

**A PROFILE
OF
Prof. A. AIYAPPAN & HIS WORKS**

Editor

Dr. C. MAHESWARAN

Curator

Department of Museums
Government of Tamilnadu

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COMMISSIONER OF MUSEUMS

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Dr. R. Kannan, Ph.D., I.A.S.
Special Commissioner &
Commissioner of Museums



Government Museum
Egmore, Chennai - 600 008.
Tel : 044-2819 3238 / 3778
Fax : 044-2819 3035
E-mail : govtmuse@md4.vsnl.net.in
Website : www.chennaiuseum.org

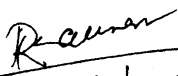
FOREWORD

Government Museum, Chennai has planned and conducted in three phases - the Birth Centenary Celebrations of Prof. A: Aiyappan, a stalwart in the discipline of Anthropology who served in this Museum of repute for over a decade as its first Indian Superintendent, succeeding his predecessors from United Kingdom.

A National Seminar on "Acquisition & Augmentation of Anthropological Artefacts: Problems & Perspectives" was conducted as the ultimate phase of the aforementioned celebration, in collaboration with the Anthropological Survey of India, Kolkata.

As a befitting tribute a profile of Prof. A. Aiyappan was decided to be published in the form of a booklet by encompassing select papers of him which were not included even in the "Tribal Culture and Tribal Welfare" - the collected papers of Prof. A. Aiyappan brought out by the Department of Anthropology, University of Madras.

I hope that this present booklet on "A Profile of Prof. A. Aiyappan & His Works" will be a welcome addition in the Anthropological works which are published by the Government Museum, Chennai.


27/11/2012

(Dr. R. Kannan, Ph.D., I.A.S.)

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Prof. A. AIYAPPAN

A PROFILE

Prof. Ayanapalli Aiyappan got trained in Social Anthropology by eminent and pioneering Anthropologists like Bronislaw Malinowski and Raymond Firth. Consequently, he was able to combine Social Anthropology, along with his ethnographic descriptions. "Among the ethnographers of India I would therefore place Dr. Aiyappan at the top along with the only one or two other writers..." says Kathlene Gough, the Anthropologist of repute. It is not only the evaluation of Kathlene Gough but one and all who fathomed the works and contributions of Prof. A. Aiyappan.

Prof. A. Aiyappan was an authority on South Indian Ethnography. His Anthropological works give a panoramic view of South Indian Tribal Culture. He adopted ethno historic method in reconstructing the earlier stages of development from prehistoric period to the present. While describing the features of tribal culture he did not forget to focus on the recent cultural changes, impact of present developmental activities and their shortcomings as well. Indeed his brief accounts of tribal culture would help the administrators, planners and social workers who have no time to grope through the vast anthropological literature, in gaining a perfect perspective of tribal culture.

Dr. Aiyappan's book on the "Report of the Socio-Economic Conditions of the Aboriginal Tribes of the Province of Madras" is still used as a reference work by the administrators, the planners and the social scientists of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh, even after nearly six decades of its publication. Further, he published a large number of research papers in scientific journals, both at the national and the international levels. His papers on the "Marriage by elopement among the Paniyans of Wynad" was an excellent ethnographic data that got published as early as 1936. "The World View of the Kurichiya" was a rather theoretically oriented detailed account of the Kurichiyas - the last reviving matrilineal tribes of Kerala. His yet another paper on "Some Patterns of Tribal Leadership" was a new approach in categorizing the tribal leaders of India. On his papers of tribal development Prof. Aiyappan gave his pragmatic and independent views and suggested how best the tribal development can be achieved. Most of his papers were briefly written in simple style and free from technical jargons.

Apart from monographs and research papers to his credit Dr. Aiyappan used to popularize Anthropology through various media such as newspapers, radio.

In short, Prof. Aiyappan's anthropological works on tribal culture and welfare are of great asset to the general readers who are interested in the culture of South Indian tribes, in particular and on tribal welfare, in general.

Dr. Aiyappan started his career as the Curator for Anthropology in the Government Museum, Chennai. Later, he became the first Indian Superintendent of the Museums and then went on to become the Professor and Head of the Department of Anthropology at the Utkal University, Bhubaneswar; Ultimately he retired as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram.

Prof. Aiyappan breathed his last on 28th June of 1988 at Thrissur, Kerala - making the Indian Anthropology poorer with his sad demise. However, he will remain ever as an illuminating pole star in the horizon of Indian Anthropology.

In a fair attempt to give a befitting tribute to Prof. A. Aiyappan in the occasion of his Birth Centenary Celebrations, this profile has been compiled and presented to the present generation Anthropologists. It is hoped earnestly that the young generations of Anthropologists and educated citizens will find this profile inspiring and create an intellectual atmosphere.

Works of Prof. (Dr.) A. Aiyappan on South Indian Ethnography

The following list gives an idea of the works of Prof. (Dr.) A. Aiyappan on South Indian Ethnography:

I. Monographs:

1937 Social and Physical Anthropology of the Nayadis of Malabar. Madras: Government Press, (Bulletin of the Government Museum, General Section 2). 1938 Report on the Socio-Economic conditions of the Aboriginal Tribes of the Province of Madras. Madras: Government Press.

II. Research Papers:

- 1933 "Rock-cut Cave Tombs of Peroke, S.Malabar" **Quarterly Journal of Mythic Society**, XXIII : 3.299.34.
- 1935 "Problems of the Primitive Tribes in India" (Paper read at the meeting of the Royal Anthropological Institute, London). Abstract of it got published in **Man**, XXV: 59.
- 1936 "Blood Groups of the Pre-Dravidians of the Wynad Plateau". **Man**, XXXVI: 191. Also got reprinted in the **Current Science**, IV: 493-494.
- 1937 "Marriage by elopement among the Paniyans of Wynad", **Man in India**, XVI: 27-37.
- 1939 "Blood Groups of the Nayadis of Malabar, South India". **Man**, XXXIX :199.
- 1940 "Theories of Culture Change and Culture Contact". In **Essays in Anthropology**, presented to Rao Bahadur Sarat Chandra Roy, Lucknow; Maxwell Co.,
- 1941 "Rude Stone Monuments of the Perumal Hills, Kodaikanal". **Quarterly Journal of Mythic Society**, XXXI : 373-377.
- 1941 "Incest and its control among the Kurichiyas of Wynad". Paper presented at the 28th **Indian Science Congress**.
- 1945 "The New Role of Anthropology". **The Hindu** (Chennai Edition) (04-031945).
- 1950 "The Kurichiyas". In **Tribes of India** (Ed. A.V. Thacker), Delhi: Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh.
- 1955 "The Tribes of South and South West India". **The Adivasis**, New Delhi: Director of Publications.
- 1957 "Hand made Pottery of the Urali Kurumbas of Wynad", 57-59: **Man**, 47.
- 1958 "Applied Anthropology". **Adivasi**, 111:3-4.
- 1960 "Tribes of Southern India". **Seminar** (14-10-1960).
- 1964 "Tribal Languages of Orissa". **Adivasi**, 3:5-6.
- 1964 "Anthropology and Tribal Welfare". 15-23. **Souvenir of the 2nd All India Seminar on Tribal Welfare**, Bhubaneswar.
- 1965 "Development of Tribal Areas". **The Economic Weekly** (12-06-1965).

