social status and ranked only second to the Brāhmaṇs [35]. Caldwell (1856) notes that it was upon the middle and higher classes of the Dravidians (chieftains, soldiers, cultivators) that the title of Śūdra was conferred and that it did not designate the servile classes such as the Paḷḷans and Paraiyans.

It is evident here that the true Tamils who were regarded as Śūdras constituted neither of the Brāhmaṇs who little doubt were an Aryan imposition on the south [36], nor of the low or untouchable castes who would have probably constituted the descendants of a native aboriginal stock of Austro-Asiatic affinities who had been subjugated or enslaved by the true Dravidians during some remote period. Available evidence suggests that prior to the nineteenth century, Śūdra rank was not an embarrassment to such castes as the Veḷḷālars. They proclaimed that status for instance in temple inscriptions [37] . It was only in later times, beginning from about the latter part of the nineteenth century or early part of the 20th century with the revival of Dravidian ethnic and linguistic consciousness that the higher Tamil castes such as the Veḷḷāḷars began to shy away from their identification as Śūdras which they quite rightly deemed an Aryan imposition from the north.

It is therefore likely that while the Brahmins represent an Aryan imposition on the South as is suggested by their title Ayyar or Aryan, the low, untouchable castes constitute the descendants of a native aboriginal stock of Austro-Asiatic affinities who had been subjugated or enslaved by the true Dravidians during some remote period though it is likely that they too have absorbed a considerable infusion of Dravidian or Mediterranean blood with the passage of time.

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[35] See Caste in Tamil Culture. The Religious Foundations of Śūdra Domination in Tamil Sri Lanka. Bryan Pfaffenberger (1982)

[36] There can be little doubt that the Ayyar or Iyer, the name by which the Brahmans are known in South India, are of Aryan origin. The very name Ayyar is but a corruption of the Sanskritic Ārya. Furthermore, the relationship is also confirmed by genetic studies. As shown by S.Kanthimathi et al (Genetic Study of Dravidian Castes of Tamil Nadu. Journal of Genetics. August 2008) through a phylogenetic analysis, the Iyer, a relatively late upper class migrant group, show a close genetic affinity with Indo-European-speaking peoples, especially with West Bengal Brahmins rather than the early migrants into Tamil Nadu.

[37] See Pfaffenberger (1982)

Proto-Dravidian Society and Culture

Lexico-cultural reconstruction of the Proto-Dravidian speech from available linguistic evidence suggests that the early Dravidians were a fairly civilized people. They had chieftains or kings (PDr.*kō) who lived in palaces (*kōyil) and received tribute (*kappam) and large territories of land (*nāṭu) with villages (*ūr) and hamlets (*paḷḷi). They apparently lived in tracts of land which had forests (*kāṭu) and mountains or hills (*mal). They seem to have been a fairly settled folk who built houses (*wīṭu), thatched with grass (*pul) or even roofed with tiles (*penkk). They also seem to have had some knowledge of agriculture as suggested by terms for plough (*ar-V) and some tool for digging such as hoe or pick-axe (*kuntāl). That grains figured prominently in their diet is suggested by terms for rice (*varinci), for the husk or chaff, probably of paddy (*unk) and for grain-container (*komm). Other food items probably cultivated, but at any rate, known to them were maize or millet (*connal), blackgram (*uẓuntu), horsegram (*koḷ) and mung (*pac-Vṭ). Also known were some sort of yam (*kicampu), tubers (*kiẓ-Vnk), eggplant (*waẓ-Vṭ), onion (*uḷḷi), sesame (*nū) and sugarcane (*cet-Vkk). Among the fruits they seems to have consumed were the banana (*wāẓa). Other trees they were familiar with included the date-palm (*cīnt), palmyra palm (*tāẓ), the fig or pipal (*cuv), mango (*mām) and the jujube (*irak). They were also very likely a pastoral folk as suggested by the fact that they had herds or flocks (*mantay) possibly of cattle (*erutu), buffalo (*erum), goats or sheep (*yāṭu) which were sometimes kept in enclosures (*toẓ-V). From these and other animals they seem to have obtained meat (*iṟaycci) and milk (*pāl) as well as the butter or 'white oil' (*weḷ-ney) derived from it. Among the other animals known were the dog (*nahay), cat *veruku) and ass (*kaẓutay) which were possibly domesticated. Other fauna included the bear (*elVnc), pig (*panṭi), sambur (*kat), deer (*uẓupp), porcupine (*ceyt), mongoose (*munkuc), rat (*eli), jackal (*nari), tiger (*puli), elephant (*yānai) and monkey (*kor-V-nkk). Also known were reptiles such as crocodiles (*mōc), iguanas (*uṭump) and snakes (*pāp). Birds such as the crow (*kāk) and crane (*korVnk) and crustaceans like crab (*nant) and prawn (*et). Fish (*mīn) too were known and apparently consumed as they were caught by hook (*kāl). Food was cooked on a fireplace (*col) with stones to support cooking vessels such as clay pots (*caṭṭi) or copper vessels (*kempu). They also seem to have known of such intoxicating beverages like palm toddy (*īẓam). Medicines (*maruntu) too were known and were very likely derived from trees (*maram). Clothing was also worn, being woven (*nec) from spun thread (*nūl) made from cotton (*parutti) as was footwear (*keruppu) probably made from animal hide (*tōl). They engaged in war (*pōr) in battlefields (*munay) and knew of forts or fortresses (*kōṭṭay) surrounded by moats (*akazttay). Among the weapons they employed were the sword (*wāḷ), axe (*maẓV), club (*kutV) and bows (*wil) and arrows (*ampu). They also seem to have had some knowledge of metals, with iron or the 'black metal' (*cirumpu), gold or the 'yellow metal' (*pac-Vnt) and silver or the 'white metal' (*veḷ-nt) figuring prominently. Among the handicrafts they engaged in were smith work (*kol) and pot-making (*koc). Personal ornamentation was also probably known, being manufactured not only with metals, but also coral (*pawaẓ) and pearls (*mut). That these Proto-Dravidians had reached a high level of civilization is attested by terms such as *tūmpu 'sluice', 'drain' and *ketay 'tank, 'reservoir' suggesting a fair knowledge of irrigation practices.

Note: The V in reconstructed Proto-Dravidian forms stands for unspecified vowel

II) The Dravidians in Sri Lanka

The Dravidian presence in Sri Lanka goes back to very early times including the Pre-Christian period, though it probably does not go back to pre-historic times. This is suggested by the fact that Sri Lanka does not ever seem to have had a Neolithic (Later Stone Age) or Chalcolithic (Copper Age), the Mesolithic or Middle Stone Age that had evolved from a Palaeolithic or Old Stone Age being abruptly superseded by the Proto-historic Iron Age [38]. The Mesolithic we have good reason to believe was represented by the country's Stone Age Man, the ancestors of the country's aboriginal Veddas and the absence of the Neolithic and Chalcolithic in Sri Lanka would suggest the absence of Dravidians who are believed to have peopled these cultures in Central and Southern India.

We however know that Dravidians had settled in the island quite early in its history. Ancient Sinhalese Brāhmī inscriptions of C.3rd century B.C.-1st century B.C. which make reference to Tamil householders (*dameḍa gahapatika*) and others of Tamil origin suggest that a sizeable community of Tamils were domiciled in the country as far back as the Pre-Christian period. One such inscription from Periya Puliyankulama has it: *Dameḍa-vanijha ga[pa]ti Viśakaha leṇe* (The cave of the householder Visaka, the Tamil merchant). Another, found in a rock boulder in the Abhayagiri area of Anuradhapura makes reference to the terrace of the Tamil householders (*dameḍa gahapatikana paśade*).

The Mahāvaṁsa and its sequel, the Cūlavaṁsa record a number of Dravidian invasions of the island beginning from about the 3rd or 2nd century B.C. As observed by S. Paranavitana [39], the incursion of the Tamils was perhaps not unconnected with the decline of the Maurya empire following the demise of Asoka and the withdrawal of imperial garrisons from the Deccan. The first recorded instance of a Dravidian invasion was that of Sena and Guttaka, two horse dealers of Tamil origin who ousted the reigning Sinhalese monarch Sūratissa C.3rd or 2nd B.C. and ruled jointly in Anuradhapura for 22 years. Later usurpers included Eḷāra, a Tamil monarch from the Cōla country who is said to have invaded the island in the time of King Asēla and ruled justly for 44 years during the 3rd century -2nd century B.C. before meeting his death at the hands of the Sinhalese prince Dutthagāmani in single combat. A Tamil invasion from the Cōla country is also said to have taken place during the 5th century A.C. This particular invasion headed by a leader named Paṇḍu was

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[38] See The Prehistory of Sri Lanka.S.U.Deraniyagala (1992)

[39] The heroic age and the later kings of the Vijayan dynasty. CHC (1961)

successful in placing a short-lived Tamil dynasty on the throne of the Sinhalese kingdom. Panḍu and his two sons, Pārinda and Khuddapārinda are said to have ruled in succession for 24 years and were followed by three other Tamil monarchs, the last of whom, Pīṭhiya, was slain in a decisive battle with the Sinhalese leader Dhātusena who went on to found the famous Moriya dynasty . Epigraphic evidence suggests that at least three of these monarchs, viz. Pārinda, Khuddapāinda and Dāthiya were Buddhists or, at least, professed Buddhism while they ruled over the island [40].

Even during times when Tamil rulers did not actually occupy the Sinhalese throne, Tamil soldiers brought over from the Tamil country by previous rulers and rival claimants to the throne during the preceding years tended to exert a considerable influence in the political life of the country, a development which became especially pronounced in the early mediaeval period beginning from the 7th century [41]. Tamil power however does not seem to have been consolidated till the late mediaeval period, for the Sinhalese monarchs, wary of recurrent Dravidian invasions spared no pains to destroy their power. The Jētavanārāma slab inscription of Mahinda IV (C.955-972 A.C.) for instance has it that the King with his majestic power drove away from Lanka the Dravidian foe, just as the rising sun dispels darkness from the sky (*hir-udā-ihimä lak amburen demeḷ-rupu-andur härа lo ek-heḷi-kärä*). However, it was not very long before the invasion of the Cōḷa Emperor Rājarāja I (C.992-993 A.C.) resulted in the fall of the Sinhalese capital of Anuradhapura and in the conquest of the northern part of the island which was organized as a Cōḷa province under the name Mummuṭi-Cōḷa-Manṭalam. A Tamil inscription of Rājarāja found in the Rājarājeśvara Temple at Tanjavur states that he conquered by his army, which was victorious in great battles, among other countries, Īḷa-Maṇṭalam of the Sinhalese who possessed rough strength (*muraṭṭēḷil ciṅkalar Īḷamaṇṭalam*) while that of his successor Rājendra Cōḷa has it that he conquered with his great and warlike army, the whole Īḷamaṇṭalam on the transparent sea (*īḷamaṇṭalamuḷuvaṭum*). Indeed, Rājarāja's successor Rājendra I is said to have brought the entire island – save perhaps for the remoter parts of the south-under Cōla domination [42], albeit for a short period. The invasion of Māgha in the early 13th century

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[40] See Moriyas and Lambakannas . C.W.Nicholas. CHC (1961)

[41] See ibid

[42] See Cola invasions . Nilakanta Sastri. UCHC.Vol.1 (1959)

and the Āryaccakkavarati rulers of Jaffna who followed him led to the further consolidation of Tamil power in the north.

It was only a matter of time before the Sinhalese were able to wrest control of the south, though it would appear that by this time the northern part of the island was probably Tamil-dominated. It was only after the thirteenth century however that substantial Dravidian settlements were formed in the north of the country when Tamil emigrants from South India migrated to the island with the definite aim of settlement [43], a contention also supported by linguistic evidence [44]. It appears that prior to the mid-13th century, mercenary and mercantile communities played an important role in the establishment of Tamil settlements in the island [45]. The rule of the Āriyacakkarāvarati rulers of Jaffna in the subsequent period could be said to have led to the further consolidation of Dravidian power in the north prior to the invasion of Jaffna by the Portuguese in the 16th century after which it came under European colonial rule and the independent Sinhalese- dominated Sri Lankan state that followed.

The anthropometrical details of the Sri Lankan Tamils suggest a close genetic connection between them and the Tamils of South India. According to the Physical Anthropology of Ceylon (1961), the Sri Lankan Tamils are a long-headed people. This is especially so in the case of the Jaffna Tamils (the mean for the head length of 452 subjects measured being 190.24 mm, the mean for head breadth 140.58 mm and the mean cephalic index 74.01) with the largest head length (with a mean cephalic index of 73.62) belonging to the Jaffna Veḷḷāḷars who comprise about 50 percent of the Jaffna population. The Armenoid type is also found in Sri Lanka amongst the Tamils, according to N.D. Wijesekera [46]. He describes the type as being heavily built with a tendency to corpulency and characterized by thick lips, profusion of body hair and absence of prognathism.

Another major Tamil-speaking community, the upcountry or Plantation Tamils largely comprise the descendants of South Indian emigrant workers who migrated to Sri Lanka during the British colonial period, especially during the latter half of the nineteenth century and the early part

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[43] See Early Tamil Settlements in Ceylon.K.Indrapala. JRAS.CB.1969

[44] It would appear that the Jaffna Tamil language branched off from the South Indian Tamil speech sometime after the beginning of the 13th century as it shares with South Indian Tamil the softening of intervocalic surds, a process which had apparently not taken place before 1200 A.C.

[45] See Indrapala (1969)

[46] The People of Ceylon (1949)

of the twentieth century, as indentured labour for the country's vast coffee and tea plantations. There is however reason to believe that these folk have originally derived, not from the true Dravidian type, but from an ancient Austro-Asiatic stock of South India. The Mediterranean element, prominent among higher caste Tamil groups such as the Veḷḷāḷar, does not appear to figure significantly in the physical composition of this community. Besides, the Armenoid element is hardly present or is altogether absent. We certainly know that the Plantation Tamils comprised of depressed caste groups in South India before they found their way into Sri Lanka. It has been claimed that the majority of these Estate Tamils belong to the depressed South Indian caste groups such as the Pallans and Paraiyans [47], and as shown earlier, these groups appear to constitute the descendants of a native aboriginal folk of Austro-Asiatic affinities. It is therefore likely that the country's Plantation Tamils have originally derived from an Austro-Asiatic stock, with a sizeable infusion of Mediterranean blood in later times.

This contention is also supported by the available anthropological evidence. As noted in the Physical Anthropology (1961), the Indian Estate Tamils from Kandy are "somewhat darker skinned than any of the Ceylon Tamil groups". They also differ slightly from the Jaffna Tamils with regard to the cephalic index (Jaffna Tamil 74.01 as against Estate Tamil 75.83) and nasal index (Jaffna Tamil 71.05 as against Estate Tamil 72.04). Much emphasis however cannot be placed on the cephalic index per se as both the Mediterranean and Austro-Asiatic stocks are long-headed. The broader noses of the Estate Tamils is however significant. The Estate Tamils are also significantly shorter in stature that any of the Ceylon Tamil groups (ibid).

III) The evolution of Tamil

Dravidian speeches have like some Indo-European languages been subject to considerable phonetic and semantic change throughout the ages so that it is not an easy task to reconstruct the Proto-Dravidian speech, though this has been attempted with limited success. P.T.Srinivasa Aiyangar [48] has on the basis of native Dravidian words in Old Tamil attempted the lexico-cultural reconstruction of primitive Dravidian society before it began to come under Aryan influence, a task improved upon more recently by B. Krishnamurti in his Dravidian languages (2003)

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[47] See Caste continuities in Ceylon. R. Jayaraman (1975)

[48] Pre-Aryan Tamil Culture (1930)

which has taken into consideration new developments in the field of Proto-Dravidian linguistic research.

Linguistic evidence obtained from a carefully and critically reconstructed Proto-Dravidian suggests that Dravidian is connected with Elamite, the language of ancient Elam spoken primarily in southwestern Iran, in the vicinity of the Zagros mountains and the adjacent plains of Kuzistan as well as to the south along the coast of the Persian Gulf. David Mc. Alpin [49] has attempted to show that the two languages derive from a common proto-language, Proto-Elamo-Dravidian (PED). He has attempted the reconstruction of a common word for 'brick' (which would suggest that the postulated Elamo-Dravidian culture was familiar with city-building) as seen in the correspondences between Elamite *upat* 'brick', 'brickwork' and PDr.*uppar* 'bricklaying' (PED **upat* 'brick) and a common stockbreeding vocabulary such as terms for cattle, ovicuprid, goat, etc.

Similarities in lexical items are however not confined to these elements alone, for Vaclav Blazek [50] has cited a number of other similarities:

Elamite	Proto-Dravidian
ten 'sweetness'	* *tēn* 'honey'
na 'day *nar* 'daily'	* *ner* 'sun', 'day'
dudu 'foal'	* *tūṭ* 'calf'
kuttu 'cattle'	* *kōtay* 'bull', 'cow'
piti 'vessel'	* *puṭṭi* 'earthen vessel'
kuna 'hair'	* *kūntal* 'hair
ulkina 'weapon'	* *alaku* 'blade of weapon'

Among other correspondences between Elamite and Tamil have been suggested Elam.*bar* 'seed' and T.*vari* 'rice grain' (represented probably also in PDr **var-inci* 'rice' where modern Tamil has *arisi*) and Elam.*kutira* 'bearer' (pr.fr.Elam.*kuti* 'to bear', 'carry') and T.*kudirai* 'horse' which in the olden days probably referred to asses or hemiones, but not true horses. Other correspondences are seen in pronouns (Eg.Elam.*ni*, *nu* 'you' which could be compared to PDr. * *nī* 'you' also found in Tamil) and in certain verbs such as Elam. *na* 'say' which could be compared to PDr **en* 'to say, speak' (PED **ena*) and *mak* 'eat' which could be compared to PDr. **mōq* 'to eat' though attested forms are only

[49] Proto-Elamo-Dravidian : The evidence and its implications .TAPS (1981)

[50] Elam: a bridge between Ancient Near East and Dravidian India. Archaeology and Language. Ed.Roger Blench & Mathew Spriggs (1999)

found in North Dravidian speeches such as Kurukh *mōxnā* and Malto *mōqe* 'to eat' to which could also perhaps be connected the Malayalam *mōkuka* 'to drink', 'sip'. Dravidian also resembles Elamite in its morphological structure as both are agglutinating languages.

There have also been attempts to connect Dravidian with the ancient Sumerian language of Sumer or Southern Babylonia . Sumerian, a long extinct language, was widely spoken in Sumer (Southern Iraq) from C.3500-2400 B.C. before being superseded by Akkadian, the ancient Semitic speech of Mesopotamia, following the Semitic invasion of Sumer by Sargon, King of Akkad . A. Sathasivam [51] has attempted a comparison of ancient Sumerian vocables with those of Tamil and other Dravidian languages in support of his thesis that Sumerian is 'essentially Dravidian'.

He cites the following correspondences between Sumerian and Tamil:

Sumerian	Tamil	
ur	*ūr*	'city'
ur	*uru*	'plough'
bit	*vīṭu*	'house'
bar	*varai*	'boundary'
gud	*kūṭu*	'nest'
gal	*kal*	'rob'
gu	*ku*	'cry'
ku	*kō*	'lord'
gub	*kūppu*	'worship'
kalam	*kaḷam*	'land'
kur	*kutirai*	'horse'
bar	*pārai*	'stone'

Sathasivam who elaborates his theory in a subsequent essay [52] also cites typological similarities, i.e. the agglutinative character of Sumerian and Dravidian, as pointing to a common origin. He also notes that the similarity between the yet undeciphered Indus valley script and the archaic Sumerian script of the Jamdet Nasr sites clearly points to a former unity of the two scripts. Indeed, it is not only the Sumerian script that has been shown to bear a close resemblance to the Indus script, but also the Elamite. G.R. Hunter [53] pointed out long ago that the pictographs in the

[51] Sumerian A Dravidian Language (1965)

[52] The Dravidian origin of Sumerian.PFICSTS,Vol.11 (1969)

[53] The Script of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro and its connection with other scripts (1934)

Indus valley seals bore a close resemblance to the older Proto-Elamite pictographic script. This linguistic and pictographic data only go on to support the view elucidated earlier that all these peoples, the Sumerians, Elamites and the peoples of the Indus valley civilization as well as the Dravidians share a common, albeit a rather distant origin.

At any rate, it seems likely that Proto-Dravidian existed as a single language as late as 4000 B.C. [54] and it is after this period, it is believed, that this early Dravidian tongue began to disintegrate with the emergence of distinct dialects which with time evolved into the modern-day Dravidian languages of India. Tamil, of all the Dravidian languages, has the longest literary tradition spanning over two millennia, the earliest records probably being cave inscriptions dated to the 2nd century B.C., and the earliest extant literary text, the grammar Tolkāppiyam assigned to the 3rd century B.C. – 1st century A.C.

Although today Tamil is strictly speaking applied to that variety of Dravidian speech usually spoken in the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu, in the olden days the term seems to have denoted all members of the Dravidian family. M.D. Raghavan [55] notes: "In the terms Malanāṭṭu Tamil for Malayalam, Karināṭṭu Tamil for Kannada, and Tulunāṭṭu Tamil for Tulu, and Sen Tamil for pure Tamil, we have examples of the wide significance of the word Tamil. By Tamil was meant the Dravidian language –any language of the group, as contrasted to Sanskrit". "Niranam poet Rama Panickar introduces his work in the words 'Tamilāyi koṇṭariyik kunnēn', meaning 'I am saying in Tamil'. This does not mean that he is writing in Sen Tamil. He is translating Vyasa's Brahmanda Puranam from Sanskrit into Malayalam, a Dravidian tongue. Another striking example is Līlā Tilakam, the oldest Malayalam grammar, written in Sanskrit style. In speaking of the Mani Pravālam style of poetry (a synthesis of Malayalam and Sanskrit), the author has the remark "Tamil mani Samskrita pavilam' (Tamil gem and Sanskrit coral). The author does not mean by the word Tamil any language other than Malayalam". Raghavan however observes that the "present connotation of the word Tamil is limited to Sen Tamil only". He adds: "It is clear that Tamil in the days of Tamilakam meant all the languages of the Dravidian family".

Tamil, like other Dravidian speeches is an agglutinative one. As in the case of other Dravidian languages, it has a profusion of dental, labial, palatal and velar conjunct consonants, which contribute to its rather crude,

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[54] Comparative Dravidian Phonology. Kamil Zvelebil (1970)

[55] The Malabar inhabitants of Jaffna. SPPFV (1956)

statical character. In Tamil, a voiced plosive (sonant) cannot commence a word, nor can a voiceless plosive (surd) be admitted intervocally unless doubled. Even foreign loans appear to have been subject to this peculiar tendency. Consider for instance Skt. *deva* 'god' which becomes *taiva* in Tamil and Skt. *bhāgya* 'happiness' which becomes Tamil *pākkiyam*. Even in the script, there exists only one character to denote a surd and its corresponding sonant. Thus the character which is employed to denote *t* in the initial position will be employed to denote *d* intervocally. The same could be said of other plosives such as *p* and *b* and *k* and *g*. According to Caldwell (1856), "*The Tamilian rule which requires the same consonant to be pronounced as k in one position and as g in another –as ṭ , t, p in one position and ḍ, d, b in another –is not a mere dialectic peculiarity, the gradual result of circumstances, of a modern refinement invented by grammarians, but is essentially inherent in the language, and has been a characteristic principle of it from the beginning*".

This view however no longer appears to be tenable in the light of later and more detailed research. Jules Bloch [56] who has based his arguments on Kumārila Bhaṭṭa's Tantravārttika (latter part of the 7th century A.C.) which cites sundry Dravidian words such as *atar* 'road' (which survives in Tamil in the form *adarkkōl* 'highway robbery') and *pāp* 'serpent' (T. *pāmbu*) contends that intervocalic surds did exist in Old Tamil. Bloch's contention is deserving of serious consideration as it could have far-reaching implications for a proper study of Tamil linguistics. That the vocables given by Kumārila represent Old Tamil forms is supported by a number of factors. Firstly, the term *Drāviḍādi bhāṣāyām* used by him to designate the language being dealt with can mean none other than an ancestral form of Tamil whose very name seems to derive from the Proto-Dravidian **Dramiẓa* from which the Sanskrit *Draviḍa* also derives. Secondly, many of the words cited by him as belonging to the language such as *cor* 'rice', *atar* 'road' and *vair* 'belly' are to this day found in Tamil, albeit having undergone some minor phonological changes. The strongest argument of all, as noted by Bloch is that two of these words, *atar* and *cor* "are at present unknown anywhere except in Tamil".

There can also be little doubt that the forms given by Kumārila reflect actual usage of his time. As pointed out by Bloch, that the *d* of *adar* was once pronounced as a surd by Kumārila's contemporaries is proven unmistakably by the fact that he identifies the word (*atar*) with the Sanskrit root *tar*. As for the word *pāp* given by Kumārila, Bloch notes that it is evidently the common stem from which we get Tamil *pāmbu*, Kannada *pāvu* and Telugu *pāmu*, to which we must add the adjectival

[56] The intervocalic consonants in Tamil. IA (1919)

form *pāppu*. Says Bloch : "We may even legitimately ask whether there was not a time when that language contained only surd consonants to the exclusion of sonants. This assumption alone would explain why, when they adopted the northern alphabet, the Tamils came to exclude the symbols representing sonants, just as, owing to the absence of aspirates in their own language, they rejected the symbols of aspirated consonants. So both from the testimony of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa and from orthographical facts of the language we are led to infer that the present sonority of intervocalic consonants is a secondary and modern development". To this we may add the fact that in the ancient Brahmi inscriptions in Sinhala Prakrit assigned to the 3rd century B.C.-1st century A.C. apparently Tamil loans such as *Parumaka* and *Parumakalu* used in the sense of 'chief' and 'chieftainess' have preserved the intervocalic *k* and have not turned it into *g* or *h* as Modern Tamil has done which would add further weight to Bloch's contentions that the present sonority of intervocalic consonants would not have existed in the ancient Dravidian speech.

Bloch also contends that in prehistoric times, Dravidian did possess voiced sounds, a contention supported by the fact that the Classical European writers knew the Tamils as *Damir* or *Dimir* which appears to have authenticated local usage . The not unlikely contention of Bloch that the Sanskritic term *Dravida* is a transliteration of an authentic indigenous term also supports such a view. Bloch holds that the loss of sonority must be sought for somewhere between the beginning of the Christian era and the time of Kumārila, and that the surds thus obtained became sonants intervocally comparatively recently and that in 1200 A.C. (about when the Nannūl, a Tamil grammar, was written) there is not yet any trace to be found of the change in question.

That early or Proto-Dravidian possessed initial voiced plosives is also suggested by certain Dravidian loan words in early Sanskrit literature. Among the few apparently Dravidian loan words occurring in Vedic Sanskrit are *bala* 'strength' occurring in the RV and *bilva* 'woodapple' occurring in the AV the modern Tamil forms of which are *vali* (also *vallai* 'strength', *val* 'strong', *valakkai* 'right (lit.strong) hand' and *vilā* believed to go back to the Proto-Dravidian **wal* 'to be strong' and **wilawu* but which we believe on the basis of the older evidence in the Vedas may go back to the forms **bal* and **bilawu*. Among the other Dravidian loans believed to have been borrowed by Sanskrit and which show initial voiced stops may be included Skt.*guḍa* 'globe' and *gauli* 'house lizard' deriving respectively from a reconstructed PDr **kuṭ-V* 'eyeball' and *ka-Vli* 'gecko' but which as in the case of the earlier cited examples may go back to forms with initial voiced stops, viz. **guṭ-V* and **ga-Vli*. This is further

supported by the fact that many a Dravidian tongue other than Tamil show initial voiced stops:

Cf. T.*val* 'strong' but Te.*balu*, O.Ka.*bal* 'strong'and pr. Br.balun 'big'
T.*kavuli* 'lizard' but Ka.*gavuli*, Ko.*gavli*, Tu.*gauli*

Thus both the evidence from Sanskrit and the phonetics of some modern Dravidian forms themselves suggest that the Proto-Dravidian forms of these two vocables were **bal* and **ga-Vli.*

At any rate it would appear that the general loss of sonority in Tamil would have occurred by the time of Tolkāppīyanār, the author of the earliest extent Tamil Grammar,Tolkāppīyam , which is assigned to C . 3rd century B.C.-1st century A.C. Subrahmanya Sastri [57] has sought to show that at the time of Tolkāppīyanār, Tamil lacked such voiced sounds like *j,g,b,d* and *ḍ*. The script too appears to have been phonetic. Tolkāppīyanār who gives *k,c,t,ṭ* and *p* as *valleluttu* or hard consonants (implying that they were voiceless) makes no provision for or mention of their corresponding sonants, which he should have in case they did exist in his time .

The Tamil of old also does not seem to have known sibilants or aspirates and indeed this appears to have been the situation until fairly recent times. The palatal *ś*, the lingual *ṣ* and the aspirate *h* do not figure in the Tolkāppīyam assigned to C. 3rd century B.C.-1st century A.C. Though in Tamil, a sibilant having the phonetic value of *ś* (written *c*) does exist at the present day in an initial or intervocalic position, it takes the palatal sound *c* when doubled. In Telugu and Malayalam, as well as vulgar colloquial Tamil, the sound is written as well as pronounced *c*, and there is reason to believe that this was also the original Tamil pronunciation.

Caldwell (1856) believes the palatal *ś* to be a 'refinement' of *c* by the higher classes of the Tamil country. In this connection, he says that "even after the arrival of the Europeans in India, when the Portuguese wrote Soramandalam as Choramandel, and the missionary Ziegenbalg wrote Sudra as Tshuddira, the harder palatal sound seems to have been the one in general use". In any case there seems to have existed significant dialectal variations within Tamil itself. Sastri (1929) has noted that the word *śaṭṭi* (as pronounced by Tanjore people) is pronounced as *caṭṭi* by Tinnevelly people and the word *aham* (as pronounced in Tanjore) is pronounced as *agam* in Madras.

Although modern Tamil lacks compound consonants, this may not have necessarily been so in the past. Bloch (1919) opines that compound consonants such as *dr* could have well existed in the ancient Tamil speech

[57] Is Tamil script phonetic. JOR (1929)

(of which we possess only secondary survivals) and cites the case of the Sanskrit term *Draviḍa* which occurs in ancient Aryan works such as the Mahābhārata, Atharvavedapariśiṭṭa and the Code of Manu. He opines that when the word *Draviḍa* made its appearance in Sanskrit, it was the transliteration of an authentic indigenous word . He believes that simplification of compound consonants took place in Dravidian at about the same time it occurred among the Prakritic Aryan speeches. At any rate such simplification would have taken place by around the beginning of the Christian era since it is the simplified forms (*Damir* etc.) rather than compound forms that figure in the notices of the Classical writers. Bloch also holds that the terminal vowel as found in modern Tamil in words like *śōru* 'rice', *pāmbu* 'serpent' and *vayiru* 'belly' are but a comparatively recent development, as is suggested by their absence in the corresponding forms given by Kumārila, viz. *cor*, *pāp* and *vair*. He also believes that nasalization after a long vowel characteristic of Tamil and found in words such as *pāmbu* 'serpent' and *vēmbu* 'Melia tree' are also recent developments. Not only is this supported by Kumārila's *pāp* but also by the fact that such nasals are absent in other major Dravidian speeches such as Telugu and Kannada.

Another feature of Proto-Dravidian is the possession of an initial y where corresponding modern Tamil forms show a vowel. For instance **yāṭu* 'goat where in modern Tamil we have *āḍu*. The old form with *y* however occurs even in Sangam poetry such as in the Puranānūru (C.2nd century B.C.) where a poem attributed to one Nannākanār has it: "*yāmaiyin pulavunāru muṭṭai*" (Fresh smelling turtle eggs). The *yāmai* referred to here is the 'turtle' known in modern Tamil as *āmai*. Proto-Dravidian also seems to have possessed an initial palatal **c* which has been dropped in modern Tamil and other Dravidian languages. This is suggested by the fact that Tamil *ulai*, Kannada *ole*, Konda *solu* and Kuwi *hollu* 'fireplace' has cognates in Aryan languages such as Sindhī *culhi*, Oriya *cullī*, Bihārī *cūlh*, Marāthī *cūl* and Kāśmīrī *ċōl* which appear to have preserved the initial *c* of PDr. *col* which has been completely lost in Tamil but still preserved in Konda as *s* and Kuwi as *h*. Indeed, even Tamil *uppu* 'salt' is postulated to have derived from a hypothetical **cup* on the basis that the initial *c* is still preserved in the form *cuvai* 'taste'. We also know that T.*inji* 'ginger' had as its protoform * *cinki-vēr* (PDr.* *vēr* 'root') which is attested in the Pali *singivera* and Greek *zingibiris*, both evidently loan words from Dravidian.

It is also possible that Tamil forms with intermediate –y- such as *peyar* (>*pēr*) 'name' have in some instances at least derived from forms with **-c-* which is suggested by the cognate Kannada form *heśar* and other forms such as Tulu *pudar*. The aspiration of p>h in Kannada we know is an

innovation and a recent one at that since even in Old Kannada the p has been preserved. The same however cannot be said of the intervocalic –ś- which may well be a vestige of PDr.*-*c*-. Tamil in common with Telugu and Malayalam has also palatalized an original PDr. **k* occurring before front vowels into *c*>*ś*:

Cf.PDr. **kem* 'red' (T.Te..Ma.*cem*, but Ka. Ko.Tu. *kem*)

PDr **key* 'to do' (T.Te.Ma.*cey* but Ka.Ko.*key*, Tu.*gaipini*)

It is apparent here that it is those languages such as Kannada that have been more faithful with regard to the PDr **k* which has been lost in Tamil. Tamil also has forms like *cemmari-āḍu* 'sheep' which seems to go back to the PDr **kemmeli*, a reflect of which is seen in the phrase *cevveli-mayir* 'sheep-hair' occurring in the old work known as Cintāmani.

Tamil in its tendency to assimilate consonants has in some instances dispensed with an original nasal. E.g.T.*ettu* 'eight' where the PDr. Form seems to have been *ent-V*. This is evident from the fact that the nasal is even found in the T.*en-padu* 'eighty (lit.eight tens). Similarly Malayalam which has *ettu* for 'eight has *en-mar* for 'eight persons'. Kannada not only has *entu* for 'eight' but also derivatives such as *em-battu* 'eighty' and *en-bar* 'eight persons' while Tulu has *enma* or *enuma* for 'eight'. From all this, it seems likely that Tamil too once possessed a nasal in vocables such as this which were subsequently lost.

Yet another hypothetical phoneme reconstructed for Proto-Dravidian is the laryngeal *H, presumably a fricative or more likely a frictionless continuant which is said to account for the existence in early Tamil of a peculiar sound called *āytam* which was traditionally written with three small circles ∴ and transliterated as ḥ. The phoneme occurs in Old Tamil records of C.3rd century B.C.-3rd century A.C. with some kind of h-colouring in about a dozen lexical items such as Old Tamil *iḥtu* 'this one', *aḥtu* 'that one' and *paḥtu* 'ten'. Supposing the existence of a PDr. **H* to account for this sound may perhaps best explain the development of several Dravidian lexical and grammatical items with aberrant phonology such as the root for the numeral 'three (**muH*) as well as irregular and high frequency words like **caH* 'die', **taH* 'bring' and **waH* 'come'. Indeed, it has been postulated that this laryngeal **H* behaves in much the same way as other semi-vowels such as **y* and **w* and intervocalic **k* in producing compensatory lengthening of the preceding vowel in Proto-Dravidian just as **tokal* > *tōl* 'skin' and **teyam* > *tēn* 'honey' [58].

[58] See Comparative Dravidian Linguistics. B.Krishnamurti (2001)

1V) The Local Tamil Language

Intensive Tamil colonisation in the north probably did not begin until the 13th century when Tamil emigrants migrated to the island with the definite aim of settlement, as contended by Indrapala (1969).This is also supported by linguistic evidence. The Jaffna Tamil language appears to have branched off from the South Indian parent speech sometime after the beginning of the 13th century since it shares with South Indian Tamil the softening of intervocalic surds, a process which had apparently not taken place before 1200 A.C. as seen earlier. Interestingly, however, there is a Jaffna sub-dialect where this feature is not seen, which might indicate that it originated from the mainland at an earlier period [59].

That in ancient times the Tamils did not form any important or numerically significant group in the island is also borne out by the fact that the traditional Tamil designation for Sri Lanka, *Īḻam* appears to be but a corruption of the Prakritic *Sīhaḷa*, an appellation given to the country by the Sinhalese who originally hailed from Northern India. Besides, the fact that the olden day Tamil literati such as Iḷaṅkōvaṭikal, the author of the Cilappatikāram (C.2nd century A.C.) defined the Tamil or Dravidian land as being bounded by Kumari (Cape Comorin) on the south, Vēṅkaṭam (Tirupati hills) on the north and by the sea on the east and west, shows that Sri Lanka or any part of it did not constitute traditional Dravidian territory in ancient times.

Jaffna Tamil generally resembles standard South Indian Tamil to a great extent. The phonology is virtually the same. For example, the rule pertaining to the occurrence of surds in initial, and sonants in intervocalic position. In Jaffna Tamil however, the usual Tamil palatal *ś (< c)* has undergone a further refinement into *s*. The low front vowel absent in classical and Indian Tamil is also known to occur in Jaffna Tamil, but rarely, in words where corresponding Indian forms show a final *–yi* as for instance in *nā̃* 'dog' where the proper Classical and Indian usage is *nāyi*.

In certain instances, however, we would find that Sri Lankan Tamil has preserved the ancient Tamil usage as for instance in retaining the conjunct consonants of classical Tamil which have in certain positions undergone a change in Indian Tamil as for instance in *semmariyāḍu* 'sheep' and *vettilai*

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[59] F.B.J.Kuiper (Note on Old Tamil and Jaffna Tamil. IIJ 1962) records that although his informant C.Balasingham of Tellipallai gave a clearly voiced pronunciation of intervocalic sounds, he had also stated that 'further to the east' the Tamil word *poka* was pronounced as such, with intervocalic *k*. Thus there exists a Jaffna sub-dialect with intervocalic surds that may suggest a greater antiquity than the speech with intervocalic sonants.

'betel-leaf' where modern Indian Tamil often has *cenriyāḍu* and *vetle*. Sri Lankan Tamil is also known to preserve the three-way deictic distinction found in the ancient and mediaeval forms of the language, as for example in *ivan* 'this man', *uvan* 'that man nearby' and *avan* 'that man yonder' where mainland Tamil has done away with the form *uvan* [60].

Indeed, the Tamils of Jaffna have traditionally been very proud of the conservative character of their speech. James Cordiner [61] observed that the local Tamils "contend that they preserved the Tamul,or Malabar,tongue in greater purity than it is to be found in any part of Hindoostan". In like manner, S. Natesan (1959) observes that as a result of the isolation of the Ceylon Tamils from South India for a long period, the Tamil spoken by them presents some distinctive features of which they are proud, "especially as the Tamils of South India use, in their colloquial speech, more words of Sanskrit origin and also Hindustani words, disregarding Tamil phonology in the pronunciation of such words". He notes: "In Śangam literature we find only a small percentage of Sanskrit words, and even in regard to these words, they are used in conformity with some rules of Tamil phonology laid down in the Tolkappiyam, according to which, for instance, the consonant *r* should not be used at the beginning of a word unless it is preceded by an appropriate vowel. This rule is scrupulously observed even today by the illiterate villagers of Jaffna. Sanskrit words like *ruci* and *raktam*, for instance, are pronounced by them as *urusi* and *irattam*".

Although it is true that local Tamil has resisted the inroads of Sanskrit and Hindustani words which South Indian Tamil has succumbed to, it nevertheless possesses a large vocabulary of words borrowed or corrupted from European languages, the heritage of European colonial rule in the island. A considerable number of Portuguese loans pertaining to flora and fauna, articles of dress, furniture, architecture, law, war, religion and navigation are to be found in local Tamil [62]. The Dutch language has likewise influenced local Tamil in matters of law, administration, household utensils and food items, though the number of Dutch loans is small compared to the number of Portuguese loans [63]. They nevertheless figure in some interesting usages, like *tuṭṭu* (Dut.*duit* 'copper coin of

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[60] See Modern Tamil. E.Annamalai. The Dravidian Languages.Ed.Sanford Steever (1998)

[61] Description of Ceylon (1807)

[62] See Portuguese in Tamil, Gnana Prakasar. CALR (1919)

[63] See Some Dutch loan-words in the Jaffna dialect of Tamil . S. Thananjayarajasingham . PFICSTS . Vol. 11 (1969)

which eight went to make stuiver') sometimes used in Jaffna Tamil in the sense of 'money' as in *tuṭṭu illai* 'no money'. We also find a few English loans being used in local Tamil, as for instance in the case of professionals such as *kilākkar* 'clerk', *maniccar* 'manager', *incipattar* 'inspector' and *mekkānikkar* 'mechanic'.

V) The Tamil Script

It is not unlikely that the early Tamils expressed their language in a script identical or similar to the pictographic script employed in the various seals of the Indus Valley civilization of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa in the 3rd millennium B.C. This script bears a curious resemblance to what is popularly known as the Proto-Elamite script of South Western Iran, a yet undeciphered script presumed, but not as yet conclusively proven to be Elamite which is assigned to C.3400 – 2800 B.C. It has been contended by Daniel Potts [64] that the Harappan script has its origins in the earlier Proto-Elamite pictographs via the so-called potter's marks, incised signs on sherds and ceramic vessels retrieved from the site of Tepe Yahya in Kerman Province in Southern Iran which is believed to have been occupied by Proto-Elamite speakers on the basis of various artifacts C.3000 B.C. and which could have easily diffused to the Indo-Iranian borderland and thence to the Indus Valley region. If this indeed be the case, it would suggest that the Elamites and the Harappans shared many common cultural traits, which may perhaps also point to a common origin of these peoples in still earlier times. That the Indus Valley script –and language- was probably Dravidian is suggested by two important finds, one in Southern India and the other in Northern Sri Lanka. Particularly interesting is the recent discovery of a Neolithic stone celt, a hand-held axe in the Indus script at Sembion-Kandiyur near Mayiladuturai in Tamil Nadu dated to C.2000-1500 B.C. which well known epigraphist Iravatham Mahadevan believes confirms that the "Neolithic people of Tamil Nadu shared the same language family of the Harappan group, which can only be Dravidian" [65]. Also significant is an important find in Northern Sri Lanka, namely, the Ānakkōṭṭai seal found in an ancient megalithic burial site in Jaffna which seems to have formed some portion of a signet ring. The seal comprises of some ideograms in the first line, both of which are in the form of an upturned trident (*triśūla*) and some Brahmi characters of C.3rd-2nd century B.C. which appears to

[64] The Potter's marks of Tepe Yahya. Paléorient.1981

[65] See Significance of Mayiladuthurai find. T.S.Subramanian. The Hindu. May 01,2006

read *kō-vētan* or *kō-vēntu* meaning 'king-king' or 'god-king' since in Tamil *kō* can mean either god or king (T.*kōyil* fr.T. *kō* 'god' + *il* 'house').

Dr.K.Indrapala [66] believes the ideograms in the form of a trisula (which also commonly occur in Indus Valley seals) to stand for 'king' and to be an exact representation of the Dravidian *kō-vētan* or king-king' found in the lines below in Brāhmī script, very much like the bilingual legends on a coin. On this premise, he contends that the first line of the seal consists of Indus-derived characters with a meaning, namely that of 'king'. What is also interesting is that in ideographic coin legends found in ancient coins from the extreme south of India (Tirunelveli region of Tamil Nadu), the *trisūla* symbol appears mostly towards the end of the legends, recollecting the names of the rulers of the Sangam age which end with the suffix *ko* (Raghupathy 1987).

However the Tamil script as we know it today does not appear to have any connection with the Indus script, but rather appears to have derived from the Brahmi script which is of North Indian origin. The earliest known specimens of Tamil language are found in what is known as Tamil Brahmi which was evidently derived from a southern form of Brahmi known as South Asokan. These Tamil Brahmi inscriptions are mostly short, donative records often found in rock-caverns with stone beds for ascetics, mainly of the Jaina faith and occasionally Buddhist. The script was apparently introduced into the Tamil country about the 3rd century B.C. in the wake of the southern spread of Jainism and Buddhism and was probably introduced by Jain and Buddhist monks during the post-Asokan period, though the recent discovery of Tamil Brahmi characters inscribed on a burial urn at the iron age burial site at Adichanallur, 24 miles from Tirunelveli town in Tamil Nadu could push the date of its introduction further back. The inscription which reads *ka ri a ra va [na] ta,* apparently a name, is believed to date back to C.500 B.C. on the basis of preliminary thermo-luminescence dating of the pottery [67].