- 1969 "Urgent Anthropology for Southern India". **Urgent Research in Social Anthropology**". Simla: Transactions of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study.
- 1971 "Aryanization and Sanskritisation of Dravidian Speaking Tribal Groups in Central and Eastern India". 289-294. **Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference of Tamil Studies**, Madras International Association of Tamil Studies.
- 1977 "World View of the Kurichiya, A Little Known Matrilineal Tribe of Kerala". **Seminar on Dravidian Tribal Languages**. Annamalainagar : CAS in Linguistics, Annamalai University.
- 1980 "The Situation in the South". 14-20. **The Illustrated Weekly of India**.
- 1981 "Case as a Form of Acculturation". **Man in India**, 61:4.371 - 372.
- 1983 "A Case for a Sub-discipline : Brahminology". **Man in India**, 63:4.335-350.
- 1986 "Recollections and Reminiscences", **Man in India**, 313-316.

III. Radio Talks :

- 1944 "Totem and Taboo"
- 1946 "Habits of South Indian Tribes"
- 1949 "The Chenchus"
- 1951 "The Deccan Plateau Ethnology"

ROCK-CUT CAVE-TOMBS OF FEROKE, S. MALABAR¹

The site of these ancient tombs in a hillock of laterite to the west of the Feroke Railway Station, known locally as Chenapparambu. The hillock is now quite bare, though some seventy years ago, it was covered with a dense growth of shrubs. The eastern edge of the site has been levelled down for the railway line and in the course of the works dozens of earthenware urns of the pyriform type, buried in hollows in the rock were brought out. The place, therefore, must have been an important crematorium once.

There are now to be seen at the site seven or eight cave-tombs all filled with debris after they had been desecrated by treasure hunters. The two described in this paper are the only ones remaining there intact for the student of archaeology. The circular openings at the top of the tombs have, in many cases, grown dark-brown with exposure. Near by the site there was once a Siva shrine; very little of the ruins is now visible. Recently the owners of the site have built there a small temple to propitiate the spirit of a *Vannan* (washerman) who was a class-mate of an ancestor of theirs at the Kalari (fencing school) and was killed by him for certain rudeness and misbehaviour on the *Vannan's* part. His ghost pestered them for nearly two generations, till at last they thought it best to make peace with him and honour him in a shrine.

¹ Read before the Anthropology Section of the Indian Science Congress, Bangalore, and published with the permission of the Superintendent, Madras Government Museum.

Saivite shrines in close association with these rock-cut tombs are an extremely interesting feature from the point of view of the early religious history of the country. At another site I examined recently on the Parambantalli hill, near Mullasilerry in South Malabar, tombs similar to those at Feroke are found, most of them destroyed by quarrying work. All these tombs are in the immediate vicinity of a very ancient Siva temple. Rea also records that close by the tombs he examined at Perungulam,¹ there was an ancient Siva fane. Other traces of Saivism in these sepulchres will be pointed out later in the paper.

Both at Feroke and Parambantalli I picked up several terracotta figures of animals (Pl. IV-B), probably dogs, half buried in the loose surface layers of laterite. These figures may be votive offerings² to the sylvan godling Sasta, who is closely associated with later Saivism and is considered in Malabar to be the guardian deity of hunters. Popular legends of Malabar have it that Parasu Rama installed him (Sasta) and sixty four Durgas to guard the borders of Malabar. Sasta is, according to *Amarakosa*, one of the names of the Buddha and we are not sure whether he may not have, in Malabar at least, degenerated into a godling of the Hindu pantheon. The stupa-like shape of the tombs and the remains of Sasta worship near them suggest Buddhist influence, but, unfortunately, we get no more of Buddhist vestiges anywhere near.

The Feroke site was discovered by Prof. Jouveau-Dubreuil in the beginning of the year 1931. On his writing to the Superintendent, Madras Museum, I visited the place in March 1931 in the course of a tour to Malabar and did the excavation. Similar rock-cut tombs were discovered at other sites by Babington³ so early as the year 1519 and by Rea⁴ in 1910, but their descriptions lacked details and no suggestions were made about their significance. Prof. Jouveau-Dubreuil was the first to draw our attention to the very great interest attached to these rock-cut tombs by assigning to them a Vedic (Aryan) origin.⁵ In this paper only an attempt is made to supplement previous writers on the subject by first-hand information from two new sites-Feroke and

¹ A. Rea: *Madras Arch. Dept. : Annual Report, 1910-11.*

² Votive offerings (therimorphic) in metal are associated with Adittanallur burials.

³ Babington: *Bomaby Lit. Soc. Trans., 1819.*

⁴ Rea: *Mad. Arch. Dept. Ann. Report, 1910-11.*

⁵ G. Jouveau-Dubreuil: *Vedic Antiquities, 1924.*

Parambantalli, the latter being on the Cochin borders and showing that this type of tombs has a wider distribution than Prof. Jouveau-Dubreuil supposed.

The first of the two tombs (Feroke No. 1) described below, was opened by Prof. Dubreuil. The large urn he removed from it is in the Madras Museum. I cleared up the entrance, the steps and the floor of the tomb ; of the finds from it, I have only limited information. Most of the materials detailed here were from the second tomb (Feroke No. 2).

The surface indication for the underground tomb is a circular or square slab of stone (Plate I, figs. A, B) covering the top opening. The tombs explored by Babington had symmetrically arranged stone-circles as in typical cairns and urn burials, e.g., those at Adittanallur. At Feroke and Parambantalli, however, there has been too much of human interference for the stone circles to stand. The capstone stand out prominently and is quite unmistakable. In the case of the tombs - figured in Babington's paper and reproduced by Logan in his "Malabar" the top-hole is merely plugged with a rude un-shaped boulder, but at Feroke and Parambantalli there are well-cut slabs of stone forming regular cap-stones. While at Feroke the cap-stones are laterite harder than the laterite in which the tombs are cut, those at Parambantalli are large square granite slabs, very much larger than the circular openings they covered.

The cap-stone had to be broken and removed in pieces before the interior of the cave could be exposed. Fig.1 is a section of the tomb No.1. Through the circular opening (Pl. II-A) a person can easily get down into the hemispherical hollow. The tomb proper with the top aperture is like a hollow cylinder superposed on a hollow half-sphere. The flow of the tomb is circular and the wall arches up evenly to the top opening. Marks of the stone cutter's tools can still be seen. At the north-eastern side, about a foot above the floor level, is a small rectangular opening in the side wall of the hollow. This opening is also closed by a laterite slab placed vertically against in outside. The section shows how this opening is a communication between the tomb proper and a quadrangular space cut into the rock just in front of it, to which one descends from the surface level by a flight of three steps.

The aperture at the top was therefore obviously not intended for access into the tomb; the lower one was meant to represent a doorway. A person can just crawl on all fours through this doorway into the tomb. In the tomb there is room enough for a man to stand; it would have taken several days for cutting out the tomb in the very limited space available.

The doorway of the tomb No.1 is directed north-east (Fig.2). On its floor, a platform, rectangular in shape and about one foot high, is cut out as a ridge in laterite in the left segment of the floor-the platform is only an elevated portion of the floor. Similar platforms or ridges were found by Rea in some of the tombs at Perungulam.

When the earth that filled completely the space between the steps and the vertical north-eastern wall of the tomb was being removed, a few pieces of broken pottery, probably of a four-footed urn, and a small flat piece of iron were obtained from near the right side of the slab that closed the entrance.

The tomb No.2 agrees in general in description with No.1. The cap-stone had been here partially cut off, but sufficient remained of it to protect the tomb below. Some earth had infiltrated and the contents of the tomb were in a clay envelope. The doorway here is directed towards the north and not north-east as in No.1 (Fig.3). There is no platform, but exactly where one would expect a platform, there is a bath-tub like vessel, oblong in shape, with twelve legs (Pl. II-A and Fig.3).

Finds from No.1

The finds¹ from the tomb No.1 have, only a few of them, reached me. Fragments of black-polished ring stands and lids (conical) were found in plenty. Pieces of charcoal and bones were also picked up by me. The bone pieces were all too small and able, crumbling into fine dust when handled. The ferruginous tint of the laterite had got into the cancellous portion of some fragments and in some others formed concentric rings. A large pyriform urn 2' 5" high and 1' 4" across the mouth (Pl. II-B) removed from the tomb is the most interesting of the finds from tomb No.1. There was to be found traces of ash here and there in the run.

¹ The finds are all in the Madras Government Museum.

The one notable peculiarity this urn has is the six claw-like projections on the inside of it just below the neck region. One of the large Adittanallur urns in the Madras Museum has two hooks or horns, one on each side, not in a cluster, as in the present one. Rea (*Arch. Sur. of India, Ann. Rep.* 1902-3) thought that the horns on the inside of the rim were "evidently for hanging or suspending pots or other articles". He had seen similar horn on the outside of urns from the Bangalore District. The Adittanallur urns were receptacles for various funerary vessels and bone remains and in them the hooks may have served some useful purpose, but in the case of the Feroke urn there was nothing to suspend from the cluster of six hooks. (The photograph shows only three intact, the other three were broken.)

Finds from No. 2

Pottery.-(1) A large pyriform urn of coarse half-baked clay (Pl.III-A) at the south-eastern part of the floor. This urn was half-filled with moist earth. There was a flat lid (Pl.IV) covering its mouth. The lid and urn, as most other pottery, were lying on their sides.

(2) A large oblong bath-tub like vessel about 2' in length and 1' in height, with twelve small, solid legs (Pl. III-A) and (Fig. 3). It was filled with earth and at its bottom was found a few etched tabular carnelian beads (Fig.4-D). This vessel was, like the large urn, made of coarse clay and was very difficult to handle. The shape and the legs remind one of the Pallavaram and Perumbair sarcophagi, of which this may be a distant relative. Similar vessels were obtained from dolmens at Koltur in S.Arcot and Gajjalakonda in Kurnool, with fifteen and eighteen legs respectively. So this sort of trough-like urns is not peculiar to the rock-cut tombs of Malabar, but shows the cultural connection between her and the neighbouring areas.

(3) Four four-footed urns somewhat rounded, with the reddish coloured and polished surface remaining only in patches here and there (Pl.III-B). One of them near the many-legged trough was the largest of the lot; it contained at the bottom greyish animal ash¹ and over the ash, there was the usual reddish earth filling the urn to the brim, as

¹ I am obliged to Mr. 5. Pramasivan, Archeological Chemist, Madras Government Museum, for the chemical examination of the ashes, etc.

in other vessels. The arrow-head like pottery mark on it [Fig. 5 (9) 1 is full of significance.

(4) About a dozen vessels of the pitcher type with wide mouths and generally finer in make than the four-legged urns (Pl. III-A & B). The largest is 21" high and 12.5" across the mouth. Smaller vessels like the one on the tripod in Pl. III-B were also found. Small coarse "Chombu" like vessels (Pl. IV) were the most numerous, about 15 in number.

All types of pottery except the large urns had, a few of them, the pottery "marks.

Iron.-(1) A large tripod 9" high with its ring 9.5" in diameter (Pl. III-B), swollen and cracked with rust, only a thin metallic core remaining. It was found lying on its side (Fig. 3).

(2) An iron dagger (Fig. 4-A) 1' long buried with its point to the south. Nearer still to the large pyriform urn were found several other pieces of iron, the ones with forked ends (Fig. 1-13) being quite peculiar.

Beads. - All are etched tabular carnelian beads (Fig. 4-D) coarse and large when compared to the fine ones from Trvancore urn-burials now in the Madras Museum. The largest bead is 0.5" and the smallest 0.3" in diameter.

From the Parambantalli tombs, I am reliably informed that iron *Trisulas* (tridents), pottery, mostly polished, and husks of paddy were obtained.

The direction of the entrance to the tombs at Parambantalli is exactly similar to that of the Feroke tombs. Of the two I have seen at the former site, one has the entrance facing north-east, the other north. While S. Indian dolmens vary very much in the direction of their openings, it is remarkable that a vast number of them especially in North Arcot have their openings in the north-east slab, and many in Coorg and the Deccan have their openings towards the north.

Pottery marks.-Very important paleographic issues have been raised by scholars like Yazdani, Bandarkar and Chanda on the basis of the so-called "signs" or "marks" inscribed on a funerary vessel, to which Yazdani (*Hyd. Arch. Soc Report*, 1917) drew our attention several years ago. His list of the marks on pottery in the Madras Museum contains a few that are alphabetic in form resembling early Brahmi script.

Dr. Hunt (*J.R.A.I.*, 1924) has added several new marks to those already known and has made interesting observations about the associations of certain marks. Several marks have been discovered recently by Mr. M. Numa Laffitte (*Ind. Antiquary*, July 1931) from urn burials near Pondicherry. The discovery of pottery marks from Malabar also shows how wide is their distribution. So far, we have very little idea of the kinds of graves from which the " marks " have been collected.

A medium size pitcher had the three marks (1). The group (2) was on a pitcher of almost the same size; (3) and (4) on still smaller pitchers, (6) (7) and (8) on four-legged urns, The mark (9) was found, as was said above, on the largest of the four-legged urns that contained the ashes. The association between this particular mark and cremated human bones is found in urns from North Arcot; the same mark, slightly modified, is found on an urn from a burial in Coimbatore also.

Tradition

Popularly these rock-cut tombs and similar funerary monuments are considered to be places of *samadhi* of sages or sanyasis. In a metrical history of Malabar, a Malayalee poet ascribed them to Buddhists. "The places where Bauddha sages attained *Nirvana* are still to be seen everywhere-the *Kudakkallu*, etc. They are rendered unmistakable by the rosary of beads, the lamps, arrows and earthenware that are found in them." The large pyriform urns are supposed to have been for in-urning aged people alive when they were reduced by sheer senility to a frog-like shape and hopped about. It is said that the eldest son would put the frog-like father in an urn with sufficient food to last him a pretty long time and bury the urn with proper rituals. *Nannangadi* is the popular name for such a burial urn. Curiously both at Feroke and Parambantalli, many people believed that these caves were made for storing up valuables during Muhammadan invasions. Of all the traditions, the Buddhistic tradition is more reasonable, because there were, in the early centuries of the Christian era, Buddhist centres in Malabar at the ancient port of Cranganore, Vanji of the ancient Tamil writers, and Muziris of early European traders, it is well known that a mild form of Buddhism permeated the Hindu-animism of the country and the Namputiri Brahmins had, later on, to organize an attack on

Buddhism. In a previous paragraph, I have referred to the confused identification of Aiyandar in Malabar with the Buddha.