Tamil Brahmi somewhat modified Asokan Brahmi to suit the phonetic system of the Tamil language and it was thus that it added extra characters to represent letters not found in Prakrit and omitted letters for sounds not present in Tamil such as aspirates and voiced consonants. The script subsequently evolved into a more cursive form, and by about the 5th or 6th century had become what came to be known as *Vaṭṭeḻuttu* or 'round script'

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[66] Cited in Early Settlements in Jaffna. An Archaeological Survey.Ponnampalam Raghupathy. 1987

[67] See Rudimentary Tamil-Brahmi script unearthed at Adichanallur. T.S.Subramanian. The Hindu. Feb.17, 2005

which was in use in Tamil Nadu for a considerable period of time [68]. With time, however, Vaṭṭeḻuttu lost out to the Pallava script introduced by the Pallava dynasty who claimed an origin from the Brahmans of North India and stressed on the importance of Sanskrit. The script was formed by simplifying the Grantha script (which itself had derived from Brahmi but was more suited for the expression of Sanskrit than Tamil) and adding to it Vaṭṭeḻuttu characters, though an alternative view would have it that Vaṭṭeḻuttu which had become more and more rounded as the writing material of stylus and palm leaf used in South India favoured this tendency exerted a considerable influence in modifying the shape of Grantha Tamil resulting in its also getting more rounded [69]. It is this imperial script used in the Cola Kingdom that eventually evolved into the modern Tamil script.

The Tamil script (*Tamiḻ-ariccuvaṭi*) which is syllabic like Brahmi and Sinhala has 31 characters, 12 vowels (*uyireḻuttu* or 'soul-letters') both short and long, 18 consonants (*meyyeḻuttu* or 'body-letters') and a character known as *āytam* which is neither a consonant nor a vowel, but is termed *aliyeḻuttu* or 'hermaphrodite letter'while the extended script used to write Sanskrit words or on occasions other foreign loanwords has six Grantha (*kirantam*) characters *ja*, *ṣa*, *śa*, *ha*, *kṣa* and *śri*. The script has been found to be lacking in characters needed to express foreign sounds, as for instance *b*,*g* and *d* in initial positions as well as *f* and *z* found in European languages and Arabic. In order to address the want of such characters denoting sounds which do not form part and parcel of the Tamil vocabulary, i.e. loan words, V. Vallipuram [70] has proposed a number of reforms to the Tamil script using diacritical marks.

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[68] Early Tamil Epigraphy. From the Earliest Times to the Sixth century A.D. Iravatham Mahadevan (2003)

[69] See Tamil Palaeography as an aspect of Culture. A Veluppillai. Senarat Paranavitana Commemoration Volume. Ed.L.Prematilleke, K.Indrapala & J.E. Van Lohuizen De Leeuw (1978)

[70] Suggestions to solve the problem of inadequacy of the Tamil Alphabet. PFICSTS. Vol.11. 1969

CHAPTER 05

THE SRI LANKAN MOORS AND THEIR LANGUAGE

The Sōnahar or Sri Lankan Moors have a long history in Sri Lanka. The descendants of Arabs who espoused local women they are largely a mixed race with a considerable infusion of Sinhalese and Dravidian blood. Nevertheless their Arab ancestry is a matter of pride for them and provides them the basis on which to claim a distinct ethnic identity.

1) The Origins of the Moors

We will here attempt to show that the core or nucleus of the Sri Lankan Moor community comprises the descendants of Arabian merchants and settlers hailing from Iraq and the Arabian peninsula who arrived in the country during the mediaeval period, and perhaps earlier to form considerable settlements in various parts of the island, and especially the coastal areas. Oral tradition, genealogical records, anthropological data and linguistic, epigraphic and literary evidence will be adduced to support this view which was elaborated by the Moorish scholar I.L.M.Abdul Azeez in his famous treatise on the origins of the Moors[1]. Abdul Azeez's thesis sought to disprove P.Ramanathan's assertion [2] that the Moors were Tamils by race on the basis of their spoken language as well as on account of certain customs relating to marriage such as *strīdānam*, the *ālatti* ceremony, the wearing of *kūrai* and the tying of the *tāli*. Abdul Azeez's arguments were largely based on Moorish oral tradition relating to their earliest settlements and the etymology of the term Sōnahar.

The early Muslim settlements in the island appear to have arisen from peaceful infiltration of Arabian merchants and settlers over a considerable period of time, though such settlement would have been more pronounced at certain times than others. Although the Arab presence in Sri Lanka is generally believed to have not been very old, the fact is otherwise.

According to the Mahāvaṁsa, an ancient chronicle of Sinhalese royalty compiled around the 5th century A.C., King Pandukābhaya (C. 4th century B.C.) had a quarter named *Yonasabhāga-vatthu* (lit. ground set apart for the *Yonas*) located on the side of the western gate of Anuradhapura. There

[1] A Criticism of Mr.Ramanathan's 'Ethnology of the 'Moors' of Ceylon'(1907)

[2] The Ethnology of the 'Moors' of Ceylon. JRAS.CB (1888)

has been some dispute as to who these *Yonas* were, it being generally assumed that they were Greeks, especially as the term suggests a close similarity with the Greek *Ionia*. We know however that the Prakritic *Yona* is cognate with, or derived from the Sanskritic *Yavana*.

This becomes especially significant in view of the findings by Rajendrala'la Mitra [3], based largely on literary evidence, showing that originally the *Yavana* of the Sanskrit writers was the name of a country and of its people to the west of Kandahar (Arabia, Persia, Medea or Assyria) subsequently becoming the appellation for all casteless races to the west of the Indus, including the Arabs and the Asiatic Greeks. He has shown that there is absolutely no evidence to indicate that it was at any one time the exclusive name of the Greeks. Besides, Mitra has shown that the term *Yona* occurring in the Asokan edicts of C.3rd century B.C. would have denoted Syria and the countries to the east of it as far as Afghanistan , but neither Greece nor Egypt [4].

In any case, Wilhelm Geiger [5] has shown that the Yonas of Pandukabhaya's time were probably Arabian traders. He has noted that although in the 4th century B.C., the term Yona was applied to Greeks, from the second century A.C., it was used to denote all foreigners who hailed from the west, as well as the Arabs. As the Mahāvaṁsa was not composed before the 5th century A.C., he believes that its author employed a term in general use in his time. He also notes that at the beginning of the 5th century, the Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hien who visited Sri Lanka has alluded to the houses of Sabaean (i.e. Arabian) merchants [6] in Anuradhapura being

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[3] On the supposed identity of the Greeks with the Yavanas of the Sanskrit writers. JASB (1874)

[4] Thus we have an Asokan inscription referring to Antiochus, the Seleucid King of Syria (3rd century BC) as *Yona-laja*, an Eastern Prakritic form of *Yavana-Raja* or 'Yavana-King'. However it is very likely that the Sanskritic term *Yavana* from which it derives has its ultimate origins in the name of a Hellenic tribe, the Ionians (Gk.*Iones*) who were settled in the West Coast of Asia Minor (*Ionia*) in modern-day Turkey. Ionia we know was founded by colonies from Greece. This eastern settlement of Greeks would explain why their tribal name, known to the Assyrians as *Yavanaya*, was adopted as the common name for all Greeks by many Eastern peoples including the Hebrews who termed them *Yāwān* and the ancient Persians who called them *Yauna*.

[5] Culture of Ceylon in mediaeval Times.Ed.Heinz Bechert (1960)

[6] Fa-Hien in his record of Buddhist kingdoms refers to Sabaean merchants (the phonetic values of the Chinese characters being sa and va, bo or bha) whose houses are stately and beautiful.

beautifully adorned, suggesting that the Yonas of the Mahāvaṁsa were none other than Arab merchants or settlers.

The 1st century writer Pliny in his Natural History [7] states of Taprobane (as the Romans called Sri Lanka): *Regi cultum liberi patris, caeteris Arabum*, implying that Arabs were settled in coastal Sri Lanka before the 1st century AC.

Buzurg Ibn Shahryār [8] alludes to Sri Lanka (known to the Arabs as Sarandīb) having relations with the Arabian peninsula as early as the days of the Prophet Muhammad (570 – 632 AC). Says Ibn Shahryār: "When the people of Sarandīb and the surrounding area came to know of the appearance of the Prophet of Islam and his message, they deputed an intelligent person from among themselves and sent him to Arabia to meet him to obtain information about him and give a first-hand report to his people. When the deputed person reached Madina after a hazardous and long journey, the Prophet, on whom be peace, had passed away and the caliphate of his successor Abu Bakr had ended and Umar was the Caliph. The messenger met the Caliph and heard in detail from him about the mission of the Prophet and his character. However, on his return journey he died on the Makran coast. But his Indian servant who had accompanied him succeeded in returning to Sarandīb and gave his impression to the people in the light of what he saw and heard in regard to the Prophet-on whom be peace- and of Abu Bakr-May Allah be pleased with him; that he and his deceased master had met Umar-the companion of the Prophet. The servant told his people about the sweet disposition extended to him and his master by Umar who used to wear patched garment and sleep in the mosque at night. On receiving his report in detail, the people of Sarandīb adopted a friendly attitude towards Muslims".

It is also said that the Arab invasion of Sind in 712 A.C. led by Muhammad Bin Qāsim was prompted by the capture of some Arab women near the sea port of Daybul (near Karachi, Pakistan) whom the Sri Lankan sovereign was sending to Iraq. According to Ahmad Al-Balādhurī, the 9th century historian and author of the Futūh Al-Buldān, the Sri Lankan monarch (Probably King Mānavamma who reigned 684-719 AC) sent some Muslim women who were born in Sarandīb – daughters of merchants who had died in the island –to Hajjaj Ibnu Yusuf, the Governor of Iraq (694-714 AC). But their ships were attacked by some pirates near Daybul and one of the captured women of the tribe of Bani Yerbu cried out "Oh

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[7] Excerpta ex Caii Plinii Secundi Historia Naturali in Usum Scholarum (1829)

[8] Ajā'ib al Hind.10th century.Ed.P.A.Van Der Lith.1883-1886.

Hajjāj! Come to my help". When this news reached Hajjāj, he sent a message to Rajah Dahir, the ruler of Hind (i.e. Sind) demanding the immediate release of the captives. As he did not respond, a series of raids against his kingdom commenced, leading ultimately to the conquest of Sind in 712 AC.

Having shown the close relations the Arabs of yore maintained with Sri Lanka, we will now attempt to trace the origins of the Moors to Arab folk largely hailing from Iraq and the Arabian peninsula. Alexander Johnston [9] has recorded that the first Muslims who settled in the country, were, according to the tradition which prevails among their descendants, a portion of those Arabs of the House of Hashim [10] who were driven from Arabia in the early part of the eighth century by the Umayyad Caliph Abd-al Malik bin Marwan, and who proceeding from the Euphrates southward, established settlements in the Concan, the southern parts of the Indian peninsula, Sri Lanka and Malacca.

He adds that the division of them that came to Sri Lanka formed eight considerable settlements along the north-eastern, northern, and western coasts of the island, namely, at Trincomalee, Jaffna, Mantota-Mannar, Kudiraimalai, Puttalam, Colombo, Beruwala and Galle. Intermittent Arab settlement evidently did not cease until fairly recent times. E.B.Denham [11] has noted the existence of a Muslim community at Hambantota who gave their race as 'Arabs'. Denham notes that they claimed to be descendants of two Mawlanas or clerics who came to Ceylon from Baghdad "One about 150 years, the other about 60 years ago". H Parker [12] also noted that in his

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[9] Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland (1827)

[10] The Prophet Muhammad's clan, the Hashimites, i.e. the descendants of the Prophet's great grandfather Hashim. Many Hashimites are said to have fled their homeland due to the persecution of the rival Umayyad dynasty, especially during the reign of its fifth ruler Abd-al Malik bin Marwān (685-705 A.C.). The Hashimites themselves belong to the clan known as Quraysh (Lit.little shark, perhaps a metonymy for strength and resilience) which had its stronghold in the ancient Arabian holy city of Mecca. The Quraysh, in common with the other Arabs of the Hijaz and Najd in present-day Saudi Arabia as well as the Nabataeans and Palmyrenes further north as in Syria, Jordan and Palestine are held to be descended from Ishmael (Ar.Ismāīl), the son of the Patriarch Abraham (Ar.Ibrāhim) through his Egyptian spouse Hagar (Ar.Hājar). These properly are the 'Arabicized Arabs' (*Musta'ribah*) of a mixed Mesopotamian-Egyptian (Abraham originally having hailed from Iraq and Hagar from Egypt) background who assimilated with the original Arab stock *(Aribah)*, Yemenites descended from Qahtan (Biblical Joktan) (See History of the Arabs. Phillip Hitti.1953).

[11] Ceylon at the Census of 1911 (1912)

[12] Ancient Ceylon (1909)

time Arabs from Western Arabia still occasionally settled among the Moormen of Ceylon.

Genealogical records maintained by certain Moor families also bear testimony to their Arab ancestry. J.C. Van Sanden [13] cites literary evidence (viz.an old Arabic document in the possession of one of the oldest Moor families residing in Beruwala) in support of the claims of some Moorish folk of Beruwala who traced their ancestry to a scion of Arabian royalty who departed from Yemen in the 22nd Hijri year (C. 643 A.C.) in the time of the second Caliph Umar. It is related here that of a fleet of vessels carrying three sultans that left Yemen, Sultan Salah-ud-din's son Sams-ud-din cast anchor at Mannar off the west coast of Ceylon while another vessel conveying Sultan Mohamed's son Sad-ur-din sailed south and landed at Beruwala where he settled down. There were a few Moors in Van Sanden's time who in fact traced their ancestry to this prince.

Mohamed Sameer [14] has cited substantial genealogical evidence showing the Arab origins of prominent Moor families. An Aluthgama family for example traced its lineage to the first Caliph of the Islamic Commonwealth Abu Bakr (C. 573-634 A.C.), while another traced its descent to one Badrudeen who evidently hailed from Iraq. Yet another family traced it descent to one Prince Jamaldeen, an Arab from Konia, who arrived in the country in 1016. Such patronymics as Baghdadi (the one from Baghdad) and Yemeni (the Yemenite) which figure among the prominent Moor families cited in Sameer's work indicate the diverse origins of the Moorish folk settled in Sri Lanka [15]. The Nicholson Cove Tombstone inscription at Trincomalee refers to the deceased as the daughter of the chief Badriddin Husain Bin Ali Al-Halabi, showing that her family hailed from Halab (Aleppo) in Syria. The Moors of Akurana trace their descent to three Arabian mercenaries who espoused Kandyan women during the reign of King Rājasinha II (1635-1687) [16]. The Gopāla (Bētgē Nilamē) family of Moors domiciled in Gätaberiya in the Kegalle district likewise claim descent from Arab physicians (*hakīms*) who arrived in the country from

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[13] Sonahar. A brief history of the Moors of Ceylon (1925)

[14] Personages of the Past. Moors, Malays and other Muslims of the past of Sri Lanka (1982)

[15] More details on the Arab origins of prominent Moor families could be found in the Genealogical Table of Sri Lankan Muslims by Fazli and Firoze Sameer (1996).

[16] See A Gazetteer of the Central Province of Ceylon.A.C.Lawrie (1896)

Sind during the reign of King Parakramabahu II (1236-1270) of Dambadeniya and espoused Sinhalese women [17].

There is also reason to believe that the Moors of the Puttalam and Chilaw districts are at least partly derived from Arab settlers or traders hailing from Egypt. This is suggested by the fact that they formerly conveyed in their processions the wheeled boat which they described as the custom of their fathers and which very probably had its origins in ancient Egypt. Says Hugh Nevill [18] "In Ceylon the ship of Isis is no doubt the origin of the ship so often carried by the Moors of the Putlam and Chilaw district in their processions of today, but I cannot find they attach any hidden meaning to the ceremony, which is called "custom of our fathers".

C.G.Seligman [19] notes that the Moormen of Ceylon have a ceremony in which figures a boat on wheels and holds that it is a survival of an old Egyptian rite which, after being absorbed into Islam, was introduced by Arab traders into Ceylon. In Luxor in Egypt, three boat processions have been traditionally held every year, at the festivals commemorating the birthday of its patron saint Sidi Abuel Haggag and that of the Prophet and at the beginning of Ramadan. Similarly, the boat figured prominently in ancient Egyptian ceremonial, as shown by the number of representations of sacred boats on wheels which have come down to us. The boat which figured in the ceremonies at Luxor in the days of the Pharoahs evidently symbolized the journey to the world beyond the grave. That it figured in the ceremonial of some sections of local Moors who described it as the custom of their fathers strongly suggests that they are descended at least in part from Arabs hailing from Egypt.

Epigraphic evidence also suggests a strong Arab connection in the olden days. Noteworthy is the Arabic gravestone inscription in Kufic characters [20] concerning an Islamic cleric named Khālid Ibn Abu [B]aqāya dated the Hijri year 337 A.H. (C.948 AC) found at the Moorish burial ground near Colombo. According to local tradition, this cleric was sent by the Caliph of

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[17] See The Muslims of Sri Lanka. One thousand years of ethnic harmony. Lorna Dewaraja (1994)

[18] The Taprobanian June 1886

[19] Ancient Egyptian beliefs in modern Egypt. Essays and Studies presented to William Ridgeway on his Sixtieth Birthday (1913)

[20] The Kufic (kufi) script developed in Kufah, Iraq, was extensively used for documents, inscriptions and monuments during the mediaeval era, and especially during the Abbasid period (750-1258 A.C.)

Baghdad to reform the Muslims of Colombo after learning that these Muslims (who were then established as traders) were ignorant of, and inattentive to the real tenets of their religion (Johnston. 1827). Besides this, seven other stones, including five gravestones inscribed in Arabic dated from the 8th – 16th century A.C. have been discovered. The earliest tombstone discovered in May 1976 at Madulbowa in Hemmatagama in the Kegalle District bears the Hijri date 133 A.H. (C.750 AC) [21].

The fact that the Arabic language had been employed in the inscriptions suggests that the country's Muslims, or at least a significant proportion of them were literate and conversant in Arabic. Although this is no longer the case, one still finds a few vocables of Arabic origin such as *umma* 'mother' commonly employed by Moor folk which may perhaps be a survival of their former Arabic speech.

The appellation given to the Moors by themselves as well as by others also indicate their Arab origin. The Moors have traditionally referred to themselves as *Sōnahar* [22] in their peculiar dialect of Tamil, the pure Tamil form of which, *Sōnagar*, refers to a native of Arabia (*Sōnagam*) [23].

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[21] Recent archaeological finds. Souvenir of the Moors Islamic Cultural Home. 1970-1976 (1978)

[22] Although today, the term Sōnahar is hardly if ever used as an ethnonym by the Moors who simply know themselves by the general term of Muslims on the basis of their religious faith, there is ample evidence to show that in the olden days they referred to themselves as a distinct ethnic group by this term and were referred to as such by others. A local Tamil work dealing with the peopling of the Eastern Province, the Nāṭu Kāṭu Paravani Kalveṭṭu (C.16th century) refers to the Moors as Cōnakar. Simon Casie Chitty notes in his Ceylon Gazetteer (1834) that in the Tamil language the Moors are usually denominated by the term Sonaher which they do not object to. Abdul Azeez (1907) states in no uncertain terms that his community is known in its own circle as Sonahar. Similarly, Ponnambalam Arunachalam in his contribution on the Population of Ceylon to the Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon (1907) states that the local Moors call themselves Sonahar, as distinguished from the Sammankarar, the later arrivals from India.

[23] J.P.Rottler's Tamil-English Dictionary.Pt.1 (1834). Similarly, the Madras Tamil Lexicon (1928) gives *Cōnakan* as 'foreigner, especially Greek, Arab or Moor'. It would appear that the Tamil Cōna or Sōna has in fact derived from the Sanskritic *Yavana* through the Prakritic *Yona*. The latter term would have with time been turned to **jona* before entering Tamil as *Cōna*, the initial *j* being unknown to Tamil which in adopting it hardened it to *c*. The term *Sōnagar* was also formerly used to denote the Tamil-speaking Muslims of the coastal belt of Tamil Nadu, evidently because of their Arab ancestry. The description is said to have been used in their documents and other writings till the beginning of the last century, though it is no longer in use in Tamil Nadu. Towns like Nagore, Santhome, Cuddalore and Porto Novo in Tamil Nadu are still said to have Sonagar Streets (See Arabic, Arwi and Persian in Sarandib and Tamil Nadu. Dr.Tayka Shuayb 1993). The Moors who formed a considerable settlement in Jaffna and its environs until fairly recent times (i.e. about 1990) lived in large numbers in a quarter known as Sōnahar-Teru or 'Moor Street' showing that the term Sōnahar was

Another term *Sōni*, perhaps a corruption of *Sōnahar*, also appears to have been used by some Moors, such as those of Batticaloa. Ramanathan (1888) says that in the District of Batticaloa "which is the premier district of Islam in the island", the "Muhammadans" call themselves "Sóni" or "Chóni" which he wrongly argued was another form of Choli or Tamil of the Chola country. Similarly, Denham (1912) says that the term Soni is frequently applied to a Moor in the Batticaloa District. The Sinhala term for the Moors *Yon* [24] is related to the Sanskritic *Yavana* and Prakritic *Yona* used by the Indians to denote foreign peoples, especially the Arabs, Greeks and those who belonged to the vast Graeco-Bactrian region between Greece and India following Alexander's Asian conquests in the fourth century B.C.

In Sinhala however, the term *Yon* appears to have been associated with the Arabs and Moors. Fernao de Queyroz in his Conquista Temporal e Espiritual de Ceylao (1687) has noted that the Sinhalese generally called the Moors *Iona*. That the term is closely connected with the Arabs is suggested by the Sinhala term for the 'date' *yon-iňdi* which was evidently thought to have originated in Arabia and *yon-dehi*, a species of lime supposed to have been brought originally from Arabia [25].

The ethnonym Mouro or Moor employed by the European colonial powers such as the Portuguese, Dutch and British to denote the Sōnahar can however in no way be taken to indicate an ethnic relationship between them and the Moors of North Africa who are largely Berbers of Mediterranean stock. In fact the term Moor as applied to the Sōnahar is a misnomer. The term Moor in its various forms was used in virtually all Western European languages to denote the Muslims of Spain and of the

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commonly applied to them not very long ago, though today they are more often known by the religious designation 'Muslim'.

[24] Rev.B.Clough in his Sinhalese-English Dictionary (1892) gives *Yonā* as 'Moorman' while Charles Carter in his Sinhalese-English Dictionary (1924) gives *Yonā* as a colloquial term for 'Moorman' and *Yon* as 'Arabian' or 'Moorish'. Among the place-names still bearing the name *Yon* 'Moor' may be mentioned *Parana Yon Vīdiya* (Old Moor Street) and *Alut Yon Vīdiya* (New Moor Street) in the Hulftsdorp area of Colombo. There is also *yon-gala* (Lit.Moor rock) a huge rock near Mutwal in the north of Colombo named after an incident connected with a Moorish girl who entered it after having escaped the pursuit of the Portuguese (See Van Sanden 1925). The appellation *Yon* has however now been confined to classical usage and the term *Marakkala* is the usual colloquial term used to designate the Sri Lankan Moors. The term evidently has its origins in maritime trade and is derived from the Tamil *marakkalan* 'sailor', 'master of a ship' (fr.T.*maram* 'wood' + *kalam* 'vessel').

[25] Clough (1892)

Mediterranean ports of North Africa. The term is thought to have derived from the Semitic Mahourim 'the people of the west' which seems to have been employed by the early Semites such as the Phoenicians to denote the peoples of the Maghreb or Barbary states of North Africa. The Romans perhaps inspired by the Semitic usage used the term Mauri to indicate a group of relatively sedentary tribes in the Roman Province of Mauretania (Present-day Morocco) following the destruction of Carthage in 146 BC. This term Mauri passed into Spain as Moro and it was under this designation that the inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula designated the Muslim conquerors of Spain (i.e. the Arab conquerors and Arabicised Berbers who had come to settle in Spain from the other side of the strait of Gibraltar) during the whole period of Muslim domination from the eighth to fifteenth centuries [26].

It is evident that in Spanish as well as in other Western languages that borrowed the appellation in forms like Mauren, Moors etc that the term had a geographical meaning indicating the people coming over from the North African coast, including not only the native Berbers, but also the Arabs. As such the term was not an ethnographical one [27]. The Portuguese evidently borrowed this usage from their Spanish neighbours and bestowed the appellation on the Arabs and their mixed breed descendants whom they found established as traders in the coastal regions of Asia and Africa at the time of their conquests in the sixteenth century.

Although primarily used to denote the Arabs and their mixed progeny, the term was at times extended to cover all persons professing Islam. It is perhaps in such a context that they applied the term Mauros to the Moors as is borne out by their tombos or land registers. The Dutch continuing this usage called them Mooren and this in turn was adopted by the British who called them Moors [28].

Physical anthropological evidence may also be cited in this connection. The Kōkila or Kovul Sandēśaya (C.15th century) refers to *Yon liya* (Arab or Moor women) of golden hue (*ranvan*) at a village called Mahaväligama (Probably Weligama in the southern part of the country) suggesting that these *Yon* were a relatively fair-complexioned folk, somewhat like the true

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[26] See Enc.I.VII.1991

[27] ibid

[28] A parallel situation is to be observed among the Moros of Mindanao in the southern Philippines who were designated as such by the Spanish conquerors on account on their religion and not on account of their race, they being a Malay, and not an Arab or Berber people.

Arabs [29]. According to the Physical Anthropology of Ceylon (1961), a comprehensive work dealing with the physical characteristics of the country's various races [30], the skin colour of over thirty Moor subjects of the Jaffna district measured in the survey approximated that of the Aryan Sinhalese, which would suggest that they derive from a somewhat fair-skinned race. The 32 Moors measured showed 37.5 percent in the light-light brown category, 21.9 percent in the light-brown category and 40.6 percent in the dark-light brown category.

The work further shows the Moors to be a people with a tendency towards brachycephaly or broad-headedness as distinct from the long-headed or dolicocephalic Tamils and that they most closely approximate the Sinhalese in cephalic index. The 32 Moors measured in the survey showed a mean cephalic index of 78.14 which closely approximates the Sinhalese mean of 78.33 as against the Tamil mean of 74.68. It is however unlikely that this brachycephaly derives from the Sinhalese. It is more likely that this trait originated from Iraq or Southern Arabia, especially since there is literary evidence to show that many of the forebears of the Moors hailed from these regions.

It has been shown by C.G. Seligman [31] that the Arabs of the Northern Arabian peninsula and Sinai are predominantly long-headed (dolicocephalic) while those of the south such as the Yemen are predominantly broad-headed (brachycephalic). Citing anthropological evidence obtained from skeletal remains, he states that the Northern Arabs have been predominantly long-headed for the last 2000 years. The South Arabian brachycephaly, he believes to have derived from the Armenoid type found largely in the great brachycephalic area of Western Asia, viz.

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[29] C.F.Gordon Cumming (Two Happy Years in Ceylon.1892) says that in complexion, the Moors are "pale copper colour" while referring to the Sinhalese as being "sienna-coloured" and the Tamils "dark brown". The somewhat darker colour of the Moors when compared with the true Arabs may be due to the admixture of Sinhalese and Tamil elements. With regard to the pure Arab character, we may have to agree with Aleš Hrdlicka who observed in his Anthropological Studies in Southern Asia, Java, Australia and South Africa (1926) that the pure Arab shows as lively, intelligent white man's physiognomy, straight to wavy black hair, dark brown eyes and a brown body though he observed that a higher class Arab man or woman who has always worn protection against the sun and lives much indoors, may be nearly as light in colour as many a Southern European.

[30] The Physical Anthropology of Ceylon by Howard Stoudt (1961) is based on the information gathered during the Ethnological Survey of Ceylon (1937-1939)

[31] The Physical characters of the Arabs. Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute. Great Britain & Ireland (1917)

Asia Minor and Mesopotamia. This southern brachycephaly is thought to be an intrusive element borne to South Arabia, perhaps by sea, from the north-east, and it is likely that the Southern Arabian peninsula, like the Northern, was originally peopled by a dolicocephalic Semitic stock, upon which was later superimposed a brachycephalic element following some remote Armenoid immigration from the east, probably Mesopotamia.

There is reason to believe that Mesopotamian cultural influence was exerted in South Arabia at least as far back as the first half of the first millennium B.C.[32]. The aquiline nose, a characteristic of Semitic races such as the Arabs and Jews, is also prominent among the South Arabians (Seligman.1917). This too is significant as there are many Moors to-day who do possess prominent aquiline noses [33]. The nasal index of the Moors differs significantly from that of both the Sinhalese and Tamils. The Moors measured in the Physical Anthropology showed a relatively low mean nasal index of 67.70 as compared to the Sinhalese mean of 70.35 and the Tamil mean of 70.51. The Moors measured had a nose height of 53.38 mm as against the Sinhalese mean of 51.75 and the Tamil mean of 51.77, and a nose breadth of 35.97 mm as against the Sinhalese mean of 36.21 and the Tamil mean of 36.30. They were therefore a decidedly leptorrhine folk and had the narrowest noses of any of the races of Ceylon measured in the survey.

The prevalence among the Moors of the Shāfi Madhhab, the school of Islamic jurisprudence founded by Ash-Shāfi (150-204 AH) which was once prevalent in Iraq and many other parts of the Arab world and indeed is still so in the southern parts of the Arabian Peninsula such as Yemen may also be taken as evidence of an Arab origin from these parts. Johnston (1827) noting that the Sri Lankan Moors are of the 'sect of Shafei' says that the commentary on the Mohammedan law which is most in use amongst them is called the Amali. "The whole of it is written in Arabic, the text in the old Arabic of the Koran, and the notes in modern Arabic. Their laws of marriage and inheritance are a modification of the laws of marriage and inheritance which prevailed amongst the Arabs, who were subject to the caliph of Baghdad at the time their ancestors emigrated from Arabia". That

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[32] See Seligman (1917)

[33] It is interesting to note here that Ernst Haeckel (A visit to Ceylon 1883) describes the Moors as having a brownish yellow complexion and unmistakeably Semitic features. John Ferguson (Mohammedanism in Ceylon. Moormen, Malay, Afghan and Bengali Mohammedans 1897) similarly refers to the Moormen as having 'Arab features and as veritable father Abrahams or Ishmaelites' (Old and New Colombo. J.Ferguson.1900).

the Arab ancestors of the Moors subscribed to the Shafi school is not unlikely given the fact that it then exerted a considerable influence in Baghdad, the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate. It was in Baghdad that the Shafi madhhab came to be formally established after Imam Shafi had taught there from 810-814 AC. Hence Baghdad became the chief centre of the school and it was mainly from here that Shafi teaching spread to the rest of the Islamic world. The school is said to have been particularly known in Baghdad in the days of Abu'l Qāsim Uthmān Al-Anmātī (9th century) whose principal disciple, the Qādī Abu'l Abbas Ibn Surayj played an important role in the diffusion of the madhhab [34].

Although it is true that the Hanafi madhhab had gained a predominant place in the Abbasid state, particularly after Abū Yūsuf (late 8th century) an adherent of this school was appointed Chief Qāḍi of Baghdad by the Caliph Hārūn Ar-Rashīd, it was not until the 16th century with the Ottoman Turks that the Hanafi madhhab became permanently established in Iraq [35], though we still find the Shafi school being followed in its northern provinces among the Kurds who are still very much Shafis ritually. The Shafi school also seems to have once occupied a prominent place in the Arabian Peninsula [36] before the Hanafi school gained dominance in the Ottoman period followed by the Hanbali school under the Saud dynasty.

It is very likely therefore that the Shafi school was introduced here by the early Arab settlers just as they did in peninsular India where the existence of the Shafi school, especially in the coastal areas of Kerala and Tamil Nadu very likely owes its origins to the commercial and cultural links these areas maintained with the southern Arabian lands like Yemen, Hadramauth and Aden. In contrast, the Hanafi school has prevailed largely in those areas that have come under non-Arab Turkish or Moghul influence which explains its prevalence in Turkey, Central Asia and Northern India as well as those Arab countries that have come under Turkish rule such as Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Iraq.

The Arab antecedents of the Moors is also suggested by their traditional occupation, mercantile pursuits, which little doubt was inherited from their Arab forbears whose very presence in the island was motivated by the

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[34] See Enc.I.Vol.IX.1995

[35] See Mediaeval Islam. Gustave Von Grunebaum (1947)

[36] Thus Richard Burton in his Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah (1893) could observe that the Hanafi school "holds the first rank at Al-Madinah, as in most parts of Al-Islam, though many of the citizens, and almost all the Badawin, are Shafe'is".

opportunities it provided for trading activities which in an earlier period was largely confined to maritime trading activities between Sri Lanka and other parts of Asia including the Middle East in items of trade such as precious stones [37].

Having thus demonstrated that the Moors are largely of Arab descent through a consideration of historical, linguistic, anthropological and genealogical evidence, we will proceed to explain how Tamil came to be adopted as the 'home language' of the Moors of Sri Lanka. It is very probable as contended by Dr.M.A.M.Shukri [38] that following the fall of Baghdad in 1258, the Sri Lankan Muslims came to rely largely for their contact with the Muslim world on Mabar, that is to say, the Coromandel coast (the South Eastern Coast of India) where Arab trade colonies had been established like Kayalpattinam in Tirunelveli district.

Shukri notes that due to increased trade activity in the Mabar area, mainly with Yemen, Hadramaut and Aden, a thriving Muslim community developed and steadily found their way in considerable numbers to Sri Lanka where they intermarried with the local Muslims. As a result, a new element, a South Indian one, was added into the composition of local Muslim society which consequently lost its exclusively Arab character. He notes that the memory of a new wave of immigration that occurred due to the outburst of Muslim commercial activity in the Coromandel coast is preserved in a tradition centering around the mediaeval port of Kayal as the ancestral home of local Muslims.

He adds that as a result of the commercial and cultural contact that existed between the Muslims of Sri Lanka and Mabar, the Tamil language made its impact in their social and cultural life to the extent of becoming their medium of expression in all aspects of life. This led to the emergence of Arabic Tamil as a common language among them, where the Tamil as spoken and written assumed a peculiar pattern and shape in respect of the script and vocabulary.

It is very probable then that with the fall of Baghdad –the seat of the Abbasid Caliphate- to the Mongol hordes in the 13th century, the old ties subsisting between the Arabs of the Middle East and those of South Asia were severed with the result that the Arab merchants and settlers resident in the island and their mixed descendants would have had little option but to cease connections with their old home country and turn towards their

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[37] The belief that the Moors are descended from Arab traders is a widespread one. Cumming (1892) for instance refers to the Moormen of her time claiming to be "descended from Arabian merchants who settled in Ceylon two thousand years ago".

[38] Muslims of Sri Lanka- A Cultural Perspective. MSL (1986)

closest co-religionists in the region, the Tamil-speaking Muslims of South India for commercial and cultural intercourse.

Being a largely mercantile community themselves, they would have established and maintained close relations with the Muslim trading settlements in the South Indian coastal areas, especially since their livelihood depended largely on maritime trade; and Tamil it should be pointed out was the lingua franca of commerce in the region at the time. Such a situation could have easily led to the acceptance on the part of the Moors of Tamil as their spoken language over a period of time, a process which would have been greatly facilitated by constant intermarriage with Tamil women or perhaps even Tamil-speaking Muslim women hailing from South India. Thus it would have been due to obvious reasons of convenience that the Moors came to speak Tamil as their 'home language'.

The period of the Abbasid Caliphate (750 -1258 A.C.) is widely regarded as the golden age of Arabian culture, science and commerce, an enlightened epoch dominated by caliphs of the likes of the illustrious Hārūn Ar-Rashid so grandly portrayed in the Arabian Nights. The sacking of Baghdad by the Mongols in 1258 and the other destructive acts perpetrated by them is said to have resulted in the downfall of the Arabian political and cultural heritage in the eastern part of the Arab world as well as in neighbouring countries like Iran.

Indeed, the period from 1258 to the 18th century is known as the age of decadence of Arabic language, literature and the sciences. As such, it is hardly surprising that the Arabs and Moors established in the country should have ceased connections with the rest of the Arab world and eschewed their native Arabic speech for a completely different and non-related language – Tamil. This process which is known as linguistic regression is not unknown amongst other nations and has taken place due to various political, social and economic factors. This has been the case with the Parsis of Western India who have eschewed their native Iranian speech for Gujarati and the Cape Malays of South Africa whose native Malay speech has been superseded by Afrikaans, an offshoot of Dutch.

As for the adoption of Tamil customs such as *strīdānam*, the *ālatti* ceremony, the wearing of *kūrai* and the tying of the *tāli*, we may suppose that these too entered the social life of the Moors due to close intercourse with their Tamil-speaking co-religionists of South India as well as intermarriage with local Tamil women which would have been fairly commonplace in the olden days. It is interesting to note here that it is not only the Moors, but also the Sinhalese who had adopted the custom of wearing the *tāli* as a symbol of marriage. The ornament was known as *tälla* in the Sinhala language and seems to have been commonly worn in the

olden days. For instance, in a Sigiri inscription of about the eighth century we find the composer boasting thus in Old Sinhala verse:

no helillā me ki bit'hi dig netak mayi
tepalan piyovur mäjä kaḷa la muka ärä nil tällak

(Did not the long-eyed one on the wall – the fair one – say this to me: "Open your mouth and speak after having placed between the breasts a blue necklet) [39].

This is not to say that a Dravidian racial element is altogether absent among the Moors. A sizeable infusion of Dravidian blood appears to have entered the Moor community through intermarriage with Mukkuvar women. Dravidian blood seems to be especially pronounced among the Moors of the Eastern districts such as Ampara and Batticaloa who have preserved a form of social organization known as the kuḍi system, a matri-clan system found also among the neighbouring Mukkuvars from whom it appears to have originated [40].

Folk belief such as that found in the Ampara region holds that the Arabs or Moors who settled here espoused local Mukkuvar women and inherited the Kuḍi system from them [41] which may also explain why some Moors in the area still bear typically Dravidian physical characters such as relatively dark complexion and snub nose, though a good many are undoubtedly of Arab ancestry as borne out by such characteristics as the aquiline nose commonly found among them [42]. As noted by Edgar Thurston [43], the

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[39] Sigiri Graffiti. Senarat Paranavitana (1956)

[40] See The Kudi Maraikayars of Batticaloa South. M.Z.Mohideen. MICHS. 1944-1965 (1965)

[41] See The Land of the Matri-clans. Asiff Hussein. Sunday Observer. June 29,2003. There also exists A Tamil folk tradition which recounts a caste conflict between the Mukkuvars and their rivals, the Thimilars for regional dominance, in which the former are said to have enlisted the aid of the Moors. According to this tradition, a party of Mukkuvars consisting of seven clans or kudis came over from north Jaffna to Batticaloa and conspired with some shipwrecked Moors who had settled at Kattau-Kudierupu to eject the Thimilars who then had control over that part of the country. The plot succeeded and the frightened Thimilars fled to beyond Panichankani. The Moors having been of such service to the Mukkuvas were in recognition of their valour and services offered for their choice, either gold, lands or women. The wily Moors, knowing the value of the ties of consanguinity chose the last (See Tradition as to the origin of the people of Batticaloa. J.P. Lewis. CALR. July1923). S.O.Canagaratnam (Monograph of the Batticaloa District.1921) found that even in his time mixed marriages between Moormen and Mukwa women were common.

[42] See Hussein, June 29,2003.

Mukkuvans are the sea fishermen of the Malabar coast. That they are of Dravidian origin is borne out by the statement of Simon Casie Chitty [44] who observes that the Mookwas bear a close resemblance to the Tamils in their physiognomy, manners and gait.

A few Coast or South Indian Moors known as the Sammankārar who largely comprise of Muslim ethnic groups like the Labbai and Marakkayar originating from Tamil Nadu state in South India, may have also merged into the Moor community, facilitated largely by a common religion and language. These folk, though largely of Dravidian extraction, also appear to have had an admixture of Arab blood [45]. Migration to Sri Lanka does not seem to have solely originated from the Tamil country of South India. The Portuguese historian João de Barros in his third Decada (1563) says that the Moors of Calecut and of the coast of Malabar, having been scared away from those parts since the arrival of the Portuguese to India "had some refuge in this island of Ceylam" as their armadas did not go to it [46]. This was however before Lopo Soarez built a fort in Colombo in 1518 and established a foothold in the country. It is therefore possible that some Muslims from the Kerala area settled here and eventually assimilated into the Moor community, which may also explain why some Moors of not very long ago bore names like Nayna Marikkar which is evidently of Kerala origin.

We also know that the Māppillai or Moplah Muslims, a mixed Indo-Arab community tracing its origins to Arab settlers who espoused Kerala women many centuries ago [47], resorted to the island until fairly recent times and participated in the business life of the country. That some of them settled in

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[43] Castes and Tribes of Southern India. Vol.V.1909

[44] The Ceylon Gazetteer.1834

[45] Edgar Thurston (Castes and Tribes of Southern India.. Vol.IV.1909) records that the Labbais are said to be converted Dravidians with a slight admixture of Arab blood. However, the infusion of Arab blood was probably much more considerable, for an interesting tradition recorded by Colonel Wilks (Historical Sketches of the South of India.1810-17) has it that the Labbais are descended from some persons of the House of Hashim who landed to the eastward of Cape Comorin, having been forced to flee by Hajjaj, Governor of Iraq. This tradition corroborates the local tradition regarding the origin of the Moors as recorded by Johnston (1827).

[46] See The History of Ceylon. As related by João de Barros and Diogo do Couto. Trans & Ed.Donald Ferguson.JRAS.CB 1908

[47] See Thurston.Vol.IV (1909)

the country or left behind offspring is not unlikely [48]. Muslims from places like Pullicat in South India also resorted to this island, not merely for commerce, but also to practice the trades they specialized in [49]. It is also possible as noted by Denham (1912) that the ranks of the Moors were occasionally swollen by Tamils who embraced Islam as an escape from caste regulations, though here we would have to suppose that the vast majority of such proselytes originated from the depressed Tamil-speaking castes who appear to be largely of Austro-Asiatic, rather than Dravidian origin.

Miscegenation has however not been restricted to the Tamils, for there is ample evidence to show that certain sections of Moors have a considerable infusion of Sinhalese blood as well. As seen earlier, both the Gopāla clan of Moors and the Moors of Akurana trace their descent to Arabs who espoused Sinhalese women.

When a census of the country was taken in 1881 there were found to be 71 Sinhalese "professing the Muhammadan religion" and Lionel Lee in his Census Report commenting on this states "It is not unusual for Moormen to marry Sinhalese girls of low position, first causing them to embrace the Muhammadan faith" [50]. This situation is known to have continued in the south until fairly recent times, for Denham (1912) observes "Amongst the Moors in Colombo and Galle at the present day there must be a fairly considerable infusion of Sinhalese blood; the number of Sinhalese women married to or living with Moors is fairly large". The fact that the Arab forbears of the Akurana Moors and the Gopāla family were allowed to marry Sinhalese women would indicate that they were not subject to the

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[48] This is suggested by notices such as that of Tudor Jones (These People make Ceylon. Times of Ceylon Christmas Number 1935) who notes that: "The Moplahs, a fair sturdy race, are rice and curry-stuff traders. Others make roti in little tea shops". He adds that some of them go about the streets, dressed in white, carrying round tin boxes on their heads. "In these boxes" he says "they carry Bombai muttai, for the Moplahs have a monopoly in this and pappadam". These observations are quite interesting since the sale of Bombai muttai is still largely if not solely confined to local Muslims, many of whom may be regarded as Moors. The making of roti until fairly recent times also appears to have been dominated by Moors, though other communities have now ventured into this occupation.

[49] For instance, Ryckloff Van Goens in his Memoir to Ryckloff Van Goens the Younger dated 12, 1675 refers to six or seven Muslim Palleacatta tailors and their families who were resident at Colombo. These Pulleacatta tailors were evidently tailors from Pullicat.

[50] See The Ceylon Handbook & Directory 1883-84.Ed.A.M & J.Ferguson

rigid Sinhalese caste rules governing intermarriage [51]. In fact oral tradition passed down among the members of the Gopala clan indicate they were given in marriage daughters of the Kandyan nobility. We learned from an elderly member of the clan, Mohamedu Udayar of Gevilipitiya that oral tradition passed down the generation has it that their first ancestor who settled in the country took in marriage Tikiri Kumari, daughter of Unambuve Rala. This is interesting since the Govi clan of Unambuve were deemed to be of a very high status in Sinhalese society, being the clan with which even Sinhalese royalty, including the last true Sinhalese monarch, Narendra Sinha married into. We were also informed by Udayar's son, Sheikh Hamees that his father was still addressed as *Nilame* by elderly village folk while he too had been addressed as *Punchi Nilame*. The women of the clan were likewise addressed as *Mänike*, titles such as these being used in the olden days to address those only of a high social standing.