Another interesting practice in Malabar, which throws some light on urn burial, is the symbolic killing and burying of evil spirits or enemies: the evil spirit is exorcised from the possessed person and is enclosed in a new earthen pot and buried deep.

Significance of the Rock-cut Tombs

We have seen that popular traditions are not at all helpful to us in getting an idea of the significance of these rock-cut tombs. Their distribution is confined to Malabar, the southern most site known being the Parambantalli hillock. So far as numbers are concerned, simple urn burials are the most numerous, running into thousands in each taluk of Malabar, Cochin or Travancore. Dolmens and other purely megalithic structures are few and far between. Laterite cut tombs are more numerous than dolmens, etc. The peculiar rock-cut tombs¹ of Malabar were supposed by Logan to be a variant of the megalith, the variation having been rendered possible by the plasticity of laterite rock and the comparatively greater difficulty in working gneiss. Architecturally, Malabar is even to-day a backward area in S. India; in funerary architecture too the forbears of the modern Malayalee may have been easy-going and heterodox.

The simplest excavations in laterite for burial purposes in Malabar are square or circular pits to receive large pyriform urns. Then we have the slightly more complex *Kudakkallu*, a hollow just large enough for an urn, with a ledge cut above the hollow for placing minor funerary articles and a flight of two or three steps leading from the surface level to the urn. Rea's Perungulam caves were some with a central pillar and others without one, as in the Feroke tombs. Platforms in the tomb were also a variable feature. The Nilachaparamba caves described by Logan had neither a top opening nor any pillar. Lastly, we have the complex group of underground cubical cells discovered by Logan at Padinjattumuri² - a regular family cemetery (like the double dolmens perhaps) with seats, beds, central pillars and "fire places" (?). A circular hollow with a cist is typical of most cairns. The Gajjalakonda

¹ Logan : *Malabar* Vol. I.

² Logan : *Indian Antiquary*, Vol.VIII.

cairns are dome-shaped, with an oblong cist inside containing many-legged sarcophagi easily like the one from Feroke No. 2. Though culturally one, the extreme variability of the laterite tombs becomes strikingly obvious. Even architecturally, when compared with circular or domeshaped burials elsewhere, the Feroke cave-tombs do not stand isolated either from the urn-mound complex or the cairn-cist complex.

A seat for the dead is a feature of many of the dolmens in common with the Feroke tombs and similar stupa-caves and also the Padinjyattumuri caves. The cromlechs at Jivaji had some of them the openings directed north and also large iron tripods, beads, etc. Cremated remains have been found in many unmistakable dolmens, so that, in fact, there is little evidence to dissociate the, rock-cut tombs of Feroke from the general South Indian megalithic culture complex.

The tripod found in the Feroke tomb No. 2 raises the important question whether it shows any association with fire-worship or not. Iron tripods are included in the list of metal finds from the Adittanallur urn burials which are quite unrelated to fire-worship. At Adittanallur, we get either complete burials or a burial of selection of excarnated bones. Traces of the latter practice even now survive, among some Malabar tribes who are in the habit of burning on the pyre excarnated bones from the grave. The tripod at Adittanallur had probably some other significance than fire-worship. If the tripod in any way was related to the Aryan fire-cult, it ought to have been found in all cave tombs or the Feroke type. It is, however, found only occasionally. Taking the available evidence from the two tombs at Feroke only, it is remarkable that whereas in No. 1 there were numerous ring stands, in No. 2 they were significantly absent and as if to make up for this deficiency, there was the tripod of iron. The presence of a tripod, it will be seen now, need not imply fire-worship.

Trisulams (tridents) have been found in the Perungulam and the Parambantalli tombs. Grinding stones from the former are almost indistinguishable from those from Adittanallur or Odugattur¹. These features again bring the Feroke cave-tombs in a line with megalithic burials.

¹ Rea : *Prehistoric Burial Places in India*.

¹ F. J. Richards; "Iron Age Graves at Odugattur, "J.R.A.I., Vol., LIV.

Does cremation show Aryan influence on these sepulchres? Inhumation seems to have been characteristic of Dravidian people. Evidence from ethnology supports such a belief as to-day in S. India the prevalence of inhumation is in inverse proportion to the degree of Aryanization. We find that many dolmens are cremation graves, in the districts of Krishna and Godavari in particular. There have been found in the same place burials with head to the north, reminding us of certain Dravidian tribes of Malabar burying their dead with head to the north. It is interesting to note that these tribes retain some traces of a megalithic culture in their alignments. For topological reasons, Prof. Ghurye considers that the dolmens of Godavari are related to the Malabar cave-tombs. His suggestion is held out by traditions or folk movements from the Godavari region into Malabar. That the Aryanization of Malabar by the Namputiri Brahmins might have proceeded from the banks of the Godavari is an assumption made by some writers on the Namputiris. Could it be that cremation was grafted to the existing urn-complex producing the results we have noticed, a blend of Dravidian and non-Dravidian items of death-rites ?

Prof. Jouveau-Dubreuil is of opinion that the rock-cut tombs of Malabar are Vedic remains surviving in the seclusion of Malabar. Tombs like those at Feroke are considered by him to be Aryan *agnidriyas* or fire-houses. Ethnologically, his plea that the Namputiris are racially and culturally direct descendants of the Vedic Aryans is not held out. Next lie considers the top opening of tombs to be the chimney of the *agnidriya*. The available descriptions of the *agnidriya* do not suggest any idea of a chimney. The directions prescribed for the doorways of an *agnidriya* are not the same as those of the rock-cut tombs of which we have exact knowledge. The top opening may be explained on grounds of expediency. The object of the whole sepulchre being the careful preservation of the ashes to ensure undisturbed rest to the spirit of the departed, the constructors of the tomb, in all probability, considered it best to narrow down the wide opening of the *Kudakkallu* or cairn type of burials to smaller dimensions and to plug it securely.

Reasons to relate the Feroke tombs to other un-Aryan burials may be stated briefly :

1. The urn with lid in tomb No.2 is exactly copies from urn mound burials as at Paravi.¹
2. The very great resemblance in architecture that these tombs bear to the *Kudakkallu* in having a cap-stone above, a flight of steps leading to an aperture communicating with the hollow in which the urn is placed.
3. The twelve-legged earthen trough with beads remind us of the Perumbair sarcophagi. It is interesting to note in this connection that Codrington considers the four-legged urns also are derivable from the many legged Pallavaram sarcophagi, which are distinctly un-Aryan.
4. The platforms inside the tombs. The practice of providing a seat for the dead is continued in modern days in rites connected with Kudi-iruthal (housing) of manes. A wooden seat with three or four legs is provided for the departed.
5. The stone circles marking the rock-cut tombs as in the case of cairns.
6. The pottery "marks" are almost identical with those found in urn-burials, e.g., Pondicherry burials excavated by M. Numa Laffitte, the cairns of Coimbatore, etc.
7. Most scholars are of opinion that megaliths are most of them anterior to Aryan influence in S. India.

The chronology of these burials is an extremely difficult problem. Some Coimbatore cists and the Pondicherry urn-burials contain iron together with polished stone implements. The polished stone implements are altogether absent in most megalithic burials, which shows the colts were not for mere ritual purposes. In all probability the stone implements indicate the great antiquity of the burials from which they were obtained. The oldest burials have no signs of cremation. Of megalithic cremation tombs, we have the Sulur burials of circa-200 B.C. This grave contained bronze. Bronze has not been found in any of the

Malabar burials. The bronze with a high percentage of tin makes some authorities give a comparatively later date to burials from which bronze is obtained. Taking the crudeness of the pottery and the absence of bronze into consideration, we may tentatively take the Feroke tombs to be slightly earlier in age than the Sulur graves.

RUDE STONE MONUMENTS OF THE PERUMAL HILLS, KODAIKANAL

FATHERS Anglade and Newton of the Sacred Heart College, Shembaganur, Madura district have described the dolmens of the Palni Hills in their paper on this subject which has been published as Memoir No. 36 of the Archaeological Survey of India. They have also referred to the occurrence of "stone circles"¹ and urn burials in Perumal Hills. These three types—dolmens, stone circles and urn-burials—of the so-called prehistoric monuments of Southern India are being destroyed everywhere by the inroads of civilisation, but in the Palni Hills they are more or less protected, except near the roads, on account of their inaccessible situation. Unfortunately, most of the dolmens have been opened by treasure hunters and their contents rifled, but several of them still retain enough of their original features to give us an idea of the manner of their construction². Unlike the dolmens which by their large size and prominent situation invariably arrest attention, the stone circles are inconspicuous and very often completely hidden from view by thick growth of bracken and sedge. Father Anglade whose knowledge of the geography and archaeology of the Kodaikanal taluk is profound and unequalled is of the opinion that there are scores of these stone circles in the Perumal Hills.

Two of these stone circles were excavated by me in August, September, 1940. The site of the first of these was the saddle below the hill locally known as the Pancha-Pandavar-mettu (the hill of the five Pandavas³, as there are two dolmens on it). In the valley below is a paddy field

¹ The "stone circles" are strictly speaking not one of them circular, some being oval, others oblong, etc. I have examined about fifty of them, but cannot be certain that their makers wanted to give them any definite shape. The term "stone circles" is applied to them on account of their apparent similarity to the stone circles surrounding various funerary structures.

² From an examination of the dolmens in the Vilpatti valley, I gained the impression that they could not have been dwelling places as suggested by Fathers Anglade and Newton.

³ As elsewhere, the people of Kodaikanal believe that dolmens were houses built by the Pandava brothers.

known as *Vekayan-Pillai-vayal* belonging to the Perumal Malai coffee estate. The second circle was one among several to be found on a low saddle leading to the hill called *Uppu-paarai*. These sites are in the Vilpatti valley facing the populous and picturesque village of the same name.

Stone Circle No.1

This was oblong in shape and was selected for excavation as the outline appeared prominent. Its maximum length was twelve feet. The ring was formed by two large, thickish slabs of gneiss on the sides, and one between them at the extreme eastern end, the rest being irregular bits of flag stone, all planted vertically on edge. The long axis of the circle was aligned in the ENE-WSW direction, and the maximum breadth at right angles to it was six feet six inches. The space enclosed by the stone ring was filled with rubble and overgrown with bracken and grass. The black humus was about a foot and a half thick, and amidst the roots a few sherds of pottery were to be found with their slip corroded by roots growing in close contact with them. Below this layer was the usual clayey soil interspersed with broken boulders. At a depth of about two and a half feet it was found that a narrow trench eight and a half feet long and one and a half feet broad had been dug, the looseness of the soil that filled it indicating its extent. Over the trench, at a depth of two feet from the surface, there were two horizontal slabs of stone placed across the trench, one across the eastern and the other across the western ends. There was a hollow below the latter which I thought might be due to some urn below having collapsed, but there was nothing of the kind, the earth being just loose. Sherds of pottery became more frequent as the digging proceeded down, but everything was so crushed that no shapes could be made out. The fabric itself was very inferior and the sherds difficult to be extricated from the sticky clay. Clayey soil, as is well-known, is extremely harmful to pottery. From the middle of the floor of the trench was got a hoop of iron, probably part of a bangle. One of the sherds was recognisable as that of a pottery laddle¹. There is no doubt that some pottery was placed in the trench but they were comminuted partly due to the inferior character of the

¹ It is planned to publish a fuller account of the pottery from Kodaikanal at a later date.

pottery and partly to the rubble having been thrown in.

Stone Circle No.2

The shape of the ring (text fig.1, and also plate I, a) in this was roughly oval, the longest diameter which lies in the NW-SE direction being ten feet six inches the maximum distance across being about seven feet. In spite of the thick growth of vegetation, the soil from the northern portion of the ring has been eroded to a depth of about a foot due to the natural drainage in the region of the saddle in which the circle is situated. The ring is formed by fragments of flag stone, the larger ones among them measuring about two to three feet, placed on their edges, giving the enclosure a walled-in appearance when the earth is removed. Less than a foot of the larger stones of the circles projects, above the ground level.

In the surface layers of earth within the circle were found fragments of pottery the shapes of some of which were identifiable. A few sherds belonged to an offering stand of the type represented in text fig. 2,1 and plate III, a, and some others were fragments of a jug similar to the one shown in plate II, b. Instead of the two covering slabs in No.1, there were three in No.2, (plate I, b) and it was obvious that they had been placed over a sort of trench in which a number of broken and some unbroken pottery (plate II, a) had been deposited. The earth in a few vessels appeared to be black due probably to ashes, the assumption being supported by the presence here and there of pieces of wood-charcoal. Chemical analysis by Dr. Paramasivan of the Madras Government Museum showed that the samples of the dark-coloured earth from the pottery did not contain bone ash. Except for the bits of charcoal, and bits of quartz that probably came accidentally into the pit, the whole of the finds consist of pottery. The arrangement of the pottery is schematically shown in text fig. 2, and the manner in which they were jumbled particularly at the western end is shown in plat II,a.

The pottery is remarkable for their shapes some of which are unique and reported now for the first time from Southern India. They are therefore described in some detail below :

1. The first complete specimen of pottery to be revealed on digging was an offering stand (text fig. 2, No.1). It was near the extreme NW end

and was probably placed erect though it had fallen over and got crushed by the weight of the soil above. It was placed about eight inches above the level of the pottery immediately in front of it and is 15.6 cm. high, 23 cm. across the top, and 14.4 cm. across the pedestal. The clay is somewhat coarse and had been baked to a light brown shade in the pedestal portion and also most of the outside of the bowl part, its inside and the top portion of the outside being black as in the carboniferous wares of Southern India. The pedestal appears to have been added to the bowl-like part, and is fenestrated by four narrow oblong holes that have been cut in it while the clay was still moist.

Smaller offering stands have been known before from old burials in Southern India, but pedestals with holes are now being reported for the first time. Another offering stand presented to the Madras Government Museum by Father Anglade has circular holes in the pedestal.

2. A bowl, only partially reconstructed, about 13 cm. in diameter, and 6.5 cm. high. Comparatively well-made of red ware. The rim is rounded and the thickness ranges from four to five millimeters. No carboniferous portion. The vessel rested almost on the floor of the trench.