In fact, the Moors of the Sinhalese areas have tended to bear a certain resemblance to the Sinhalese amongst whom they live, which may perhaps indicate some admixture of Sinhalese blood since at least the Kandyan period. In fact, James Cordiner, a keen observer of peoples who spent five years in the country (1799-1804) could hardly distinguish a Moor from a Sinhalese, referring to the country's Muslims as "the Cingalese who

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[51] Needless to say, such mixed marriages were not looked upon with favour, especially if it concerned high-born Sinhalese women of the Govi caste. For instance, we find in the case of Eknaligoda Dingiri Etana Vs.Udagedara Korale Arachila 1829, where a Govi woman who had embraced Islam and married a Muslim was disinherited on the grounds that Muslims were inferior to the Govi. The woman however contended that Muslims were equal to the Govi (PRO/CO/416/20). In contrast, the Arab ancestors of the Moors who were not bound by considerations of caste do not seem to have been prejudiced against marrying native women as seen from the above instances of intermarriage. Many factors would have contributed to this attitude. For one thing, the Arabs who resorted to the island would have found it difficult to control their natural urges, particularly when away so long from home where they would have had wives. A second marriage being permissible in Islam would have been looked upon as an ideal way out of this predicament. Further, those Arabs who had chosen to settle down here permanently would have had little recourse but to espouse local women. Secondly, since the Arabs have traditionally reckoned descent from the paternal line, even the more ethno-centric among them would not have been too concerned about co-habiting with non-Arab women since their offspring would still be recognised as Arabs by the larger community. What must also be borne in mind is that the Arabs, beginning from the early days of Islam were not averse to marrying non-Arab women. The Prophet Muhammad himself is known to have taken a Coptic woman from Egypt known as Māriya through whom he had a son named Ibrāhīm. We also come across instances of Arab men espousing Greek or Byzantine women in mediaeval Arabian literature such as the Kitāb Al-Aghani and the Alf Layla Wa Layla. Indeed, even royalty was no exception and this was especially true of the Abbasids, a house that traced its ancestry to Abbas, an uncle of the Prophet. Several Abbasid princes, we know, were born of Greek, Persian or Turkish women.

profess the religion of Mahomet" [52]. Another authority, John Davy [53] says of the Moors "In dress, appearance and manners, they differ but little from the Singalese".

To this day, many upcountry Moor families bear typical Kandyan patronymic *ge*-names like *Vidānalāge-gedara*, *Muhandiramlā-gedara*, *Vedarālage-gedara*, *Kosgaha-gedara*, *Liňde-gedara* and *Gal-gedara*. It is possible that such names, at least in some instances, were originally borne by the Sinhalese ancestresses of these Moor families who passed it down to their offspring, thus ensuring its continuity. James Emerson Tennent mentions in his monumental work Ceylon (1859) that in the mountains of Ooda-kinda in Western Oovah is a small community known as the Padu-guruwas who profess Islam, but conform to Kandyan customs, while H.W.Codrington [54] gives Guruva as "a man of a mixed race of Sinhalese and Moor descent and of the Muhammadan religion in Uva".

It is also possible that some Eastern Moors have Sinhalese ancestry as borne out by the names of two kuḍis or matrilineal clans among them, namely Ranasinga Mudaliyar and Verrisinga Aracci, names of Sinhalese origin meaning 'Lion of War Chieftain' and 'Lion Hero Headman' respectively [55].

Sinhalese blood may have also entered the Moors by way of conversions which seems to have even taken place during the days of Portuguese colonization when Christian missionary activity was at its height. Queyroz (1687) says that the Moors have a *Cassis* (Perhaps *Qāḍi* or cleric versed in Islamic jurisprudence) to teach them and to propagate their sect among the Sinhalese. He adds that the license of the sect was very inviting to the Sinhalese and the favour which they found with the Portuguese also induced them to embrace it. He notes that once when a Franciscan preacher preached to these heathens to become Christians, they replied that they would rather become Moors "for if they became Christians, the Portuguese would not on that account cease to tyrannise over them and to treat them like slaves, which was not done to the Moors, rather they did them many honours, giving them the posts of vidanas, and canacapoles in

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[52] Description of Ceylon (1807)

[53] An Account of the Interior of Ceylon (1821)

[54] Glossary of Native, Foreign, and Anglicised Words (1924).The Guruwo are also said to have been found in Dibburuwela in the Udasiya Pattu of Matale South (See Lawrie.1896)

[55] See Crucible of Conflict. Tamil and Muslim Society on the East Coast of Sri Lanka Dennis Mc.Gilvray (2008).

their villages, letting them come into their houses and treating them like lords". We also have a comment by the Dutch Governor Rijkloff Van Goens that he had received reports that a number of Sinhalese had converted to Islam [56].

Also interesting is the fact that the Moors of old are known to have purchased children of other communities from their parents so that they could be brought up as Muslims. G.A.Dharmaratna [57] observed in the latter part of the nineteenth century that "the Moors add to their number poor Singhalese boys and girls who are duly received into their community" while Paul E.Pieris [58]observed in the early part of the twentieth century: "The purchase of boys from parents who are too poor to maintain them, for the purpose of bringing them up as Mohammedans, is still a popular practice among the Moors". He adds that such converts are known as *Maulas* [59]. These Maulas, it is obvious, were assimilated into the community, so that it is possible that they too contributed a significant infusion of Sinhalese blood to the Moor community. This is particularly interesting as it would suggest that the Sinhalese ancestry of some Moors would have been acquired not merely in the maternal line as seen earlier, but also through the paternal line.

This is corroborated by the latest genetic studies which indicate that the Moors are genetically the most diverse of all communities in Sri Lanka and share many traits with the Sinhalese. For instance it was found with regard to Autosomal or Chromosomal Non-Sex-inherited DNA the Moors were the most heterozygous of the groups studied, indicating greater gene flow into the community from other communities and clearly suggesting that they had freely intermarried with these other groups.

With regard to maternally inherited mt DNA, the Moors were shown to share the greatest proportion of non-unique haplotypes (HVS1) with others, showing that they had been subject to greater gene flow from other groups

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[56] Letter to Batavia dated 13 May 1659. KA 1121

[57] The Kara-Goi Contest (1890)

[58] Ceylon. The Portuguese Era. Vol.II (1914)

[59] The term which conveys the meaning of 'client' or 'ally' often means 'freed slave' in Arabic literature, though it could also mean 'master or manumitter of a slave'. We may therefore assume these children to have been purchased as slaves (slavery being a recognized institution in mediaeval Sinhalese society up to the days of the Kandyan kingdom and even the early part of British rule in the island) before they were freed by their masters or mistresses and brought up as Muslims.

in connection with female lineages. The mtDNA tree indicated a clustering of Sinhalese and Moors, suggesting a close affinity with the Sinhalese and indicating a contribution to their maternal lineages by Sinhalese. This is not surprising since as we have seen earlier, there is considerable evidence to show that the forebears of the Moors not uncommonly espoused Sinhalese women.

More interestingly, with regard to paternally inherited Y Chromosomal DNA, the Moors were shown to possess certain male lineages that came from other communities and most closely approached those of the Sinhalese. They had the lowest number of population-specific haplotypes (Y-STR haplotypes) which indicates more sharing of male haplotypes with others than the other groups shared with each other. Furthermore, a phylogenetic analysis of male-inherited Y-Chromosome haplotypes showed the Sinhalese to be closer to the Moors in male lineages when compared to the other groups [60]. It is very likely that such male DNA from the Sinhalese entered the community by way of adoption as we have seen earlier.

We may therefore conclude that although the core or nucleus of the Sri Lankan Moor community was formed of Arab traders and settlers who chose to make Sri Lanka their home, considerable accretions from the other communities resident in the island, especially the Tamils and the Sinhalese, have taken place from a very early period. All this suggests that the Moors of today are a largely mixed community though their claim to be of Arab descent is not unfounded.

[60] Development of databases for Autosomal, Y-Chromosomal and Mitochondrial DNA Markers and their application in forensic casework and population genetics in Sri Lankan populations by Dr.Ruwan Illeperuma. Cited in Race in Sri Lanka: What genetic evidence tells us. A.Hussein. Sunday Times, Jan.26, 2014

II) The Arab Antecedents of the Moors

The Arabs belong to the Semitic stock, the predominant racial type of the Middle East and especially of the Arabian Peninsula. The Semitic type, like the Indo-European is basically Caucasoid, being characterized by a relatively fair complexion (though not as light as the European) and regular features (save for certain distinguishing features such as the aquiline nose) [61]. The Semitic nations like the Arabs and Jews are believed to be descendants of Noah's son Shem (Ar.Sam) through his son Arpachshad, grandson Shelah and great-grandson Eber. Eber's son Peleg was the ancestor of Abraham, one of whose sons Ishmael became the forefather of the Arabs, and the other Isaac, the forefather of the Jews, the two best known Semitic peoples. Some of the major Semitic nations of old including the Akkadians, Phoenecians and Assyrians who inhabited that area known as the fertile crescent where human civilization as we know it first began have all but disappeared, having probably been absorbed into an Arab ethnos with the great Arab conquests of Mesopotamia and the Levant for Islam that took place in the 7th century. Among the other Semitic nations, the Jews, descendants of the ancient Hebrews have managed to preserve a separate identity due to their strong ethnic consciousness, which was evident throughout much of their history including their diaspora in Europe while the largely Christian Ethiopians and largely Muslim Eritreans, though much mixed with African elements have also managed to preserve their distinct identities probably due to their geographical situation in Eastern Africa to which Arab influence was unable to penetrate in any significant measure. Although it is generally assumed that all Arabs are descended from Ishmael (Ar.Ismail), the son of the Patriarch Abraham (Ar.Ibrahim) and Hagar (Ar.Hajar), it is more likely, as borne out by Arab genealogical tradition, that it is only a portion of them ,viz. the Northern Arabs, found largely in the Hijaz and Najd who are descended from this personage .The Southern Arabs seem to derive from an altogether different lineage. Arabian genealogy has traditionally categorized the Arabs into two distinct groups, viz. the Arabian Arabs (*Aribah*) and Arabicized Arabs (*Musta'ribah*). The former are said to constitute the early Arab stock and held to be Yamanites descended from

[61] With regard to the pure Arab physical character, we may have to agree with Aleš Hrdlicka who observed in his Anthropological Studies in Southern Asia, Java, Australia and South Africa (1926) that the pure Arab shows as lively, intelligent white man's physiognomy, straight to wavy black hair, dark brown eyes and a brown body though he observed that a higher class Arab man or woman who has always worn protection against the sun and lives much indoors, may be nearly as light in colour as many a Southern European.

Qahtan (the Biblical Joktan, a son of Eber who became the father of Hazarmaveth and Sheba, important place-names in Southern Arabia), while the latter who comprise the Hijazis, Najdis, Nabataeans and Palmyrenes are held to be 'naturalized' Arabs descended from Ishmael [62]. As for the original homeland of the Semites, A.V.Kremer [63] who attempted to reconstruct the Proto-Semitic period by means of language also endeavoured to trace their evolution from an original home which he supposed to have been in the plateau of Central Asia which lie west of the Pamir terrace between the Oxus and Jaxartes as indicated by the fact that the camel, which the Proto-Semites knew could only have been native to this area in primeval times. Here, he believes, began the migration of the Semites which at first followed the course of the Oxus, in a south-west direction, skirted the southern shores of the Caspian, proceeded into Medea by one of the passes of the Elburz and thence through the gorge of Holwan into the deep basin of the Assyrian and Mesopotamian depression, where the differentiation of the Semitic peoples was gradually effected. O.Procksch [64] however opines that as far as early Semitic migrations can be traced, they indicate a north to south direction, and sees no cause for disputing the Biblical account deriving the descendants of Shem "from the neighbourhood of Ararat, i.e.Armenia, across the Taurus to the North Syrian plain". John Peters [65] citing historical, archaeological and linguistic evidence, also contends that "Asia Minor including Armenia, or Asia Minor and the country south of it from the Taurus mountains to the Euphrates" was the cradle land of the Semites. According to Peters, a large portion of the Semites including the Arabs left this region at a very early period (apparently before the close of the fourth millennium B.C.) and moved southwards to occupy the Arabian Peninsula. Hitti (1953) on the other hand holds that the Semites originated in the Arabian peninsula and subsequently migrated to Egypt and the lands of the fertile crescent which they presently occupy. He points out that the Mesopotamian theory is vitiated by the fact that it assumes passage of people from an agricultural stage of development to a nomadic stage, "which is the reverse of the sociological law in historic times". Hitti is inclined to the view that the Semites, originating in Arabia, expanded North-Westwards towards the Nile valley and North-Eastwards towards the Tigro-Euphrates valley in parallel migrations which took place sometime around 3500 B.C.

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[62] History of the Arabs. Philip Hitti (1953)

[63] Semitische Culturentlehnungen aus den pflanzen und Tierreiche 1875

[64] Das Land der Bibel.1914

[65] The home of the Semites. JAOS.1919

III) The Language of the Moors

Although it is likely that it was Arabic that was the spoken language of the early Arab settlers of the country and perhaps of the early Moors whom they sired, it is today largely Tamil, and to a lesser extent Sinhala, that has become the 'home language', so to say, of the present-day Moor community. Arabic is today employed by them only as their liturgical language in their prayers and other religious observances. Tamil is by far the predominant speech of the Moors.

The Tamil spoken by the Moors is however not quite the same as the Tamil spoken by the Tamils of Jaffna and South India. Indeed, this peculiar dialect or rather patois of the Moors is derogatorily referred to as 'Sōna Tamil' by conservative Tamil folk. This Sona Tamil speech seems to have largely derived from a South Indian Tamil dialect such as that spoken in Tanjore where the place of intervocalic *g* (such as pronounced in Madras) has been taken by *h* [66] and which seems to have served as the principal lexifier language. It has also been considerably influenced by other languages such as Arabic, Hindustani, and Sinhala. The very appellation by which the Moors have termed themselves *Sōnahar* (fr.T.*Sōnagar* 'A native of Arabia) as well as other vocables such as *sahalar* 'wife's sister's husband' (T.*sagalar*) employed by them clearly show that the place of the Standard Tamil intervocalic *g* has been taken by *h*.

However, in some instances, Sona Tamil has gone further and has *v* in place of the Standard Tamil intervocalic *g*.

Son. T. *mavan* 'son' (T. *magan*)
nevam 'fingernail' (T.*nagam*)
paval 'afternoon' (T. *pagal*)
kosuvam 'sari frill' (T.*kosugam*)

This however appears to be a development from an intervocalic *h* as is suggested by the Arabic words *sahn*, 'plate' and *sahūr* 'meal before the fast' being turned into *savan* and *savar* respectively in the Sona dialect. There are also instances where Sona Tamil has the bilabial *b* in places where Standard Tamil has the initial labio-dental fricative *v*.

Son.T. *bānam* 'sky' (T.*vānam*)
banḍu 'beetle' (T.*vanḍu*)

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[66] See Is Tamil script phonetic. Subrahmanya Sastri. JOR (1929)

bulāṅga 'woodapple' (T.*vilāṅgāi*)
bān-kōli 'Turkey' (T.*vān-kōli*)

Sona Tamil has also softened the initial voiceless velar *k* of Standard Tamil into voiced *g*.

Son.T.*gudura* 'horse' (T.*kudirai*)
genar 'well' (T.*kinaru*)
guḍakku 'hookah' (T.*kuḍākku*)
gundarikkam 'frankincense' (T.*kundurukkam*)

Among the other phonological differences between Sona Tamil and Standard Tamil may be cited the fact that the former has dropped the peculiar *ṛ* found in the latter.

Son. T.*onḍu* 'one' (T.*onḍṛu*)
mūnu 'three' (T. *mūnḍṛu*)
panḍi 'swine' (T.*panḍṛi*)
ōnumenḍu 'purposely' *(T.vēnḍumenḍṛu*)

Sona Tamil has also dispensed with the Tamil rule requiring that the semi-vowel *r* be preceded by a vowel:

Son. T. *renḍu* 'two' (T. *iranḍu*)
ravukkai 'bodice' (T.*iravikkai*)
rettam 'blood' (T.*irattam*)
rāu 'night' (T.*iravu*)

As for vowel changes, we find that the high front vowel *i* of Standard Tamil has become a mid front vowel *e* in the Sona dialect:

Son. T. *ela* 'leaf' (T.*ilai*)
eracci 'flesh' (T. *iraicci*)
veral 'finger' (T.*viral*)
kelangu 'potato' (T.*kilangu*)

The high front vowel *i* has also become a mid back vowel *o*:

Son.T. *pora* 'crescent' (T.*pirai*)
pona 'security' (T. *pinai*)
porov 'afterwards' (T. *piragu*)
molavu 'pepper' (T.*milagu*)

The high front vowel *i* has also become a high back vowel *u*:

Son.T. *bauru* 'stomach' (T.*vayiru*)
bulunda 'fell' (T.*vilanda*)
buluṅga 'swallow' (T.*viluṅgu*)
ravukkai 'bodice' (T.*iravikkai*)

While the high back vowel *u* has become a mid back vowel *o*:

Son. T.*oḍal* 'body' (T.*uḍal*)
nora 'lung' (T. *nurai*)
koḍal 'bowels' (T.*kuḍal*)
poḍava 'sari' (T.*puḍavai*)

We also find that the terminal diphthong *–ai* common in Tamil nouns is often shortened to *–a*:

Son.T.*tala* 'head' (T.*talai*)
mala 'rain' (T.*malai*)
vella 'white' (T.*vellai*)
kelama 'week' (T.*kilamai*)

Among other distinct Sona Tamil forms may be included *ūḍu* 'house' (T.*vīḍu*), *ōnum* 'want' (T.*vēnum*), *sōm* 'health' (T.*suham*), *sōppu* 'red' (T. *sivappu*), *pēr* 'name' (T.*peyar*), *osaram* 'tall' (T. *uyaram*), *postam* 'book' (T.*puttaham*), *dūram* 'far' (T.*tūram*), *marvādi* 'respect' (T.*mariyādai*), *marvālum* 'again' (T.*marpaḍiyum*), *kāyidam* 'letter' (T.*kaḍidam*), *tabaka* 'frog' (T.*tavalai*) and *dār* 'who' (T.*yār*). It also has *–cc-* in place of the *–tt-* of Tamil first person past tense verbs such as *aḍiccan* 'I beat' and *sandiccan* 'I met' in place of their respective Tamil equivalents *aḍittēn* and *sandittēn*.

Another distinct Sona usage, albeit one largely, if not solely confined to the Moors of Colombo and even there not universal amongst them is the use of the plural suffix-*val* instead of the Tamil *–hal* or *–gal* (after nasals) as for instance *ūḍuval* 'houses' instead of *vīḍuhal* and *maramval* 'trees' instead of *maraṅgal*. These show that not only has Sona Tamil shortened certain Tamil terms (eg.*ūḍu*, *pēr*, *sōm*, *sōppu*), but has also tended to preserve certain phonetic features of Sanskritic loans in Tamil which Standard Tamil has dispensed with such as for instance in the case of *postam* 'book' and *osaram* 'tall' which very likely have their origins in the Sanskritic *pusta* and *ucca* respectively. Similarly, *dūram*

'far' seems to have preserved the initial *d* of Sanskrit *dūra* which Tamil has turned into *t*, hence *tūram*. There also exist a few other regional usages that diverge from Tamil phonology as for instance *pośa* 'smoke' used by Galle folk which the Moors of other areas usually pronounce as *poha* (T.*pugai*).

It must however be pointed out that the phonological changes given above are by no means regular and are confined to a limited vocabulary of Sona Tamil. How this situation has come to exist it is difficult to say. A possible explanation may be regional variation where we may suppose a particular patois having these peculiarities evolved in comparative isolation from the rest of the speech community and when these two came into contact at some point in time the result was an intermixture leading to the situation we have today.

What we can be fairly certain of however is that changes such as the softening of initial voiceless plosives into voiced plosives such as the change *k>g* appear to be innovations that were even operative during the early colonial period as it even affected vocables of European origin. For instance consider the name of a sweetmeat indulged in by the Moors of old, *goradiyal* which seems to have originated in the Dutch *cordiaal*. Louis Nell in his explanatory list of Dutch words adopted by the Sinhalese [67] gives *kordiyal* as lozenge-shaped sweet cakes made of sugar blended with cashew-nuts, green muṅ seeds or gingelly seeds and milk, a term which seems to have derived from the Dutch *cordiaal*.

The Sona vocabulary has also been considerably influenced by other languages. Sona kinship terminology, for instance, has been influenced by languages whose speakers also belong to the Islamic faith. The Sona *ummā* 'mother', *vāppā* 'father', *dāttā* 'elder sister' and *nānā* 'elder brother' differ considerably from their respective Tamil equivalents, *ammā*, *appan*, *akkā* and *annā*. *Ummā* is no doubt derived from the Arabic *umm* 'mother' while *vāppā* appears to be a corruption of the Hindustani *bāp* 'father' though it could have also arisen from the Arabic *bābā* used for addressing an elder such as father or grandfather despite the fact that there exists a distinct term for father in Arabic, *ab* which may be used in forms like *abi* 'my father'. The change of initial *b* to *v* in this case may be explicable on the basis that Tamil knows no initial *b* and in the case of loan words often turns it into *v*. *Dāttā* is possibly a loan from the Divehi *datta* 'elder sister' or even a corruption of the Arabic *dāda* meaning 'a nurse who looks after children' or 'nanny' as in Egypt or Morocco or even 'lady' as in Jordan. In Iraqi Arabic *dāda* may

[67] The Orientalist. 1888-89

be used as a form of address for a brother or sister and in Swahili which has borrowed extensively from Arabic *dada* means sister.

Nānā may have arisen from the Oriya *nanā* which is used in the sense of 'elder brother' or borrowed from the Muslims of the coastal areas of Tanjore District like Nagore and Pullicat who similarly use the term *nānā* in the sense of 'elder brother'. Another term *kākā* used to denote elder brother in the Galle Fort area and Eastern regions like Nindavur is also found among the Tamil-speaking Muslims of Kilakarai, Kayalpattinam and parts of Kerala. It evidently has its origins in the Persian *kaka* or Malay *kākā* 'elder sibling'. Sona Tamil *sāccā* 'father's younger brother' and *sācci* 'mother's younger sister' also differ from their respective Tamil equivalents *sittappa* and *sitti*, and appear to have been borrowed from Hindustani. *Sāccā* is very probably a corruption of the Hindustani *cācā* 'father's younger brother' while it is likely that *sācci* has been constructed on analogy.

Arabic words also figure significantly in the Sonahar vocabulary. These include common nouns such as *ilm* 'knowledge', *āfat* 'harm', *mawt* 'death', *subah* 'dawn', *sabr* 'patience', *qabr* 'grave', *jahl* 'ignorance', *hawa* 'greed', *safar* 'journey', *kitāb* 'book', *miskīn* 'beggar', *najīs* 'dirt', *nikah* 'marriage', *walima* 'nuptial feast', *janāza* 'funeral', *mahalla* 'locality in connection with a mosque', *zamān* 'age', *qurbān* 'sacrifice' *talaq* 'divorce' and *karāmat* 'miracle'.

Many such terms may be used in expressions such as *pinnaka vāra zamān* 'coming age' (Ar.*zamān* 'age'), *mautta pōnā* 'passed away' (Ar.*mawt* 'death') or *harabā pō* 'fie!' 'get out!' (Ar.*harab* 'flee'). One may also come across the Arabic adjective *sālih* 'good', 'sound' being used in the form *sālihāna māppula* 'virtuous bridegroom'. Besides these, there exist a few Arabic-derived words. These include *olu* 'ablution'(Ar.*wuḍu*), *osiyat* 'last will' (Ar.*wasiyyat*), *nabusu* 'greed' (Ar.*nafs* 'self'), *sandak* 'funeral casket' (Ar.*sundūq* 'trunk','chest') and perhaps *nappi* 'miser' (Ar.*nafsi* 'desirous), *musuppu* 'lethargy' (Ar.*musābah* 'calamity') and *purājal* 'fun' (Ar.*faraj* 'delight, 'joy'). Whether the Arabic words used in Sona Tamil are survivals of their ancestral Arabic speech or later borrowings as a result of religious instruction it is difficult to say. Some such as *umma*, *āfat*, *zamān*, *mawt* and *nabusu* may perhaps be survivals of their Old Arabic speech while others pertaining to religion and social life may have also been simply retained or else arisen from religious instruction.

Distinctly Hindustani loans in the Sona speech include *attar* 'perfume', *bāṅg* 'summons to prayer', *dāḍhi* 'beard', *pardā* 'Islamically proper female attire', *surma* 'collyrium for the eyes', *sunnat*

'circumcision', *qabrastān* 'graveyard' and *jumerāt* 'Thursday night'. Although some of these terms themselves are of Arabic origin, their usage is distinctly Urdu. For instance, the term *sunnat* refers to 'The Prophet's tradition' or the 'way of the prophet' in Arabic, while in Urdu it has assumed the meaning of 'circumcision' which is also reflected in local usage, the proper Arabic term for circumcision being *khitān*. The term *jumerāt* is also particularly interesting since in Urdu it simply means 'Thursday' and not merely 'Thursday night' which to Muslims is in fact Friday, the reason being that the day in the Islamic calendar begins at dusk. Thus this night has a special significance to religious Muslims, hence a special term to denote it. It must however be pointed out that even in Urdu, the term *jumerāt* appears to have originally denoted 'Thursday night' as it appears to but a combination of *jum'a* 'Friday' and *rāt* 'night'. If this indeed be the case, the Moors who employ the term could be said to have preserved a usage truer to the original Urdu than that which prevails today among the Hindustani-speaking Muslims.

There are also instances where Hindustani loans have lost their original meaning in their passage to Sona Tamil. For instance, the Hindustani noun *pasand* 'choice' has come to assume the sense of 'beautiful' in Sona Tamil, probably through an intermediate sense of 'desirable'. Hindustani loans may also occur in a few expressions peculiar to the Moors, among them *yād* 'memory' (as for instance in *yād dilānā* 'to remind') which occurs in Sona Tamil as *yādu illai* 'I do not remember'.

There also exist a number of terms derived from Hindustani. These include *sāvi* 'key' and *śamśāpa* 'spoon' which have their origins in the Hindustani *cābi* and *camca* respectively, the proper Tamil terms being *torappu* and *karandi*. Likewise *baduvā* 'curse' has its origins in the Hindustani *bad-dua* 'evil wish'. There are also a number of terms relating to food items such as *buriyāni* 'rice dish' (U.*biryāni*), *bādam* 'almond' (U.*bādām*), *kīmā* 'minced beef' (U.*qīmā*) and *firini* 'pudding' (U.*firnī*).

A few regional usages also suggest Hindustani influence such as *jōrā* 'fast' as in the sentence *jōrā ōdi vānam* (don't run fast) used by Galle folk instead of the Tamil word *surukka* used by the Moors of the other parts of the country. The term seems to have its origins in the Urdu *zōr* 'strength' or *zōrāvar* 'strong' or 'forceful'. Although some of these terms are Persian in origin (eg.*parda*, *surma*, *firni*, *bādam*), there is good reason to believe that they were obtained through the medium of Urdu. Many of these loans may probably go back to as early as the 16th-

18th centuries when the Urdu language was making rapid progress in India under its Moghul rulers, especially during the reign of Aurangzeb who is known to have penetrated as far south as Golconda. These Hindustani loans have probably been acquired as a result of the close connections the Moors would have had with the subcontinent.

Besides, Hindustani or North Indian influence we also come across a few loans or shared words that are peculiar to the Muslims of South India such as *nānā* 'elder brother' and *dāttā* 'elder sister'. The Moor term for the dugong *āvuliyā* is also shared by the Lubbai fishermen of Kilakkarai who call it *avilliah*, the proper Tamil term for the creature being *kaḍal-paṇḍri* or 'sea-pig'. These borrowings are little doubt attributable to the socio-cultural influence exerted by South Indian Muslims on local Moor society following the fall of the Abbasid caliphate in the middle part of the thirteenth century.

The influence of Portuguese loans also appears to be greater in Sona than in Standard Tamil. Take for instance, words like *kusini* 'kitchen' (Port.*cozinha*), *kāmbara* 'room' (Port.*câmara*), and *kalisam* 'trousers' (Port.*calção*) which are used in preference to their pure Tamil equivalents *śamayalarai*, *arai* and *kātśattai*. *Kamisa* 'shirt' too may have derived from the Portuguese *camisa* though it is not impossible that its origins lie in the Arabic *qamis* which like the Portuguese term appears to have derived from the Latin *camisia*. The term very often used used for the bridal dais or throne *istādu* also appears to have a Portuguese origin, as it has very likely derived from the Port.*estrado* 'raised reclining place'.

Portuguese influence very likely permeated Moor speech during their sway in the island's maritime provinces during the latter part of the 16th century and the early part of the 17th century. Portuguese is known to have influenced the Sinhala vocabulary to a significant extent and the Tamil to a lesser. It is not unlikely therefore that it impacted on the Sona speech as well despite the fact that the two nations were not very well disposed towards one another.

The influence of the Dutch who followed the Portuguese as a colonial power seems to have been less significant, despite the fact that they enjoyed better relations with the Moors than their Lusitanian predecessors. Among the few lexical items of Dutch origin is that referring to a sweetmeat indulged by the Moors of old, *goradiyal* which has its origins in the Dutch *cordiaal*. The term *kakus-kuli* which the Moors of the Eastern areas used to designate those pits in which they formerly used to relieve themselves had its origins in the Dutch term for 'toilet', *kak-huis* (Lit.excreta-house).

Sinhala influence has also been considerable. Sinhala terms such as *goḍa* 'abundance', *bora* 'muddy' and *kabal* 'damaged' are widely used. The Sinhala term *kammäli* 'lazy' has been adopted as *kammalitanam*. The Sinhala *vaduvā* 'carpenter', *pissā* 'madman' and *pacayā* 'liar' have been adopted as *vaduvan*, *pissan* and *pacen* respectively by adding the Tamil terminal –n while *putuva* 'chair' has been adopted as *putuvam*. Similarly, the Sinhala terms of some fruits and vegetables have been adopted with an additional suffix *–kā* denoting fruit (fr.T.*kāi*) such as *ambarelikā* 'hog plum' (Sinh.*ämbaräla*) and *polosikā* 'tender jak fruit' (Sinh.*polos*). We also find the suffix –e signifying the exclamation O as in *amme* 'O mother!' being expressed as *umme* after the Sinhalese manner.

It must however be pointed out that many of the phonological changes given above as well as Sinhala and Hindustani loan words have not affected the Tamil spoken by the Moors of the Eastern Province who could be said to have preserved or adopted (as a result perhaps of their former relations with the Mukkuvar Tamils) a form of Tamil much more purer than the dialect spoken by the Moors of the Western and Southern parts of the island. For instance, they do not share the Sona Tamil innovation $v > b$ (Thus *vayiru* 'stomach' instead of *bauru* and *vānam* 'sky' instead of *bānam*), $k > g$ (Thus *kenar* 'well' instead of *genar* and *kōdamba* 'wheat' instead of *gōdamba*) or the change $g > h > v$ (Thus *mahan* 'son' instead of *mavan* and *mahal* 'daughter' instead of *maval*). Even here, the intervocalic *–h-* occurring in forms like *mahan* is sometimes pronounced as a sort of guttural lower down the throat and intermediate between the aspirate *h* and the voiced plosive *g*, showing that it has preserved vestiges of the proper Tamil form [68].

They also have some peculiar usages such as *vlām-palam* 'woodapple' which is closer to the Classical Tamil *vilām-palam* than the colloquial form *vilāṅgāi*. Some Eastern Moor usages also differ from those of the rest of the island. For instance 'elder sister' is called *lāttā* or *rāttā* and not *dāttā* as is the case with the Moors of the South and West. Their vocabulary too has not been influenced by Hindustani to the extent it has been in the West and South as they do not use words such as *sāvi* 'key' and *śamsāpa* 'spoon' using instead the pure Tamil *torappu* and *karandi*.

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[68] This may explain why even some Arabic names among the Batticaloa Moors with *h* should have been rendered as *g*. E.g Agemadumeerapodi (CGG. June 4, 1870) and Agamado Lebbe (Ceylon Directory 1876), both of which have derived from the Arabic Ahmad.

There do however exist a few shared lexical items such as *ūḍu* 'house' which is used colloquially alongside the more formal and proper Tamil form *vīḍu*. Such forms may be due to a common inheritance acquired prior to a period a sizeable community of Moors who later went on to settle the East split away from those in the Western or Southern littoral such as took place during the reign of King Senarat (Early 17th century) who settled many Moors living in the maritime districts expelled by the Portuguese in the Batticaloa District [69].

The Moors of the north who until recent times formed a considerable settlement in Jaffna Town still tend to speak their conservative Tamil speech in the areas they have settled in. These Northern Moors too have some distinct usages of their own. For instance *vāppacci* (the form *–acci* which evidently has its origins in the Tamil *ācci* 'grandmother') for paternal grandmother instead of the Sona Tamil form *vāppamma*. This shows that the speech of the northern Moors has been subject to a greater degree of Tamil influence than that of those in the south.

Generally, however, the Moors whose ancestors as we have seen were an Arabic-speaking folk do not seem to have had that strong linguistic consciousness that has characterized the Tamil folk such as those of Jaffna. Indeed, we find a situation today where some Moorish youth in the largely Sinhalese-majority areas in the Western, Central and Southern Provinces are gradually eschewing Tamil and adopting Sinhala in its place. This process is largely attributable to education in the Sinhala medium. The majority of Moor students in the Sinhalese-majority areas receive their education today in the Sinhala medium. Indeed, the need for education in the Sinhala vernacular was felt about the middle part of the twentieth century or perhaps even earlier, particularly among the Kandyan Moors. W.A.Dullewe, the President of a village council in Matale could observe well over hundred years ago: "It is worthy of remark, to their credit, that Moors show a greater love of learning than the Sinhalese. The Moormen of the distant village Nikawatawana have got up themselves a Sinhalese school of their own in the village, taking a Kandyan as the teacher" [70].

The Report of the Kandyan Peasantry Commission [71] noted of the Muslims of the Central and Uva Provinces: "They realize and consider

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[69] See Conquista Temporal e Espiritual de Ceylao. Fernao de Queyroz (1687)

[70] Reports on the working of village councils.1877. Papers laid before the Legislative Council of Ceylon.1877 (1878)

[71] Sessional Paper XVIII 1951

that their future is so closely linked with the Sinhalese peasantry midst whom they live, that it would be in their future interest and betterment if Sinhalese became their medium of instruction". Instruction in the Sinhala medium has had the effect of gradually displacing Tamil as the home language among the younger generation. M.A.Nuhman [72] observes: "There is a growing tendency among the school going generation who study in the Sinhala medium, to use Sinhala as their first language and speak in Sinhala even with their Muslim friends and parents. They do not read and write Tamil, that shows a shift in their mother tongue".

It should also be pointed out that during the 1950's, when the official Language issue was at its peak, Moorish leaders like Badiuddin Mahmud and Razik Fareed did not think it odd to be among the most fervent advocates of the 'Sinhala Only' policy which sought to make Sinhala the sole official language of the country, replacing English, despite the fact that the Moor constituencies they represented were for the most part a Tamil-speaking people. In fact, Badiuddin Mahmud who was to become a powerful Muslim Minister in the 1970's under the left-leaning United Front Government is known to have propagated among his southern co-religionists as far back as the 1950s the need to learn Sinhala and adopt it as their mother tongue [73].

There are even those who believe that Mahmud was the first Sri Lankan who wanted Sinhala as the only official language in an independent Sri Lanka. As far back as 1938, addressing the Muslims of Galle, he is known to have declared that "Muslims did not get any benefit by accepting Tamil language. Today or tomorrow, we will definitely get independence and Sinhala should be the official language" [74]. Razik Fareed, another well known Muslim political figure is also known to have ardently supported the 'Sinhala Only' policy. He was one among the five members and the only one from the minorities who voted for a motion at the State Council in 1944 to make Sinhala the sole official language. In a fairly lengthy speech on the subject in Parliament on 13th June 1956 he declared in no uncertain terms that he was the happiest man present there, because, he said "the dream I dreamt and the

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[72] Sri Lankan Muslims.Ethnic Identity within Cultural Diversity (2007)

[73] Enkal Talaivar Badiuddin. A.W.M.Hanseer (1989)

[74] Ibid

vision I saw 12 years ago are a reality today – that the Sinhalese language be the only official language of Sri Lanka".

Among the reasons for supporting the Bill he cited were among others the fact that he was convinced more than ever before that "one language alone will serve us as a unifying factor of the different communities. One official language will be the emblem of ideal homogeneity of a nation and, very logically, it should be the language of the majority, the Sinhalese". He also went on to add that he did not wish to be "part to the political genocide of my race, the Moor community, by another race, the Tamil community, which is stretching its treacherous tentacles to draw us into the whirlpool called the Tamil-speaking nation and thus annihilating a race with history, culture and religion of its own" [75].

Such a policy was no doubt largely motivated by political considerations, prompted by the desire to gain the favour of the majority community and their leaders in a largely Sinhalese-dominated political set-up. Nevertheless the scant opposition to it only goes on to show that the Moor masses were not too concerned with the issue of the Tamil language being given parity of status despite the fact that they spoke it as their home language and were largely if not solely literate in it. Nowadays one could even find the *bayān* or sermon before the congregational *Jumu'a* prayer on Fridays being sometimes delivered in Sinhala in certain areas, particularly in the Western Province.

English too has come to figure significantly in the life of some of the Moors of the urban areas. Many Moor youth today, particularly in the predominantly Sinhalese provinces are bi-lingual (Tamil and Sinhala), if not tri-lingual (Tamil, Sinhala and English) though this does not hold true of those of the North and East who are still largely conversant only in Tamil. The Moors in general have placed due emphasis on acquiring multi-lingual skills which is deemed extremely important for the progress of the community. Indeed, the Tamil language newspaper Muslim Nēsan edited by M.C.Siddi Lebbe advocated as far back as 1886 that in the circumstances obtaining, the Muslims should acquire a knowledge of Arabic, Tamil, English and Sinhala.

The situation is not very much different today. Tamil continues to be the home language of the majority of Moors while Sinhala is often employed in interacting not only with the majority Sinhalese but even amongst Moor youth themselves. English too is highly valued as an international language that provides greater access to educational, vocational and commercial opportunities. Unfortunately, however, the

[75] Hansard, 13 June 1956

study of Arabic has been largely neglected despite its being the liturgical language of Islamdom as well as the ancestral speech of the community. There thus remains a need for more stress to be placed on the teaching of Arabic upon local Muslims.

Indeed, the pioneers of the Muslim revivalist movement in the country like Siddi Lebbe did make a serious effort to propagate Arabic as the language of the Muslims of the country, an effort which was inspired by the fact that the Muslims could read and write the Arabic script. Siddi Lebbe wrote in his newspaper Muslim Nesan in 1884 that "Muslims should try to adopt Arabic as their home language. If the Portuguese and Dutch who live in Ceylon can forget their mother tongue and speak English why can't we forget Tamil and make Arabic our mother tongue ?" he asked [76]. In 1891, Siddi Lebbe published an Arabic grammar entitled Al-Hidayatul Qassimiyath (in Arabu-Tamil script) and a concise Arabic grammar entitled Tuhfat-un-Nahw. He also published easy primers for the study of Arabic [77]. Indeed, over 80 Muslims are known to have participated in a meeting at the residence of Siddi Lebbe on the night of 15th May 1891 to encourage the study of Arabic among Muslims. Siddi Lebbe is said to have addressed the meeting in Arabic at great length [78].

Arabic however failed to catch on as a spoken language among the Muslims of the country. As noted by Mahroof (1986): "The lack of cheap Arabic books in variety and quantity and the lack of continuous dialogue with Arabic-speaking communities in the Indian sub-continent and in the middle-east were some factors which were against Arabic becoming a popular spoken tongue".

Had Arabic been adopted as the spoken language of the Moors, it would have been a case of linguistic revival, rather than linguistic regression. Today it is only a very few Moors who can speak Arabic fluently, confined mainly to the religious establishment.

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[76] Cited in Ilaṅkāi muslimkalin varalārum kalācāramum (1870-1915). M.I.M.Ameen (2000)

[77] See British rule and the Muslims.M.M.M.Mahroof.ESMSL (1986)

[78] See 'Meeting of Musalmans in Kandy',CLR,May 26,1891

IV) Arabu-Tamil

Available evidence would suggest that the Moors have traditionally belonged to a fairly literate society, which is however not surprising considering the emphasis their Islamic faith places on the acquisition of knowledge. In the olden days, the literature of the Moors was generally written in *Arabu-Tamil* i.e.Tamil in Arabic script, which seems to have its origins among the Tamil-speaking Muslims of South India [79]. Tradition prevalent in areas such as Kilakkarai and Kayalpattinam in South India indicate that Arabu-Tamil was in use as early as the second century of the Hijrah (C.8th century AC) [80]. Its use among the local Moors was however very likely after the thirteenth century when as we have shown Tamil began to displace Arabic in their day to day life.

The Arabu-Tamil script consists of the 28 Arabic characters plus 10 more characters representing *c*, *p*, *g*, *ṅ*, *ṇ*, *ṭ*, *ḍ*, *ḷ*, *gn* and *zh* and two diacritical marks representing the vowels *e* and *o* which are absent in Classical Arabic. These characters were formed by minor alterations to the Arabic letters by the addition of dots. The diacritical marks denoting vowels also follow the Arabic pattern. The Arabu-Tamil script however differs considerably from the Perso-Arabic script of Urdu and appears to have been improvised independently of either Persian or Urdu. For instance, the sound *p* is formed by adding a dot below the Arabic *fā* unlike in Persian or Urdu where *p* is formed by adding three dots below the Arabic *bā* to form the character known as *pe*. Similarly, the *g* of Arabu-Tamil is formed by adding a dot below the Arabic *kāf* unlike the Persian or Urdu which denotes the sound by adding a stroke over the *kāf* to form *gāf*. Similarly, the retroflex sounds *ḍ* and *ṭ* are formed by the addition to the Arabic *dāl* of a single dot below in the case of *ḍ* and two dots below in the case of *ṭ* where it occurs in conjunct form; *ṅ* is formed by adding to the Arabic character *ayn* three dots while *gn* is formed by adding below the Arabic *nūn* two dots; the peculiar Tamil sound *zh* is

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[79] This language is referred to as Lisānul Arwi in classical usage. It takes its name from the Arabic *lisān* 'language' and *Arwi* which is either derived from a corrupted form of *Arabi* 'Arabic' or from *Aruvar*, the name by which Tamil-speaking folk were formerly known in other parts of Dravidian India such as Andhra as contended by Dr.Tayka Shuayb in his Arabic, Arwi and Persian in Sarandib and Tamil Nadu (1993). It is also possible however that *Arwi* may be from a Tamil synonym for the Tamil language *aravam* 'sound which is not sonorous, soundlessness, bustle, confused noise' which even folk etymology connects with this meaning (Companion Studies to the History of Tamil Literature. Kamil Zvelebil.1992).

[80] See Arabu-Tamil Engal Anbu Tamil. A.M.A.Aziz (1966)

formed by adding a dot below the Arabic *ḍād* whose sound it somewhat resembles. As for vowels, the Arabic diacritical mark *dammah* representing *u* is turned upwards and placed on the top of any letter to produce *o* while the same symbol placed under a letter denotes *e*.

The only character common to both Arabu-Tamil and Persian/Urdu is that denoting *c* which in both scripts is formed by adding to the Arabic *jīm* two more dots to form the character known as *ce* or *cīm*.

Arabu-Tamil generally follows the Tamil convention of representing voiced sounds by the characters denoting their corresponding unvoiced sounds. For instance, *inda* 'this' is spelled *inta*, but pronounced *inda* in keeping with the Tamil practice of voicing a plosive when it follows a nasal. Not all words however follow this convention. For instance, while Tamil represents intervocalic *d* (pronounced as a voiced interdental like the *th* in English *this*) by *t*, e.g. *ōtu* 'recite', *pātukāval* 'protection', Arabu-Tamil represents it not by the Arabic character *tā*, but by the Arabic thā (a voiceless interdental fricative similar to *th* in English thin) though properly speaking the more appropriate character for representing the sound should be the Arabic *dhāl*.

Many are the factors which are believed to have contributed to the emergence of Arabu-Tamil. M.M.M.Mahroof [81] believes that Arabu-Tamil was invented as a matter of necessity. Tracing its early phases, he notes that when Arabic-speaking ship masters, seamen and traders arrived in South India, they would have had to make records of their commercial transactions. By necessity, names of commercial goods, locations, names of persons, articles of food and clothing would be in the local language (in this case Tamil) recorded by Arabic-speakers in Arabic with some modifications. Hence, it would be the nouns of the local language which would be written down in Arabic. In course of time, common verbs and common sentence patterns would be transcribed in Arabic as well. At first, each individual, Arabic speaker would do the transliteration on his own, but in course of time, this coding of Tamil words in Arabic became standardized, giving rise to a common Arabu-Tamil script.

Another powerful element at work, contends Mahroof, was that all Muslim religious activities involved the use of Arabic language and Arabic material such as the Qur'an, hadith etc and hence in such places as mosques and madrasahs, it was convenient to use the local language written in Arabic. Another was personal use. The keeping of diary

[81] Arabic Tamil in South India and Sri Lanka. IS, Summer 1993

entries, commercial information, notes and messages to one's commercial partners and employees, notices in front of mosques, personal invitations and private letters were some uses to which Arabu-Tamil easily lent itself. In all these uses, an element of secrecy (refusal to transfer information to the 'other-group', i.e. non-Muslims) existed. This was particularly so in Sri Lanka during the early colonial period when the Muslims of the country adopted a low profile, and it was only in this period and perhaps at no other time in Sri Lanka was the role of Arabu-Tamil so positive and dynamic.