3. Round pot of red ware lying on its side with the mouth towards the middle line. General description similar to that of No. 6 below.

4. Jug, only partially reconstructed. General description similar to that of No. 10 below. Placed at the mouth of No 3.

5. Hemispherical pot, 15 cm. high, and 22.5 cm. across, with everted lip. Lying on the side.

6. Round pot of red ware, on the right margin of the trench, lying on its side with the mouth towards the middle line. Height 21.9 cm. diameter across the mouth 13.8 cm. across the neck, 9.8 cm. and across the belly, 21.6 cm.

7. Interesting cup of red and black ware (plate III, b). The reddish slip is worn off. The black prevails over the inside, and also the outside except a small area near the bottom. The mouth has an oval outline, the vessel probably having been pressed towards the middle from the two sides in the region of its rim. About three-fourths of an inch below the rim there is a constriction. The oval shape of the mouth would

make it easier to pour out liquid from the cup without spilling it. The longest diameter across the mouth is 10.3 cm., the diameter at right angles to it, 8.8 cm. the height, 9.5 cm. and the thickness, about 3 mm.

The shape is somewhat uncommon in Southern India. The Madras Museum received recently a couple of cups of this shape from urn burials of the Ramnad Zamindary examined by Mr. Ramaswamy Aiyangar. A few more are found in the collection of pottery in the office of the Superintendent of Archaeology of the Southern Circle which I was able to examine through the kindness of Mr. G. C. Chandra.

8. Sherd of red and black ware.

9. Sherd of red ware.

10. Beak-spouted jug (plate II, b). Height from base to the tip of the lip, 14.8 cm. diameter across the mouth, 9.5 cm. and across the belly, 12.8 cm. Red ware. Moulded partly on the wheel and then by hand.

The nearest archaeological site where spouted jugs of similar shape have been found is in ancient Iran and the date goes back the third millennium B.C¹.

11, 12, 13. Sherds.

14. Flat bowl of red ware on the right margin. Resembles the lid of the urns in South Indian urn burials.

15. The biggest of the pots in the series. Probably placed erect, but fell on its side, and the mouth part got crushed into the belly. The latter filled with loose earth. Red ware. Ornamented below the neck (see plate II, a). Diameter across the mouth about: 33 cm.

16, 17. A small bowl and within it a spouted jug all crushed to small fragments.

¹ I am indebted to my friend Mr. T. Balakrishnan Nayar of the Annamalai University for the reference to Frankfort's paper "Archaeology and the Sumerian Problem - The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization, No. 4. 1922 "where the distribution of this type of jugs is discussed. I agree with Mr. Nayar's suggestion, made in a personal communication to me that the jug of the Perumal stone circles may be a survival of a very ancient Asiatic type of pottery, Further work at the site that is being done by Father Anglade will, we hope, throw some light on the linkage between Persia and India of the distant past.

18. A small bowl. Red ware.
19. A round pot, cf. No. 6.
20. A bowl crushed out of shape.
21. Sherds, probably of a medium-sized *chatti*.
22. Sherds of a large thick-necked pot about 18 inches in diameter made of poorly baked clay having violetish red tint. The shape could only be very roughly made out in the crushed condition. It was placed at a slightly higher level than the rest of the pottery in this region. Other crushed sherds were also present here.
23. A large pot which was probably thrown bottom downwards on the floor of the trench. The neck alone was entire and was resting on the sherds of the portions below which were imbedded in the sticky clay of the floor. Red ware.

Conclusion

With the data at present available it is not possible to understand the significance of these stone circles. Though the analysis of the ashes does not give any support to the assumption that these rude structures may be cremation burials, it does not actually rule out that possibility, as the soil in a well drained area cannot retain all the animal phosphates indefinitely long. A suggestion was made to the writer that the large number of pots might have been those used by an individual and buried on his death in a single trench. This is exceedingly improbable, particularly because of the fact that most of the pottery gives the impression of having been put in for some definite ceremonial purpose. The modern practice is to throw away household pottery rendered unfit for use by ritual pollution. Broken fragments in the superficial layers of the soil within the circles show that some of the pottery were actually broken prior to their burial. On comparative ;rounds, it seems to be not unlikely that these "stone circles" belong to the urn burial complex of Southern India.*

I wish to express my thanks for the help received in connection with the work in the Perumal Hills to Dr. F. H. Gravely who made the preliminary survey and sent me officially to the site to Mrs. Gravely for her hospitality during my stay at Kodaikanal; to Father Anglade who showed me the various sites and placed at my disposal not only the interesting collection in the museum attached to the Sacred Heart College, but also his wealth of knowledge concerning the antiquities of Kodaikanal to Rev. Father Rector and Fathers Gathier, Ugarte, and Austruc of the Sacred Heart College, for the facilities and help for the excavation and their hospitality and to Dr. S. Paramasivan for the chemical analysis of some of the antiquities.

ARYANIZATION AND SANSKRITIZATION OF DRAVIDIAN-SPEAKING TRIBAL GROUPS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN INDIA

Under the heading, Central Dravidian, the Language Tables of the 1961 Census Report lists the following language groups:

	Number of speakers
Kui (Kui, Pengu)	512,161
Kolami	51,055
Gondi (Dorli, Gondi, Maria and 13 others) . .	1,501,431
Parji	109,401
Koya	140,777
Khond/Kondh	168,027
Kond	12,298
Total . .	2,495,150

Under North Dravidian, spoken in North Orissa, Bihar and Bengal, the following languages are listed:

	Number of speakers
Kurukh/Oraon	1,141,804
Malto	88,676
Total . .	1,230,480

The Dravidian speakers in Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh are constituted by about three dozen tribal communities in various stages of cultural and economic development and degrees of linguistic and cultural transformation. Surrounded by Aryan-speakers who are economically and politically powerful, these Dravidian speakers are under various pressures and react to them first by becoming bi-lingual or in some cases tri-lingual, then by giving up their original languages and adopting those of their dominant neighbours. The largest groups of Dravidian speakers are the several Gond tribes in the eastern districts

of Madhya Pradesh, the Kuvi/Kui speaking Konds of Orissa and the Kurukh-speaking Oraons of Bihar and Orissa. On a rough estimate, more than half of the Gond tribes have given up their original Dravidian Speech in favour of dialects of Hindi, just as the Bhils of Northern Maharashtra and Rajasthan long ago gave up their non-Aryan mother tongue (which has not been identified but is likely to have been Dravidian). One section of the Gonds, namely the Raj Gonds, have got themselves transformed into Kshatriyas and retained only their tell-tale Dravidian group name. The Gonds of Orissa resented being included in the list of scheduled tribes and refused to accept the scholarships offered by the government for their school-going children. The process of kshatriyisation of tribal aristocrats in Andhra and Orissa has been briefly described elsewhere by the present writer (Aiyappan, 1964). Other socio-cultural processes of Hinduisation which anthropologists conceptualise as sanskritization find brief references in several monographic studies on these tribes. Their Hindu neighbours (unlike the missionaries) do not force the tribesmen to adopt their language and customs, but ridicule is one of the subtle but powerful instruments which they use on these weak minorities with considerable effect. About 60% of the Oraons are said to have become Christians. Christian missions are active in all tribal areas. With the increased tempo of Hinduisation and conversion, tribal cultures have little chance of survival.