Shuayb (1993) cites a number of other causes that would have contributed to the birth of Arabu-Tamil or Arwi as he prefers to call it. For one thing, the Arwi or Tamil-speaking Muslims were a negligible minority who did not enjoy political power so that they became conscious of the necessity to preserve their distinct religious and cultural character without losing their linguistic identity. Further, certain terms and concepts in the Tamil language which had come under the influence of the idolatrous Hindu religion were in conflict with the religious beliefs, ethical concepts and moral values dear to Muslims. Moreover, Tamil words lacked the capacity to convey the full significance of Arabic terms with deep religious and spiritual connotations such as *Allāh*, *rasūl*, *sahābah*, *wali*, *fard*, *sunnat*, *wājib*, *mustahab*, *qiyāmah*, *karāmat*, *jannat* and *jahannam*. As such, translations of Arabic terms such as these were inadequate to convey their real sense.

Further, the Tamil-speaking Muslims were quite familiar with the Arabic script because of their ability to read the holy Qur'ān. Such factors, coupled with their close contact with the Arab traders and immigrants hastened the process of shaping a new language which, while retaining all the basic aspects of the finest spoken Tamil and its grammatical forms, put on the beautiful garb of the Arabic script. Arabic letters with suitable added diacritical marks were devised and the result was a new language that came to be known as Lisānul Arwi or Arwi, concludes Shuayb.

What must also be noted however is that the proper Tamil script does not possess characters that could be adequately employed for transcribing Arabic terms. For instance, it does not possess characters representing sibilants such as *s*, *z* or *sh*, the aspirate *h* or the labio-dental fricative *f*. Furthermore, Tamil does not have separate characters for voiced sounds such as *b* or *d* due to the simple reason that a voiced plosive cannot commence a word, nor can a voiceless plosive be admitted intervocally unless doubled. Thus the character employed to denote *t* or *p* in the initial position would be employed to denote d or b

in the intervocalic position or after a nasal. Similarly, there does not exist a separate character to denote the voiced palatal *j* and its voiceless equivalent *c* is employed to represent it when it occurs after nasals.

Thus it is not unlikely that the inadequacy of the Tamil script in representing Arabic words would have been a contributory factor to the adoption of Arabic script. Arabic words, particularly those of a religious significance, have been held in great sanctity by Muslims. Not only was translating them unthinkable, but it is also unlikely that they would have allowed it to be corrupted by transcribing it to another language whose script could not faithfully represent its sounds. Although one conversant in Arabic or aware of the proper pronunciation of Arabic vocables could mentally read for instance *p* as *b* or *c* as *j*, there still remained the danger of mispronunciation based on written texts over time.

Thus, besides obvious religious sentiments, namely as a means of fostering a Muslim religious identity, the fear of mispronouncing Arabic religious terms might perhaps explain why writing one's language in Arabic script or a modified form of it has been characteristic of many Muslim peoples of the east. This still obtains among the Urdu-speaking Muslims of the subcontinent who use a Perso-Arabic script. It also formerly obtained among the Turks of the Ottoman period (who employed a modified Perso-Arabic script) and the Malays (who employed an unvocalised Arabic script known as Jawi before it was superseded by the Latin script). The Moors of old commonly employed Arabu-Tamil in their day to day activities such as for instance in their certificates of marriage known as *kaduttams* [82].

Among the few remaining survivals of indigenous Arabu-Tamil literature may be included the *Kashfur rān an qalbil jān*, an Arabu-Tamil journal published in Colombo in the latter part of the nineteenth century (1889-1890) and preserved at the National Archives, Colombo. There is also said to have existed a short-lived Arabu-Tamil newspaper *Assavāp* (*As-Sawāb*) around the turn of the last century which was edited and published by I.L.M.Abdul Azeez which however did not endure long and was soon superseded by his Muslim Guardian which

[82] For instance in the Reports on the Mohammedan Marriage Bill occurring in the Sessional Papers of 1885 we find that "The protocols of kaḍuttams are always written in Tamil language, but in Arabic characters, with a slight modification of the signs thereof in order to suit the Tamil sounds. It is called "Arabu-Tamil" and most of the Mohammedans can read it".

started as a bi-weekly in 1901 [83]. Other local Arabu-Tamil works include the *Mīzan Mālai* composed by Shaykh Mustafa of Beruwala and published in 1868 and the *Arwiyyah* and *Arūssiyah Mālai* composed by Muhammad Hanifa Bas, Founder Trustee of Bukhari Mosque, Maradana [84]. A notable feature of many Arabu-Tamil works, and not only religious works, was the high incidence of Arabic terms used, not to mention the fact that many had Arabic titles [85].

In later times, with the circulation of printed books, the Arabic script was gradually superseded by the Tamil script with or without the use of diacritical marks [86]. Shuayb (1993) cites a number of factors that would have contributed to the general decline of Arabu-Tamil including the setting up of the modern Tamil printing presses on a large scale which facilitated the quick and easy printing of Tamil books. In contrast, the printing of Arabu-Tamil books was a complicated and tedious process based on the costly lithographic process. One had to rely heavily on the copying artists known as kātibs or scribes. The kātib's job, he points out, was a patient and time-consuming one and the wages they received was not commensurate with the hard work extracted from them. Slowly, the number of these skilled artisans dwindled so that people preferred printing their religious books in Tamil rather than in Arabu-Tamil, concludes Shuayb.

Nevertheless we still find a few Arabu-Tamil compositions of a religious nature still in circulation and in use among the Moors, especially the womenfolk of the older generation. These include the *Talai Fātiha* and *Āshūrā Duā* still recited on certain occasions, though both of these are in Arabic as well as in Arabu-Tamil. Indeed, one may still come across a few elderly folk, particularly women who are able to write in Arabu-Tamil.

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[83] See I.L.M.Abdul Azeez Birth Centenary Address by A.M.A.Azeez.MICHS 1944-1969

[84] For more details of the contribution of local Moors to Arabu-Tamil see Shuayb (1993)

[85] Take for instance the novel titled *Madīnatun nuhās*, based on the 'City of Brass' of the Arabian Nights authored by Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Lebbai (Imām al-Arūs). Printed in the Arabic script in 1900 in Colombo, it is arguably the first novel written in the Tamil language as it was probably written several decades before being published (See Islam in Tamilnadu. Torsten Tschacher. Südasienwissenschaftliche Arbeitsblätter. 2001).

[86] See Some Aspects of the Muslim Society of Ceylon. A.M.A.Azeez. PFICSTS (1968)

The Moor contribution to Tamil literature proper has not been insignificant, the major part of it coming from the northern and eastern parts of the country. The notable literary personages of the north included Miran Mukiyittin Pulavar of Jaffna who authored a work entitled *Canmārkka Ilakupota Vinā Vi Tai*, a catechism on various aspects of Islam. Other notable literary personages of the north included Assana Lebbai who wrote an anthology of poetry entitled Pukalppavāni and Badrudin who composed the *Mukkiyittin Purānam*, an epic work on the life of saint Muhiyuddin.

The Moors of the East also produced some well known literary works, among them Abdul Rahman Alim of Addalachenai, the author of *Tavamalar Nana Oppari*, Oluvil Yusuf Pulavar, the writer of a work on Islamic mysticism entitled *Meyyolivu Nanamani Malai* and Syed Mohammed Moulana of Kattankudi who wrote the *Nana Anantak Kalippu* and *Kappar Cintu*.

One of the earliest was Meeralebbe Alim of Marudamunai popularly known as Sinnalim Appa who composed a work known as *Gnanarai Ventran* (Victory over the Sage), a book of verse condemning the unislamic practices that were in vogue among the Muslims of the area at the time. This work, consisting of 68 stanzas was copied by Aboobuckerpody Ahamedlebbe onto Ola leaf in 1850, but not published until nearly a hundred years later as a booklet in 1948. Another early poet, Ahamed Kutty of Kattankudy composed a work of verse known as *Isuva Ammanai* as far back as 1260 AH (C.1844) which dealt with the trials of a woman named Isuva and the importance of female chastity. In later times, A.M.Sherifudeen composed a number of poetic works including *Nabimoli Nātpadu*, *Mutumoli Venpā*, *Sūravali Padaippōr* and *Manamangala Mālai* which were largely religious in nature. Abdul Cader Lebbe of Kattankudy composed another well known work, *Caynampu Nācciyār Mānmiyam* (Virties of Lady Zainab).

More recent times saw a new genre of poetry, war poetry, emerging as a result of the conflict between the Muslims of the area and Tamil militants, among them Ashroff Shihabdeen's *Zaitūn* and N.A.Theeran's *Abābīlkalum Yānaipataiyum* which drew upon the Qur'anic story of the *abābīl* or birds sent by God to destroy a large army mounted on elephants that had sought to destroy Mecca.

Among the more recent novels or fictional literature produced by Easterners include Y.Ahamed's *Putiya Talaimuraikal* (New Generations), M.P.M.Jaleel's Oru Vellaipura Sirikkiratu (A white

flower smiles) and Junaida Sheriff's *Kāṭṭil Erinta Nila* (The moonlight in the forest) [87].

The Moors living in the predominantly Sinhalese areas have also contributed somewhat to the development of Tamil literature, among them M.C.Siddi Lebbe who wrote a Tamil novel, *Asanbey Udaya Katai*, based on the life of an Egyptian prince named Asan Bey in 1885, a work claimed to be the first ever novel published in the country. Siddi Lebbe also wrote a book on Islamic mysticism entitled Asrarul Alam in 1897 and another on the Greek-Turkish War in 1892 [88]. The period 1980-1995 saw a steady rise in works written by Moors in Sinhala, though the majority of books continued to be in the Tamil language[89]. Indeed, the literary works written by Moors in the Sinhala language are still very few. One such work is Madavala Kaleel's *Aviya Bimadamamu* (1997) which is a collection of poems on peace. Another notable writer in Sinhala, Ahamad Shamshad Begum has published a number of works including a book on poetry titled *Reyyān* (*Doraṭuva*).

As for newspapers, we find that the Moors of yore were responsible for publishing many newspapers in Tamil for propagating Islamic values among the Muslims of the time. These included *Pudinālankāri* which commenced publication at Sonahar Puttu Road (New Moor Street) in Colombo in 1873 and was released every Saturday and Monday, its editor being Vappu Marikar Nayinthai Marikar. *Muslim Nēsan* was commenced in 1882 by P.Rayappen of the Muslim Friends Office at Katugastota, Kandy and issued on Thursdays. In 1884, M.C.Siddi Lebbe of the Muslim Friends Office served as its printer and publisher and in 1887 the printing of the paper was transferred to Prospect Hill of Peradeniya in Kandy. *Sarvajana Nēsan*, a weekly paper covering general news, education, business and politics was started in 1886 and printed and published by A.L.C.Mohideen for the proprietors Othnoman & Co at Messenger Street, Colombo. Syful Islam which published general news and advice for youth commenced publication in 1890

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[87] See The Literary Pursuits of the Muslims of the Eastern Province. Rameez Abdullah. MHESL (2011)

[88] See The Language and Literature of the Muslims.M.M.Uwise. ESMSL(1986)

[89] See Cuvaṭi Ārruppaṭai.S.H.M.Jameel (1994-2001) who lists over a thousand works written by Sri Lankan Muslims in Tamil from 1868-2000.

under the editorship of Abdul Rahuman at Messenger Street, Colombo [90].

Besides the conventional newspapers, there are also said to have been 'little magazines' catering to the local Muslims and this included the *Islam Mitiran* begun in 1893 by L.M.Othman and continued to be published by his sons O.M.Shukri and O.M.Razeen until 1945.The Jamiyathul-Ulama published the religious periodical *Al-Ilm* while *Al-Islam* also appeared during this period and the *Islam Tarakai* began to be published in 1946 [91]. In more recent times, we find a number of Tamil religious publications catering to the local Muslim readership. These include *Al-Hasanāt* published by the Sri Lanka Jamā'at-e-Islāmi and the *Unmai Udayam*, the organ of the Jamiyyatu Ansāris Sunnatil Muhammadiyya. A Sinhala monthly publication, *Prabōdhaya* published by the Jamā'at-e-Islāmi has also appeared of late and deals with a variety of religious issues as well as current news.

[90] See Tamil Newspapers of 19th century Sri Lanka. S.S.K.Wickramanayake and Nalayini Kanapathipillai.SCVRASSL (1995)

[91] See The Fortunes of the Muslims in the period 1901-1948.M.M.M.Mahroof. ESMSL (1986)

CHAPTER 6

THE MALAYS OF SRI LANKA AND THE LOCAL MALAY LANGUAGE

The Malays of Sri Lanka are the second largest Muslim community in Sri Lanka after the Moors with a population of about 60,000 persons. Though a tiny minority, their impact on the national life of the country, religious, social and cultural has been significant.

I) Origins and Affinities of the Malays of Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka's Malays are largely descended from political exiles including nobles and chiefs, soldiers, convicts and freed slaves from the Indonesian archipelago who were brought over to the island during the period of Dutch occupation which lasted from 1658-1796. This is not to say that there were no Malays in the island before the Dutch colonial period, for there does exist some evidence to show that Malay peoples may have settled in Sri Lanka well before the Dutch era. This supposition of early Malay contacts with Sri Lanka could be supported on geographical grounds. Sri Lanka situated as it is in a central position in the Indian Ocean lies midway between the Indonesian archipelago and Madagascar to which sea-faring Malays of yore are known to have resorted to and settled and it is not unlikely that such voyagers would have touched the southern or eastern coasts of Sri Lanka in times gone by.

This is suggested by certain cultural affinities between the Sinhalese and the peoples of the Indonesian archipelago, especially with regard to sea-faring vessels and a few vocables which seem to have originated in the Malay world. It is very likely that the Sinhalese outrigger canoe known as *oruva* commonly used by the fishermen in the southern parts of the island has in fact derived from a similar Malayo-Polynesian sea-faring vessel. As James Emerson Tennent observes in his Ceylon (1859), the out-rigger canoes used by the Ceylonese are peculiar to the Malay race and is even to be traced in Madagascar and the Comoros where a Malayan colony was settled at some remote period of antiquity. J.Hornell [1] likewise notes that the Sri Lankan outriggers differ considerably from those found in South India and postulates a Southeast Asian influence. It is also possible that it were the early Malays who

[1] The origin and ethnological significance of Indian boat designs. Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.1923

gave to the island the name of its commercial capital Colombo known in classical literature as Kolon-tota (lit.the port of the Kolon)[2]. The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea describes South East Asian ships known as *kolan-diophonta* or 'Kolan ships', the name Kolan here probably being the same as the Kunlun-Po which the Chinese annals use to describe non-Chinese ships, more specifically ships manned by the Kunlun peoples to the south of China, very probably Malays. These South East Asian ships are described in the annals as large vessels made of two whole logs roped together very much like the double canoes of Oceania. Some of these multi-masted ships could reach fifty metres in length and were able to carry up to six hundred tonnes of goods [3]. Kunlun sailors who are identified as sea-faring Malays are believed to have been known in China by the 3rd century B.C. and there is evidence that they were settling along the East African coast by the first century A.C. so that by the time of the Roman empire, there are said to have been permanent colonies of Malayo-Polynesian-speaking peoples on the coast of Malagasy, where they remain to this day [4]. It is therefore quite possible that it were the Malay mariners of old who resorted to Sri Lanka in ancient times who gave the port-city of Kolon-Tota or Colombo its name.

Yet another settlement that seems to have been settled by the Malays of old is Hambantota, the very name of which suggests a connection with *sampan*, the Malay term for a type of sailing vessel, for Hambantota appears to literally mean 'harbour of the sampans'. Says R.H.Bassett [5]: "Hambantota is essentially a Malay settlement, although, due to modern traffic facilities, Sinhalese arte probably numerically superior. The town remains, however, the main centre from which Malays penetrate all over Ceylon, while its local characteristics have

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[2] P.E. Pieris in his Ceylon. The Portuguese Era. Vol.I (1913) makes reference to Colombo in Portuguese times being known as Kolon-Tota and says that "so far as can be ascertained, the Kolon Tota of the Sinhalese is that portion of Colombo which is now bounded on the north by Bankshall street; on the east by Fourth Cross Street; on the South by Maliban Street; and on the West by Front Street, being about one half of the Pettah ward of to-day. It would thus be protected by water on the North and South, and by marsh on the West and the greater portion of the East".

[3] Southeast Asian shipping in the Indian Ocean during the first millennium A.D. Pierre-Yves Manguin in Tradition and Archaeology. Early maritime contacts in the Indian Ocean.Ed.H.P.Roy & J.F.Salles (1996)

[4] The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia. Nicholas Tarling (1999)

[5] Romantic Ceylon (1929)

been permeated for centuries by the sentiments of that nationality. The origin of this settlement is ascribed to the thirteenth century A.D., when Malay *prahus*, sailing to and from Madagascar-where they still have a colony- made it a practice to call at the bay for water. The few people who formed the nucleus of a small colony, finding its living in the maintenance of a port for stores at this remote spot, naturally attracted later immigrants to their neighbourhood. Sampantota (boat-place), being familiar as a port of call, then became the recognized landing-place for emigrant Malays in early times. The colony was subsequently swelled both by ex-soldiers who, on retirement from Dutch service, gravitated to their overseas home, and by the installment there of several Malay families of good standing, who were deported by the Dutch government from Batavia for political reasons".

The existence in the island of those typical Malay curved daggers known as krises since very early times may also indicate an early Malay presence in the island. H.Parker notes in his Ancient Ceylon (1909) that the kris known in Sinhala as *krīciya* is rarely seen and does not often appear in the vihāra paintings but is represented at the Dambulla Vihāra where it is held as a dagger. He however adds: "The fact that a broken blade which appeared to belong to this weapon, with at least three bends, was discovered in the Tissa excavations, in the lowest pottery stratum, proves that it had been introduced into the island in very early times". The local tradition of betel chewing may have also been influenced by the practice existing in the Malay world. The Sinhala term for arecanut *puvak* which figures in betel-chewing may perhaps derive from an Austronesian language which employed a reflex of the Proto-Austronesian form **buaq* 'fruit' for arecanut, such as seen in *vuaq* in Payuma of Taiwan, *buah* in Lampung of Indo-China, *pua* in Roti in the Lesser Sundas and *na-pwo-k* in Lenakal in Vanuatu. Similarly, the Sinhala term for the betel leaf, *bulat*, may derive from an Austronesian or Malayo-Polynesian form such as **bulu* which is attested in such far-flung forms like *bulu* in Bimanese (Sunda Islands), *buulu* in Mandar (Sulawesi), *pupulu* in Chamorro (Mariana Islands in Micronesia) and *ful* in Siassi (Bismarck Archipelago). The Sinhala form *bulat* with a terminal *t* it is possible has derived from a compound *bulu+ pat* 'leaf' becoming **bulu-vat* and eventually *bulat*.

There also exist a number of other Sinhala vocables which seem to have had its origins in the Malay world, notable among these being *oluva* 'head' which does not appear to have derived from an Aryan or Dravidian source. The term nevertheless seems to have been in existence for quite some time and even occurs in the 13th century Saddharma-Ratnāvaliya in the form *olu*. This term very likely had its

origins in the Old Malay *hulu* (since replaced by the Sanskritic *kapala*) or Sundanese where *ulu* means 'head'. Other Malay vocables found in Sinhala include *hamban* 'small sea-going craft' (Mal.*sampan*), *rabāna* 'variety of drum' (Mal.*rebana*), *pingāna* 'plate' (Mal.*pinggan*), *hānda* 'spoon' (Mal.*sendok*) and *giraya* 'arecanut cutter' (Mal.*girek*) though we cannot be certain of the antiquity of these loans [6], that is whether they existed in Sinhala before the 17th century when the Malays began to trickle to the island as soldiers with the commencement of Dutch rule.

Nevertheless the earliest substantive historical account relating to the Malay presence in Sri Lanka before the Dutch period is that of the Cūlavaṁsa which relates that during the reign of King Parakkama-Bāhu II (C.1236-1270) a king of the Jāvakas named Candabhānu [7] landed with a terrible Javaka army under the pretext that they too were followers of the Buddha. They are said to have invaded every landing place and with their poisoned arrows harassed the people they caught sight of and laid waste the country. The Sinhalese warriors are however said to have given battle to the invaders and put them to flight, thus freeing Lanka from them. This Jāvaka king nevertheless appears to have gained a foothold in northern Sri Lanka, eventually becoming the ruler of the Jaffna Kingdom. This is borne out by epigraphic evidence, namely, an inscription dated to the tenth year of the Pandyan king Jaṭāvarman Vīra Pāṇḍya (C.1263) where mention is made of a contemporary Jāvaka (*Śāvakan*) king of Sri Lanka, now identified as Candabhānu. It has been further recorded in the Kuḍimiyāmalai Praśasti dated to Vīra Pāṇḍya's eleventh year that the son of the Malay king (*Śāvakan maindan*) who had been disobedient for some time, made his submission to Vīra Pāṇḍya and was restored to the kingdom once ruled by his father [8].

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[6] The only exception here is perhaps *hānda* which occurs in the SdR in the plural form *hāňdi* as well as in the form *bat-sāndak* 'spoonful of rice'

[7] These Jāvakas however do not appear to be Javanese as suggested by the name, but rather Malays of the Malayan peninsula, for the Candabhānu alluded to in the CV is very probably identical with the Candrabhānu who figures as the lord of Tāmbraliṅga (a kingdom which comprised a considerable portion of the Malay Peninsula particularly the Ligor area) in an inscription from Chaiya dated 1230 AC (Le royaume de Çrīvijaya.G.Coedès.BEFEO.1918). This is corroborated by local works such as the Hatthavanagallavihāravaṁsa composed during the reign of Parākrama-Bāhu II which states that Candabhānu hailed from the country of Tambaliṅga which is no doubt identical with the Tāmbraliṅga mentioned in the Chaiya inscription.

[8] See Sri Lanka and South-East Asia. W.M.Sirisena (1978)

It is further recorded in the Yalpana-Vaipava-Malai, a history of the kingdom of Jaffna compiled by Mayilvakanan C.1736 that during the reign of Vijaya Bahu (the usurper) there was a numerous army of Yavakar (Javanese or Malays) in the king's pay. Their numbers, claims the chronicle, underwent constant diminution by deadly feuds among themselves and by the oppression of kings. It adds that the remnants of them inhabited the villages of Sava-kacceri and Savan-kodu before the king of Jaffna Sankili drove them out of his kingdom. These two place-names nevertheless survived as Cāvakaccēri (Javanese village or settlement) and Cāvakoṭṭai (Javanese fort), names still very much in use [9]. Another Malay influence in Jaffna is seen in the musical kite, a type of kite of a very highly developed technology which shows striking similarities to the musical kite of Malaya [10]. All this bears ample testimony to the former Malay presence in the Jaffna region. We are however uncertain whether these early Malays who had chosen to settle in the country gradually assimilated with the other communities or preserved a distinct identity until about the early part of the 17th century when they merged with those Malays who came here with the Dutch, thus becoming part and parcel of the local Malay community.

There is also some evidence to show that a small number of Javanese were brought to the country during the period of Portuguese colonial rule from 1505 to 1658. The Parangi Hatana, an old Sinhala war poem celebrating the victory of the Sinhalese over their Portuguese foes refers to Javas steeped in Kansa and Opium serving the Portuguese. What their fate was is however not known, though it is possible that some of them survived and went on to settle in the country or merged with those Malays who arrived here during the subsequent period of Dutch colonial rule.

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[9] Interestingly, the Kōkila Sandēśa of the fifteenth century mentions a Jāvaka Kōṭṭa (Javanese Fort) in the northern part of the country. The Sinhala kaḍaimpot which give the place-names of Sri Lanka including its territorial divisions give Jāvagama as a part of Pihiṭirata (Tri-Siṁhala kaḍaim hā vitti.Ed.A.J.W.Marambe 1926). The Pihiṭi-raṭa of old we know referred to the North-Central part of the country and the Jāvagama mentioned here very likely refers to Jaffna.

[10] This type of kite pervades large areas of Malaya and occurs in Java and possibly elsewhere in Indonesia. It is therefore quite probable that in the wide open stretches and prevailing winds of Jaffna, those Javanese migrants who found conditions so similar to what they had been used to in their homeland, resumed a pastime which in their native land gave them hours of recreation and entertainment (See Tamil Culture in Ceylon. M.D.Raghavan. 1971)

Nevertheless there can be little doubt that the earliest Malay settlements in Sri Lanka which gave rise to the present-day Malay community arose with the establishment of Dutch rule in maritime Sri Lanka beginning from the latter part of the seventeenth century. As shown by B.A.Hussainmiya [11] Sri Lanka's present-day Malay population is largely descended from political exiles including nobles and chiefs, soldiers, convicts serving the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in a military capacity or otherwise and freed slaves from the Indonesian archipelago brought over to the island during the period of the Dutch occupation of Sri Lanka's maritime districts which lasted from 1658-1796.

As shown by Hussainmiya, it had been a Dutch practice to banish from the Netherlands East Indies rebellious rulers and princes as well as other recalcitrant chiefs and dignitaries when they posed a threat to their authority in the East. Outside the archipelago Sri Lanka and the Cape of Good Hope constituted the principal centres of banishment in the period between 1650-1770 although Sri Lanka was preferred by the Dutch due to its proximity to the archipelago. As a result of their involvement in the wars of succession that began in the late 17th century, several Javanese princes were exiled to Ceylon. The first batch included Pangeran Adipati Amankurat III known in Javanese history as 'Susunan Mas' who along with his family and retinue was banished in 1708 [12]. In 1722-23, another group of Javanese princes who had risen in rebellion against the reigning Susuhnan in Mataram were exiled, among them the sons of the rebel Surapati [13]. In 1728, Arya Mangkunegara, a brother of the king Pakubuwana was banished to the island and was joined by the Chief Minister Danuraja in 1723 followed by his successor Natakusuma a decade later. Other exiles from Java included Temenggong Sosoro Widjojo, Raden Pantje Wierja Diningrad, Pangeran Soeriya die Koesoema, Pangerang Adipati Mangkoerat and Dinajoe Slaje, widow of Pangerang Boeminata. Among the exiles from the other parts of the archipelago were Raja Oesman, King of Goa, Panglima Raja Johansa, King of Padang, Raja Bagoes Abdoella, Prince of Bantam, Batjan Sadoe Alam, Prince of Batjan, Poegoe Kitjil Naimoedin, 2nd Prince of Batjan,

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[11] Lost Cousins. The Malays of Sri Lanka (1987)

[12] Gesheidenis Van Indoneisie.H.J.De Graaf (1949)

[13] History of the Indian archipelago.J.Crawford (1820)

Pangerang Menan Ratoe Maharaha Moeda, Crown Prince of Tidor and Pater Alam, Sultan of Tidor [14].

Most of these evidently had members of their families living with them in the island, who had either accompanied the main exiles or had joined them later. Further, a number of the younger members of their families were born in the island. Marriages were also contracted between these families, a notable example being Batara Gowa Amas Madina II, the King of Gowa (Macassar) exiled here in 1767 who married one Habiba, a Malay lady of noble birth. Their daughter Sitti Hawang or her sister was given in marriage to a Javanese prince Pangeran Adipati Mangkurat while another sister was married to Sadur Alam, Prince of Bacan, another important exile living in the island at the time [15].

It would appear that there were at least 200 members of this eastern nobility resident in the island in the latter part of the 18th century which was a significant number taking into account that the whole Malay population in the island at the time did not amount to much more than 2000 [16]. Although there is evidence to show that the British Governor Thomas Maitland took steps to evict the princely exiles left behind by the Dutch government on the grounds that they had become "a great pecuniary burden to the colonial revenue, besides being a danger to the British interests in the island" back to the Dutch controlled East Indies [17], a few members of the exiled royal families, especially those who had married local women, seem to have stayed behind. One such was Muhammad Balankaya whose father was the Aide-de-Camp to Sultan Batara Gowa Amas Madina II who was exiled here in 1767. He had married a Moor lady from Kandy [18].

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[14] From a Dutch document dated 1788. SLNA 1/200, Minutes of the D.P.C.Colombo, 8th March 1788. Cited in Hussainmiya (1987)

[15] SLNA 7/20, North's Mily.diary 19th December 1803. Cited in Hussainmiya (1987)

[16] Hussainmiya (1987)

[17] SLNA 5/4, Maitland to Castlereagh, enclosed in 8th February 1808. Cited in Hussainmiya (1987)

[18] Hussainmiya in his Orang Regimen. The Malays of the Ceylon Rifle Regiment (1990) observes that it appears that those exiles and their families who lived upon the dole provided by the British government were all required to return to the Indies while some of their family members who earned their own living remained in the island even after 1808 when Maitland removed the Malay princes, nobles and their families from Sri Lanka to Java. He cites the case of Muhammad Balankaya who married a local Moor woman named Umoo Kathija, a sister of one Othman Lebbe Mesthriyar who was the father of Mudaliyar Cassie Lebbe, a well known Moor gentleman of Kandy. Muhammad

However it were the soldiers who arrived here to make the bulk of the Dutch garrisons on the island who comprised the largest numerical group of the early Malay population as shown by Hussainmiya (1987). There exists considerable evidence to show that Malay troops took part in the Dutch attacks on the Portuguese fortifications in the island in the middle part of the 17th century. Such troops took part in the storming of Galle by Admiral Coster in 1640 as well as in the siege of Colombo in 1656 when the Malays comprising of Javanese and Bandanese stormed the bastion of St.Joao [19]. Two years later, a force of Malays under their own captain Raja Telella accompanied Ryckloff Van Goens in the Dutch expedition against the Portuguese settlements on the Malabar coast and subsequently took part in the capture of Mannar and Jaffna [20]. These soldiers were drawn from all Malay groups from the archipelago and included Amboinese, Bandanese, Balinese, Buginese, Javanese and Madurese. Christopher Schwitser who visited the island in the 1680s found Amboinese soldiers kept in the Dutch garrison at the fort of Sitawaka [21]. In 1737, three companies of Balinese troops were dispatched from Batavia to Ceylon at the request of Governer Van Imhoff in preparation for war against the Kandyans [22]. Malays and

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Balankaya had nine children including among them a son Samoon Balankaya who married Mas Balkis, daughter of Captain Baba Amith Muthalip, and a daughter Sithy Habiba who married the regimental cleric Baba Abdul Bahar. Hussainmiya notes that the case of Balankaya demonstrates that some members of the exiled Malay aristocracy did indeed stay behind after 1808 and some of their descendants inter-married with the local Malay population and were permanently domiciled here. He also notes that a number of prominent Malay families in Sri Lanka continue even now to claim that they are the descendants of Indonesian kings and princes who lived as exiles in the island and adds that although such claims of their aristocratic or princely ancestry cannot be ruled out altogether, many such claims cannot be proved in the absence of reliable documentary evidence. Among the cases he cites are that of Murad Jayah who claimed that his family descended from Raden Thurtho Perma Jayah, Aide-de-Camp to the King of Java and one of 24 noblemen deported by the Dutch to Ceylon in 1747. Similarly, Mas Ghaise Weerabangsa claimed that his family descended from Syaikh Yusuf of Mangkasar while the Latiff family who functioned as the khatibs of the Wekande Mosque in Colombo claimed that their ancestor was one Raden Farman of 'Sunan Casar' exiled to Ceylon in 1773 (Hussainmiya 1990).

[19] The Malays of Colombo.E.Reimers.Jubilee Book of the Colombo Malay Cricket Club (1924)

[20] ibid

[21] See Germans in Dutch Ceylon. Raven Hart (1959)

[22] Syair Kompeni Welanda berperang dengan Ijina. J.Rusconi (1935)

Buginese are also said to have been sent to reinforce native troops in Ceylon in 1761 [23] while Madurese and Sumanepers were despatched to garrison Mullaitivu in the eastern coast [24].

As evident from the report of Schwitser in 1680, the Amboinese soldiers at Sitawaka had their wives with them. Says Schwitser: "Here is also continually kept a company of Amboinese in the Dutch service. Their lieutenant was called Alons, and was of royal blood. By day they lie out of fort in a whole street together, their wives with them; but at nights they are obliged to be in the fort as many of us". He adds that their wives are in part Amboinese and in part Singulayans (Sinhalese) and Malabarians (Tamils) [25]. It is also clear from the terms of capitulation of Colombo concluded on 27 February 1796 that the Malay troops serving with the Dutch had their women and children living with them [26].

There were also the convicts comprising of petty officials and commoners who were convicted of criminal offences and deported by the Batavian government to Sri Lanka [27]. Some of these were allowed to earn their living either by performing services to the company or engaging themselves in some form of handicraft [28] while others were recruited to serve in the native army [29]. It is said that in 1731 alone there were 131 of these convicts serving the VOC in Sri Lanka [30] not to mention the others who served in the military and those who had been set free and remained in the island. As pointed out by Hussainmiya, it is almost certain that these deported convicts formed part of the early Malay population in the island. It was decreed by the Dutch Government in 1782 that those deportees who had been taken into the

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[23] SLNA 1/490, Annex to the Minutes of the DPC, Colombo, 22nd January 1761. Cited in Hussainmiya (1987)

[24] SLNA 1/1793, Annex to Minutes of the DPC, Colombo, 18th January 1788. Cited in Hussainmiya (1987)

[25] Raven Hart (1959)

[26] SLNA 7/2343.Terms of Capitulation of Colombo.1796

[27] Register op de Generale Resolution van het Casteel Batavia. 1632-1805.Realia. Cited in Hussainmiya (1987)

[28] Dagh Register, 30th August 1682. Cited in Hussainmiya (1987)

[29] Realia. 5th July 1782. Cited in Hussainmiya (1987)

[30] Memoir of Van Gollenese. Cited in Hussainmiya (1987)

service of the company must remain in Ceylon [31] while it was also decided in the same year that except the branded criminals, other deportees could be enlisted into the native army [32]. As noted by Hussainmiya, a good part of these convicts had the chance to mix up with their fellow easterners in the island while those who were set free had the opportunity to raise families here and settle down permanently. Hussainmiya (1987) also contends that apart from the political exiles, soldiers and convict settlers, the early Malay population owed its origin, albeit in a small way, to slaves sent now and then by the Batavian government. Most of them are said to have originated from the Moluccas, the lesser Sunda islands etc and were forced to serve in Dutch government establishments.

Others are said to have served the Indonesian political exiles in Ceylon. It is also said that some rich private individuals owned slaves from the Eastern Islands [33]. Nevertheless there were occasions when slaves owned by the Dutch government gained their freedom by joining the military. For instance in 1763 a Malay company is said to have been formed out of deportees and 31 slaves who had earned their freedom [34] while we also know that when Van De Graaf made secret preparations to invade the Kandyan Kingdom in 1781, many slaves were set free on condition that they would join the expedition [35]. As noted by Hussainmiya, it is almost certain that as free men, they raised families like the other Easterners, settled in the island and merged into the early Malay community. Whereas those Malay settlers who came to the island during the Dutch period hailed mainly from the present-day Indonesia, during the British period, except for two batches of Malays who came from Java in 1813 and 1816 [36] to settle in Sri Lanka, all other settlers, or

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[31] Realis, 19th March 1782. Cited in Hussainmiya (1987)

[32] Ibid, 5th July 1782. Cited in Hussainmiya (1987)

[33] Christoffel de Saram alias Atapattu Mudaliyar owned two eastern slaves, namely Troena de Wangsa and Amber. SLNA 1/4740. Cited in Hussainmiya (1987).

[34] SLNA 1/4864, Minutes of the Secret War Committee, 9th September 1763. Cited in Hussainmiya (1987)

[35] SLNA, 1/591, Annex to the Minutes of the DPC, Colombo, 21st October 1781. Cited in Hussainmiya (1987)

[36] Captain de Bussche's enlistment mission to Java resulted in 412 soldiers mainly from Madura coming to join the Malay Regiment from the port of Surabaya, Java in 1813. They were accompanied by 214 Indonesian women as well as 208 children to settle in Sri Lanka. In 1816, a further batch of about 228 Javanese (of whom there were about 150 soldiers) accompanied by their women and children were brought to the island from the

to put it more precisely, the army recruits, came from the Malay Peninsula [37]. They were nevertheless very few compared to the arrivals from the archipelago. The vast majority of Sri Lankan Malays would therefore appear to be descended from Malay peoples hailing from Java and the other islands of the Indonesian Archipelago and not from the Malayan Peninsula.

Sri Lankan Malays refer to themselves either as *Orang Melayu* (The Malay People) or as *Orang Jāvā* (People of Java). That they are largely of Javanese extraction is also suggested by the Sinhala term for the Malays, *Jā-Minissu* (Javanese people) as well as the Tamil term for them *Cāvakar* (Javanese). The Moors refer to them as *Jāvā* or *Jāvā Manusar* (Javanese people). Whereas the early Malay immigrants brought in by the Dutch were known as Oosterlingen or 'Easterners' by the Dutch, they later came to be known as Javaans or 'Javanese' [38]. This would indicate that with the passage of time, the Javanese element among the Malays brought here gained a pre-eminent if not predominant position over the rest. The fact that the headquarters of the VOC was situated in Batavia (Jakarta in Java) may have also contributed to this situation. However at the same time, there is reason to believe that the term Java or Javi was also used to denote other islands and peoples of the archipelago besides Java or the Javanese. This was especially so of Sumatra but could have also denoted others. For instance, the Arabs of yore also called Sumatra Jāwa as evident from the reports of Abulfeda and Ibn Battuta while Marco Polo refers to Sumatra as Java the less. João De Barros in his Decadas De Asia (1553) records that the people of Sumatra called themselves by the common name of Jauijs and in the Thai language the Malay language is called Cawa.

Javanese areas of Semarang and Gresik (SLNA.,7/118, Brownrigg to John Kendall, Lieut.Governor of Java. 8th August 1816, cited in Orang Regimen. The Malays of the Ceylon Rifle Regiment.B.A.Hussainmiya.1990).

[37] Although we do not know their exact numbers, there exist records to show that Malays from the Malay Peninsula were recruited by the British to serve in Sri Lanka. For instance in 1819, a recruiting mission under Lieut.Col.Blankenberg returned with 102 Malays from Penang (War Office.133/14, Brownrigg Papers, 8th July 1819. Cited in Hussainmiya 1990).

[38] See Hussainmiya (1987). In the 18th century Dutch records known as the Tombos we regularly come across Malay folk being referred to as Javaan as in SLNA 1/3839 where we also come across a reference to a Javaanse Straat (Javanese Street) in Wolfendahl. In one instance, however, we come across a reference to a Lieutenant der Malaÿs Comp. (lieutenant of the Malay Company) named Daoet (SLNA 1/3839), the name Daoet evidently being a corruption of the Ar.Dāwud 'David'.

Melāyu by which term the Malays of Sri Lanka also term themselves seems to have originally referred to a place in Sumatra (probably Jambi). Chinese records of the seventh century, especially the writings of Yijing or I-Tsing , refer to Malayu (Mo-la-yu) as a kingdom to the north of Srivijaya (A kingdom in Sumatra probably founded about the 3rd century AC), which was probably Jambi which was eventually absorbed into the empire in the 680s [39]. The Nagarakrtagama or Desavarnana of the Majapahit poet Mpu Prapanca C.1365 lists the entire east coast of Sumatra from Lampung in the south to the northern tip around to Barus on the west coast as belonging to 'the land of Melayu'. He listed the Malay lands as encompassing not only Jambi and Palembang, but also Dharmasraya and Minangkabau. Further as evident in the Sejarah Melayu, a chronicle of Malay royalty written sometime in the 15th century, it was only after a refugee prince from Palembang, Sumatra, with his followers, established themselves in the peninsula when they founded Melaka, probably in the fourteenth century, that it became part of the Malay world.

The Indonesian or rather insular South East Asian origins of the local Malays is also suggested by their spoken language which is more akin to that of Indonesia than that of Malaysia as for instance in such usages as *bangsat* 'bedbug' where the Malays of Malaysia use *pepijat*, *sendok* 'ladle, 'spoon' where the Malaysians have *sudu*, *kerinjal* 'kidney' where the Malaysians have *ginjal* and *jillek* 'ugly' which is closer to the Indonesian *jelek* than the Malaysian *buruk* or *hodoh*. Among other usages that suggest an Indonesian origin for the local Malays include *dukun* 'midwife' (Malaysian *bidan*), *jimat* 'amulet' (Malaysian *azimat*), *dogol* 'stupid' (Malaysian *bodoh*) and *gampang* 'easy' (Malaysian *mudah*). Furthermore, local Malay usages such as *dami* 'straw' could in fact be pinpointed to Javanese where the same word is used for rice straw instead of the Standard Malay *jerami* commonly used in Malaysia and parts of Indonesia.

As for the racial characters of the Sri Lankan Malays, there can be little doubt that they have preserved to a great extent the Mongolo-Polynesian physical type like their brethren in Indonesia and Malaysia. Among the typical Malay traits found among the Sri Lankan Malays may be included the epicanthic fold of the upper eyelid which gives the impression of slanted eyes, flat, squat nose, high cheekbones, yellow-brownish skin, straight hair and sparsity of body and facial hair. The early notices of the Malays by European writers indicate that the Malays had preserved their original racial type to a great extent. For instance,

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[39] See A Record of the Buddhist Religion as practiced in India and the Malay Archipelago by I-Tsing.J.Takajusu (1986)

James Cordiner in his Description of Ceylon (1807) noted that the Malays of his time were of a complexion inclining to copper, broader and more robust, but not taller than the Sinhalese, and their heads were compressed and their noses flattened, while Robert Percival observed in his Account of the Island of Ceylon (1805) of the Malays of his time: "They are of a light brown or yellow colour, which approaches nearer to a copper hue in their old age, or when they are much exposed to the sun. Their forehead is broad and flat; their eyes small, black, and very deep sunk; their nose flattish, broad towards the nostrils, with a sort of curve at the extremity approaching the lip".

The Physical Anthropology of Ceylon (1961) which measured 35 Malays from Hambantota showed a mean cephalic index of 82.41 (As compared to the Sinhalese mean of 78.33, Tamil mean of 74.68 and Moor mean of 78.14). Thus they had the highest cephalic index of any Ceylonese race meaning that they were the most brachycephalic or broad-headed race resident locally. They also had the shortest heads with a mean head length of 181.47 (as compared to the Sinhalese mean of 181.63, Tamil mean of 188.67 and Moor mean of 184.31) and the shortest head height with a mean of 126.19 (compared to the Sinhalese mean of 128.44, Tamil mean of 134.55 and Moor mean of 133.87). The PAC also found the Malays to have a nose breadth of 36.84, making them the most broad-nosed race after the aboriginal Veddas (with a nose breadth of 36.96) and the Kaffirs descended from African slaves (with a nose breadth of 41.37)[40]. As for the epicanthic fold which gives the impression of slanted eyes, the PAC found the highest incidence of external epicanthic eyefolds among the Malays which was 29 percent. It also found the Malays to have the straightest hair, the great majority (78.1 percent) being classified as Low Wave. As for complexion, the PAC found the Malays to be almost completely light brown with 34 individuals or 97.1 percent in the Light Brown category.

Nevertheless it is also true that the features of a sizeable portion of the local Malay community has been modified due to intermarriage with local Moor and Sinhalese folk which has been commonplace since at least the early part of the nineteenth century. Cases of intermarriage between Malays and Moors are even found in the Dutch tombos [41].

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[40] These anthropometrical figures compare very favourably with other Malay peoples. For instance it has been found that the average cephalic index of a group of Indonesians was 81.51 while the nasal index was 88.17 (See The First Outlines of a Systematic Anthropology of Asia. Giuffrida-Ruggeri. 1921).

[41] SLNA 1/7358, Head Tombo. Cited in Hussainmiya (1987). We also come across a few indications of Malay- Moor intermarriages in SLNA 1/3839 where it is recorded of one

Percival (1805) has recorded that the Malays intermarried with the Moors and other castes while Denham (1912) has noted that the Malays intermarried with Ceylon Moors and Sinhalese. The number of marriages in 1956 between Malays and Malays was 141 and between Malays and others 84. In 1960 the number between Malays and Malays was 90, whilst that between Malays and others was 106 which is to say that more than 50 percent were marrying outside the community [42]. All this has contributed in no mean measure in modifying the basically Mongoloid Malay physical type of certain families and individuals just as it did the Moghuls (through intermarriage with Indian women) and the Turks (through intermarriage with Circassian women).

We will now attempt to trace the origins of the Malay peoples of Southeast Asia from which the local Malay community has its origins. Available evidence suggests that it is very likely that a distinctive Malay race, the Orang Melayu or true Malays had come into being in Sumatra by the early centuries of the Christian era, before dispersing to other parts of the Malay world such as Java, Bangka and Kalimantan. Inscriptions from Palembang in Sumatra dating from the seventh century appear to be the oldest extant specimens of Malay writing as it is assumed, on somewhat tenuous ground, that this region of Sumatra and the islands off its east coast are the homeland of the Malays proper [43]. That Sumatra was the early home of the race that termed itself *Melayu* is also suggested by the fact that the Melayu or Malay language which has dispersed to various parts of Southeast Asia including the Malayan Peninsula over the centuries is natively spoken in Sumatra.

Malayan tradition also upholds the view that the Malays proper originated in Sumatra. This tradition has it that the Malays originated from the golden empire of Pulo Mas in Menangkabowe in the heart of Sumatra. It is said that during the 11^{th}-12^{th} centuries and probably at a much earlier period, the overflowing population of Menangkabowe found .heir way not only to various places on the east and west coasts of Sumatra, but also to the island of Singapore, and to the extremity of the Malayan Peninsula, Ujong Tannah. A party of these migrants are said to have proceeded towards Malacca where they settled and founded a city though even prior to this the colonists from Menangkabowe who had

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Jayadien, a Javaan, that he was married to Eraemoottoe Natja and had two sons Caliep and Aries, the wife's name with the suffix Natja (Nāciyā) indicating that she was a Moor (See Sarandib. An Ethnological Study of the Muslims of Sri Lanka. A.Hussein. 2011)

[42] See The plight of the Ceylon Malays. Murad Jayah. MICHS 1944-1969 (1970)

[43] See Enc.I.Vol.VI.1991

distinguished themselves as a maritime people gradually overspread the coast on both sides of the peninsula. Stimulated by mercantile speculation, they turned the prows of their vessels eastward and effected settlements on the most fertile of the beautiful and verdant islands which begem the bosom of the Malay archipelago. The fragrant Moluccas and islands of the Sulu Archipelago also did not escape their notice. In course of time, these widely separated colonies, intermarried with other nations among whom they lived and found themselves under the necessity of varying many of their own original laws brought from Menangkabowe, according to the exigencies of their respective situations [44].

To go further back, we know that the Malay peoples whether of Java, Sumatra, the Malayan peninsula or other parts of South East Asia are basically of the Austronesian or Malayo-Polynesian variant of the Mongoloid type, for not only do the Malays resemble in many physical traits the speakers of the Austronesian languages, but also their language shares many common features with other Austronesian languages including Malagasy in Madagascar, Tagalog in the Philippines, Paiwan in Southern Taiwan and Rapanui in Easter island, suggesting that all of these have derived from a common speech spoken several millennia ago.

The first Austronesians are believed to have originated in coastal South China (Present-day Fujian or Guangdong) from where they migrated eastwards to Taiwan about 6000-5000 years ago. The sudden appearance of pottery in Taiwan C.4000 BC which is of a manufacturing and stylistic type which can be fitted comfortably within contemporary archaeological cultures in the adjacent mainland of China in what is now Fujian Province suggests that Taiwan was settled by Austronesian speakers from China as a result of a gradual process that extended over a period of centuries [45]. It has been further shown that the material culture of Taiwan in 4000 BC gleaned from available linguistic evidence was remarkably similar to the ancient site of Hemudu in the mainland a millennium earlier. This prehistoric habitation site located in the coast some sixty miles south of the mouth of the Yangzi river has been dated to 5200-4900 BC and is basically a village with large rectangular timber houses raised on piles with abundant evidence for

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[44] See The Native Races of Asia and Europe. From the Manuscript Notebooks of Sir James George Frazer. Ed.Robert Anges Downie (1939)

[45] Austronesian Culture History: The Window of Language. Robert Blust, in Prehistoric Settlement of the Pacific. Ed.W.H. Goodenough (1996)

rice, pottery and domestication of animals such as the dog, pig, cattle and chicken and interestingly enough evidence of boat building. The dating of the site and content of its material culture suggests that it was part of a cultural tradition which spread southward during the 5th millennium BC, first along the island-dotted coast of Zhejiang and Fujian provinces and eventually to Taiwan [46].

It was in Taiwan that a distinct Austronesian speech (i.e.Proto-or early- Austronesian) evolved with all the defining characteristics that would mark it as Austronesian. The aboriginal speeches here have preserved what appear to be very archaic forms inherited from Proto-Austronesian (PAn). They also show a great diversity, from which it has been inferred that Taiwan was the early Austronesian homeland based on the principle that the centre of the greatest linguistic diversity is likely to be the major dispersal point. Available evidence seems to suggest that the Austronesian language/s moved from Taiwan to the Philippines and the Indonesian archipelago before spreading out to Melanesia and thence to Polynesia and Micronesia [47]. Peter Bellwood [48] believes that before the break-up of PAn, colonists with an agricultural economy moved across the Formosa Strait from the Chinese mainland to Taiwan where developed the initial Austronesian language/s. After a few centuries, some speakers of one of these languages made the first moves into Luzon and the Philippines, leading to the division of An into its two major subgroups, Formosan and Malayo-Polynesian. The reconstructed PAn vocabulary, which relates

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[46] Ibid

[47] See Austronesian subgrouping. R.A,Blust (1977). The linguistic evidence is also corroborated by more recent genetic evidence which has taken mtDNA markers into consideration. A study by T.Melton et al (Polynesian genetic affinities with Southeast Asian populations as identified by mt DNA analysis. AJHG. August 1995) found that the 'Polynesian motif' of mtDNA are highest in frequency in the corridor from Taiwan south through the Philippines and east Indonesia, and that the highest diversity for these types is in Taiwan, this being consistent with the linguistic evidence of a Taiwanese origin for the Proto-Polynesian expansion, which spread throughout Oceania by way of Indonesia. A subsequent study by T. Melton et al (Genetic evidence for the Proto-Austronesian homeland in Asia. AJHG.Dec.1998) showed, also through an analysis of mt DNA that not only did the indigenous Taiwanese populations hold an ancestral position in the spread of mtDNAs throughout Southeast Asia and Oceania, but they also had considerable mainland-Asian diversity, and that these were spread to Southeast Asia and Oceania through a Taiwanese bottleneck.

[48] Austronesian prehistory in Southeast Asia: Homeland, Expansion and Transformation.The Austronesians. Historical and Comparative Perspectives. Ed.Peter Bellwood and James Fox (1995)

generally to this early Taiwan-Luzon phase, he avers, indicates an economy well suited to marginal tropical latitudes with cultivation of rice, millet, sugarcane, domestication of dogs and pigs, and the use of some kind of watercraft. Proto-Malayo-Polynesian (PMP), he believes to have been located somewhere in the Philippines, and interestingly enough contains a number of tropical economic indicators which were absent in the earlier and more northerly PAn stage, including colocasia, taro, breadfruit, banana, yam, sago and coconut. The PMP vocabulary also has terms for pottery, sailing canoes and several components of substantial timber houses, suggesting that its speakers had taken to a settled lifestyle with a fair degree of material development in their postulated home in the Philippines before settling in the Indonesian archipelago and Malayan peninsula.

As for the origins of the Mongoloid type to which the Malays and other Austronesian peoples primarily belong, it is not unlikely that that this type had its origins in a cold region since characteristics such as stocky build, narrow eyes and squat nose which are all defining features of this type could have a positive impact in minimizing heat loss, traits better suited for survival in an intensively cold environment. This type according to A.C. Haddon and Hingston Quiggin [49] had its origins in the lacustrine Tibetan tableland. Here, they contend, were found all the natural conditions favourable to the development of a new variety of man moving from the tropics northwards including the ample space such as all areas of marked specialization seem to require. They opine that these early Mongoloid groups began their migrations in remote pre-historic times becoming more and more specialized as they receded farther and further from the Tibetan cradle-land into Mongolia and China. Those Mongoloid folk who ventured further appear to have evolved into the distinctive Austronesian or Malayo-Polynesian type many millennia ago as a result of such factors as environment and miscegenation with other peoples, a process that would have taken centuries or even millennia to accomplish.

Despite the association of the Mongoloid type with brachycephaly or broad-headedness there are indications to suggest that the early Mongoloids like many other early races of mankind were long-headed. Baron Mezö-Kövesd Ujfalvy [50] describes two Mongol types, a northern round-headed and a southern long-headed, and thinks that the latter,

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[49] In their revised, expanded edition of A.H.Keane's 1899 work Man. Past and Present (1920)

[50] Les Aryens au Nord et au sud del' Hindou-Kouch (1896)

which includes the Ladakhi, Champas and Tibetans proper were the primitive Mongol type (*le type primitive des Mongols est pour nous dolicocephale*). This would also lend support to the view that it was probably in a region such as Tibet that the early Mongoloid type evolved before becoming more and more specialized including progressively acquiring brachycephaly as they moved away from their cradle-land to the outlying regions where they are now predominantly found.

II) The Sri Lankan Malay Language

The Malay language belongs to the Malayo-Polynesian language group which in turn belongs to the Austronesian family of languages [51]. Austronesian (An) languages are spoken in a very vast area, from Madagascar (Malagasy) in the west to Easter Island (Rapanui) in the east. It is spoken by the majority of the populations of Indonesia (including the official language Bahasa Indonesia, a Standard Malay dialect natively spoken in Sumatra, Achenese in Aceh in northern Sumatra, Javanese, Madurese and Sundanese spoken in Java, Buginese in Sulawesi and Balinese in Bali), Malaysia (Bahasa Malaysia or Standard Malay, Brunei (Malay) and the Philippines (Tagalog) as well as by minority populations in Southern Thailand (a dialect of Malay known as Yawi) and in Southern Vietnam and Cambodia, Mergui archipelago off the coast of Burma, on Hainan Island in Southern China and by the indigenous population of Taiwan. It is also spoken by the native inhabitants of the Hawaiian Islands and in the islands of Oceania, in Melanesia (Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and in Fiji where it is known as Bauan), Polynesia (Samoa, Tonga and Tahiti) and Micronesia (Guam, Palau and Kiribati).

When we consider the phonological features of these far-flung languages, we would find that they are all related and have derived from a common Proto-Austronesian (PAn) language that appears to have originated in Taiwan off the southern coast of China several millennia ago. Take for instance, the case of the PAn **dusa* 'two' whose initial *d* has been preserved in Malay and other neighbouring speeches (Malay,

[51] The discovery of the Austronesian language family is a relatively recent development and was pioneered by scholars such as the German linguist Otto Dempwolff who in his Vergleichende Lautlehre des Austronesian Wortschatzes (1934-38) sought to reconstruct a lexicon of Proto-Austronesian (Ur-Austronesisch), the putative ancestral speech from which all of today's Austronesian languages descend. Dempwolff's work was improved by Otto Dahl in his Proto-Austronesian (1976) which took into consideration some new findings and proposed some modifications to the reconstructed sound system outlined by Dempwolff

Madurese and Balinese *dua*, Achenese *duwa* and Sundanese *duwe*), but has been turned to *r* in Oceanic languages (Rapanui, Tahitian and Fijian *rua*) and to *l* in Hawaiian (where we find *lua*). That the earliest form of this vocable was **dusa* is suggested by the occurrence of *dusa* for 'two' in Paiwan, an indigenous language of Taiwan whence PAn is believed to have spread to the rest of the Austronesian-speaking world. Taking another example, this time from PAn **sepac* 'four' which is attested in Paiwan *sepac*, we would find the Malay language as well as those to its east have dropped the initial * s while turning the final * *c* to *t* (Malay *empat*, Balinese *papat*, Sundanese *opat*, Tagalog *apat*, Malagasy *efatra*) while others have undergone further degeneration (as for instance Fijian *va* and Hawaiian *ha*). The dropping of the initial **s* is also seen in the term for fire **sapuy* which is preserved in Paiwan sapuy, but dropped in Malay and neighbouring speeches (Malay *api*, Achenese *apuy*, Madurese *apoy*, Malagasy *afo*) as well as in those further to the east (Rapanui, Tahitian and Hawaiian *ahi*). That PAn also possessed an initial **q* as in **qacay* 'liver' is attested by Paiwan *qatsay* which Malay has aspirated into *h* (Malay *hati*) and Tagalog and the Oceanic languages have dropped (Tagalog *atay*, Rapanui *ate* and Fijian *yate*).

We also notice a few other changes such as the intervocalic *–p-* which Malay and its more closely related speeches have preserved (Malay *api* 'fire', *empat* 'four') but which has been turned into *f* in Malagasy (*afo* 'fire', *efatra* 'four') and into *h* in the Oceanic languages such as Rapanui (*ahi* 'fire', *ha* 'four',). When compared to other Austronesian languages, we would find that Hawaiian has undergone some radical sound changes such as aspirating the initial PAn **b* as in **buaq* 'fruit' (Malay *buah*, but Hawaiian *hua*) and turning the PAn **c* (as occurring in **maca* 'eye' and **qacay* 'liver') into *k* (as seen in Hawaiian *maka* 'eye' and *ake* 'liver', a change which possibly took place through *t* (as found in Malay *mata* 'eye' and *hati* 'liver'), a contention lent support by the fact that it has even affected forms derived from the PAn **t* as in **bituqen* 'star' where Hawaiian has *hoku*, but which has been preserved in the Malay *bintang*, Tagalog *bituin*, Rapanui *hetu* and Tahitian *feti'a*.

Besides such sound changes, a few Austronesian speeches have also undergone semantic changes or changes in meaning. For instance, take the case of PAn **qulu* 'head' which is found as *hulu* in Old Javanese and *ulu* in Fijian and Samoan. The cognate form found in Tahitian *uru* (in keeping with the well attested rule of PAn **l* > Tah.*r* as seen in PAn **telu* > Tah.*toru* 'three' and PAn **walu* > Tah.*varu* 'eight') however does not mean 'head', but rather 'breadfruit', though there is evidence in Tahitian folklore to show that it originally meant 'head'.

The local Malay language known as Melayu Bahasa somewhat differs from the standard Malay language of Indonesia (Bahasa Indonesia) and Malaysia (Bahasa Malaysia). Hussainmiya (1987) believes the local Malay language to be descended from a colloquial dialect known variously as Batavian Malay (Omong Jakarta), Low Malay, Bazaar Malay etc, a Malay pidgin that originated in the coastal areas of Java. In support he points out that the original Malay settlers, since the beginning of Dutch rule in Sri Lanka were drawn from many East Indan nationalities domiciled in and around the Dutch port city of Batavia (present-day Jakarta). He notes that the diverse national groups of soldiers such as Amboinese, Bandanese, Javanese and others who arrived in the island to perform military service, were in the main former residents of Batavia and did not always come from the different geographic regions of the archipelago as their names suggest.

He contends that ever since the founding of Batavia in 1619, a number of such nationalities settled in the outskirts of Batavia and cites Dr.F.De Haan who shows in his Oude Batavia (1922) that there were separate kampungs for each of these nationalities headed by their own chieftains. He nevertheless notes that assimilation between these various ethnic nationalities from the archipelago which had settled in Batavia had already taken place before their arrival in Sri Lanka and contends that one of the main factors which assisted the residents of Batavia gain a distinct group identity was a simplified Malay language alias 'Batavian Malay' which they adopted as their main medium of communication. In this connection, he cites Viekke who in his Nusantara. A History of the East Indian Archipelago (1945) has this to say: "Gradually this heterogeneous population developed into a new Indonesian national group, distinct from the Sundanese of the west and the Javanese of the East Java and with a simplified Malay language, the lingua franca of the archipelago as their native tongue". In later times, this Malay pidgin that found its way to Sri Lanka with the early Malay soldiers was considerably influenced by the local languages, especially the Tamil spoken by the Moors, contends Hussainmiya.

Among the phonological differences between Standard Malay and the local variant are the dropping of the aspirate, the replacement of final dental nasals by velar nasals as well as a few other irregular vowel changes.

De-aspiration is pronounced in Sri Lankan Malay:

SLM. *aus* 'thirsty' (SM. *haus*)
idong 'nose; (SM.*hidung*)

ijo 'green' (SM.*hijau*)
utan 'forest' (SM.*hutan*)

As is the replacement of dental nasals by velar nasals (which we shall here represent by *ng* and not *n* in keeping with conventional practice):

SLM. *ikkang* 'fish' (SM.*ikan*)
jalang '*road*' (SM.*jalan*)
cincing 'ring' (SM.*cincin*)
simpang 'to keep' (SM.*simpan*)

Vowel changes include that of *u* >*o* though this is quite irregular:

SLM. *bisol* 'boil' (SM.*bisul*)
lobang 'hole' (SM.*lubang*)
sarong 'sarong' (SM.*sarung*)
terong 'brinjal' (SM.*terung*)

Besides these one would find that local Malay has been subjected to apheresis or dropping of an initial syllable:

SLM. *guna* 'useful' (SM.*berguna*)
nangis 'to cry' (SM.*menangis*)
sukān 'pleasure' (SM.*kesukān*)
gini 'in this way' (SM.*begini*)

and has also undergone syncope:

SLM. *prompan* 'woman' (SM.*perempuan*)
blangan accounts' (SM.*bilangan*)
grimis 'light rain' (SM.*gerimis*)
glojo 'greedy' (SM.*gelojoh*)

It has in a few cases also undergone vowel assimilation:

SLM. *tengari* 'noon' (SM.*tengah hari*)
balang 'grasshopper' (SM.*belalang*)
brinti 'stop' (SM.*berhenti*))
makan 'food (SM.*makanan*)

and has had a tendency to double intervocalic consonants:

SLM. *appi* 'fire' (SM.*api*)
assap 'smoke; (SM.*asap*)
bella 'to split' (SM.*belah*)
jillek 'ugly' (SM.*jelek*)

There are also instances where local Malay words have undergone semantic changes when compared to Standard Malay. For instance SLM *alis* 'forehead' which in SM means 'eyebrow' and SLM *laksa* 'stringhopper' which in SM means 'noodles' or 'vermicelli' and *kancil* 'rabbit' which in SM means 'mousedeer', though one wonders here whether the Indonesian Malay form *kelinci* 'rabbit' (expressed in Malaysian Malay as *arnab*) could have played a role in influencing the local usage since it is quite possible that speakers using these very similar terms for rabbit and mousedeer could have unwittingly applied the term denoting the latter to the former with the passage of time.

At the same time there are instances where local Malay has preserved some Old Malay meanings which have undergone semantic shift in modern Malay. This is seen for instance in the local Malay term for 'fireplace' *dapur* which is employed in modern Malay for 'kitchen' though there is evidence to show that its original meaning in the Old Malay of Indonesia was 'fireplace'. Local Malay also has a few peculiar usages such as *bintāri* 'sun' where Standard Malay has *mata-hari* (lit.eye of the day), a form also found in the local Malay of some upcountry folk as *matāri.* The local usage it is probable has been influenced by the Malay term for 'star' *bintang*. Other peculiar usages include *morsu* 'gums' (SM.*gusi*), *gutok* 'knock' (SM.*ketukan*), *gumbes* 'matre ss' (SM.*kasur*) and *slampe* 'handkerchief' (SM.*saputangan*).

The speech of the local Malays has also been influenced by the Tamil spoken by their Moor co-religionists, as for instance in usages such as *vauval* 'bat' (SM.*kelawar*), *nandu* 'crab' (SM. *ketam*), *vannāti* 'butterfly' (SM. *kupu-kupu*), *selendi* 'spider' (SM.*laba-laba*), *atte* 'leach' (SM.*lintah*), *kālang* mushroom' (SM.*cendawan*), *pāsi* 'moss' (SM *kulat di dinding*), *marakari* 'vegetable' (SM.*sayur*), *rete* 'twins' (SM.*kembar*) and *māmi* 'aunt (SM.*bibi*). Even commonly used words like *mavēn* 'son' and *mavōl* 'daughter' are obvious loans from the Sona Tamil *mavan* (T.*magan*) and *maval* (T.*magal*), the present-day Standard Malay forms being the Sanskritic *putra* and *putri* respectively. Forms such as *bandu* 'beetle' and *blānga* 'woodapple' where the Tamil initial *v* has been turned to *b* shows to what extent the Sona Tamil dialect of the Moors, rather than the purer Tamil spoken by the country's Tamil inhabitants, has influenced

local Malay. We also find that local Malay has been influenced by a few vocables of European origin such as *almus* 'breakfast' (Port.*almoço*, but SM.*serapan*), *kandēra* 'chair' (Port.*cadeira* but SM.*kursi*), *spāttu* 'shoe' (Port.*sapato* but SM.*kasut*), *kakalat* 'cockroach' (Dut.*kakkerlak* but SM.*lipas*), *orlōs* 'clock' (Dut.*horologie* but SM.*jam*) and *belek* 'tin' (Dutch.*blik* but SM *kaleng*). As for syntax, there exists significant differences between Sri Lankan Malay and Standard Malay, a notable example being that whereas in Standard Malay adjectives invariably follow the noun, in Sri Lankan Malay they precede the noun.

Cf. SLM.*besar rumah*
SM. *rumah besar*
(A big house)

There are also a few other grammatical differences such as:

SLM. *Amat nasi makan*
SM. *Amat makan nasi*
(Amat eats rice)

and SLM.*madu gula nang lebih manis*
SM. *madu lebih manis daripada gula*
(Honey is sweeter than sugar) [52]

Hussainmiya (1987) attributes the grammatical differences between Standard and Local Malay to the influence of the Tamil spoken by the Moors. There can be little doubt that social intercourse and intermarriage between the Malays and their Moorish co-religionists has taken place since at least the late Dutch or early British period, so that the impact of Sona Tamil on local Malay is not difficult to comprehend. Indeed, so pervasive was this influence that it even affected the vocabulary of the Malays who adopted a few Tamil loans in preference to their native Malay. The influence of Sinhala grammar on local Malay also cannot be ruled out, though its impact on the vocabulary of the local Malay language has been negligible. Surprisingly, the upcountry Malays managed to retain the traditional Malay practice of preceding the adjective with the noun as in Standard Malay until fairly recent times. For instance, they would say *daging goreng* 'fried beef' and *orang miskin* 'a poor man' instead of *goreng daging* and *miskin orang*

[52] The differences between Standard Malay and the local variant has been dealt with at length by B.D.K.Saldin in his The Sri Lankan Malays and their Language (2001)

as expressed by Malay speakers in Slave Island [53]. The reason these upcountry Malays were able to preserve their language better is attributable to the fact that they were more isolated than the rest and did not have as much contact with the other ethnic groups as those who lived in Colombo [54]. We however found in a visit to an upcountry Malay community (Agarapatana) in late 2008 that both grammatical forms, adjectives preceding nouns as well as adjectives following nouns were still being used alongside each other, though our informant believed that the former form was the correct one, no doubt because it was the more common usage then, even in the upcountry.

We nevertheless find that there still exist a few local Malay compound words inherited from the Malay parent language which follow the noun+adjective pattern of Standard Malay. For instance, *bawang putti* 'garlic (lit.onion white), *jaye kering* dried ginger; (lit.ginger dry), *batu giling* 'grinding stone' (lit.stone grinding) and *orang melayu* 'Malay man' (lit. man Malay). Indeed, there even exist such forms which have not been inherited from the Malay parent speech such as *ayir mera* 'plain tea' (lit.water red) where Standard Malay has *teh kosong* and *jalang kicil* 'lane' (lit.road small) where Standard Malay has *lorong* which we may suppose were constructed by periphrasis well before local Malay underwent the change from the noun preceding the adjective to that following it due to the influence of other local languages. It however appears that the Malay language has been declining of late and fears have been expressed that it is gradually dying out and being superseded by Sinhala among the younger generation. The adoption of Sinhala has been facilitated not only by education in the Sinhala vernacular, but also by constant intermarriage and the cordial relations that have subsisted between the two communities. A few Malays living in predominantly Moor areas like Kalpitiya are however very conversant in Tamil, though they are still said to speak Malay with their families. The Malays of Kinniyai who still retain their Malay physical traits have however taken to speaking Tamil and no longer speak Malay as their home language largely if not solely due to the influence of the neighbouring Tamil-speaking Moor community. It is today only in areas like Kandy, Badulla, Gampaha, Wattala, Ja-Ela, Kirinda, Hambantota and Slave Island where sizeable concentrations of Malays are found that the younger generation still speaks Malay. In other areas it is largely restricted to the older folk. This trend has however not gone unchecked. Many are the Malay organizations that

[53] See The Sri Lankan Malay language and its future.B.D.K.Saldin.CDN.Jan.14.2004.

[54] ibid.

have joined in the struggle to preserve their language, among them the Persatuan Melayu Sri Lanka (The Sri Lanka Malay Association), Pertubuhan Melayu Bersatu Sri Lanka (Sri Lanka United Malay Organisation) and the Konferansi Sri Lanka Melayu (Conference of Sri Lankan Malays). Regional associations such as the Mabole Malay Association (Persatuan Melayu Mabole) and the Kandy Malay Association (Perkumpulan Melayu Di Kandi) have also made a significant contribution to the struggle. However whether these efforts will meet with success yet remains to be seen.

III) The Jawi or Gundul Script

The Jawi or unvocalised Arabic script in which Sri Lankan Malay texts of the olden days were written was known to local Malays as the Gundul (lit.hairless) script. The script is similar to the Arabic script save for the existence of characters denoting five more sounds, namely, *pa*, *ga*, *ca*, *nya* and *ngga*, making it 35 in all. All characters in the Gundul script are however not identical with the Perso-Arabic script employed in Urdu. For instance, the Gundul script represents the sound *p* not by the Persian *pe* (Arabic *bā* with three dots below instead of one) but by the Arabic *fā* with three dots above instead of one. Similarly, *g* is represented not by a stroke over the Arabic *kāf*, but by a dot over it. The velar nasal *ng* is represented by three dots placed over the Arabic *ayn* and the peculiar *ny* by adding two more dots to the Arabic *nūn*. The character representing the palatal affricate *c* is however the same as that found in Urdu, being formed by adding to the Arabic *jīm* two more dots.

This script has evidently been in existence for several centuries. The earliest known specimens of Perso-Arabic script in the Malay world are said to be found in the Trengganu stele of the 14th century [55] and there is evidence to show that Malay had been written in Arabic script since at least the 16th century, superseding earlier forms of writing in Malay, perhaps by virtue of its religious associations [56]. Even the earliest extant

[55] See The Malays. A Cultural History.Richard Windstedt (1947)

[56] It would appear that prior to the adoption of Arabic script, some Indian-based scripts were employed as is seen in a 14th century Malay manuscript of Sumatra known as the Tanjung Tanah manuscript (The Tanjung Tanah Code of Law. The oldest extant Malay Manuscript. Uli Kozok.2004). An even older form of Old Malay, written in Pallava-type script has been found in inscriptions in Sumatra (See Islam Translated. Literature, conversion and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia. Ronit Ricci.2011).

Malay literature containing Pre-Islamic themes like the Hindu Rāmāyana in the form Hikāyat Seri Rāmā are written in Jawi [57].

Literary activity in the Gundul script seems to have thrived among the Malays of old. There even existed separate newspapers to cater to the needs of the local Malay-speaking population, namely Alamat Lankapuri, a Malay newspaper in Gundul script published fortnightly in 1869/1870 in Colombo and again in 1877/1878. It was edited by Baba Ounus Saldin. Another Malay fortnightly newspaper, Wajah Selong, also in Gundul script was published by Ounus Saldin from 1895-1899. Unlike the Alamat Langkapuri which was largely oriented towards a local readership, Wajah Selong published foreign news with a view to satisfying foreign Malay subscribers in Malacca, Singapore, Batavia and Sumatra [58]. As demonstrated by Hussainmiya (1987) the Sri Lankan Malays belonged to a fairly literate society and that although much of their literature including the hikayats (epics and romances in prose) and syairs (classic poetry) have had their origins in other parts of the Malay world, some of the works such as the Hikayat Indera Kuraisy and the Syair Syaikh Fadlun seem to have had a local origin. The former work is a Malay romance which tells the story of the hero Indera Kuraisy who sets out from the country of Sarmadan to win the heart of a princess from heaven while the latter work which could best be described as a romance-epic narrates the story of the pious Muslim Syaikh Fadlun who is said to have lived in Arabia during the caliphate of Umar. The Syair Kisahnya Khabar Orang Wolenter Bengali is undoubtedly of local origin. Written by a Malay named Boreham Ibn Kapitan Lai in the year 1820, it describes in about 90 verses an armed skirmish which took place in Colombo on New Year's Day 1819 between the Malay soldiers of the Ceylon Malay Regiment and the Bengali soldiers of the 20th Bengali Infantry Volunteer Battalion then stationed in Ceylon. There was also the Syair Faid al Abad subtitled Kediamannya berbagai pengetahuan (storehouse of various knowledge), a syair on the history of

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[57] It is said that Jawi ruled the pages not only of literary and religious works, but also of Malay newspapers and magazines till Christian missionaries came to the area of present-day Malaysia in the early nineteenth century. When the locally born descendants of Chinese immigrants (Peranakan) begun setting up their own newspapers influenced by the missionaries' tendencies toward the Latin script and their own interests, they published Malay written in Latin script (Rumi). This development was however not well received by the Muslim Malays of the time so that for many years, until the Rumi script became standard in the mid-twentieth century, both scripts, Jawi and rumi were used (See Ricci.2011).

[58] Hussainmiya (1987)

the island including the native Sinhalese and European colonial rule, the uprisings of 1817 and 1848 as well as moral and religious themes such as devotion to parents and esoteric knowledge composed and published as a booklet by Ounus Saldin in 1904 [59]. Among the classical Malay hikayats so far discovered in the island may be included the Hikayat Seri Rama, Hikayat Amir Hamzah, Hikayat Si Miskin, Hikayat Isma Yatim, Hikayat Nabi Muhammad and the Hikayat Nabi Bercukur while the syairs discovered here include the Syair Bidasari, Syair Burung Merpati, Syair Jauhar Manikam and Syair Sultan Abdul Muluk. Among the religious texts so far discovered may be cited the Miftah Al-Jannah, Hidayat Al-Salikin, Bustan Al- Salatin and Sirat Al-Mustakim. In addition to these, several manuscripts dealing with traditional Malay medicine, incantation, magic and other miscellaneous subjects have also surfaced (Hussainmiya 1987).

The decline of the Gundul script among local Malays appears to have begun in the early part of the last century. For instance, the 1921 Census Report found that "decreasing numbers remain able to read and write Malay" [60]. Today the script is no longer in use as a result of which the Malays no longer have a literary tradition they could call their own. Nevertheless there are still those who are keen to revive this lost literary tradition, not in the old Gundul script but rather in the Roman script as it now prevails in the rest of the Malay world, among them well known Malay author B.D.K.Saldin who has done much to revive and promote the Malay language among his community. Saldin, the author of A Guide to Malay (2000) which is intended to promote the use of Standard Malay as it prevails in Indonesia and Malaysia contends that it is best that in reading and writing, local Malays follow the system that has been tried and tested in other parts of the Malay world, while at the same time retaining their colloquial Malay speech. There exists significant differences between the colloquial speech and the literary idiom in many languages including Sinhala and there is no reason why such a system cannot be followed in the case of Malay. Such a move, he avers, would go a long way in helping the local Malay community preserve its distinct linguistic identity, while at the same time maintaining close relations with the rest of the Malay world and keeping up with the developments in the language.

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[59] Baba Ounus Saldin. An account of a Malay Literary Savant. B. A. Hussainmiya JMBRAS.1991

[60] Report on the Census of Ceylon 1921 by L.J.B.Turner.1923

Since both Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Malaysia derive from the same source and are very much similar at both lexical and grammatical levels, steps have been taken to standardize the language which is now called Bahasa Kumpulan or Baku for short. A common phonetic system for writing the language has also been developed. These measures are expected to go a long way in strengthening the language in all parts of the Malay world. Further, in both Malaysia and Indonesia, regional Malay groups such as the Sundanese and Balinese continue to speak their own regional dialects while at the same time adopting Standard Malay for writing purposes and for conversing with other Malay-speaking groups. As such, there is no reason why such a system cannot succeed here, points out Saldin [61].

[61] Reviving a lost literary tradition. Asiff Hussein.Sunday Observer.January 07, 2001

CHAPTER 7

THE MEMONS

The Memons of Sri Lanka, though relatively recent migrants from the Indian subcontinent form an important Muslim minority in the island. It is difficult to estimate their exact numbers as they have been classed as 'other' in successive censuses since independence in 1948. Nevertheless a 1981 estimate indicated that there were 3000 Memons comprising 0.26 percent of the total Muslim population in the island. We may therefore conclude that the Memon population in the island today is anywhere between 4000-6000 persons.

I) Origins and affinities

The Memons are a relatively recent Muslim immigrant community from the Indian subcontinent, having migrated to Sri Lanka from various localities in Kathiawad in Gujarat for purposes of trade beginning from about the latter part of the nineteenth century. The Memons are basically a trading community of Gujarat who appear to have embraced Islam around the 12th century-15th century. They are said to have been converted to Islam from the trading Lohana and Kutch Bania castes living in Sind and Kacch either by a son or descendant of Abdul Qādir Al-Jīlānī [1]. Indeed, popular belief holds that the ethnonym *Mēman* by which they term themselves is in fact derived from the Arabic *Mūmīn* meaning a 'believer' and are said to have been so called as they were recent converts to Islam.

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[1] See Enc.I.Vol.VI.1990. Much of the information on the origins of the Memons provided in this work seems to have been influenced by the origin legend of the community recorded in the Bombay Gazetteer published in the latter part of the 19th century which in turn derived its information from a little known Urdu booklet, the Abrazul Haq by Syed Amiruddin Nushat. According to the legend, Abdul Qadir Gilani, the Saint of Saints who died at Baghdad in 1165 ordered on his deathbed one of his sons named Taj-ud-din to settle in India and display to its people the light of Islam. In 1421, Sayad Eusuf-ud-din Kadri, fifth in descent from Taj-ud-din, in a miraculous dream, was ordered to set sail for Sind and guide its people into the way of Islam. On his arrival, he was received with honour by the local ruler, a chief of the Samma dynasty who had his capital at Nagar-Thatta. The ruler, having embraced Islam, was followed by one Manekji, the head of the Lohana community who at the time was in favour at the court. His sons and seven hundred Lohana families also embraced Islam and upon their conversion the saint changed the name of the community from Lohana to *Mūmīn* or 'Believer'.

The vast majority of Memons domiciled in Sri Lanka are known to belong to the so-called Halāi Memon community who are believed to have migrated from their homeland in Sind southwards to Halar in Gujarat before dispersing to localities like Kutiyana, Rajkot, Bhavnagar, Porbandar and Junagadh in Kathiawad. Many of those who migrated to Sri Lanka were textile merchants hailing from Kutiyana in Junagadh state in Kathiawad Peninsula. These include the prominent families such as the Admanis, Bhailas, Bhojas, Chanas, Dangras, Gadars, Hingoras, Lakhanis, Magooras, Nagariyas and Jandulas. The Fatanis however hailed from the village of Wadasada and the Somars from Ranavav not far from Kutiyana in Junagadh State. The Hadfas hailed from the town of Upleta north of Junagadh. These Halai Memans form a distinct group from the Kacchi Memons who evidently migrated to and settled in the Kacch region. Only a few Kacchi Memons seem to have migrated to Sri Lanka and perhaps the only remaining Kachci Memon family that made Sri Lanka its home is the Arab family of which there are only a few members left [2].

A consideration of the physical features of the Memon community domiciled in Sri Lanka clearly shows them to be of North Indian Aryan extraction as they are for the most part a medium- to tall- statured, mostly fair-skinned, fine-featured people with prominent noses, thin lips and ample body hair showing affinities with the peoples of Sind. Some are however of a slightly darker complexion than others and also appear to be more broad-headed which would suggest some admixture with the peoples south of Sind such as the Gujarat region. The aquiline nose characteristic of the Semitic races is also discernable in some families which may perhaps suggest a remote Arab admixture. Although there have been no anthropological studies of local Memons so far, an Indian study of 100 male Memons of Gujarat revealed a stature of 163.72 cm, a cephalic index of 79.83 and a nasal index of 68.27 [3]. They are therefore a relatively tall, mesaticephalic, leptorrhine people and there can be little doubt that the Memons of Sri Lanka for the most part bear similar physical characters.

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[2] See Memons of Sri Lanka. Men, Memoirs, Milestones. Asiff Hussein & Hameed Karim (2006)

[3] See The Biological Variation in Indian populations.K.S.Singh et al (1994)

II) The Memon Language

The speech of the Memons, Mēmanī, is basically an Indo-Aryan language belonging to the Western Indo-Aryan group. In origin it could perhaps be best regarded as a dialect of Sindhi, though enriched considerably by Urdu and Gujarāti. The language has no script and consequently no literary tradition [4].

We will here attempt to trace the origins of Mēmanī and its affinities to the other Modern Indo-Aryan Vernaculars through a study of its vocabulary. Mēmanī as employed by the Memons of Sri Lanka has a basic vocabulary derived from Old and Middle Indo-Aryan which we shall represent here by Sanskrit and Pali respectively.

Mem. *pē* 'father' (Skt.*pitr*, P.*pita*)
mā 'mother' (Skt.*mātr*, P.*māta*)
kan 'ear' (Skt.*karna*, P.*kanna*)
sat 'seven' (Skt.*sapta*, P.*satta*)

That it has its origins in a Western Indo-Aryan speech is suggested by its preservation of the OIA and MIA initial *v* which the Central and Eastern MIAVs have turned into *b*

Mem.*vī* 'twenty' (Skt.*viṁśati*, P.*vīsam*, Si.*vīha* Guj.*vīś*, but H.*bīs*, Bg.*bis*)
vār 'hair' (Skt.P.*vāla*, Si.*vāru*, Guj. *vāḷ*, but H.Bg.*bāl*)
viā 'wedding' (Skt.P.*vivāha*,Si.*vihāmu*, Guj.*vivāh*,but H.*bivāh*, Bg.*bihā*)
vij 'lightning' (Skt.*vidyut*, P.*vijju*, Si.*viju*, Guj.*vīj* but H.*bijlī*)

It also most closely resembles Sindhi than any other MIAV, as for instance in preserving the short vowels of OIA and MIA which other MIAVs have elongated

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[4] It has been said that "Whatever Memon a child learns, is in his mother's lap and this he retains till the end of his days". Despite being scriptless, the language is said to be flourishing among the community, so much so that the Memon magazine Samachar ed. Hameed Karim (2000) quotes a beautiful Urdu couplet to describe its lasting nature:

Samandar me chirāg jale	(A little light glimmers on the mighty ocean
Hawa uski hifāzat kare	The winds provide it with protection
Wo chirāg kab buje	How would this light ever fade away
Jisko roshan khuda kare	When the Allmighty keeps it aglow)

Mem. *sat* 'seven' (Skt.*sapta*, P.*satta*, Si.*sata*, but Guj. H.*sāt*, Or.*sāta*)
aṭh 'eight' (Skt.*aṣṭa*, P.*aṭṭha*, Si.*aṭha*, but Guj.H.*āṭh*, Or.*āṭha*)
kan 'ear' (Skt.*karna*, P.*kanna*, Si.*kanu* but Guj.H.*kān*, Or.*kāna*)
ratto 'red' (Skt.*rakta*, P.*ratta*, Si.*rato* but Guj.*rātuṁ*, H.*rātā*)

and turning the OIA and MIA *l* to *r*

Mem. *vār* 'hair' (Skt.P.*vāla*, Guj.*vāḷ* but Si.*vāru*)
kāro 'black' (Skt.P.*kāla*, Guj.*kāḷum* but Si.*kāro*)
kēro 'plantain' (Skt.P.*kadali*, Guj.*keḷ*, H.*kēlā* but Si.*keviro*)
mur 'root' (Skt.P.*mūla*, Guj.*muḷ*, H.*mūl*, but Si.*mūru*)

Other similarities with Sindhi include dispensing with the MIA labial *b* when it follows a nasal: Cf. *āmu* 'mango' which closely resembles the Sindhi *āmo* and differs from Guj.*āṁbo* and Bg. *āṁb* (P.*amba*) and *lammu* 'tall' which likewise resembles the Sindhi *lāma* and differs from the Guj.*lāṁbuṁ*, H.*lambā* (P.*lamba*). Besides these one may find other similarities such as Mēmani *panj* 'five' and Sindhi *panja* which differs from forms such as Skt.*panca*, Guj.*pāṁc* and H.*pāc* in softening *c* > *j* and Mēmani *maccī* 'fish' which resembles the Sindhi *machu* and differs from forms such as Guj.*māchlī* and H.*machlī*.

Nevertheless we do come across a few vocables which seem to have their origins in or have been influenced by Gujarāti as for instance Mēmani *sintēr* 'seventy' (Si.*satari*, Guj.*sīter*) and ēsi 'eighty' (Si.*asī*,Guj.*eṁśī*). The tendency to do away with the terminal vowels common to Sindi such as for instance in such Memani terms as *sat* 'seven', *kan* 'ear' and *dan* 'tooth' where Sindi has *sata*, *kanu* and *dandu* may also indicate the influence of Gujarati which like Hindi has dispensed with the terminal vowels of Sanskritic *sapta*, *karna* and *danta* so that we have the equivalent terms *sāt*, *kān* and *dāt*.

Words of Arabic or Persian origin commonly used in Memani such as *zabān* 'language', *badan* 'body', *qamīz* 'shirt' and *safed* 'white' were probably acquired through the medium of Urdu with which many Memons were familiar with. Some folk, especially of the older generation however have a propensity to pronounce the *z* in words of Arabic or Persian origin as *j*. Thus *jarda* for *zarda* and *ramjān* for *ramazān*. Urdu has figured prominently in the life of the Memons for quite some time.

It is even said that in the olden days, their wedding cards would invariably begin with an Urdu couplet:

Zahe kismet, Khuda ne din dikhaya
Shādmānika bahār āi hawa, Gulshan zindigānika

(God has destined and shown us the day of marriage
The season has arrived for a beautiful lifespan) [5]

Even today, the language figures prominently in their religious life, being regularly employed for the weekly Friday sermon and other religious activities at the Memon Hanafī Mosque in Pettah. It is also taught to boys and girls in the Madrasa-Faiz-e-Raza which is concerned with the religious instruction of the community, particularly of its younger members.

The Memons of old are also known to have acquired a working knowledge of Gujarāti as a result of education in the Gujarāti medium before they arrived in Sri Lanka and this served the purpose of a medium in which to communicate on paper, Gujarāti unlike Mēmani having a script of its own. It is said that even after their arrival in Sri Lanka, the older generation of Memons continued to use Gujarāti in their correspondences and accounts and one could still come across a few elderly Memons who are able to read and write Gujarāti.

[5] See Samachar 2000

CHAPTER 8

PEOPLES OF EUROPEAN ORIGIN (THE PORTUGUESE AND DUTCH BURGHERS)

The Portuguese Burghers

Portugal could be regarded as the first European power in the modern sense, possessing at the height of its power colonial settlements that spanned across three continents. This process of empire building was however a gradual process and could be said to have commenced with the Christian reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula from the Arabs. The initial efforts of the newly independent Portuguese kingdom was apparently religiously motivated as they still regarded themselves at war with Islamdom. This expansionist drive seems to have been initially focused southwards on North Africa where they had as their cherished goal the desire to reestablish and spread Christianity by outflanking the Arabs and then to take the holy lands by joining forces with Prestes João or Prester John, a semi-mythical Christian King of Ethiopia.

The era of exploration that commenced as a result however ushered in a new kind of thinking and it was not long before the Portuguese came to realize the commercial advantages of their explorations and conquests, giving a further incentive to their efforts at empire building, developments that paved the way for the emergence of Portugal as a colonial power in its true sense. Before long, the Portuguese found themselves in possession of an empire that spanned four continents with its centre in Lisbon and a sway extending across the coastlines of Asia, Africa and South America.

In fact, the Portuguese were the first European power to reach India by sea when Vasco de Gama sailed around the southern tip of Africa and reached India in 1498. Eventually allying themselves with petty Hindu monarchs, they set up fortified trading posts in Cochin (1503) and Goa (1510) by which means they sought to wrest the profitable trade in spices and other merchandise from a well-established network of Muslim traders. It was not long before the Portuguese, through sheer military adventurism and political alliances with native rulers, wrested control of the larger Asian trade routes from the Arabs and Malays who had earlier held them, eventually going on to establish coastal trading outposts in such far-flung regions as Malacca (1511), Sri Lanka (1518), Japan (1542) and Macao (1555). These trading outposts, in some cases allowed the Portuguese to gain a foothold in these countries, even to the extent of supplanting native

rulers and ruling these areas themselves as happened in Sri Lanka. However, their sway did not extend much beyond the coastal regions of these countries as the Portuguese, being a maritime power, thought it prudent to consolidate their power in the littoral rather than venturing further inland which they probably could not undertake given their limited manpower, Portugal at the time being a nation with a small population. Their commercial interests also dictated that it was more prudent to hold the littoral to facilitate maritime trade between Portugal and her colonies.

Portugal's interest in Sri Lanka known to them as Ceilao was threefold, namely 1) to secure control over the country's spice, and especially cinnamon trade 2) to carry out proselytizing activities in order to attract native converts to the Roman Catholic Church and 3) to establish a firm political hold in the island so as to gain mastery over the Indian Ocean region. Indeed, the Portuguese rulers are known to have declared that they would rather lose all India than imperil Sri Lanka. Van Goens, the Dutch Governor of Ceylon observed in 1663 that he had seen amongst the Portuguese records at Colombo, the royal orders to the viceroys of India containing the expression: "*Dat men liever, geheel India zoude laten verloren gaan, dan Ceylon in prykel van verlies brengen.*

The Portuguese presence in Sri Lanka dates from 1505-1658, a little more than a century and a half. Although masters of the low-country including the kingdoms of Kōṭṭe (the principal Sinhalese kingdom encompassing the Western and Southern western coastal plains of the island) and Jaffna (a Tamil kingdom in the northern part of the country), they were not able to secure a firm hold in the Kandyan kingdom (an independent Sinhalese kingdom in the central highlands of the country) despite several bold attempts to bring it under their control, including a move in 1594 to place a Sinhalese princess under their care named Dona Catherina on its throne.