Replacement of Dravidian mother tongues by Hindi and Oriya was slow in the past for two reasons. The areas of the highest concentration of tribal people were remote with few good roads, but during the recent decades miles and miles of motorable roads have opened up the tribal areas and intensified contacts of the tribesmen with the men from the plains. More schools have been opened to educate the tribal children. Though the national policy on paper is that, wherever possible, tribal children should have facilities to learn through their mother tongues, the state governments are not keen on implementing this policy. At a conference at the Orissa Government Secretariat which discussed the question of the use of tribal languages in elementary schools, the anthropologists pleaded that, at least on humanitarian grounds, the tribal children, in areas that were not bilingual, should be taught for the first three school years through the medium of their mother

tongues. This suggestion was opposed by the Director of Public Instruction on the ground that the change over to Oriya after the third year will be difficult. He was prepared to have the mother tongue medium along with Oriya only during the first school year. "If in convent schools in the cities our children learn through the English medium in the very first year" he argued "What is wrong with tribal children doing it in Oriya in their first year?" What is happening in Orissa is true of Bengal and Bihar. Neither the commissioner for Linguistic Minorities nor the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes seems to have taken notice of the unfortunate situation. Even if they did, it is doubtful if they will be able to do anything to prevent this cruelty to tribal children. In Bengal and in Bihar, the Governments are really concerned about the growing influence of the Jharkhand party who are claiming a national language status for the Santali language. Following the example of their Santal neighbours, the Kisans - a branch of the Kurukh-speaking Oraons-of Orissa, are developing linguistic ethnocentrism. The Kisans are now trilingual, using the Kisan tongue among themselves and Hindi and Oriya for communication with their neighbours in North Orissa. Recently one of my colleagues found the Kisan leaders at a meeting of the Kisan Jati Sabha insisting on speeches being delivered in Kisan instead of the Oriya *lingua franca*. It is doubtful if, in the competition for survival, the languages of politically and economically weak minorities have any chance of winning and continuing any vigorous existence, much less of growing.

This rather depressing account of the progressive increase of the pace of attrition of tribal languages leads me on to the chief point I want to make in this paper. It is most unfortunate that both anthropologists and linguists have not been active in their researches on the Dravidian speaking tribes of Central and Eastern India. Ethnographic studies are not fashionable among Indian anthropologists of the present generation. Most of them have become rural and urban sociologists as more funds are available for rural and urban research. Unesco appointed a committee to consider the problem of research on vanishing cultures. I do not know if any similar agency has gone into the question of vanishing languages. It is for this Conference of Tamil Studies to take this question up or their active and urgent consideration. Nigam (1964, p. ccii) after examining the little research done during the last six

decades, comes to the conclusion that the Grierson classification of the Central Dravidian languages is no longer valid, but that an alternative classification requires further studies. Apart from classification, there are the far more interesting aspects of language change. Linguists can watch here the steps in the decline and final death of languages. These are as interesting as the physiology of death is to the medical man. The linguist may even be able to prevent the death and disappearance of some at least of them.

There are some crucial historical problems for which the anthropologists and historians of India would like to get linguistic answers. The first of such problems is a proper explanation for the presence of Dravidian words in the *Rg Veda*. One set of scholars say that these words may have been *indirectly* borrowed, not directly, as Dravidian speech has no traces left in the Panjab. Mayura is one of the Dravidian words found in the *Rg Veda*. As peacocks (Mayura) are indigenous to the Panjab, could it be that the local people, (non-Aryan, non-Dravidian, according to this hypothesis) had no words of their own for this very conspicuous bird? The explanation that the word was indirectly borrowed does not hold water. What I have said here is a layman's common sense way of looking at the problem which, however, should be examined by linguists.

The next important ethno-linguistic problem concerns the prehistory of the Bhils. Anthropologists who know them feel certain that careful search will bring out survivals of their ancient Dravidian speech. Malti Nagar, a student of Dr. Sankalia, has found modern survivals, in the domestic and decorative arts of the Bhils and Minas of the Binas Valley, of motives and artifacts of the Ahar culture that goes back to 1800 B.C. There seems to be little doubt that the ancestors of the Bhils were in contact with the Vedic people and the Harappan culture. The Bhils and other indigenous people of Rajasthan, like the Dravidian speakers of southern India, have the basic southern kinship pattern (Karve, Ch. IV, V) characterised by cross-cousin marriage and the merging of consanguines and affines. The Bhils were important politically in Rajasthan till about the 6th century A.D. Subject to confirmation by further research, we might assume that the Bhils are the ethnic relic of the prehistoric Dravidian-speakers in contact with the early Aryan

immigrants, Their relation with the Harappans is at present a dark chapter.

The relation of the Dravidian-speaking Brahui of Kalat to the rest of the Dravidian speakers has not yet been satisfactorily explained. If the suggestion that the Bhils and also the pre-Aryan speakers of Gujarat, were Dravidians is validated, then the geographical gap is somewhat bridged and we reach the conclusion, contrary to the one held by Grierson, that Dravidian was not, to begin with, peninsular in its geographical spread but covered the whole area from Kalat in Baluchistan to the Rajmahal Plateau of the Santal Parganas in Eastern India.

Historical analysis of the likely socio-cultural differentiate between early Aryan and Dravidian speakers has to be based on reconstructions of the past, for which valid and reliable documentary and other data are extremely meagre and fragmentary. The earliest literary evidence both in the north and south are from sources that came to be written over ten or twelve centuries after the Aryan incursion, by which time considerable fusion of cultures and social give and take had gone on. The separation of archetypes from the recent or sub-recent blend is full of difficulties. Inter-cultural interaction is far more complex than inter-linguistic interaction. The play of situational factors is much more in the former. Historians and anthropologists often presume, that the processes of acculturation in the past were more or less similar to those which they observe in the contemporary scene. The anthropologist's reconstruction of past cultures based on the method of "arguing from the present to the past" and the literary historian's reconstruction based on the scanty resources to socio-cultural traits in ancient poems and mythologies can at best be only very tentative. In what follows I do bear in mind that the suggestions made are tentative and provisional.

According to Indologists, social practice of cross-cousin marriage, especially matrilinear cross-cousin marriage (*matulakanya vivaha*) differentiates the northern Hindu from the southern, and this difference is considered to go back in time and is related to differences in archetypal Dravidian and Aryan social systems. Anthropologists, particularly Karve, have pointed out that the clans to which Krishna and the Pandavas belonged were cross-cousin-marrying clans; that this

goes with the puranic reference to the ancestress of the Pandavas, Kali Satyavati, being dark-skinned; and that the Maharashtrians, in spite of their Indo-Aryan speech, practice cross-cousin marriage on an extensive scale. What is the current situation with regard to this marriage custom among the central and eastern Indian Dravidian speakers? Among the Maler, cross-cousin marriage is no longer in vogue; in his book on this tribe Vidyarthi does not make any reference to it, and the kinship terminology of the Dravidian type is also not in use. The Oraons and the Kisans practise it but on a declining scale. In Orissa, the Konds of the interior areas practise cross-cousin marriage, but those in the plains who marry their cross-cousins have to pay a nominal fine to the caste council. The Oraons of Chotanagpur who have migrated and settled in the Sunderbans district of West Bengal have completely given up cross-cousin marriage. Some sections of the Maharashtrian Brahmins get over Aryan prohibition of cross-cousin marriage by the subterfuge of an adoption of the cross-cousin to an unrelated family before his marriage: Research on what is happening to cross-cousin marriage among other Dravidian speakers has been very meagre.