There can be little doubt that the Portuguese were able to secure a firm hold in the country due to internal struggles, that is, the power struggle the then ruler of the Kōṭṭe Kingdom Bhuvanekabāhu VII (1521-1551) had against his brother. The Portuguese who threw in their lot with this ruler even supported him with troops, as a result of which the Kōṭṭe ruler began to depend heavily on the Portuguese for survival and the continuation of his dynastic line, giving them a high degree of influence over royal policy. Dharmapāla, the grandson of Bhuvenekabāhu who succeeded to the throne of Kōṭṭe following the death of his grandfather in 1551 was also supported by Portuguese arms and it is said that it was Portuguese arms, rather than any legal claim that secured for Dharmapāla the Kōṭṭe crown and kept it on his head through the troubled times that followed. Portuguese rule in

the kingdom was firmly established following the death of Dharmapāla in 1597 who had by deed of gift bequeathed his kingdom to Philip II who had annexed Portugal to the Spanish Crown in 1580. When Dharmapāla died on 27 May 1597, the Portuguese Captain-General Dom Jeronimo De Azavedo at an assembly held a few days later in Colombo attended by the King's principal officers as well as representatives of the provinces, proceeded to proclaim Don Philip as Dharmapāla's successor following which an oath of allegiance was taken to the new sovereign. In the decades that followed, the historical kernel of the day's events mythified by the accretion of several elements comforting to the ego of a people under foreign yoke, finally emerged as the historic Malvāna Convention at which the Sinhalese are claimed to have agreed to accept the Portuguese King as their own [1]. This development was a major boost to Portuguese imperial ambitions as they now had in their power a kingdom which was regarded as the natural and legitimate successor to the Sinhalese throne. This situation was however not to last long. The Kandyan armies scored decisive victories against the Portuguese at Randenivala (1630) and Gannōruva (1638). Their prize possession of Colombo was taken in 1656 and Jaffna in 1658 by their European rivals, the Dutch to whom the Kandyans had given their support, only to find that the place of the much hated foreign foe had been taken by another –albeit one not so aggressive- a development which gave rise to a well known Sinhalese saying *iñguru dīlā miris gattā* (Gave ginger and got chillies) used to signify a raw deal.

The defeat of the Portuguese in Ceylon roughly coincided with their weakening position in the rest of Asia in the face of rival European challenges and native resistance. The fact that their forces were spread out too thinly in their colonies was no doubt a major contributory factor to this situation as this meant that they could no longer consolidate their position, especially in a context where new threats were emerging from previously unthought of quarters in this part of the world, particularly from the other European powers. Thus instead of attempting to reacquire their Eastern possessions, the Portuguese settled down to Brazil as their prize colony and to their African possessions, perhaps mainly as a viable source of slaves, a lucrative trade at the time.

However this did not mean that Portuguese influence in these countries where they formerly held sway had come to an end, for the wily Lusitanians had already planted some of their inhabitants in these colonies and encouraged them to espouse local women so as to ensure that the ties

[1] See Portuguese Rule in the Kingdom of Kotte in Sri Lanka. 1594-1638. Tikiri Abeyasinghe. SLA. 1983

between Portugal and her colonies would be perpetuated. This colonial design not only encompassed settlements of Portuguese citizens so as to safeguard their temporal possessions, but also the propagation of Portuguese religious and cultural values. Well over four centuries ago, before the Portuguese disengaged themselves from most of their European possessions, a renowned Portuguese thinker, Joao De Barros [2] had predicted thus: "*The Portuguese arms and pillars placed in Africa and Asia, and in countless isles beyond the bounds of three continents, are material things, and time may destroy them. But time will not destroy the religion, customs and language which the Portuguese have implanted in these lands*".

I) The Origins of the Portuguese Burghers

Unlike other European colonial powers in Asia such as the Dutch and British, the Portuguese freely interacted and intermarried with the native populations with whom they came into contact and particularly in the areas where they enjoyed a dominant position. Indeed, it was a stated policy of the Portuguese to give the peoples that came under their sway, their religion, their lifestyle and their blood, in order to establish a strong affinity between Portugal and her dependencies. This was evidently the Portuguese policy ever since Afonso de Albuqurque, Governor of Portuguese India from 1509-1515 advocated intermarriage of Portuguese soldiers to native Indian women. The Crown too is known to have encouraged such a policy by granting such a couple a dowry in money. Such intermarriages, it was believed, would create a new community of mixed breeds who would identify themselves, politically as well as culturally with the Portuguese as well as serve as a link between the Portuguese rulers and native peoples. Says Rudolfo Dalgado [3]: " There is no colonial nation which has less racial egotism and is more inclined to identify itself with the indigenous population than the Portuguese... Even at the present time there are to be met with in various parts of Asia groups of families, some small, others large, which pride themselves on being the descendants of the European people who were the earliest in modern times to bring their civilization to the East. These families also glory in designating themselves Portuguese and are proud of their Lusitanian patronymics".

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[2] Dialogo em louvor de nossa lingua (1540)

[3] Influência do Vocabulário Portugues em linguas Asiáticas (1913)

The thinking underlying the colonial Portuguese administration's encouragement of such intermarriages in Ceylon would have been no different. Such Portuguese settlers who espoused native women were known as *Casados* (meaning 'married'). These unions gave rise to mixed breed Eurasian communities known as Mestiços that generally tended to be Portuguese-speaking and were to all intents Portuguese. Such communities, it was thought, would constitute an important link between the Portuguese rulers and their native subjects. "It was hoped" to cite the words of P.E.Pieris [4] "that such connections would enable them to keep a surer finger on the pulse of the Sinhalese nation, and that in a few generations a new class would spring into existence which would help to bridge the gulf between the races".

Colonisation was not an altogether slow process and as noted by C.R.De Silva [5] there existed "a solid phalanx of Portuguese landed gentry consisting of army officers, casados and a few soldiers" as early as 1615. Later times which saw a consolidation of Portuguese rule saw a steady influx of such casados. Antonio Bocarro [6] says that the island of Mannar has a population of seventy casados (married Portuguese settlers) and that they are all very good soldiers. He adds that "since many of them are hunters, they have firearms. They live in well built houses made of stone and mortar with spacious gardens. Each settler has a slave also adept at using arms". He also records that on the high ground in front of the triangular shaped fort of Trincomalee is a settlement of Portuguese married men, each of whom was paid five larins maintenance allowance per month, and one and a half measure of rice per day. Besides these he has recorded twenty married settlers living within the fort of Jaffna in spacious houses of stone and mortar. He notes that they also perform garrison duty in addition to the soldiers resident there. He also notes that the settlement of casados outside the fort cover an extensive area, because there is enough land. Bocarro also refers to Portuguese married settlers living in Colombo city and their sons, all of whom numbered as many as 350. We also have Fernao de Queyroz [7] referring to a garrison of 80

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[4] Ceylon. The Portuguese Era (1913-1914)

[5] The Portuguese in Ceylon.1617-1638 (1972)

[6] Livro de Plantas de Todas as Fortalezas Cidades e Povações do Estado da India Oriental (1635)

[7] Conquista Temporal e Espiritual de Ceylao (1687)

Portuguese Casados in Galle Fort and one Captain Pedro Carvalho, a Casado of Gale with sixteen companions in the bastion of Santiago.

The descendants of such unions, known as Portuguese Burghers are today found mainly in the eastern littoral, in certain parts of Batticaloa (Dutch Bar in Kalladi near Batticaloa town, Sinnappodai also near Kalladi, Palaiyuttu region of Trincomalee district, Kulāvaddi and Māmāngam as well as in Tannāmunai, Panichiadi and Karuvapangani, new settlements formed after the December 2004 Tsunami that devastated the eastern coast) and in a few parts of the Amparai district, particularly in Akkaraipattu town (Māyalaku Road and Old Market Road where a few families are found) and in Itiyadi, a new settlement formed after the Tsunami. We estimate that there are well over 200 Portuguese Burgher families in the Batticaloa region alone with at least another twenty families in Akkaraipattu and Itiyadi. These folk are known as *Tuppāhi* [8] in Sinhala and *Paraṅgi* [9] in Tamil. The British colonists called this folk

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[8] The term occurs quite early, in works like the Parangi Hatana, a Sinhalese war poem which refers to "*country-born Thupassis who feed on beef and ape the senhors in their trousers*". The usage is probably Tamil in origin, having derived from T.*tupāsi* 'interpreter' (fr.H.*dobhāṣiya* <Skt.*dvi* + *bhāṣin* 'bi-lingual') as these folk would have, at some period, been bi-linguals who also served as interpreters between the Portuguese colonial authorities and their native subjects. An alternative derivation would have it from the Portuguese word for hat topi. L.De Grandpre in his Voyage in the Indian Ocean (1803) says that the Portuguese caste is called in Bengal *Topas* "*from the word topi, which signifies in the Portuguese language a hat. The name is given to such Indians as change their own for the European dress, and wear a hat instead of a turban*". Originally, however, the Tuppāhi who are known as Topazes in Portuguese sources seem to have been distinct from the offspring of the Portuguese casados. Bocarro (1635) for instance refers to a company of Topazes as blacks who served in the garrison protecting the fort of Batticaloa and who were stationed in the stockades of the bastions along the lagoon. The term 'blacks' used in this context as in much of Bocarro's work probably refers to natives, whether Sinhalese or Tamils. These Portuguese Burghers seem to have also been known as *mettissa* (a corruption of the Portuguese term *mestiço* or 'mixed') by the Sinhalese of old. B.Clough in his Sinhalese-English Dictionary (1892) gives *mettissa* as 'of mixed European and Indian birth; a term applied to one sprung from a European father and Indian mother; one who adopts the female costume of a mestiso, viz.a jacket and skirt with the native comb and hairpin, and a pair of slippers'. As noted by Pyrard (Viagem): "*The least esteemed are the offspring of a Portuguese father and an India mother, or vice versa, and these are called metices, that is Metifs, or mixed*".

[9] In Batticaloa and Akkaraipattu for instance, Portuguese Creole-speaking Burgher families are referred to by the Tamil-speaking inhabitants as *Paraṅgi*. This term, as also the Sinhala term for the Portuguese, *Parangi*, is apparently derived from an old eastern term for the Franks (Hindustani *Firingi*, Persian *Firang*, Arabic *Ifranj*) which was later transferred to the Christian nations of Europe and hence came to mean any European, particularly of the West European countries. In the Sri Lankan context however the term seems to have been solely applied to the Portuguese, the country's first European visitors. Its occurrence in Sinhala

Portuguese or *Mechanics* after their occupation as artisans [10]. These folk who are today often quite dark-complexioned unlike their Portuguese forbears due to successive intermarriage with local folk and the subsequent miscegenation are however still known to preserve faint traces of Portuguese physical traits, in some instances even a relatively fair skin only slightly darker than that of a Mediterranean European.

As we found in a visit in April 2009 to the Dutch Bar near Kalladi not far from Batticaloa town as well as to Māyālaku Road and Old Market Road in Akkaraipattu where the Portuguese Burghers of these parts are found in considerable numbers, these folk, unlike the Dutch Burghers, display a great variation in skin colour and physiognomy. Some, like one Anthony Andrado and his daughter whom we met are very fair-complexioned and appear to have preserved typical Portuguese physical features. Most of the others we met were either light brown like many Sinhalese and even dark brown not much unlike the Tamil inhabitants living in their midst. This variation in physical characters among the

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literature is seen in works such as the Senarat Rāja Puvata (C.1630-1634) where it figures in the verses *Parangin allā, kapā tāna tāna ellā* (Having captured the Portuguese, cut and hanged them in various places) a reference to how the Portuguese soldiers were dealt with by an equally ruthless Sinhalese foe. The Portuguese also find mention as Parangi in the Parangi Hatana, a Sinhalese war poem celebrating the victory over the Lusitanian forces: "*Like raging wolves on a herd of kine our gallant host lay about on the Parangis*".

[10] Says C.M.Fernando (An Album of Ceylon Music.1904): "The Mechanics form a distinct portion of the inhabitants of Ceylon, connected by ties of kindred, speaking a common language, and possessing habits and customs as distinct from any other nationality in the island. The name Mechanic, generally applied to them as a class, is derived from the fact that they are almost exclusively devoted to the lower crafts of artisanship. They are usually shoemakers, tailors or blacksmiths. Their conservatism is such that few, if hardly any, are known to have grown out of their ancestral callings. Their race, as at present constituted, is an admixture of several nationalities, having for its nucleus the offspring of the Portuguese settlers of maritime Ceylon. These Portuguese were wont to take to themselves native wives, and upon the Dutch occupation left behind them a considerable number of descendants. These latter, on account of their faith to which they rigidly adhered in spite of the persecutions of their conquerors, were debarred from holding office, or occupying positions of trust or honour under the Dutch regime, and were consequently obliged to seek refuge in the mechanical arts. Compelled by the circumstances of their callings to move among the lower classes of the native population, they frequently contracted marriages among the latter, and absorbed into their language a host of Sinhalese and Tamil words". The tradition continues to this day among many of their descendants. As we found in a visit to Akkaraipattu in April 2009, many Portuguese Burgher men had as their primary occupation, carpentry, with one named Vetterbrown Ignesius even having a sizeable business, the Nelson Carpentry Workshop and Nelson Furniture Shop.

Portuguese Burghers is nothing new and has perhaps been so for several centuries.

Robert Percival in his Account of the Island of Ceylon (1805) observed that the blood of the European Portuguese has been so intermixed as to scarcely leave a trace behind among their mixed breed descendants. "*Complexions of all sorts are indeed found among this mongrel race, from a jetty black to a sickly yellow, or tawny hue. Their hair, which is black or dark brown, is worn long, and usually tied*". Likewise James Selkirk [11] observed of the Portuguese Burghers: "*In colour they resemble neither the Singhalese nor the Tamulians. Some are of a duller black than either, and others of a sickly yellow. They keep up the European dress; wear shoes and stockings, trousers, waistcoat, jacket and cap or hat. There are few good-looking men among them, being thin and ill-made. The women, when young, are often pretty*". And a decade later John Capper [12] could observe: "*The Dutch have been, and are to this day, very careful not to intermarry with any Cingalese; thus their habits and their characters have undergone but little change. The Portuguese on the other hand, have been far less scrupulous on this point; and their descendants of the present day are to be seen of every shade and grade*".

There are also those who have noticed traces of European blood in the Portuguese Burghers, among them William Digby [13] who observed over a century ago that whatever their actual number may have been, certainly no Portuguese left the island with the exception of a few soldiers when the arrangements concerning the capitulation were completed. "There are other causes" he says "to account for this race being preserved and still able to propagate after its kind, but here the suggestion may be ventured as to why, in the progeny of Portuguese fathers and Sinhalese mothers, though successive generations, while the European element must necessarily be growing fainter, the facial characteristics of the male original parent should be maintained. There is a curious resemblance between the features of a poor Ceylonese "mechanic" of the present day and the well-known Portuguese type of face as it appears in the likenesses of men of ancient renown, and some of the Ceylon Portuguese not much darker in complexion than dwellers in fair Lusitania". Digby [14] also

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[11] Recollections of Ceylon (1844)

[12] Pictures from the East (1854)

[13] The Eurasians of Ceylon. Calcutta Review for 1877

[14] Forty years of official and unofficial life in an oriental crown colony (1879)

gives the following names of the Mechanics as indicating their Portuguese origin: - De Silva, Perera, Fernando, D 'Almeida, de Costa, Rodrigue, de Alwis, de Livera, Dias, Diaz, Pieres, de Abrew, Fonseka, Corea, de Zilwa, de Mel etc. He adds that there are only a few Mechanics with Dutch names, and they are fairer than their confreres.

Others have opined that the Portuguese Burghers are 'the spurious descendants' of different European nations. Says Percival (1803) of this mixed breed race: "The present Portuguese of Ceylon are a mixture of the spurious descendants of the several European possessors of that island by native women, joined to a number of Moors and Malabars. A colour more approaching to black than white with a particular mode of dress, half Indian, and half European, is all that is necessary to procure the appellation of a Portuguese". There are also grounds for supposing that intermarriage between the Portuguese Burghers and Sinhalese was not uncommon in the olden days. In a song entitled Singalee Nona, a Mechanic youth is supposed to be addressing the mother of his Sinhalese lady-love

Cingalee Nona ! Cingalee Nona ! Eu kere kasa
Porta ninkere, orta ninkere
Figa namas da, Figa namas da none
Figa namas da

(Sinhalese lady, Sinhalese lady !
I wish to marry
Your house I want not, your lands I want not,
Only your daughter give, Only your daughter give lady,
Only your daughter give) [15]

It is also possible that these folk have absorbed a considerable infusion of Tamil blood, given their proximity to Tamil communities in the past and at the present day. There are also those who argue that the Portuguese Burghers freely intermarried with the Negro slave soldiers brought hither by the Dutch, for instance, Fernando (1904) notes that it is more than probable that the Portuguese descendants freely associated with the soldiers of the Caffir regiments employed by the Dutch, from whom much of the national music of the Ceylon Mechanic seems to have originated. In this connection, he refers to the word Cafferina and to the tune Velinda Mazambicu which clearly refers to the island of Mozambique. He also

[15] Fernando (1904)

cites Bertolacci who writing in his Ceylon (1817) calls it "a very remarkable fact that of about 9,000 Caffirs at different times imported into Ceylon by the Dutch Government, no descendants are remaining- at least they are in no way to be distinguished among the present inhabitants". These Caffirs, concludes Fernando, were doubtless absorbed among the Mechanics of Ceylon. However we do know that such Kaffir communities may well have survived for even to this day we come across a small Kaffir community near Puttalam in the western littoral. Nevertheless, it is possible that given the large number of Kaffir soldiers supposed to have been employed by the Dutch government in Ceylon and the fact that extremely dark complexions have been noticed among the Portuguese Burghers, it is not unlikely that many such peoples of African origin were absorbed and assimilated into the Portuguese Burgher fold.

We also have good reason to believe that the Portuguese Burghers absorbed a fair number of Dutch Burghers into their ranks. Among the family names (*alkuñā*) of the Portuguese Burghers of Batticaloa and Akkaraipattu while we often come across apparently Portuguese surnames such as Andrado, Delima, De Silva and Fernando, we also find names of apparently Dutch origin such as Henrik, Klyen, Ockersz, Outschoorn, Pietersz, Ragel and Stockvs occurring among them. We even come across patronymics of probable French origin such as Barthelot and Martil and even a peculiar patronymic Vetterbrown which may perhaps be a corruption of the English Peter Brown or possibly even a corruption of the Dutch Witterbron. Those persons bearing Dutch patronymics are also known as *Parangi* and not *Lansi* which is commonly applied to the Dutch Burghers. Yet another indication of the Dutch antecedents of some of the Portuguese Burghers is suggested by their traditional cuisine, particularly a kind of cake known to them as *fofōcci* prepared by placing in the indented hollows of a special pan a batter made of rice flour, coconut milk, toddy and sugar and heating it over a fire. Such cakes which are often consumed in the mornings or evenings with tea no doubt have their origins in the Dutch *Poffertjes*, little ball-shaped puff cakes made of wheat flour known to have been consumed by the Dutch Burghers of old.

There is reason to believe that in former times there existed a greater number of mestiço communities than we come across today and that they were not confined to the littoral. These seem to have been subsequently assimilated into neighbouring communities, though remnants of them are still to be found in the Kandyan highlands. Robert Knox has recorded in his Historical Relation of Ceylon (1681) that many Portuguese "with their whole families, wives, children, and servants" migrated to the Kandyan kingdom following the surrender of Colombo to the Dutch, preferring to

live under the Kandyan King rather than under the Hollanders. Knox states that "divers of them are alive to this day, living in Conde Uda; and others are born there". The modern-day Catholic community of Vahakōṭṭe in the Matale District may perhaps represent the descendants of one such inland migration.

D.A.Jayawardene [16] basing his account of tradition current among Roman Catholics and Buddhists of the surrounding districts, traces the Portuguese settlement of Vahakotte to five Portuguese families, later to be supplemented by three more families. He however notes: "*The present generation has lost the pedigree of their Portuguese forefathers. These European families have since become so blended with the Sinhalese natives that it is now impossible to find any traces of racial distinctions. Most of the Portuguese, it must be inferred, did not bring wives along with them, so that they had to take wives to themselves from the Sinhalese*". He however notes that it is well to observe that this handful of colonists, allied as they have been with the Buddhists for nearly three centuries, with a language, habits and customs adopted from the Sinhalese, have, however, preserved the religion of their ancestors. He also notes that they were proud of their honorary title of Don and of the unrivalled beauty of their daughters. Portuguese Burghers practicing their traditional occupation of shoe-making were still to be found along Shoe Road in Kotahena in the late 1970s [17].

Such settlements of Portuguese descendants were also noticed in the northern part of the country. A Tamil history of Jaffna, Yalpanaccarittiram, dateable to about the 16th century, tells us that Cheddikulam was under the Paranki (Portuguese) Carlo and others of his race [18]. The Dutch Lieutenant Thomas Nagel [19] has also mentioned a Portuguese colony in the Vanni district of Parringechitte-colon (Parangicettukulam) who differed from the natives in stature, features and colour.

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[16] The colonization of Vahokōṭṭe by the Portuguese. The Orientalist. Vol.II

[17] Shoe Road's Fairy Cobblers. Maureen. Weekend. July 16, 1978

[18] Historical Sketch of the Vanni. MLR. Jan.1893. This is supported by a map by A.Arrowsmith published in Percival's Ceylon (1805) where Cheddiku'ım is called Parangiecheco and in the map published by Philalethes (1816) where it is called Paringieseetoecolom

[19] Account of the Vanni.1793. Trans. In JRAS.CB 1948

Others were found in Mannar. J.P.Lewis [20] records that in Illupaikadavai in Mannar is a colony of Portuguese and Dutch descendants residing in a part of the village called Paranki-kāmam who speak no language but Tamil, but bear European surnames like Otto, Spek and Barbut.

Yet others were found in Jaffna town. Says the American Missionary Herald [21]: "Some hundreds of country-born descendants of the Portuguese and Dutch reside in the town of Jaffnapatam, and a few at the outstations of Point Pedro, Mallagum and Chavycherry". More recently, S.Sabaratna Mudaliyar [22] observed that there were over 200 Portuguese descendants, mostly in the Jaffna town, who spoke Indo-Portuguese. What became of these isolated communities it is difficult to say, though it is possible that they had assimilated with other neighbouring communities or migrated to other areas where there were to be found other Portuguese Creole-speaking groups such as in the eastern littoral.

II) Portuguese Creole Speech

The language spoken by the Portuguese Burghers is a corrupt form of Portuguese which may be termed Indo-Portuguese [23] or more specifically

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[20] Some Notes on Archaeological Matters in the Northern Province. CALR..Oct.1916

[21] Notices of the people and district of Jaffna, published in the Colombo Journal, Jan 12, 1833

[22] Relics of the Portuguese rule in Jaffna. CALR.1919

[23] The Portuguese-based creole speeches that developed in the coastal areas of southern and western India and the littoral parts of Sri Lanka during the period of Portuguese rule from the early 16th to the middle part of the 17th century are generally termed Indo-Portuguese.Rudolpho Dalgado (Dialecto Indo-Portugues.Revista Lusitania 1917) is of the view that there are several distinguishing features in the phonology, vocabulary and grammar of Indo-Portuguese creoles and contends that frequent contact between the Asian Portuguese creoles has led to 'partial reciprocal transfusions' resulting in both lexical and grammatical affinities between these creoles. This situation would have arisen not only because the Portuguese colonies in the Indian Ocean region were linked by a common administration in Goa, but also because Indo-Portuguese, despite its various dialectal variations functioned as a lingua franca in the region, facilitating communication and commerce. Portuguese has survived as creoles in India in such cities as Diu, Daman, Korlai and Cochin (Oral traditions in Indo-Portuguese Creole verse.K.D.Jackson.1990). The disappearance of Portuguese Creole in Goa, one-time headquarters of the Portuguese eastern empire which experienced over four centuries of the Portuguese presence may be attributable to the introduction of Standard Portuguese in Goanese schools "which re-established the negative connotations held against creole languages" as suggested by Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya (Portuguese and English translations of some Indo-Portuguese songs. JRAS.SL.1995). Portuguese not only survived as creoles in various parts of India, but also

Sri Lankan Portuguese Creole [24]. The reason this language is called a creole is because it has evolved or rather been corrupted from the original Portuguese as a result of its being spoken by a community of mixed origin which meant that the indigenous languages, whether Sinhala or Tamil, had exerted a considerable influence on it, particularly in phonology, as well as in grammar though the vocabulary on the whole has been retained to a great extent.

This is not to say that Portuguese itself from which it has its origins is a pure tongue. Although considered a Romance language in common French, Italian and Spanish, all of which have their origins in the ancient speech of the Romans, the Portuguese language has derived not from the cultivated Latin of the higher classes of Rome, but rather from the Vulgar Latin introduced by Roman soldiers and colonists following the Roman invasion of the Iberian Peninsula in the 3rd century B.C. The language subsequently came to be spoken by the Romanised peoples of the region comprising of Celtic tribes such as the Lusitani, Gallaeci, Celtici, Conii, Grovi, Equaesi, Leuni and Seurbi before gradually evolving into the modern-day Portuguese language. It is however contended that it was in neighbouring Gallicia in Spain which was founded in the 3rd century and constituted a part of the Roman occupied lands of Gallaecia and Asturica that the Portuguese language emerged from Vulgar Latin, for the inhabitants of this peripheral and inaccessible area retained in their speech

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considerably affected the various languages with which it came into contact. For instance Konkani (the speech of the Goans) has been shown to contain the largest number of Portuguese loans in any Indian language. Sinhala, the language of the Sinhalese, is second only to Konkani, with respect to the number of Portuguese loans in a subcontinental language (Influencia do Vocabulario Portuguese m Linguas Asiaticas. Rudolpho Dalgado.1913)

[24] This country-specific usage appears to have been first employed by Adolpho Coelho (Os Dialectos Românicos ou Neo-Latinos na Africa, Asia e America. BSGL.1880) who described the local Portuguese creole as Ceylão-Português or Ceylonese Portuguese. The Sri Lankan Portuguese Creole has been dealt with at length by Rudolpho Dalgado in his Dialecto Indo-Portugues de Ceilao (1900) while more recently a somewhat detailed creole vocabulary and syntax has been given in S.Thananjayarajasingham and M.H.Goonetilleke's A Portuguese Creole of the Burgher Community in Sri Lanka. JIAS Nov.1976. The lexical and grammatical forms with diacritical marks given here is the result of our field study among the Portuguese Burghers of the Dutch Bar near Kalladi, Batticaloa in April 2009. Unfortunately this language is not widely spoken today, its place having been taken by Tamil, the predominant speech of the region. The development seems to have taken place in the 1970s and 1980s, so that most young people are not familiar with it.

the typical characteristics of the archaic Low Latin spoken by their colonizers [25].

The local Portuguese has to a large extent preserved the original vocabulary handed down by the original speakers of the language, though in some cases these have been subjected to some minor phonological changes. Among the phonological differences between Standard Portuguese and the local creole may be mentioned lack of stress in intonation, anaptyxis, simplification of conjunct consonants, sibilization of palatal sounds and the replacement of nasalized vowels by real nasals on the part of Sri Lankan Portuguese Creole.

A widely represented phonetic development of SLPC when compared to SP vocables is the replacement of nasalized vowels (indicated by a tilde placed over the appropriate vowel) commonly found in the latter, by the nasal sound *m*:

SLPC *pām* 'bread' (SP.*pão*)
mām 'hand' (SP.*mão*)

Other notable changes are seen in the sibilization of the palatal *sh*:

SLPC *pēsi* 'fish' (SP.*peixe*, pronounced *peish*)
trēs 'three' (SP.*três*, pronounced treish)

and the palatal *zh*:

SLPC *dās* 'ten' (SP.*dez*, pronounced *dezh*)
naris 'nose' (SP.*nariz*, pronounced *narizh*)

The hardening of the palatal sibilant:

SLPC *cām* 'ground' (SP.*chão*, pronounced *shãõ*)
kaccōr 'dog' (SP.*cachorro*, pronounced *kashōr*)

The simplification of conjunct consonants:

SLPC *āvu* 'water' (SP.*água*, pronounced *agwa*)
kāttaru 'four' (SP.*quatro*, pronounced *kwatru*)

[25] See The Phonology of Portuguese. Maria Helena Mateus and Ernesto d'Andrade (2000)

The dropping of intervocalic palatal liquids:

SLPC *ōyi* 'eye' (SP.*olho*, pronounced *olyu*)
fiya 'daughter' (SP.*filha*, pronounced *filya*)

And the doubling of intervocalic voiceless dentals:

SLPC *sā̃tti* 'seven' (SP.*sete*, pronounced *set*)
oyittu 'eight' (SP.*oito*, pronounced *oitu*)

Among the other phonological changes may be mentioned the voicing of the initial *v* of SP:

SLPC *bōs* 'you' (SP. *você*)
bāka 'cow' (SP.*vaca*)

With exactly the reverse taking place with the intervocalic *b* of SP:

SLPC *kavasa* 'head' (SP.*cabeça*)
savōla 'onion' (SP.*cebola*)

a process that also seems to have taken place in the case of *b* occurring in conjunct positions:

SLPC *pāvūri* 'poor' (Port.*pobre*)
avri 'open' (Port.*abre*) [26]

We also find that SLPC has turned the initial soft *g* of SP (pronounced *zh* in cases preceding the vowels *e* and *i*) into *j* as in *jēntis* 'people' (SP.*gente*), a change which has also affected the SP *j* (also pronounced *zh*) as for instance in *janā̃la* (SP.*janela*) though we find an exception in *yūntu* 'together' (SP.*juntos*) where the change *j* > *y* may reflect a remote Dutch influence, particularly since we know that a good number of Portuguese Burghers are of Dutch ancestry.

[26] Some of these changes go back to well over a century. In a 19th century Hugh Nevill manuscript we find the local creole already having initial *b* where Standard Portuguese has *v* (E.g. *basa* for SP.*voce* 'you)' and intervocalic *v* where SP has *b* (Eg.*savi* for SP *sebe* 'hedge').

We also come across instances where Portuguese vocables have undergone anaptyxis in their passage to the local creole:

SLPC *irumām* 'brother' (SP.*irmão*)
pādara 'rock' (SP.*pedra*)

Among the vowel changes may be mentioned the simplification of the diphthongs of European Portuguese:

SLPC *dōs* 'two' (SP.*dois*, pronounced *doish*)
sēs 'six' (SP.*seis*, pronounced *saish*)

And the tendency to pronounce the Portuguese vowel *e* or *ê* as long *ā̃*:

SLPC *māl* 'honey' (SP.*mel*)
fāmiya 'woman' (SP.*fêmea*)

We also find that in some instances SLPC has undergone prothesis, the introduction of an extra initial sound in the form of vowels as in *anōtti* 'night' (SP.*noite*) and *ussānta* 'hundred' (SP.*cem*) and in at least one instance has dropped it as in *bōvara* 'pumpkin' (SP.*abóbora*).

Significant differences are also seen in a few lexical items such as SLPC *kāmbara* 'room' (SP.*quarto*), *kambrāda* 'friend' (SP.*amigo*), *ālri* 'tree' (SP.*árvore*), *fūla* 'flower' (SP.*flor*), *pāstri* 'bird' (SP.*pássaro*) *kumēra* 'food' (SP.*comida*) and *lumāra* 'moon' (SP.*lua*).

Some such forms seem to have derived not from European Portuguese forms that are cognate, but from other Portuguese forms. For instance, *lumāra* 'moon' has derived not from Port. *lua* (L.*luna*) but from Port. *lumeeira* 'torch', 'fire', 'bright light', 'firefly' or 'candlestick' which seems to have assumed the meaning of 'moonlight' in local Portuguese Creole as is evident from the following cantiga:

bunito lumara nona, banda de janela
noivo cum sua noiva nona, ja trukka anela

(Moonlight has come out in front of the window
the bride and groom have exchanged rings)

Likewise *kāmbara* has its origins in the Port. *câmara* 'chamber' and *kambrāda* in the Port.*camarada* 'comrade', 'companion'. The form *fūla* employed in the local creole for flower appears to be a typically Indo-

Portuguese usage as it seems to be related to the Konkani *pula* and Hindi *phūl*.

As for semantic changes, these are very few and far between, as for instance SLPC *letria* 'stringhoppers' which has derived from the SP *aletria* 'vermicelli'. It is probably this term, corrupted further in Sinhala that became *lävariya*, a popular sweetmeat prepared by steaming a roll made of rice flour formed into a stringhopper-like texture in the centre of which is a delectable filling made of grated coconut, jaggery or treacle and cinnamon or cardamoms. As for the grammatical structure of Sri Lankan Portuguese Creole, we would find that there do exist substantial differences between the local creole and Standard Portuguese which are the result of independent developments or bear the imprint of vernacular influences by way of Sinhala and / or Tamil.

Compare the SLPC sentence *miñā nōmi* 'my name' with SP *meu nome* where the former has dispensed with the masculine singular possessive *meu* by employing the feminine possessive *miñā* (Port.*minha*) in its stead. The use of *miñā* for the possessive is a regular feature of the local creole. For instance *bōs miñā kambrāda* 'you are my friend' where SP has *você é meu amigo* [27]. In Portuguese *minha* is only used for the feminine as seen for instance in the peasant repartee: *esta mulher e minha da cabeça ate as unhas* (This woman is mine from her head to her toenails). Also compare the SLPC interrogative *bottusu nōmi kī* 'What is your name ?' with the SP *como é o teu nome ?* and the SLPC *parimi fōmita faya* 'I am hungry' with the SP.*eu estou com fome*. We also find that the local creole has been considerably influenced by the vernaculars in its syntax as for instance in having the adjective preceding the noun rather than following it as in Standard Portuguese:

Cf. SLPC *grāndi kāsa* 'big house' and *bunīta fāmiya* 'beautiful woman' with their respective European Portuguese equivalents *casa grande* and *feminino bonita*

Both Sinhala and Tamil syntax follow the adjective + noun form and agree with SLPC which it seems to have influenced in this respect as seen in Sinh.*loku gedara* 'big house' and *lassana gähäniya* 'beautiful woman' and T.*periya vīḍu* and *alahāna pen* respectively. We also find that SLPC

[27] This peculiarity seems to be quite old and occurs in a local Portuguese Creole song recorded by Hugo Schuchardt in his Zum Indoportugiesischen von Ceylon in the latter part of the 19th century (Hugo Schuchardt Collection in the University of Graz. Austria) where we find *minha amor* 'my love' and *minha corecao* 'my heart' occurring alongside *meu amor* and *meu coracao* (SP.*meu amor* and *meu coração* respectively)

agrees with the vernaculars in the subject + object + verb pattern as against the subject + verb + object pattern of SP:

Cf. SLPC *ēu kāsa tandā*'I go home' where SP has *eu vou a casa* and where Sinhala has *mama gedara yanavā* and Tamil *nān vītukka pōrēn*

Also compare SLPC *ēu pām kum pēsi kummā* 'I eat bread and fish' with SP *eu como pão com peixe* where Sinh. has *mama pān ekka mālu kanavā* and T. *nān pān udan mīn sāppuduvan.* Also compare the SLPC *parimi sãusta parsa* 'I see the sky' with SP *ēu vejo o céu* where Sinh. has *mata ahasa pēnavā* and T. *enakku vānam teriyudu.* We would find here that *parimi* (SP.*para mim* 'for me' as in the sentence *essas flores são para mim* 'Are those flowers for me') has been constructed on the pattern of the Sinh. *maṭa* and T.*enakku* meaning 'to or for me'.

Also compare the SLPC *āvo pōkku bova* 'drink some water' with the SP.*bebe um pouco de água* where the SLPC sentence agrees in its syntax with the Sinh.*vatura poḍḍak bonna* and T.*tanni koñjam kuḍinga.* We also find the SLPC *bottus yūntu* 'with you'll' differing from SP. *com voces* and agreeing with the Sinh. *oyālā ekka* and T.*ongal-uda.* We also find the local creole employing compound words as in the vernaculars against Standard Portuguese usage:

Cf.SLPC.*mācci kriansa* 'boy' (lit.male child') and *fāmiya kriansa* 'girl' (lit.female child) as against SP.*rapaz and rapariga* where Sinh. has *pirimi lamayā* and *gähänu lamayā* and T.*ān-pulla* and *pen-pulla* respectively.

But just as Sinhala and Tamil influenced SLPC in its grammar, the creole enriched the vernaculars, and particularly Sinhala with its Portuguese lexicon, for there is reason to believe that a good part of Portuguese vocables in Sinhala originated through the medium of the creole speech. So much so indeed that the renowned Portuguese linguist Dalgado considered Sri Lankan Portuguese Creole to be the most important Portuguese Creole found anywhere in the world due to its vitality and its contribution to the Sinhala vocabulary. Creole loans are evident in such forms as *nōnā* which is used in modern Sinhala in the sense of 'lady', 'wife', 'mistress'. Its equivalent in Portuguese is *dona* or *senhora.* As noted by Louis Nell [28] the Portuguese-speaking classes

[28] An explanatory list of Portuguese words adopted by the Sinhalese. The Orientalist.1888-89)

applied the term *nona* to females in mutual conversation. This however appears to have been a semantic development from a Portuguese word meaning a nun. Nell has noted that in Portuguese usage in Europe Nona was a title given to nuns of St.Benedict and that in Indo-Portuguese nuns were known as *nonas d'igreja*. It is nevertheless evident that in the local creole, *nōnā* meant lady. Consider for instance the following verses from some creole cantigas:

Canta, canta, canta nona, canta sem vergonna
Eu nove capela nona, per kuspi pesonna

(Sing, sing, sing lady, sing without shame
I am not a snake lady, to spit poison) [29]

It is quite evident from verses such as this that in local Portuguese Creole, the term *nōnā* meant 'lady' and not 'nun'. Also relevant is the definition of *nōnā* given in Benjamin Clough's Sinhalese-English Dictionary (1892) where the usage is given as 'lady, applied only to one in European costume'.

Such examples suffice to show that many vocables of Portuguese origin would have entered Sinhala via the local creole which as seen earlier served as a lingua franca throughout much of maritime Asia during the colonial period. As observed by Percival in 1805, nearly 300 years after the Portuguese had first set foot in the country: "*The low Portuguese is the universal language spoken amongst the Cinglese in our settlements, and indeed amongst all the natives who have any intercourse or connexion with Europeans*".

[29] See Indo-Portuguese cantigas. Oral Traditions in Ceylon Portuguese Verse. Kenneth David Jackson. Hispania. Sep.1991. Here one would find reproduced the Cantigas ne o lingua de Portuguez. Impressado ne Matre, 23 de Juni 1914 which were transcribed from the oral traditions of the Portuguese Burghers and which bears ample testimony to the fact that Portuguese Creole folk texts survived well up to the twentieth century.

Finally we give below a specimen of Portuguese Creole verse to demonstrate its euphony and mellifluousness which would have little doubt been an important factor in its wide-scale adoption by local peoples, and not just those who natively spoke the language, including among others the Dutch Burghers. The following quatrain is from a Batticaloa Portuguese song in the Hugh Nevill collection together with its Standard Portuguese and English translation [30].

Indo-Portuguese	Standard Portuguese
ayu fronte bala	*olha a bela em frente*
ne kampo de floris	*na campo de flores*
alla jaffoi prinsasa	*ela foi uma princesa*
kaem grandi amori	*com grandes amores*

(Look at the beauty in front, in the field of flowers, she was a princess with great loves)

[30] Portuguese and English translations of some Indo-Portuguese songs. Shihan De Silva Jayasuriya. JRASSL.1995

Dutch Burghers

The Dutch Burghers unlike the Portuguese Burghers who are descended from Portuguese soldiers and settlers who espoused native women, trace their descent to Europeans, largely Dutch nationals, who arrived here during the period of rule of the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie or Dutch East India Company which held sway over the country's maritime districts from 1658-1796.

I) Origins of the Dutch Burghers

The term popularly used to designate this community, Burgher, has derived from the Dutch word Burger meaning 'a citizen', 'inhabitant of a city' which seems to have been in use ever since the period of Dutch rule in Sri Lanka. The term evidently applied to European citizens domiciled in Dutch Ceylon and it is interesting to note that even in a former colony of the Netherlands, South Africa, the term Burgher has been commonly used for citizens of European descent.

As pointed out by R.L.Brohier [31] the term Burgher is not an ethnographic name and has nothing to do with race. The term, he argues, is of historic origin and refers to a political community which had a distinctive character when it entered under the sway of the British Government. He notes that the community of citizens left behind when the Dutch capitulated came to be designated on a generic basis as Burghers- a transliteration of the Dutch term Vryburgher or Free Citizen. The original Dutch term appears to have been Burger (without an aspirate) and meant a citizen (fr.*burg* 'city', hence *burger* 'resident of a city'). The term seems to have been particularly used of the residents of the great Dutch commercial cities such as Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Antwerp and particularly its middle and upper classes who played an important role in the republic's economic as well as political life, particularly in the aftermath of the overthrow of Spanish domination and the conclusion of the eighty years war in 1648 which led to the birth of the new republic which was then known as the United Provinces of the Free Netherlands.

It did not take the Dutch long to realize that they too like other western European powers could venture out of their national boundaries to colonise other nations, particularly in the East such as the Indian Ocean region and the Indonesian Archipelago where the trade in spices offered great promise for their national ambitions. Such colonization was however

[31] Changing Face of Colombo (1984)

not spearheaded by the Dutch Republic directly, but by a company known as the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC) which served as a vehicle of the Dutch state's colonial ambitions in the East and which exercised considerable power in its overseas colonies on its behalf. Under a charter awarded to the VOC by the States General, the VOC was conceded a monopoly of Dutch trade and navigation east of the Cape of Good Hope and west of the Straits of Magellan. The company was vested with much authority overseas, so much so indeed that its governing body of seventeen directors (the Heeren XVII) was empowered to conclude treaties of peace and alliance, wage defensive wars and build fortresses in the regions that came under its power or influence.

To man the administration of such possessions and defend them, they were also entitled to enlist civilian, military and naval personnel who were required to take an oath of loyalty not only to the company, but also the States General, thus cementing their allegiance to the Dutch State and the House of Oragnje Nassau to which the Stadholder belonged. With these concessions, the VOC lost no time in embarking on its venture to colonise the Orient, and particularly those regions that were easily accessible by sea, the Dutch at the time being a formidable maritime power. This meant that countries such as South Africa, Sri Lanka and the Indonesian Archipelago all came within the scope of Dutch interests. Such interest was mainly borne out of a desire for commercial gain for the company, especially with a view to monopolizing the lucrative trade in spices and other valuable commodities the east had to offer, and less so to convert the pagan nations that had come under their power to the Christian doctrine they followed, namely that of the Waare Christelije Gereformeerde Kerk or the Dutch Reformed Church, a Protestant Church inspired by the teachings of the French Theologian Jean Calvin[32] .

The VOCs drive towards the east meant that it needed more and more men to man and defend their possessions in the newly acquired territories and this was initially fulfilled by enlisting Dutch nationals who would take up service in the company for a fixed pay and for a specified period of time. In later times, however, men from other nations were also absorbed

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[32] Although it seems that Calvinism with its emphasis on predestination and freedom of commercial license was a major driving force in the dynamic Dutch commercial expansion of the 17th century, there can be little doubt that profit was its main motive, indeed even behind the very establishment of the VOC. It is said that once when a Dutch envoy was speaking highly of the religious liberty in his country in the presence of King Charles X of Sweden, the King pulled out a Rix Dollar from his pocket and said: *Voilla votre religion* (See The Dutch seaborne Empire. 1600-1800. C.R.Boxer.1965).

into service with the company. As pointed out by Deloraine Brohier [33] the enormous wastage of European lives in these far-off lands and the rigours of sea-voyaging would have taken a heavy toll which resulted in the gradual reluctance of Dutch citizens themselves to serve in the tropics, although the lure of the east had initially been very encouraging. Besides, Holland, then as now was a small country with limited manpower resources.

As noted by Brohier, although opinion varied concerning what kind of foreigners were desirable for enlistment, orders were repeatedly promulgated against the employment of Catholics in any capacity which probably harked back to the struggle against Catholic Spain in the previous century. It was thus that persons originating from neighbouring European countries who were largely if not solely Protestant came to take service with the company. These included persons originating from Germany, England, France, Switzerland and Scandinavia. For instance it has been found that of 143 soldiers serving in the garrison at Batavia in January 1622, there were 60 Germans, Swiss, English, Scots, Irish, Danes and other foreigners, apart from 17 Flemings and Walloons. In the garrison at the Cape of Good Hope as elsewhere Germans were in the majority of those who had taken service with the VOC. Although the proportion of Dutchmen was higher in the commissioned ranks than in the rank and file, it is known that key positions were also filled by foreigners. For instance Batavia had a French Huguenot Commander, Issac de Saint-Martin 1686-96 and the Cape of Good Hope a Berliner J.T.Rhenius in 1728-40 [34]. The VOC nevertheless thought it prudent to ensure that the Burghers remained largely Dutch, for in the Instructions from the Governor-General & Council of India to the Governor of Ceylon (1656-65) we find the statement: "*That in order to maintain our footing in this colony, the Burgher class must be strengthened as much as possible by our own people*".

What we can be fairly certain of however is that by the latter part of Dutch rule in Sri Lanka, there had come into existence a resident European community of Dutch and other European nationalities that had more or less settled down in the island, and entered into marriages with local or Eurasian women [35]. This resident community found itself

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[33] Who are the Burghers ? JRASSL.1985/86

[34] See Boxer (1965)

[35] For instance in the Dutch Tombos which indicate those who possessed landholdings at the time, we come across a number of European men who are described as 'Burger' including

virtually stateless when the Dutch capitulated to the British in 1796, for while under the former government they could still maintain relations with the home country, this appeared not to be possible any more.

Thus the Dutch settlers domiciled in the island would have had no option but give up any thought of returning to the old country. It would appear that a fair number of the civil inhabitants who had the will and the means to go back to Holland or the other countries of their origin, eventually did so just as the non-resident military personnel relocated back to Holland or were transferred to other Dutch possessions. Nevertheless there still remained a fair number of Dutch and other European families who were resident in Colombo and the other major towns who either did not have the desire or the means to make it back to their home country, even when the opportunity arose[36]. The early Burgher residents of the island apparently resented the British presence and the British assumption that Ceylon was permanently theirs to the exclusion of the Dutch and seem to have harboured thoughts that when peace was declared between the Dutch and British, Ceylon would revert back to Holland. The Peace of Amiens signed in 1802 however seems to have put such thoughts to rest and the opportunity was thereafter offered to the former VOC officers and their families to betake themselves to Batavia with a concession of free passage. The opportunity however does not seem to have been taken to too kindly, for many resolved not to make use of it, for not only had they become accustomed to the local climate and way of life, but many also had families born out of unions with native women as well as properties and other vested interests [37]. They chose to remain behind and it was they who went on to constitute the Burgher community of the island.

It would appear from a consideration of Dutch Burgher genealogical records and the vernacular name applied to them, that the Burghers are largely of Dutch origin. The common Sinhala appellation used to

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among others Hendrick Schokman, Gabriel Caspers and Johannes Schroeder who is described as a Sergeant of the Burgery (SLNA 1/3839). That a good many of them had espoused local women, probably women of Portuguese ancestry, is suggested by a number of instances of such marriages occurring in the Tombos, for instance the Burger Harmanus Lodewyksz who is said to have been married to maria Fernando who was earlier married to the Burger Daniel Backer (SLNA 1/3760). Lodewijk Potnitz de Jonge, perhaps a Burger or at any rate a gentleman of Dutch ancestry is likewise said to have been married to Elisabeth Fernando and had two sons Lodewijk Justinus and Daniel Gysbert and a daughter Maria Potnits married to Sergeant Pieter Passerat (SLNA 1/3760).

[36] See Brohier.1985/86

[37] Ibid

designate them, *Lansi* is probably derived from the Dutch term *Hollandsche* used for an inhabitant of Holland or a contraction of Sinh.*Ōlanda-dēsi* 'Hollander' [38]. A derogatory term used by some Sinhalese to refer to them, *Kärapottā* or 'cockroach' apparently referred to Albinos or extremely fair-skinned persons with light hair and eyes which would also fit the Nordic type to which most Dutchmen belonged [39].

Among the Burgher families of Dutch origin may be included Caspersz, Claasz, Claessen, Christoffelsz, De Jong, De Vos, De Kretser, Dirckze, Fransz, Jansz, Jansen, Juriansz, Kelaart, Loos, Ockersz, Pietersz, Scharenguivel, Schokman, Van Cuylenberg, Van Dort and Van Twest [40]. Those of German origin include Berenger, Godlieb, Hoffman, Ludovici, Koch, Koelmeyer, Muller and Neydorff while those of French origin include Brohier, Poulier and De Valliere. The Toussaints and Labrooys had their origins in Belgium and the Buultjens in Flanders.

The genealogical records maintained by Burghers over the centuries and recorded in the Journals of the Dutch Burgher Union have preserved for us notices of their original forbears. Thus the Schokman family could trace its ancestry to one Jan Arentsz Schokman who was born in Amsterdam in Holland and who served as Foreman of the Ship's Carpenters while the Loos' could trace theirs to Jacob Pieterz Loos, also born in Amsterdam who served as Superintendant of the VOC's armoury. The Van Dort

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[38] The appellation Hollander could properly be applied only to an inhabitant of North or South Holland, two provinces in the Northern Netherlands. This is interesting as the Dutch who came to Sri Lanka came not only from North or South Holland, but also from Zeeland, Limberg, Utrecht, Gelderland, Friesland and Groningen in the Northern Netherlands and from Antwerp, Brabant, Flanders, Liege and Hainant in the Southern Netherlands (See JDBU. July 1927)

[39] The term seems to have originally been a derogatory usage used to refer to Albinos. A similar usage was noticed in India by the 19th century French missionary Abbe Dubois (Hindu manners, customs and ceremonies. Trans. from the author's 1821-22 French manuscript and edited by Henry Beauchamp 1906) who says that Albinos in South India are called Kakrelaks as a term of reproach. Says he: They cannot bear the light, neither can they look fixedly at anything so long as the sun is up". In a footnote he adds: "The Kakrelaks are horrible insects, disgustingly dirty, which give forth a loathsome odour. They are of the same species as our bugs, but much larger. These unpleasant and destructive insects shun the day and its light. They remain hidden in holes or crannies in walls, and come out at night to devour all the food they can find and to disturb sleepers".

[40] Many such Dutch surnames are easy to identify. Many begin with De (the) or Van (of the house or place of) while others have a suffixed z. This last feature is but an abbreviated form of the Dutch *zoon* 'son'. Thus Claasz actually stands for Claas Zoon, Jansz for Jans-Zoon and Pietersz for Pieters-Zoon, suggesting that these were originally not family names but very simple surnames formed from the first name of one's father.

family could likewise trace their lineage to Anthony Van Dort of Gravenhage in Holland who took service in the VOC as Tamboer and later as Soldaats and the Kretsers to Cornelis de Kretser of Culenberg in the Netherlands.

Families of French descent include the Labrooys who could trace their descent to Jacobus La Brooy whose ancestors were of French origin with the ancestral name La Broyes. The family is said to have left France and settled in Brussels on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Also of French descent are the Brohier family, the founder of which, Captain Jean Brohier was of Huguenot French origin. Born in the Island of Jersey in the Channel Isles, he arrived in Ceylon in 1777 and served as a sailor before being promoted to Ensign and Lieutenant and eventually as Commissioner of the Pearl Fishery before the British takeover of the island. The Buultjens could likewise trace their ancestry to Willem Buultjens of Notreboom in Kleefsland, Flanders, a Boatswain in the service of the VOC; the Toussaints to Matheus Toussaint who was born at Tournay (Doornick) in Belgium and the Ludovicis to Johannes Ludovic who was born in Schloben (Thuringia).

Families of German descent include the Van Langenbergs whose ancestry has been traced to Johann Von Langenberg, a surgeon in the service of the VOC hailing from the village of Langenberg near Wörth, West of Karlsrhue in Baden-Württemberg. Likewise the ancestry of the Müller family has been traced back to Pieter Muller, a German, who embarking from Hoorn in the Netherlands arrived in Galle in 1739 after having joined the Duke of Württemberg's Regiment raised from German refugees fleeing religious persecution in Groningen in the Netherlands. Pieter's descent has been further traced back to Conradus Von Hüsen who was made Imperial Knight of the Order of Hospitallers of St.Mary of Jerusalem by the Holy Roman Emperor Heinrich VI Hohenstaufen in the early 13th century and granted as a gift in perpetuity four mills in the Mosel Valley in the Rhineland from which his descendants the Müllers (German for Miller) took their family name [41].

At the same time however there is evidence to show that many of these Burghers espoused local women, particularly women of Portuguese extraction. Says Digby (1877): "The story is told by old Burgher residents, who heard it from their parents, these latter living in Dutch times, that no European ladies whatsoever came to Ceylon save the Governor's wife; that the means of the civil and military servants of this thrifty nation

[41] See The Burghers.J.B.Muller (2006)

would not permit of their bringing to Ceylon wives of their own countrywomen. Further, accommodation was not provided on board the East Indian traders for women, and stronger still, as corroborative evidence, the Singhalese were in the habit of speaking of the Governor's lady as "Nona d' Hollande" ("The Lady of Holland") and it is the firm belief of many of the Burghers that there is not a single Dutch family in Ceylon, which is entirely free from native connection"[42].

Although this may be an overstatement, there can be little doubt that mixed marriages had taken place from the very beginning of Dutch rule in the island, though these seem to have been mainly confined to women of Portuguese descent. For instance, after the capture of Colombo and Jaffna from the Portuguese in 1656 and 1658, it is said that about 200 Dutchmen married some of the Indo-Portuguese women who stayed back in the island [43]. The Dutch Governor of Ceylon Rijkloff Van Goens is even said to have considered intermarriage with Sinhalese, Tamil and Eurasian women as part of the colonization strategy. Though the company even authorized a moderate bonus of 2 to 3 months pay to any Dutch soldier or sailor who would marry thus, the results were extremely disappointing [44].

The reason, it would appear was that the great majority of the men, whether soldier, sailor or merchant had no intention of spending the rest of their life in the Indies, an attitude that differed considerably from that of their Portuguese predecessors, and which found expression in the following words of Corporal Johann Saar who wrote: "Wherever they (the Portuguese) once come, there they mean to settle down for the rest of their lives, and they never think of returning to Portugal again. But a Hollander, when he arrives in Asia, thinks 'When my six years of service are up, then I will go to Europe again' [45].

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[42] In contrast are the findings of J.R.Toussaint (Dutch Ladies who lived in Ceylon. JDBU. Oct.1939) who has cited evidence to show that there were indeed Dutch women who had settled in Ceylon during the period of Dutch occupation from 1640-1796 as evident in tombstones and monuments raised for honouring the memory of those of gentle birth, though the women here are in a minority, numbering only 113. For instance, there was Henrietta who accompanied her father Rudgerus Van Kriekenbeck, A Book-houder from Holland, who in 1661 married Thomas Van Rhee who became Governor of Ceylon in 1692. There was also Henrietta Tugendreich, Baroness de Reder, daughter of Friedrich Wilhelm, Baron De Reder, Commandant of Jaffna, who married Cornelis De Cock, Opperkoopman and Dessave of Colombo. She died in 1778 and was buried in Wolvendaal Church.

[43] See Brohier.1985/86

[44] Ibid

[45] Reisbeschryving Van J.J.Saar (1671)

It would also appear that unlike the Portuguese who actively promoted a low intensity colonization programme by encouraging their citizens to marry local women and settle down here even to the extent of providing them some attractive incentives, with the long-term strategy of facilitating the emergence of a mixed race which would identify itself with the Portuguese, the Dutch rulers of Ceylon, being a corporate entity were more focused on making profits in the short term. Their pursuance of a long-term colonization strategy of the like that the Portuguese had pursued is certainly not in evidence.

This situation however gradually changed and we have reason to believe that many a Dutchman resident here espoused local women, though it is very unlikely that they were given any incentives by the state which sometimes looked upon such intermarriages with mistrust [46]. At any rate the authorities certainly did not take too kindly to Dutch women emigrating from Holland to the eastern colonies so that those Dutchmen who wished to settle down here were in a sense compelled to espouse Asian or Eurasian women [47]

As evidenced by church registers which go back more than two and a half centuries, many marriages were contracted between Dutchmen and Portuguese women and women of mixed Portuguese and Sinhalese descent as attested by names such as Cabral, De Costa, De Fonseca, Dias, Pieris, Perera, Rodrigo, De Silva, De Zouza etc occurring in entries of marriage with Dutchmen [48]. In Some Marriages in Colombo from

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[46] For instance we find that as early as July 18, 1664, it had been brought to the notice of the Council that there were frequent complaints by clergymen of the evils resulting from the practice which was daily gaining ground, of Dutch soldiers marrying women of the country, and it was resolved that these marriages should not be permitted to take place for the future, unless a certificate from the clergyman was produced showing that the woman professed the Christian religion (Extracts from the Dutch Records of Ceylon.The Orientalist.Oct.1884).

[47] As early as 1612, Pieter Both, the first Governor-General of the East Indies advised the Heeren XVII not to permit any more 'light women' to emigrate from the Fatherland as these females it was alleged led scandalous and unedifying lives "to the great shame of our nation". To overcome this problem, he advocated intermarriage with local women (See The Dutch Seaborne Empire. C.Boxer.1977). Indeed by 1652, the directors of the VOC had adopted a policy which with modifications was to remain the company's policy, which is to say, restriction of migration of women from the Netherlands, a position spelled out in a directive to the Batavian government, prohibiting the carrying of Dutchwomen on company ships except for wives of senior merchants, clergymen, visitors of the sick, sergeants and only those others who get special leave from the Seventeen (Directors) in session (See The Social World of Batavia. European and Eurasian in Dutch Asia. Jean Gelman Taylor.1983).

[48] See The Burghers of Ceylon. R.G.Anthonisz. JDBU. July 1927.

A.D.1700 to 1750 compiled by R.G.Anthonisz [49] we come across entries such as Abraham Beerenstaat, Jongman, meeting Dona Maria Pereira, Marten Van Der Schaff, Jongman, meeting Maria d'Almeda, Jan Claasz de Vos, Vryburger, Jonkman, meeting Natalia Rodrigo, Frans Pietersz, Vryburger, Jongman, meeting Dominga Pieris and Joannes Wittebron, Soldaat, Jongman, meeting Natalia Dias. Most of the maiden names of the brides occurring here are however Dutch such as Susanna De Vlaming, Willemina Jans, Anna Luyk, Cornelia Nagel, Louisa Martynsz, Petronella Van Gysel and Catharina Van der Byl. It is however quite possible that many of these women bearing Dutch patronymics could be the offspring of women of Portuguese ancestry as their maiden names would naturally be taken from their fathers who were Dutch.

Thus by the end of Dutch rule in the island there existed a substantial resident European community that had on many occasions contracted marriages with local women, particularly women of Portuguese descent with whom the Dutch and other European nationalities would have felt some affinity. Percival (1805) noted shortly after the termination of Dutch rule in the island that it was very common in Ceylon to see a respectable and wealthy Dutchman married to a local Portuguese woman. He adds that the Dutchmen allege that the cause of these intermarriages being so prevalent is that scarcely any woman leaves Holland to come to India except those who are already married.

Such intermarriage and subsequent miscegenation would have led to a modification of the original Nordic traits of the local Burgher community. In fact the Sri Lankan Burghers conspicuously lack blond hair while blue eyes are also very rare [50]. These traits which are rather common among the Dutch would have probably been borne by the ancestors of local Burghers but were likely lost as a result of intermarriage with women of other nations, particularly the so-called Portuguese Burghers. Remnants of their former Nordic traits as far as physical features are concerned are however still often seen in their fairer skin colour, regular features and in some

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[49] JDBU Oct.1927, Jan.1928 & April 1928

[50] In the olden days these traits seem to have been more common. Müller (2006) recalling his younger days in the upcountry refers to a few Burghers having blond hair and blue eyes including one Wilhelm Altendorff, the son of a Police official and the two daughters of one Mrs Van Rooyen. We have come across a very few Burghers who have blue-grey eyes including a little girl of the Fransz family.

instances in their brown hair colour occurring particularly in children which seems to get progressively darker towards adulthood.

More recent times have also seen Burghers, particularly those of more humble stock, intermarrying with the Sinhalese and even adopting the Sinhala language. Although the offspring of male Burghers who espouse non-Burgher women will continue to be regarded as Burghers due to the system of reckoning descent through the paternal line, this certainly cannot be said of the case of the offspring of Burgher women who espouse non-Burgher males. In fact we know of several instances of Burgher women marrying Sinhalese men which has resulted in the demise of Burgher identity among their offspring, the only reminder of Burgher ancestry being apparent sometimes in their fairer skin color and more regular features [51].

II) Language among the Dutch Burghers

Although it would appear that the Dutch language was the language with which Burghers conversed with one another in times gone by, this seems to have been largely confined to male Burgher society, and that too, only among those of Dutch extraction, who nevertheless formed a significant proportion of the Burgher population then resident in the island. In later times, shortly before the Dutch possessions in Ceylon fell to the British, the Dutch language had largely ceased to be spoken in Burgher homes, its place being taken by Portuguese or Portuguese Creole which had established itself in the island well before the Dutch conquest.

Percival (1805) observed shortly after the British takeover that the Dutch ladies seldom address one in any other but the Portuguese language and notes that the Dutch ladies of Colombo hardly ever attempt to speak even in their own families and to their own connections in Dutch "although it is reckoned the polite language". He attributes their adherence to the vulgar Portuguese "to their habits of frequent and familiar intercourse with their slaves, who all speak this dialect". We also have Selkirk (1844) who states that the common language used in Dutch Burgher families is the Portuguese. Not very long afterwards, L.F.Liesching [52] observes that the

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[51] This admixture of Sinhalese blood among the Burghers may be more pervasive than commonly believed. S.S.Papiha et al (Genetic Variation in Sri Lanka. Human Biology. Oct.1996) found in a detailed genetic analysis that the Burgher population showed European characters, but that its gene frequencies were either intermediate to its parental populations or more similar to the local Sinhalese.

[52] A Brief Account of Ceylon (1861)

Dutch language is spoken but by a few Burghers while the Portuguese has survived and is still commonly used in their houses. Brohier (1986) has likewise noted that the Burghers, till even the generation of her grandmother, continued to speak Indo-Portuguese in the home amongst family members.

There are a number of reasons why the Dutch language eventually died out among the Burghers, among these the fact that it was mainly a male language spoken in official circles within the VOC establishment and was not usually spoken by the women whom they espoused, who largely spoke Portuguese (probably on account of their themselves being of Portuguese extraction or on account of their adopting it from their Portuguese-speaking slaves) and who passed it on to their offspring. To this must be added the fact that not all VOC officers spoke Dutch as their native tongue, for there existed others such as the French, Germans and English who could not be expected to give up their native speech for Dutch, which was merely the official language of the company they served.

The British who succeeded the Dutch as the island's colonial power also did their best to ensure that the Dutch language did not survive long. As pointed out by R.G.Anthonisz [53]: "The English had naturally no love for the Dutch language, and their proverbial repugnance to the "Double Dutch" can hardly be said to have favoured the spread or maintenance of that language in a land which they were to govern after their own methods, and for which purpose it was necessary that English should be the medium". By a proclamation dated 20th august 1801, the Dutch language was abolished in the courts of law, which necessitated all those employed in these departments acquainting themselves with English. It was in Dr.Twistleton, Principal of Ceylon Schools that the Dutch language here found its most vocal opponent. He declared in 1813 that the Dutch language "*ought not to be encouraged here, but on the contrary should be allowed to die away*" [54].

However, there can be no doubt that the greatest challenge to the survival of the Dutch language among the portion of the European community amongst whom it was spoken locally came from the Portuguese language, which was not only the language natively spoken by many of the women they had espoused, but also by slave nurses or Lusito-

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[53] The Disuse of the Dutch Language in Ceylon. JDBU.1908

[54] Ibid

Sinhalese domestics who looked after their children, and further reinforced by the fact that the language served as a sort of lingua franca at the time.

Thus it is only natural to suppose that the offspring of the Dutch took to Portuguese. It is also pertinent to point out that the Portuguese language is a very easy one to learn. The Dutch Governor Johan Maetsuyker and his Council at Batavia observed in 1659 shortly after they had taken the Portuguese possessions of Ceilao: "The Portuguese language is an easy language to speak and easy to learn. That is the reason why we cannot prevent the slaves brought here from Arakan, who have never heard a word of Portuguese, and indeed even our own children, from taking to that language, in preference to all other languages, and making it their own" [55].

Besides its ease in acquiring and mastering, Portuguese was also valued for its euphony, particularly by the Burgher women. Particularly interesting here is the observation of Percival (1805) that the Burgher women "seldom or ever speak before an Englishman in any other dialect, but look upon Dutch as rather calculated for men, and too harsh for the mouth of a lady". The reason attributed for this, the 'harsh' nature of the Dutch language is however not surprising since Dutch in common with other Germanic languages like German and English with its commonly occurring blunt consonantal clusters and lack of vowel harmony is certainly harder on the tongue than Portuguese, an easily expressed Romance language with a high vowel content and frequently occurring liquid sounds.

Indeed it would appear that the English language which in later times became a widely spoken language at home amongst Burgher families was initially confined to male Burgher society and it was in much later times that it entered female Burgher society that preferred to converse in Portuguese [56]. As pointed out by Anthonisz (1908) although English had entirely superseded Dutch as the language of polite society during the British colonial period, the use of the familiar Portuguese was in no way restrained. Nor had the introduction of English affected it in any way. It continued to be the colloquial language in the households of the best Dutch families. He goes on to add that in one *stamboek* (a record of

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[55] See Language and Power. Benedict R.O'G.Anderson (1990)

[56] For instance we have Capper (1854) who notes that when he was introduced to a Dutch Burgher lady, the wife of one Samuel Kuyper, a portly dame whom he found seated in solemn silence on a huge ottoman: "*In vain I uttered innumerable speeches, full of compliment; equally useless were my inquiries after her family. The lady, I found, understood not one word of English; and this is the case with most of the female members of these families*".

domestic occurrences kept by the head of the family) still carefully preserved there is a pathetic narration by a father of an interview he had with a beloved daughter at her deathbed. After stating, in the Dutch language, the fact of his being summoned to the bedside, and having given expression to his feelings of grief on the occasion, he proceeds to set down the very words which passed between him and his daughter. The whole of the interview was in Portuguese. So also was the conversation between him and his wife on the same occasion. The gentleman had been an officer in the Dutch army, and his wife was a Dutch lady of the highest class born in the island, while their daughter was married to an European of a titled family.

The transition to English was no doubt facilitated by the lofty position the language had acquired by that time, not only as the official language, but also as the language of education, for the main medium of instruction in the schools and universities until as late as 1956, well after Sri Lanka had gained independence from the British, was English.

By the early and middle part of the twentieth century, English had come to play a dominant role in Burgher society and was admitted as a home language among a good many Burgher families, so much so that the dethroning of English as the official language of the country in post-independence times had a severe impact on many Burgher families, many of whom thereafter left the country to settle elsewhere, particularly in the English-speaking Commonwealth countries. A major reason for this exodus of Burgher families was no doubt the newly independent Ceylon's language policy following the formation of the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna Government in 1956 led by S.W.R.D.Bandaranaike which had pledged to make Sinhala, the language of the majority Sinhalese, the country's official language. This policy obviously meant a change in the status of English both as the official language in public service and in education in which the Burghers were not only well versed but also excelled more than any other race in the island and which had ensured them a high status and lucrative occupations in the state service until then. As Brohier (1986) has pointed out, these Burghers found the climate of change in the island of their birth "too dramatic and drastic" and so resolved to seek newer pastures. Many had genealogies of European descent written and documented for record which enabled them to meet the stipulations of the 'White Australia' policy that prevailed in the 1950s and 1960s which saw the emigration of hundreds of Burghers who eventually settled in Australia; yet others settled in other British Commonwealth and developed countries.

Whereas in 1946, shortly before independence, Burghers and Eurasians constituted as much as 0.6 % of the population of the island, this had declined to 0.3 % at the Census of 1971 and still further to 0.26 % at the Census of 1981. Although this is a far cry from the 1940s when there existed an estimated 65,000 Dutch Burghers, there still nevertheless remain many hundreds of Burgher families in the island. The Burgher population in the island at present may be anywhere between 15,000 - 30,000 persons, though this number may diminish with time as many young people, both men and women, continue to intermarry and merge with the neighbouring Sinhalese communities, in the process also adopting Sinhala as their home language.

CHAPTER 9

THE KAFFIRS
A PEOPLE OF AFRICAN ORIGIN

The Kaffirs comprise of a tiny minority probably comprising of no more than a thousand persons of Negroid extraction brought hither during the colonial period beginning with Portuguese rule in the 16th century. These folk who are largely found in the Puttalam district in the North Western littoral of the island still retain many of their ancestral Negro traits including dark skin and woolly hair.

I) The Origins of the Kaffirs

Sri Lanka's Kaffir community probably had its early origins in the slave labour brought into the country from Africa during the period of Portuguese colonial rule in the latter part of the sixteenth and early part of the seventeenth century. Many of the Kaffirs no doubt hailed from the Portuguese colonies in Africa such as Mozambique which served as an important source of slaves to the colonial power. The local term commonly used to describe this folk, *Kāpiri*, could be traced to the Portuguese *Cafre* which in turn has derived from the Arabic *Kāfir* meaning 'non-believer' and by implication a 'slave' since it would appear that the early Arab slave traders felt no compunction in enslaving peoples whom they deemed to be non-Muslims or in other words, *Kāfirs* (lit.a non-believer, from the Arabic root *kufr* 'disbelief') [1]. This term which was inherited by the Portuguese who took over the slave trade from the Arabs was passed down to the natives of the land who eventually came to pronounce it as *Kāpiri* which is still very much the term employed to denote this folk in modern Sinhala [2].

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[1] It would appear that these Arab slave dealers had no qualms in enslaving or dealing with slaves who were not of the Islamic faith, though strictly speaking slaves under Islam could be taken only after a *Jihād* or Holy War, from the captives among an enemy that had refused conversion to Islam or in its alternative the payment of a poll tax known as *jizya*, upon which they were afforded protection by the Islamic state.

[2] The usage is fairly old. According to the 17th or 18th century Mandārampura Puvata, in the days of Narendra Sinha (1707-1739) barbarous Kaffirs (*ruduru kāpiri*) robbed people and burned houses in Tammännā Pura. These Kaffirs who numbered over sixty persons were caught and imprisoned and made to clean rubbish. A corruption of this term, *kāberi* was also used to

In fact, the term has come to mean 'Negro' in Sinhala [3]. The local Kaffir folk likewise designate themselves *Käfar* or *Käpar* which has its origins from the same source. An older form *kavisi*, evidently derived from the Arabic *habashi* (Lit..Abysinian) was also known[4].

One of the earliest notices of the Kaffir presence in the island, the work of Portuguese historian Fernao de Queyroz [5] refers to a hundred Caffirs armed with bows and arrows participating in the Portuguese war against the Hollanders in Galle. He also refers to Domingos Da Silva, a Casado of the fortalice having two companies consisting of 80 Caffirs, and further makes mention of the Caffirs spending three days burying the dead Portuguese and Hollander soldiers after the storming of the Galle Fort.

Portuguese accounts of the siege of Colombo in the middle part of the 17th century [6] have it that 500 Negroes were forced out of Colombo by the Portuguese only to be sent back by the Hollanders the same day. The Portuguese also requested the Dutch as terms of capitulation shortly before the fall of Colombo in 1656 that the Negro inhabitants, both married and unmarried, be granted the same freedom granted to Portuguese citizens. This shows that there existed a considerable number of Negroes serving the Portuguese in the island, some with their families.

These Kaffir soldiers brought in by the Portuguese little doubt played an important role in defending their possessions in the island. It is said that the

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designate them as seen in the war poem known as Parangi hatana. The work refers to "*the worthless Kaffirs, like mountain cats fattened on beef and steeped in drink*".

[3] Indeed even the British at one time called the black tribes of South Africa Caffres (See Hobson-Jobson. A Glossary of Anglo-Indian Words. Col.H.Yule & A.C.Burnell.1886). We also have the Dutch historian Philippus Baldaeus in his Beschrijvinge (1672) referring to Negro slaves being called Caffers.

[4] The 13th century Dambadeni Asna refers to a people known as *kavisi*. The term occurs in compound forms like *kavisi-kukulā* 'fowl having frizzled feathers' and *kavisi-gōvā* 'variety of cabbage with curly leaves' (Dictionary of the Sinhalese Language.Ed.Wimal Balagalle. 1996). The term very likely derives from the Ar.*habashi* "Abysinnian' (Ethiopian), by extension Negro. Indeed, the presence of Africans or African slaves in Sri Lanka may well go back to pre-colonial times. The traveler Ibn Battuta observed C.1346: "*We started for the city of Kalanbū (Colombo), one of the finest and largest cities of the island of Sarandīb (Sri Lanka). It is the residence of the Wazir lord of the sea (Hakim Al Bahr) Jalasti who has with him about 500 Habshis*" (Voyages d Ibn Batoutah. C.De Fremery & B.R.Sanguinetti 1853-58).

[5] Conquista Temporal e Espiritual de Ceylao (1687)

[6] Reproduced in Baldaeus Beschrijvinge (1672)

Portuguese colonies in the island were rescued from an early defeat due to the help of a reinforcement of African soldiers who were sent from their base in Goa. The Portuguese Viceroy was so gravely concerned about the situation in Sri Lanka where the Portuguese had lost territory and were limited to the littoral forts of Colombo, Galle and Negombo in the kingdom of Kotte, that he sent aid to the Portuguese Captain-General Dom Jorge De Almeida in the form of two pataxos comprising of 100 Kaffirs. These soldiers who left Goa on 6th October 1631 were to join De Almeida at Cochin with instructions to proceed to Sri Lanka. A week later four other ships carrying supplies of food, money, munitions and soldiers including 80 Portuguese and 200 Kaffirs sailed directly from Goa to Colombo [7].

These Kaffir soldiers took part in a number of military adventures launched by the Portuguese, both against the kingdom of Kandy and their Dutch foes. It is recorded that when the Portuguese Captain-General Diego De Mello de Castro attacked Kandy on 27 March 1638, his force included 300 Kaffirs [8]. Kaffir soldiers also took part in the battles against the Dutch. For instance, in 1640, 100 Kaffir archers are known to have fought against the Dutch in Galle [9]. Four years later, when the Portuguese were defending the fort of Negombo from the Dutch, Dom Philippo de Mascarenhas, the Portuguese Captain-General had 300 Kaffirs in his force [10]. Many of the slaves owned by the Portuguese military elite and married settler-soldiers known as Casados were presumably African Kaffirs. Baldaeus in his Beschrijvinge (1672) refers to 200 Negroes serving the Portuguese who had been sent to fetch faggot wood for the fortification of their bastions. He also refers to three Negro carpenters who had deserted to the Dutch side.

It is recorded that after the Dutch took control of Colombo in 1656, the slaves of the Portuguese were taken prisoner. Two Portuguese generals and the son of Antonio De Sousa Coutinho, the last Portuguese Captain-General of Ceylon were allowed to remove all their property and their slaves and

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[7] Les Cafre de Ceylan: le Chainon Portugais. Shihan De Silva Jayasuriya. Cahiers de Anneaux de la Mémoire (2001)

[8] See Trading on a thalassic network: African migrations across the Indian Ocean. ISSJ.June 2006

[9] The Portuguese in Ceylon. 1617-1638. C.R.De Silva (1972)

[10] Some documents relating to the rise of the Dutch power in Ceylon.1602-1670. From the Translations at the India Office.P.E.Pieris (1973)

servants, while slaves owned by the other Portuguese were confisticated except for a few. The Casados were allowed to emigrate to Goa, but were not allowed to take their slaves with them [11]. There is also evidence to show that there were Kaffirs, perhaps renegades, who served the Kandyan king, for the early Dutch visitors to the island are said to have been accompanied to the town of Candy by a thousand armed soldiers including renegade Portuguese and Cafferos [12]. That the Kaffirs were greatly valued by a later Kandyan monarch Rajasinha II (1635-1687) is supported by Robert Knox in his Historical Relation of Ceylon (1681) where he notes that the King had a "guard of Cofferies or Negros in whom he imposeth more confidence than in his own people. These are to watch at his chamber door, and next his person". Baldaeus (1672) also refers to two Caffers serving the Kandyan King, one of whom was the King's Trumpeter and the other a Drummer. It is also not unlikely that when the Portuguese were dislodged from the island by the Dutch, some Kaffirs served under the Dutch while others settled down in the Kandyan Kingdom which remained under Sinhalese rule. The Dutch certainly did not hesitate to use Kaffir labour, including those obtained from the Cape where they held sway. According to the Dutch Governor Van Goens Junior who served from 1675-1680, 4000 Kaffirs were engaged in building the Dutch fortress in Colombo at the beginning of Dutch rule in the maritime provinces. Africans brought hither are known to have built fortresses, worked as nannies, housemaids, gardeners and water carriers during the period of Dutch rule in the island. Male and female slaves were given different tasks while sick or pregnant slaves were either exempt from work or given light work. Slaves who converted to the Dutch Reformed church were liberated after the death of their master and his wife while the children of converted slaves were freed [13].

The early British too continued the practice of employing African slave labour. There is considerable evidence to show that Kaffirs were recruited into the British army as early as the administration of Frederick North, the first British Governor of Ceylon. North is known to have contracted with one Monsieur Fortin to get down 500 able-bodied Kaffirs from Mozambique

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[11] Jayasuriya (2006)

[12] The Visit of Spilbergen to Ceylon in May 1602. The Earliest Dutch visits to Ceylon. Donald Ferguson. JRAS.CB.1927. The Travel Journal of Joris Van Spilbergen, the Historiael Journael published as De Reis Van Joris Van Spilbergen naar Ceylon, Atjeh en Bantam.1601-1604

[13] Jayasuriya (2006)

to be delivered at Galle or Colombo. It is also said that a body of 700 Kaffirs had been added to the British garrison in Colombo and formed into a regiment. Many are said to have been slaves in the Portuguese settlement of Goa and had been purchased by the British Government. They are said to have rejoiced in the change of status and had promised to become brave and hardy soldiers [14] . The Kaffirs also constituted a large portion of the Ceylon Regiment, especially the Third and Fourth Regiments which included 874 Kaffirs. Indeed, the Third Ceylon Regiment in 1811 is said to have had 800 Africans in its ranks. They had been purchased in Goa and then inducted into the regiment [15]. It is also said that the British Government retained a body of Kaffirs to construct mountain roads. They are said to have been brought to Sri Lanka by the Portuguese from Mozambique [16]. It was observed in the 1840s that the few Caffre soldiers still in Ceylon were solely employed in repairing old, or making new roads. The detachment on the Ramboda Pass consisted of sixty or seventy men, nearly all of whom were married and had fathered numerous progeny [17].

It is a curious fact that the Kaffir population in the island has remained very low, despite historical records bearing out the fact that considerable numbers of them arrived in the island at different times. The Kaffirs never seem to have comprised of a significant number of persons even during the latter part of the nineteenth century [18] which is surprising given their importation during successive colonial regimes and it is perhaps not too far-

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[14] See The African diaspora in Sri Lanka. Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya, in The African diaspora in the Indian Ocean. Ed.Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya and Richard Pankhurst (2003). James Cordiner in his Description of Ceylon (1807) says that many of the seven hundred Caffrees formed into a regiment in Colombo brought their wives and children with them and that they were lodged in temporary barracks between the western walls of the fort and the sea.

[15] Ibid

[16] Ibid

[17] Rambles in Ceylon. Liutenant De Butts (1841). De Butts implies that the women the soldiers were married to were of their race, if we are to infer from his uncomplimentary remark: "*The head of the Gorgon could hardly have united more horrors than are combined in the physiognomy of a Caffre Belle*".

[18] The Censuses of Ceylon indicate that there were 349 Kaffirs (195 males and 154 females) at the time of the first census of the country in 1871, 408 (204 males and 204 females) in 1881, 318 (166 males and 152 females) in 1901 and 253 (132 males and 121 females) in 1911. They have since been included among the 'others' category.

fetched to assume that some would have relocated elsewhere while others would have assimilated with other communities in their midst such as the Portuguese Burghers. In fact, it is uncertain whether descendants of Kaffirs brought hither during the Portuguese and Dutch periods survive among the present-day Kaffirs. In fact the Kaffir settlement in Puttalam is said to be traceable to the settlement there of disbanded soldiers from the Third Ceylon Regiment's detachment in Puttalam who were given plots of land for settling there in 1865 [19]. Minor Kaffir settlements have also been noticed in other parts of the country [20] though what their antecedents were cannot be said for certain.

To this day, the Kaffirs have managed to preserve their distinct Negro traits such as extremely dark skin and woolly hair. Although it would appear that over the years, some intermarriage has taken place between the Kaffirs and the surrounding communities [21], there is one trait they have managed to preserve that still distinguishes them from the rest- curly or woolly hair [22].

This is clearly seen in the Physical Anthropology of Ceylon (1961) where of the 15 Kaffirs studied, as many as 66.7 percent showed frizzly, woolly hair and 26.6 percent showed curly hair. Thus the Kaffirs had by far the curliest hair, fully two-thirds being classified as frizzly or woolly. Another distinguishing feature of theirs was dark skin colour. As many as 60 percent were shown to have dark brown skin colour and 33.3 percent dark light

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[19] See Jayasuriya (2006). The majority of the soldiers and camp-followers who formed the Regiment are said to have elected to settle with their families at Puttalam. The government enticed them to form a colony by offers of land and facilities for irrigation (Discovering Ceylon. R.L.Brohier.1973).

[20] These include Kāpiri Muḍukkuva (Kaffirs Lane) in Pettah, Colombo later renamed Kōsala Patumaga, Āḍimuṇai near Trincomalee and in the proximity of Lurdu Church in Kalā Oya (See Śrī Laṅkāvē Vesena Kāpiri Janatāva. Sandamali Rasnayaka.2007).

[21] In our visit to Puttalam and Sirambiadiya in early 2009 we found that a significant number of Kaffir women were married to Sinhalese men which was attributed to a shortage of males in the community. This process has been going on for some time. As seen in the PAC (1961), the Kaffirs, even in the 1930s (when the survey was done) were no longer pure African in descent as suggested by the fact that fully one-third were found to be dark-light brown and one individual characterized as light-light brown.

[22] Wooly or peppercorn hair is a trait where the hair of the head is so tightly spiraled that it forms tufts or peppercorns. Such woolly hair appears to be a persistent trait that has arisen as a mutation, it would seem, unaffected by environmental factors (See Woolly hair. A dominant mutant character in man. Otto Mohr. Journal of Heredity.1932)

brown skin colour. Thus the Kaffirs had the darkest skins of all Ceylonese with over half described as dark brown, the darkest skin colour category listed. The Kaffirs were also shown to have very broad noses. In fact they had the broadest noses of any of the races of the island with a nose breadth of 41.37. Indeed, their marked Negro physical characteristics as well as their distinct cultural heritage has contributed to their self-identification as an African community of which they seem to be proud and readily acknowledge [23]. These Kaffir folk who are involved in a variety of occupations as chena cultivators, petty traders, masons, labourers and domestic servants also seem to have preserved some traditional African dance forms which are performed along with their songs known as manja which are in Portuguese Creole and which have been commercialized by some of their members of late. African influence is said to be apparent in their dance movements with pronounced hip movements and bodies bent forwards whilst dancing [24]. Another indication of their African ancestry is their prowess in war as evidenced by their former martial character [25]. Their preservation of a corrupted version of Portuguese known as Portuguese Creole [26], their Catholicism [27] and good Christian names such as Peter Luvi

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[23] Jayasuriya (2006) for instance found that although the Kaffirs in Sirambiadiya near Puttalam spoke Sinhala and regarded Sri Lanka as their country (ape rata lankava), at the same time, they also identified with Africans. For instance, referring to a Nigerian visitor to their village, they said that he was someone of their race (ape jatiye ekkenek). She could not detect any signs of the Sirambiadiya Afro-Sri Lankans living in an "imagined homeland" although they were conscious of their African ancestry and narrated several oral histories.

[24] La Musique Créole Portugaise du Sri Lanka. S.De Silva Jayasuriya, in Métissages Culturels et Créativité. Ed.R.De Villanova & G.Vermes (2005).

[25] The Kaffirs brought hither by the colonial powers were evidently dreaded in war as suggested by Sinhalese literature such as the Kāberi Haṭana. They are described as *Ruduru Kāpiri* (Barbaric Kaffirs) and various atrocities ascribed to them (See Rasnayaka.2007).

[26] We may suppose that this Portuguese Creole originated as a result of the encounters between the Portuguese settlers and the native inhabitants of the coastal areas of Africa during the early phase of Portuguese rule in these areas. It is also possible, however, that the Creole was acquired by African slaves during the long periods of time they were confined in Afro-Portuguese-speaking slave depots before being shipped overseas. Portuguese Creole is known to have been a very easy language to acquire and would have also served to eliminate intercommunication problems in case these slaves who would have originated from different tribal groups spoke different languages. It is nevertheless also possible that the creole would have been acquired at least in some cases after the arrival of these folk in Sri Lanka, a process which would have been facilitated by the fact that Portuguese Creole was a sort of lingua franca at the time which would have been particularly useful if we are to suppose that these groups had

and Mariya Jasintu [28] also indicate that they originated from a former Portuguese colony such as Mozambique. Thus even if we are to suppose that these folk came over during the British colonial period, they were in all likelihood sourced from Portuguese Africa. Indeed it would appear that many of these Kaffirs originated from Portuguese East Africa extending from Cape Delgado to the south of Delagoa Bay, an area encompassing present-day Mozambique in the South Eastern coast of Africa. This region which was a major source of slaves for the European colonies in the Americas apparently had a long history of slavery which predated the arrival of the Portuguese by centuries. Indeed, slavery is believed to have been carried on by African tribal chiefs who raided warring tribes and sold their captives to Arab traders who resorted to the coast to trade in ivory, gold and slaves supplied by petty kingdoms in the interior hinterland. One of the reasons why slavery was so rife in Mozambique was no doubt its ethnic make-up, the Zambesi Valley having for long been a meeting ground of various African tribes, largely Bantu in origin [29]. Such diversity would have led to recurrent wars between tribes and its concomitant evils such as slavery, which was little doubt fully exploited by unscrupulous Arab traders and the Portuguese who took over from them.

Portuguese trading settlements, and later colonies, were formed along the Mozambican coast beginning from 1498 shortly after Vasco da Gama

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diverse African origins and spoke mutually unintelligible languages. In other words, Portuguese Creole would have served as a unifying factor among these otherwise linguistically diverse African groups.

[27] The Sirambiadiya community for instance are Roman Catholics and have their own little church which they call Punci Palliya 'small church' in contrast to their parish church St.Mary's Puttalam which they call Maha Palliya or 'big church'. Selkirk (1844) observed long ago that the Caffres spoke Portuguese and that all, or most of them were of the Catholic religion.

[28] Kaffir men of the western littoral have Christian names such as Peter Luvi, Solomon Justin Xavier, Ignesius and Bunifas while the women have names such as Leena Regina, Jud Josepin, Mariya Jasintu and Fatima Fransisku. The father's name often precedes the personal name as among the local Tamils and Moors. For instance Luvi will be known as Peter Luvi after his father Peter and Leena Regina would be known as George Leena Regina after her father George.

[29] One finds in Mozambique a host of such tribes to the present-day, including among others, the speakers of Makua, the largest single linguistic group, as well as speakers of Yao, Shona, Tsonga, Changana and Makonde. No language here enjoys a majority, so that Portuguese is still very much the official language, despite the fact that it is no longer a Portuguese colony.

reached it after having rounded the southern tip of Africa, and it was not long before Portugal in its characteristic mercantile manner came to look at its East African colony as a lucrative source of Negro slaves, not only as articles of trade and as a cheap source of domestic labour, but also as hardy soldiers who could be put to good use in defending and consolidating their colonies. In fact, even in later times, when the Portuguese colonies in South Asia were in danger of being lost or had already been lost, the Portuguese do not seem to have exerted much effort to retain or regain these colonies, preferring instead to employ their badly stretched military power to consolidate their hold on their African possessions which they deemed to be extremely vital as a source of slaves.

It is nevertheless also possible that at least some of these slaves were sourced from Angola in South Western Africa, a former Portuguese colony whose official language, like that of Mozambique, is still Portuguese. Many of the slaves obtained from Portuguese West Africa were transported to the Cape Verde Islands, a prosperous entrepot for the slave trade, before being shipped elsewhere. That at least a certain number of Kaffirs had their origins in West Africa is suggested by the notice of L.F.Liesching [30] who states that the Caffres are the descendants of recruits from the west coast of Africa, many of whom were once slaves under the Portuguese at Goa. "They are woolly headed and have all the characteristics of the Negro. They are either soldiers or pioneers in the road department". It is also possible that some had their origins in South Africa, for James Selkirk [31] tells us that the Caffres, who form a portion of the Ceylon Rifle Regiment, were brought from the Cape of Good Hope by the Dutch and that additions were made to their numbers by the English when Ceylon first came into their hands. Charles Pridham [32] further informs us: "*The Kaffres, who form part of the Ceylon Rifle Regiment, were originally brought from the Cape of Good Hope by the Dutch, and additions have been made to their numbers from Mosambique by the British. They speak the Portuguese tongue, and are in general of the Roman Catholic religion*".

Oral lore also testifies to these diverse origins. For instance the creole song Viltao de Mazambicu which refers to Mozambique island suggests an origin from Portuguese East Africa while Zulu Baba, perhaps a reference to the

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[30] A Brief account of Ceylon (1861)

[31] Recollections of Ceylon (1844)

[32] An Historical, Political and Statistical Account of Ceylon (1849)

Zulu tribe, indicates a South African origin. Thus we can be fairly certain that the present-day Kaffirs largely derive from Portuguese East Africa given the references to it in British period records which tell of slaves being sourced from Mozambique or Goa (which probably got down its slaves from Mozambique which at one time it administered as a province), the oral lore prevailing among this community which refer to Mozambique and the strong attachment to Catholicism among these folk, this form of Christianity having been introduced and promoted aggressively in the littoral of the Indian Ocean region by the Portuguese during the 16th-17th centuries.

II) The Speech of the Kaffirs

The Kaffirs are today largely found in Puttalam town, mainly in the area of the Pitavata Ravun Pāra (Goodshed) and in Sirambiadiya, a few kilometers from Puttalam as well as in Sellan Kandel, a village close to Sirambiadiya. These Kaffirs of the western littoral are today a largely Sinhala-speaking community though the older folk can still speak Portuguese Creole. However we found that even the younger folk were using a few corrupt Portuguese expressions such as *vī* 'come', *santā* 'sit', *kumē* 'eat' and *kilāi saōdi* 'How are you ?'.

As we found in a visit to Sirambiadiya in early 2009, it was only a very few elderly folk who could speak Portuguese Creole, one such being an aged lady named Lasiris Martin Ignesia who was said to be in her early eighties. This Kaffir form of Portuguese Creole slightly differs from the creole as spoken by the so-called Portuguese Burghers, as for instance, in preserving the intervocalic *b* of Standard Portuguese which Batticaloa Portuguese has turned into *v*:

kabēsā 'head' but BP *kavasa* (SP.*cabeça*)
kabēlu 'hair' but BP *kavēl* (SP.*cabelo*)

Kaffir Creole has also turned the nasalized vowels of Standard Portuguese into *n* and not *m* as the Batticaloa Creole has done:

irmān 'brother' but BP *irumām* (SP.*irmão*)
cān 'ground' but BP *cām* (SP *chão*)

There also exist a few other differences such as Kaffir Creole *āgu* 'water' where Batticaloa Portuguese has *āvu* (SP *água*) and *ōgu* 'egg' where BP has

ōvu (SP.*ovo*). We also find the SP and BP *eu* 'I' being pronounced as *yō* (as in the sentence *yō tā amōru* 'I love you') in Kaffir Creole. Kaffir creole also employs the peculiar form *nīño* for 'fingernail' where BP has *ūña* (SP.*unha*). It also employs *ovīdu* for 'ear' derived from the SP.*ouvido* in contrast to the form commonly employed in BP which is *oreya* derived from SP.*orelha* which also means 'ear'. Agreement with Batticaloa Portuguese Creole as against European Portuguese phonology is seen in the sibilization of palatals, dropping of intervocalic palatal liquids and doubling of intervocalic voiceless dentals besides other peculiarities such as the simplification of diphthongs and the articulation of *e* as *ā* and use of lexical items such as *kumēru* 'food' (SP.*comida*) and *lumārā* 'moon' (SP.*lua*).

There also exist a few differences between the Kaffir Creole and Batticaloa and Standard Portuguese with regard to word formation. Consider for instance the Kaffir Creole sentence *esmiñā kāzā* where BP has *isti miñā kāsa* and SP *esta é minha casa* 'This is my house'. Also consider the Kaffir Creole *akal nigriñā buntērā* where BP has *aka fãmia bunīta* and SP.*aquela menina é bonita* 'That girl is beautiful'. Some of the usages we would find are peculiar to the Kaffir Creole as for instance the use of the term *nigriñā* for 'girl' which has no doubt derived from the Portuguese word *negrinha* literally 'little black girl', the Standard Portuguese term being *menina* or *rapariga*.

CHAPTER 10

THE AHIKUNTAKA – THE GYPSIES OF SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka, like many other parts of the old world has its gypsies, a nomadic people who roam from town to town practicing their traditional forms of livelihood such as snake-charming and palm-reading. Unlike the Romany or European gypsies who speak an Indo-Aryan language and who very likely have their origins in Northern India, Sri Lanka's gypsies who are known as Ahikuntakas are a Dravidian-speaking folk who have their origins in Southern India.

It would however be a mistake to suppose that this folk are a wholly nomadic people for a good many of them have more or less permanent settlements, often in the form of simple wattle and daub structures with cadjan-thatched roofs in the Anuradhapura District of the North Central Province whence they disperse to other parts of the country, temporarily encamping in suitable places near towns by setting up tents known as *illa*. From these they find their way to various urban centres to practice their traditional occupation, the men resorting to snake-charming (*pāvunuārtā*) and monkey-dancing (*kōnti-ārtā*) and the women to palmistry (*seisūsav*).

I) The Origins of the Ahikuntaka

The Ahikuntakas who speak Telugu, a Dravidian language widely spoken in the South Indian state of Andhra Pradesh probably have their origins in that part of peninsular India. The prevalence of a few Tamil words in their vocabulary however suggest that they would have roamed about the Tamil country of South India before finding their way to Sri Lanka which they subsequently chose to make their home. Although we do not know when these migrations to the island took place, it probably cannot have been very long ago and may have even taken place about a century or so ago.

The appellation Ahikuntaka by which these folk are commonly known locally cannot help us much in determining their origins since it is merely an occupational term, conveying the sense of snake-snarer or snake-charmer. The name by which these folk are known to designate themselves, Vadukar meaning 'those from Vadukam (Northern country)' however suggests that they originally hailed from a country which in relation to the Tamil country in the south was to the north, in other words, the Telugu country or Andhra Pradesh. In more recent

times, however, we find these folk terming themselves simply as *Pāvulu-āsadu* or 'snake-charmers'. From their self-description, as well as from their spoken language, we may gather that the Ahikuntaka had their origins in the Telugu-speaking country of Andhra Pradesh [1]. Also pertinent is the fact that in the olden days, these local gypsies were known among the Sinhalese as *Telingu-kārayō* (Telugus) [2].

It still remains for us to identify the caste or tribe to which they belonged. It is very likely as contended by M.D. Raghavan [3] that the Ahikuntaka are derived from a large Indian nomadic tribe known in South India as Koraver or Kuraver, a name which he believes is best derived from *kuram* 'palmistry' largely practiced by the womenfolk of this tribe, though it is also possible that it could have simply derived from *kuru* 'fortune telling' [4]. The Korava who are known as Yerukala (after their traditional occupation of sooth-saying known as *yeruku*) in Andhra Pradesh whence they seem to have originated are represented as expert archers in medieval literature and have also been noticed as hunter-gatherers [5] . These nomadic folk also appear as an ancient hill-dwelling tribe and are even mentioned in the Cilappatikāram. Indeed, it

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[1] These Ahikuntaka folk are however not to be confused with the Kolōlu or Malayali gypsies such as are found settled in Munnesvaram in Chilaw, who are very similar in appearance and other cultural traits to the Ahinkuntaka. They however reject any connection with the Ahikuntaka whom they call Pāmalōlu, evidently a reference to their snake-charming which these Kolōlu do not practice. The women of the tribe practice palmistry while their menfolk practice palmistry (in the case of the older men versed in it) or the manufacturing of joss sticks. These folk, who are Hindus, trace their origins to Kerala and that too within living memory or the oral lore passed down from a previous generation. Their speech, however, is a dialect of Telugu, somewhat similar to that of the Ahinkuntakas, though there are a few notable differences, as for instance in the term for one *oyitti* where the Ahikuntaka has *oguṭṭi* or *uṅguṭi*, the term for hair *yentigal* where Ahikuntaka has *engalu* or *yanagal* and that for finger *yēlu* where Ahikuntaka has *ēla*. Yet other significant differences are seen in the term for tooth *pallu* where Ahinkuntaka has *pandla* and that for ear *sov* where Ahikuntaka has *gummal*. This speech we would also find is closer to Standard Telugu in many respects than the Ahikuntaka dialect. For instance compare *sov* 'ear' to the Telugu *cevi* and *pallu* 'tooth' to the Telugu *palu*. Also consider the numeral terms *rendu* 'two' and *yēḍu* 'seven' which are more similar to the Telugu *rendu* and *ēḍu* than their Ahikuntaka equivalents *rondu* and *yōḍu*.

[2] The Ahigunṭhikayō or Ceylon Gypsies. H.C.P.Bell. CALR. Oct.1916

[3] The Ahikuntakaya – The Ceylon Gypsy tribe. SZ (1953)

[4] See Castes and Tribes of Southern India. Vol.III.E.Thurston (1909)

[5] See Pre- and Proto-historic Andhra Pradesh. M.L.K.Murty (2008)

has been suggested that the Kuravar are one of the early tribes of Southern India and closely allied to the Vedans [6], a tribal folk of Austro-Asiatic affinities, which would suggest that the Kuravar themselves may largely be of Austro-Asiatic extraction. Another indication of their likely Austro-Asiatic antecedents is the observation of Thurston [7] that they were slaves in the olden days. All this might suggest that the Kuravar were originally indigenous tribals of Australoid extraction who later came to speak a Dravidian tongue, i.e.a dialect of Telugu. Indeed, it is even possible that the appellation by which they are most well known, Kuravar or Koravar may well have been an ethnic rather than an occupational term denoting a people of Munda or Austro-Asiatic stock. Cf. Korwa spoken in Chota Nagpur and Kurku spoken in the Satpura and Mahadeo hills. That the Ahikuntaka like the Kuravar from whom they are supposed to have sprung are more akin to Austro-Asiatics than Dravidians is suggested by certain physical features such as extremely dark skin colour and absence of the corpulence and high foreheads that characterize typical Dravidian folk. Raghavan (1953) however believes that the local Ahikuntaka are "basically of Mediterranean stock with considerable admixture of Australoid traits, accounted for by tribal elements that they have absorbed in the course of their migratory life".

We however venture to believe in light of the above evidence cited in favour of an Australoid origin for the Kuravar antecedents of the Ahikuntaka and the physical features of these folk we have come across that the Ahikuntaka are basically of Australoid stock with an admixture of Dravidian Mediterranean blood which they would have absorbed in the course of their migrations. Besides, it is easier to suppose a nomadic people of aboriginal tribal stock absorbing Dravidian blood in the course of their wanderings, particularly into urban centres or rural agrarian communities rather than assuming that they were a Mediterranean (Dravidian) people who absorbed Australoid blood through admixture with tribal elements as held by Raghavan. For one, thing, it is difficult to imagine a Dravidian people, who are well known for their settled lifestyle taking to a nomadic life; for another, it is equally or more difficult to understand how a nomadic people such as the Ahikuntaka or their Kuravar predecessors who have usually resorted to urban centres or agrarian communities to practice their livelihood could have absorbed Australoid blood from tribal peoples in the course of their wanderings.

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[6] See Castes and Tribes of Southern India. Vol.IV. E.Thurston (1909)

[7] Ibid

II) The Speech of the Ahikuntakas

The Ahikuntakas speak what may best be described as a dialect of Telugu. Their vocabulary most closely resembles Telugu of all the Dravidian tongues as evident for instance from numeral terms such as *ogutti* 'one', *mūdu* 'three' and *ayyid* 'five' which closely resemble their respective Telugu equivalents *okaṭi*, *mūḍu* and *ayidu* where Tamil has *ondru*, *mūndru* and *aindu* and Malayalam *onnu*, *mūnnu* and *anju*. Slight divergences from Telugu are however found in the Ahikuntaka numeral terms *rondu* 'two' and *yōḍu* 'seven' where Telugu has *rendu* and *ēḍu*, though it is still apparent that even these terms most closely resemble Telugu more than any other Dravidian tongue. For instance, the term for seven *yōḍu* despite its initial *y* and different vowel value could be more easily connected to the Telugu *ēḍu* than the Tamil *ēẓu*. The intial *y* found in words such as *yabā* 'father', *yamā* 'mother', *yanā* 'elder brother' and *yakā* 'elder sister' spoken by certain sections of the Ahikuntaka community are also not found in Telugu and may well be an innovation since it does not appear to be attested either in Old Dravidian literary works or in the reconstructed Proto-Dravidian speech. It may nevertheless be an extension of the practice among certain speakers of colloquial Dravidian to commence initial *e* with a *y*.

There nevertheless seem to exist some dialectal variations in the Ahikuntaka vocabulary. For instance an elderly woman from Dīvaragammana in the Kalawewa area of Anuradhapura gave us *abbidu* for 'father', *ammā* for 'mother' and *engalu* for 'hair' which as we found later were the usual forms in use among the Ahikuntaka. We however came across a younger woman from Ikiriyāva also in the Anuradhapura area who gave us *yabā* for 'father', *yamā* for 'mother' and *yanagal* for 'hair'. A few other variations were found, as in the term for cat where the former gave us *ūrupilli* and the latter *ūrvil*. Agreement was however seen in a number of other basic vocables such as the terms for dog (*kukkā*), tree (*mān*), a good many body parts such as nose (*mūkku*), ear (*gummal*), tooth (*pandla*) and finger (*ēla*) as well as in a number of numeral terms such as for two (*rondu*), three (*mūdu*), five (*ayyid*) and six (*āra*) though variations were found in the terms for one (*ogutti* and *uñguti*) and four (*nāla* and *nālagu*). Such Ahikuntaka terms as *kudukku* 'son' and *kukkā* 'dog' may however be linguistic remnants of their postulated former Austro-Asiatic speech which they would have managed to preserve even after they had adopted a Dravidian tongue at some distant period. Both these terms show striking Munda or Austro-

Asiatic affinities [8]. One however notices a process of Sinhalization taking place among the Ahikuntaka of the present day. For instance those of Anuradhapura often give their children Sinhalese names nowadays [9] and this process seems to have been going on for a few decades since even some adults also seem to bear such names [10] though it is difficult to say whether these names were registered names or assumed names at a later period. Such a process of Sinhalization may, with time, also affect their spoken language though it is hard to imagine such a development taking place in the near future since the Ahikuntaka appear to value their unique speech which not only gives them the distinct identity- to some extent- upon which their profession depends, but may also serve as a sort of secret language with which they could communicate with one another which could prove useful in the case of a vulnerable minority group such as this which often comes into contact with members of other communities.

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[8] Sri Lanka's aboriginal Veddas who show Austro-Asiatic affinities call their canines *kukkā* and we find a similar term in the form *chucchū* being employed by native people, presumably aboriginal Munda-speakers, also of Austro-Asiatic stock, in the Lāḍha country of West Bengal in the time of Mahavīra, the founder of Jainism around the 6th-5th century B.C. (Ācārāṅga Sūtra) though the present tribes of Eastern India appear to have lost it. As for *kudukku* 'son' it may well be connected to a Munda or Austro-Asiatic term for man or male as seen in forms such as Muṇḍā *hōṛō* and Kurku *kōrō* 'man' as well as Asur *kōṛa* 'male' in *kōṛa-hopon* 'male child'. The reconstructed Munda form appears to have been * *kōḍō* which brings it close to the Ahikuntaka *kudukku* 'son'.

[9] For instance an Ahikuntaka man from Tambuttēgama in the Anuradhapura district, Rengasāmige Sinnasāmi Vasanta had named his son Vasantagē Nihal Sānta and his daughter Vasantagē Rēnukā Saňdamāli and this trend we noticed among other Ahikuntaka of the Anuradhapura area.

[10] Three Ahikuntaka women of Kudāgama, Tambuttēgama, Anuradhapura whom we came across encamped in Colombo in early 2009 gave their names as Engatunnādē Kusumāvati, Dasammāgē Sarōjā and Sinnavēlagē Lalita. These women not only bear Sinhalese personal names, but have also adopted the traditional Sinhalese manner of surnaming by means of the *–ge* suffix which along with the father's name prefixed to it precedes the proper names of individuals, a feature found also among those with Ahikuntaka personal names of Dravidian origin as seen for instance in the names of two Ahikuntaka women of the Kalawewa area of Anuradhapura whom we came across encamped at Bandattara off Matara in late 2008, one elderly, and the other a young woman, who gave their names as Timmannāgē Masannā and Sinnārōdugē Laccumi.



Old Dutch map of Sri Lanka showing Adam's bridge which some believe was built by Rāma in his quest for Sīta after she had been captured by the demon-king Rāvana.



A scene in Rūmassala, Galle which is associated with the Rāmāyana legend



Ptolemy's map redrawn according to the co-ordinates given by him. Nagadibi (Nāgadīpa) is shown to be in the eastern part of the island.
Courtesy: A.Denis N.Fernando



Five-hooded coiled Nāga figure suggesting that a cult of Nāga guardian spirits would have once existed in Sri Lanka.
Colombo Museum



An ancient Brahmi inscription in Kaduruväva (C.1st century B.C.) referring to the establishment of a cave in the time of King Nāga (Naga raja)
Inscriptions of Ceylon. S.Paranavitana (1970)



A Vedda. The Veddas are probably the descendants of the ancient Yakkhas
The Veddas. Seligmanns 1911



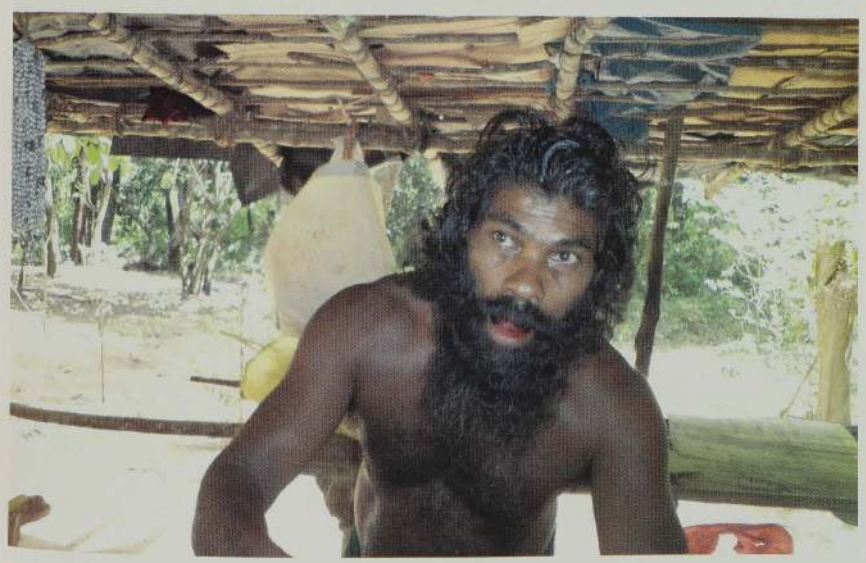
Vedda men



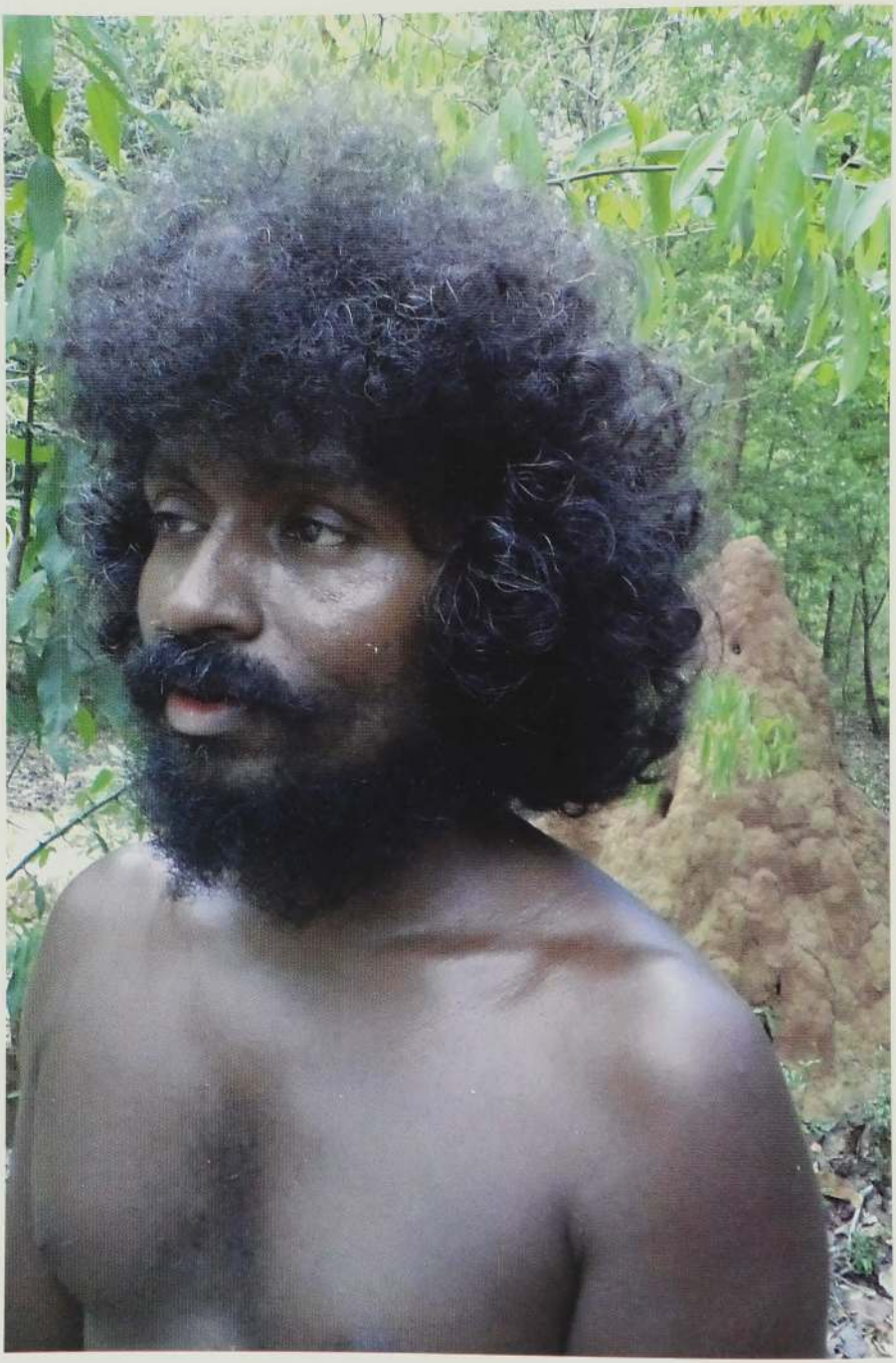
Vedda couple Hudi and Kaira.
Ceylon Observer Annual 1934.



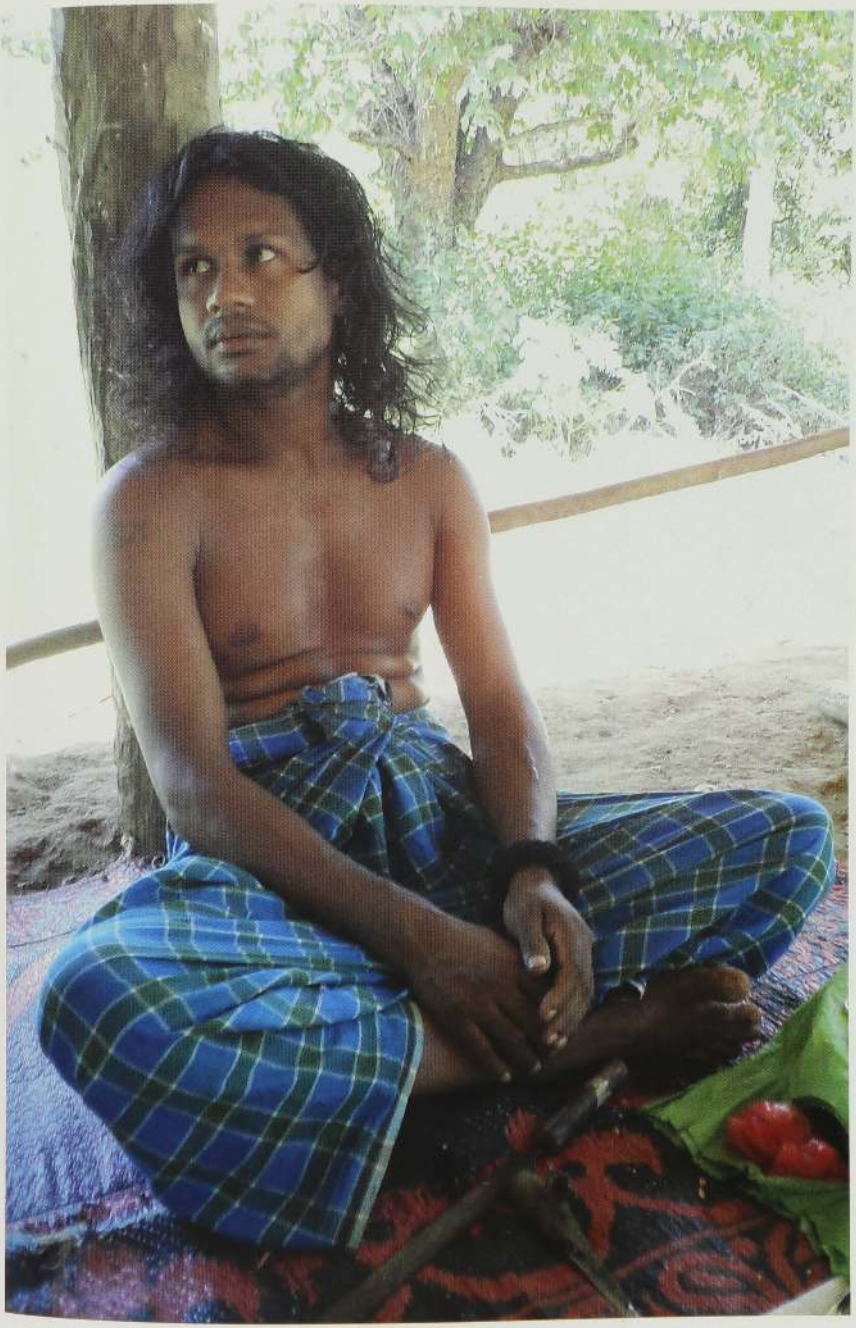
Vedda chief, Dambana



Vedda man, Dambana



Vedda man of Dambana



Vedda youth. Dambana



Vedda girl, Dambana



Coast Veddas from Kunjankulam, Vakarai



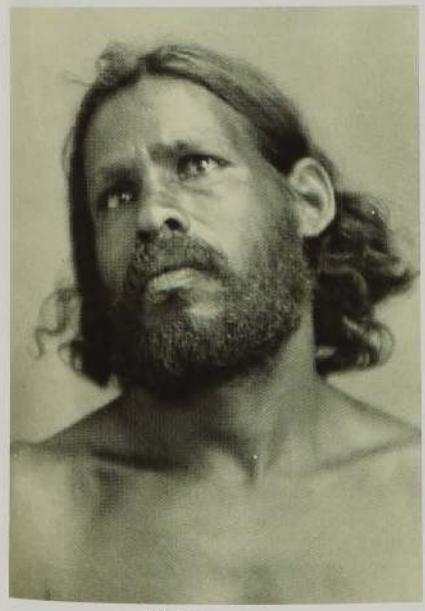
Aristocratic Sinhalese family



Kandyan lady
Scowen & Co



A Sinhalese Aristocrat
Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon. Arnold Wright.1907



Sinhalese man
Skeen & Co



Sinhalese girl
Wright.1907



Sinhalese couple, Western Province



Sinhalese Woman



Tamil man
Scowen & Co.



Tamil woman
Scowen & Co.



A Jaffna Tamil family
Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon, 1907



Tamil men, Eastern Province



Tamil woman, Nainativu



Pillar inscription from Tiruketisvaram, Mannar C.10th century. It refers to the construction of Rājarāja Isvaram by Tāli Karan agent of Rāja-rāja I (C.985-1016 A.C.)
Colombo Museum



Tamil inscription in Kengalla Gal Ambalama, Kandy District.



Moor man
Skeen & Co.



Moor man





Gravestone, Madulbowa Mosque, Hemmatagama Hijri 135 Gravestone with Arabic inscription, Madulbowa



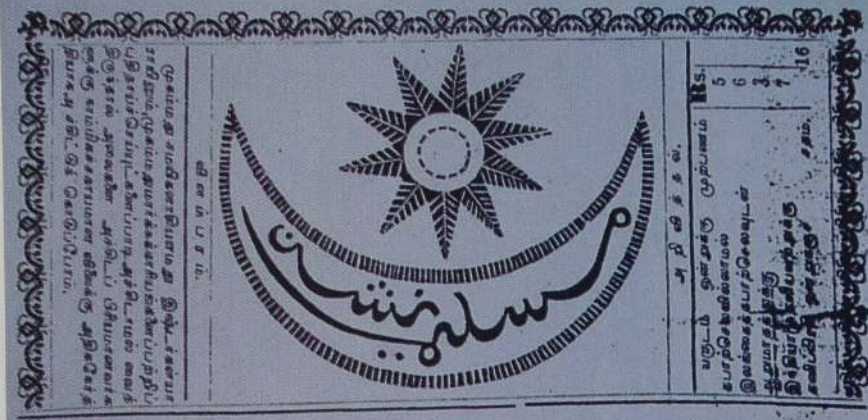
Gravestone inscription inscribed with words Ahmad Ibn Faqir Na[j]ir, Mohidin Jumma Mosque, Talapitiya, Galle.



Kufic inscription Colombo Museum



An Arabu-Tamil newspaper Kashfur Rān An Qalbil Ja' an (1889)
National Archives Colombo



The Muslim Friend.

முஸ்லிம் நேசன்.

திங்கட் கிழமை தோறும் பிரசுரஞ் செய்யப் படும்.

ஆணத்தைத்தேர் பூரணத்தைப்பார்.

VO, 2. கொழும்பு 1884—ம் ஞ வைகாசி மீ 12-ந் தேதி. NO 19

முஸ்லிம் நேசன்.

Monday 12 th M a y 1884

பத்திராதிபர்

—:(o):—

சாம்கண்டியைவிட்டுக் கொழும்பி ல்வாளுசெய்யத் நீர்மானித்த கா ன் மூதலாகக் கண்டியிலுள்ளமத உ வின்முதலாள்களும் மெதெர்களும் கொண்ட துயரத்தையும் கம்மருக் க ண்டி முனலிம்கள்கூடிக் கொடுத்தவி ருதையும் அறிவுக்காகச் சொன்ன அன்பான வார்தைகளையும், காம் வ ரும்போது கண்டியிலுள்ள முன்லிம் களெல்லோரும் வந்த பயணமனுப் பியபோது அவர்களின் பரிதாபத்தை யும் காமிப்பத்திரிகையி லெழுதோம். காம்முடைய மனத்தி லழியாத்தன்மை யா யெழுதிவைப்போம். ஆனும் கா ம் தெல்லையிற் கால்வைத்தெறிய வுடனே தண்ணீரிலிருத்து கரையி லெடுத்துப்போட்ட மீன் துடிப்பது போல் கமதுகல்லும் சரீரமுத்துடிக்க வாயிற்து, காம்முடையஅன்பான யா வரையும்விட்டுப்பிரித்து ஓர் புதனகு க்குப்போகிறோம் காம்முடைய கதி யெப்படியாய் முடியுமோவென்ற கவ லே தொக்கலாயிற்று- காம்முடைய மனத்பரத்தைச் சொல்வதை இத்த மட்டில் நிறுத்திவிட்டோம்.

கொழும்பிலுள்ள முனலிம்களே ம மது இஷ்டர்கள் எல்லோரையும்விட் டு மததகப்பனருடைய யாரையு கொழும்பில் உள்ளோடு வாளுசெ ய்ய வந்துவிட்டேன். உள்ளங்கு ய்ய வந்துவிட்டேன். உள்ளங்கு பையைத்தேடுகிறேன், முனலிம்கள் கல்வியிற் நேர்ச்சியடைவதற்காக காம் மாற் கூடியமுயற்சி செய்யவேண்டு மென்னும் விருப்பமே காம்மை இவ்வு ருக் கெழுத்துவிட்டது- பெரும்த கள் முயற்சிக்காக காம்முடையஅன்பான காணிக்கையா பொப்பட்டவிலே ம- தீர்க்கலெல்லோரும் கமக்குதவி யா விருப்பிர்களாக.

ஓறியன்றல்யேங்கு.

—:(o):—

இத்தப் பெயரையுடைய பேரு ன்தாபிக்கப்பட்ட காண்முதல் அத இலக்கையிலே பனையென்னும் மரி யைச் சொரித்து வியாபாரம் முதலிய பற்பல முயற்களையிய முயிக்கிற வ ளர்த்த வந்தது லெலாமைக அப்பவி ர்கள் வாடிக்கும்போது இத்தினம் 3 ம் தேதியிய சனிக்கிழமம்கால மே ஓர் கெருப்புப்புயல்போலவும் அப் பவிர்கள் யாவையும் சுட்டுவிடுத்த க்கினமாய் வன்டவிலிருந்து அ தபேரு பல்தெருப்பப் பேர்களிட் டதென்ற செய்திவந்தது அதெயி யூரிற் பிரசித்தமானவுடனே சொன்ன

Muslim Nesan, a local newspaper for Muslims in Tamil (1884)
National Archives Colombo



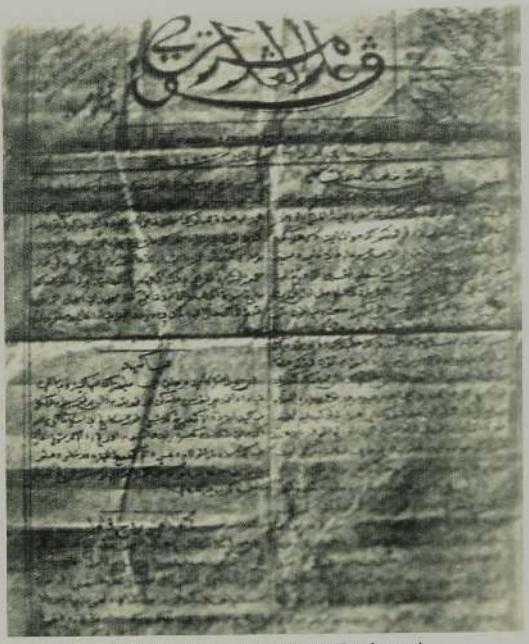
Malay family, Slave Island



Malay couple of Hambantota



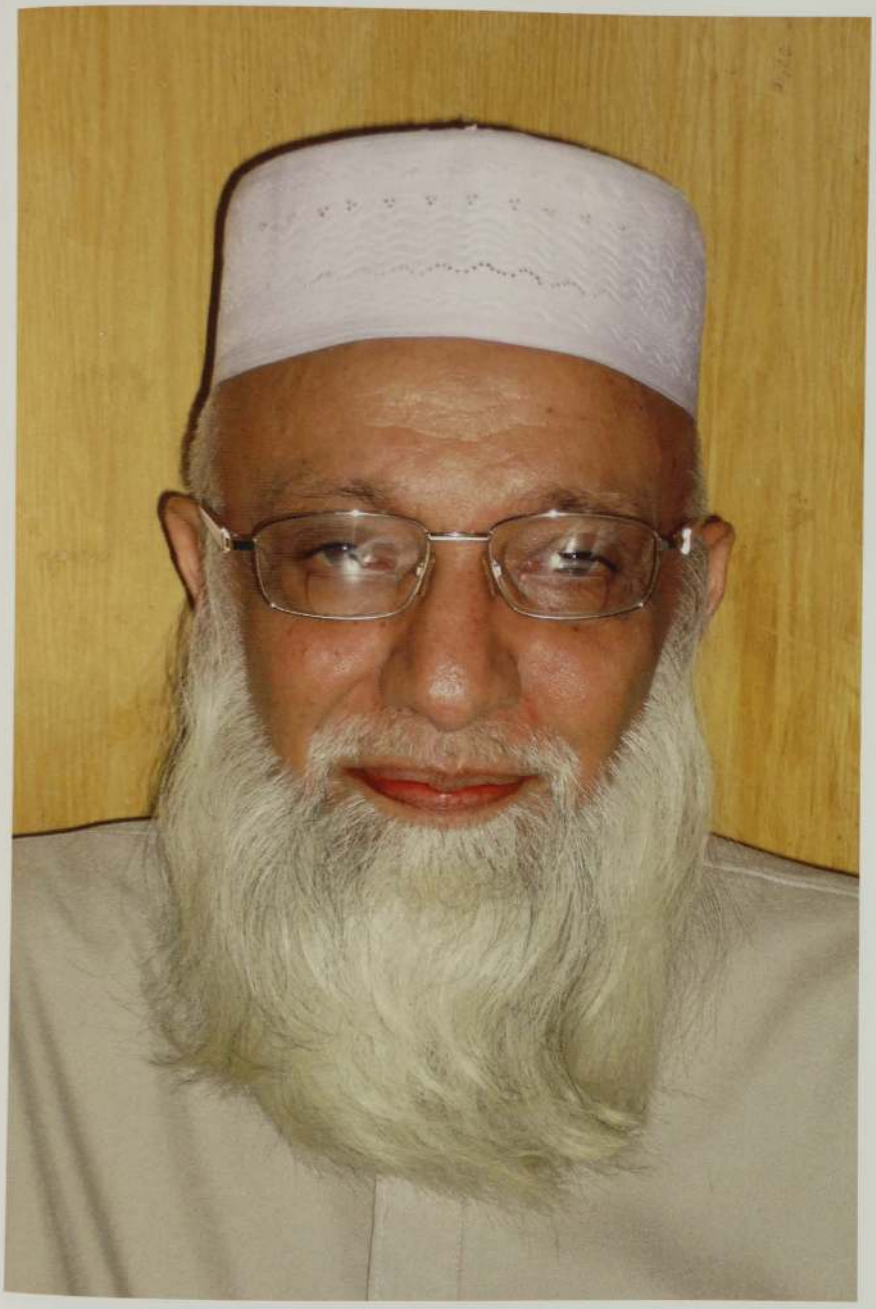
A Malay couple with roots in the upcountry



A Malay newspaper Alamat Lankapuri
Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon. 1907



Alamat Lankapuri (1869)



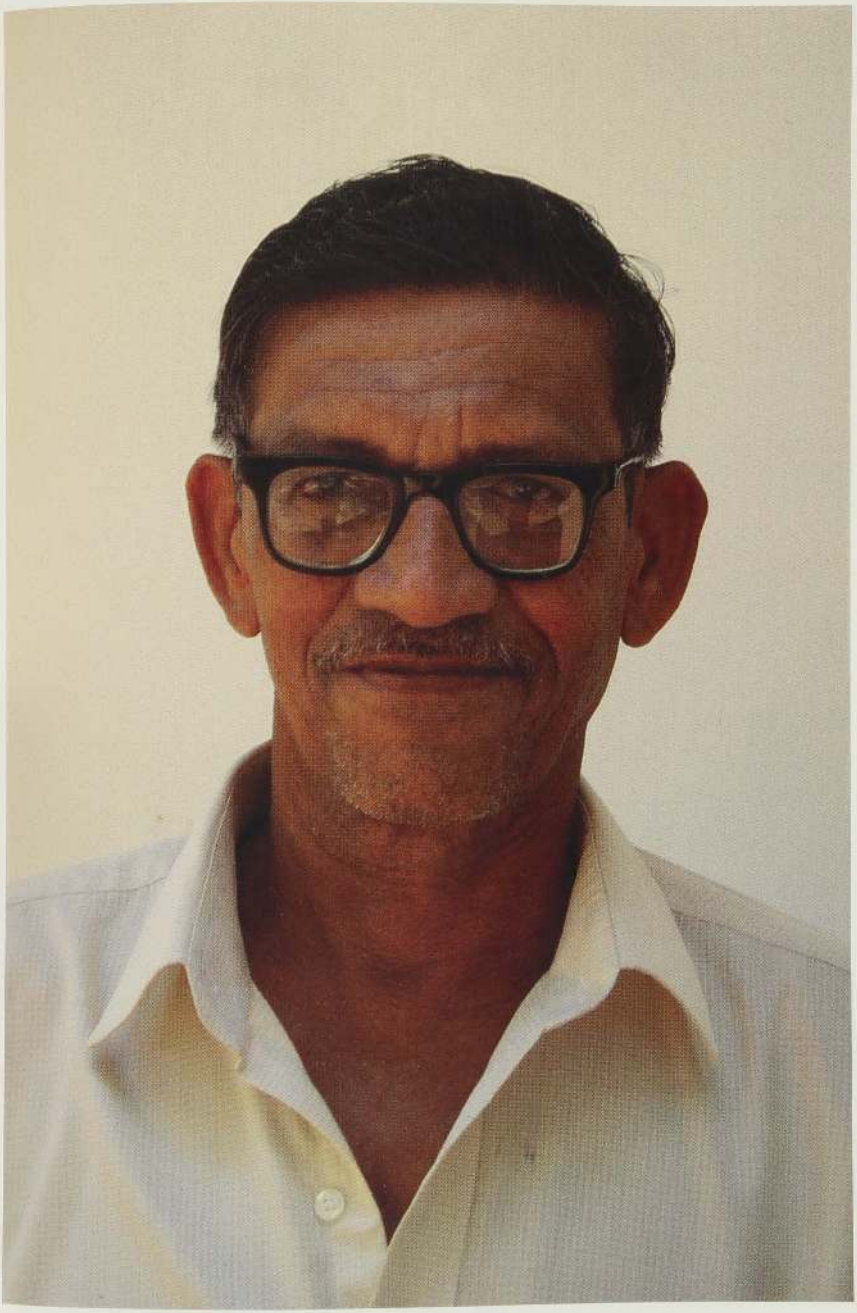
Memon man



Memon man



Memon woman



A Portuguese Burgher. Dutch Bar, Batticaloa



Portuguese Burgher children, Dutch Bar, Batticaloa



Mural tablet of a Portuguese chapel in Colombo Fort
Colombo Museum



Portuguese inscription found in Gordan Gardens, Colombo Fort with a family coat of arms
Colombo Museum



Portuguese tombstone inscription
Colombo Museum



A Burgher gentleman of the Brohier family
Courtesy: Deloraine Brohier



Burgher housewife of Werkmeister family
Courtesy:Deloraine Brohier



Burgher lady of French Huguenot ancestry



Dutch Burgher women and girls
Schokman family



A Dutch Burgher man and girl
Schokman family



Burgher Couple of Hambantota



Tombo entry of Hendrik Schokman of Wolvendaal, probably a forbear of the present-day Schokman family, SLNA 1/3839, De Hoofd Thombo Van de Vier Gravetten or the Head Tombo of the Four Gravets
National Archives



Old Dutch tombstone
Dutch Period Museum, Prince Street, Pettah



Kaffir man of Goodshed, Puttalam.



Kaffir men of Sirambiadiya



A group of Kaffir women and children of Sirambiadiya, Puttalam



Kaffir youth of Sirambiadiya



Ahikuntaka women from Kudāgama, Tambuttēgama, Anuradhapura

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Asiff Hussein is the author of a number of publications on the ethnology, linguistics and sociology of Sri Lanka. His other works besides the present work titled *Zeylanica* include *Sarandib. An Ethnological Study of the Muslims of Sri Lanka* (2007, 2011), *Ivilly Pevilly. The Gastronome's Guide to the Culinary History and Heritage of Sri Lanka (2012) and Caste in Sri Lanka. From Ancient Times to the Present Day (2013)*

He holds a BA Degree in Social Sciences from the Open University of Sri Lanka and a Post-graduate Diploma in Archaeology from the University of Kelaniya.

ZEYLANICA, a study of the Peoples and Languages of Sri Lanka by Asiff Hussein is by far the most comprehensive, multi-disciplinary study of the origins and affinities of Sri Lanka's peoples and languages.

The work comprises of ten chapters covering the different ethnic groups of Sri Lanka through which the author takes the reader to the plains and valleys of India, to the steppes of Southern Russia and Central Asia; to the Mediterranean, Asia Minor and the Iranian plateau; the Arabian peninsula and Mesopotamia; the Indonesian archipelago, Malayan peninsula and Taiwan; Northern Europe and the Iberian peninsula and to coastal Eastern and Southern Africa, in an attempt to trace the origins and affinities of the island's various peoples and languages.

The ethnic groups covered in this work includes both the major communities as well as minor groups who have made Sri Lanka their home over the centuries. This includes the Sinhalese, Tamils, Moors, Malays, Memons, Portuguese and Dutch Burghers, the Kaffirs and the Ahikuntaka. It also deals with the legendary peoples such as the Rakshasas, Yakkhas, Nagas and Nittavo who are supposed to have inhabited the island in days gone by.

The author has gathered around him a vast corpus of information from ancient literature, research studies and field work, not only to substantiate established facts, but more importantly, has postulated some new ideas and theories which should stimulate further research and inquiry into this fascinating subject.

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