Of linguistic and also of sociological interest is the rate and mode replacement of Dravidian kinship terms by Dravidian speakers in central and eastern India. The Maler use *Abba* (father), *Ayali* (mother), *Perrdu* (wife), which seem to be Dravidian, but their other kinship terms are Aryan. The Oraons retain *Baa* (father), *Maamu* (mother's brother) and *Tachi* (for father's sister and mother's brother's wife, after the Dravidian pattern). The Konds of Phulbani region, partially Aryanised, retain about 10% of Kui terms, that is, just the core kinship terms.

Most of the Dravidian speakers in the area under discussion are giving up beef eating. They have no tradition of drinking milk. Another Dravidian practice which they widely share is the erection of stone monuments to commemorate their dead. None of them have the tradition of a mortuary rite involving the use of large burial urns which seems to have been practiced by early Dravidians all the way from Tinnevely in the south to Jorwe in the upper reaches of the Godavari.

During the final stages of Aryanization in the tribal areas, tribal groups secure the services of Brahmin priests to perform priestly ceremonies for their domestic rites of passage and they also secure roles in the

ceremonials of the large temples. The Mundari-speaking Savaras-a section-have been transformed into temple servants in the great Jagannath temple at Puri in Orissa. A Former student of mine, Sri Uma Charan Mohanty, has reported on the recent adoption of the worship of Siva, Kali and Kartikeya by the Konds of Phulbani, about 1870 A.D., and on their Danda festival at which the Brahmin priest performs *homa*, the Mali priest performs the worship of Siva etc., and the Kond priest sacrifices the goat in honour of the tribal goddess *Jakri Penu* (now sanskritized as *Kandhuni Buddi*). The vedic god, Agni, puranic deities, Siva, Kali and Kartikeya, and the tribal deities, Tara Penu and Jakri Penu are worshipped side by side at a grand merging series of ceremonies. (I visited the Kond village Sadrupumpa in the Phulbani district after the Danda festival was nearly over.) With a Brahmin family taking up their residence in the tribal village the social distance between the tribesmen and the rest of the Hindus seems to have been considerably reduced.

CASTE AS A FORM OF ACCULTURATION*

This slim volume raises a few general questions : Do we know enough yet about caste? Is it possible to agree with some impatient young colleagues of ours who say that we have a surfeit of research on caste? If I am allowed to give my own answers to these questions, I would say that our understanding of caste is yet full of gaps. ' Even the latest and most perceptive of caste studies to date, *Homo hierarchicus*, leaves several problems open. Research on caste should therefore go on till we are able to predict its future course and transformations *a la* Levi-Strauss. As early as 1916, the economist Gilbert Slater, the first Professor of Economics in the University of Madras, told his students that Indian economics should have "as its central object the study of the causes of and remedies for Indian poverty". We, as anthropologists, I am afraid, have not given much thought about what should be the central practical aim, apart from generalities, of our studies. I believe that our research goals also should be related to the question of the removal of the mass poverty of the country. Though caste may have had its useful roles (see Abbe Dubois) there is no doubt that attitudes inherent in the system have contributed to the mass poverty of India. All attempts made to undermine the inequities of caste seem to have failed or are failing. Why ? We don't know. (Personally speaking, I am baffled by the medical men's agitation in Gujarat. The counter-argument to their elitist plea can be found in Dumont). For more reasons than one, I welcome this new contribution to our understanding of caste by Dr. S.N. Ratha which attacks the caste question in its Rg Vedic phase.

I am in full sympathy with Ratha's historic approach in terms of the anthropological theory of acculturation. With regard to the role of history in scientific understanding, the philosopher Collingwood said : "... natural science as a form of thought exists and always has existed in a context of history and depends on historical thought for its

* *Caste as a form of . acculturation*, by S. N. Ratha. Gauhati University, 1977.

existence. From this I venture to infer that no one can understand natural science unless he understands history; and that no one can answer the question what nature is unless he knows what history is" (1949 : 177). If we claim that our discipline is scientific, we should place higher reliance on history than we have done in the past. While structural and transactional studies are undoubtedly useful, it is sheer folly not to use our memorate history of four thousand years.

The author acknowledges his indebtedness to J. B. Watson (*Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 19,4) who first suggested the acculturation analytical model. As our sociological knowledge of pre-Vedic communities, that provided by the archaeology of pre Harappan and Harappan settlements (summarised in the first four chapters of the book) is slight, the author, rightly, I should say, seeks the explorable beginnings of caste in the Rg Vedic hymns, products of the best seminal Aryan minds of north-western India, about 1500 years before Christ. Hutton also, as we know, is of the view that for the subliminal basis, of the occupational stratification of Indian society, we should look for, even beyond the Vedas. The methodological hurdle faced by his theory is the relevance of ascribing the boundary marker, *mana*, of north-eastern Indian tribes, relatively late immigrants into that region, to Indians of Aryavarta who had little in common, historically and culturally, with the former.

The author's implicit aim in surveying pre-Vedic cultures is to suggest that the beginnings of, the partial synthesis following initial inter-ethnic opposition are to be found in the Rg Veda, the sociological analysis of which follows in the last two chapters of his book. The Aryans were colour and race conscious, but not to the extent of racial intolerance and prohibition of inter-racial marriages. Indra, the idealised symbol of warriorhood was tauny-coloured (not 'fair "or" white') and red-bearded. The snubnose and thick lips of the *Dasyus* generated obvious revulsion. Rice, well-known to the Harappan people, was little used in rituals (but later on rice was used in the *pakayajnas*). The social consequences of the demographic dominance of the conquered over the Aryan colonists are also indicated. (Later on, it should have swamped the conquerors). The author suggests that land was probably communally owned by the small Aryan village communities, for land,

significantly, is not mentioned in any of the *dana-stutis* though sheep, cows and slaves (both men and women) are included in the list. As images of Indra are made mention of, iconic worship seems to have prevailed as a minor religious practice. Sudras and Vaisyas are referred to only in the late *Purushasukta* hymns in the 10th book from which the inference drawn is that those class categories were little developed in the Rg Vedic age. The distinction between the Vaisya merchants and farmers was made only after the age of the *Brahmanas*. The Brahmins began to emerge as a highly respected class in Rg Vedic times, but any one including rarely a slave or Dasa could aspire to Brahminhood and several actually did so. There were also impostors who tried to pass for Brahmins. Composing hymns and conducting sacrifices were the chief functions of the Brahmins. Vasista, son of a *dasi*, and Visvamitra, a *rajanya*, were the most high-ranking Rg Vedic poet-priests.

The Aryan way of life and their occupations, arts and crafts are listed at pp 64-76, but of greater relevance to us in the discussion of caste are the facts collected on food, religion, the roles of the Brahmins, the list of Aryan and non-Aryan tribes and inter-racial relations. The meat of the cow and oxen was eaten by men and offered to the gods. The great gods of the epic age Vishnu and Rudra appear as only minor deities assisting Indra in his exploits (p. 73). Indra and Agni are the greats among the gods. There is little evidence of the temple rites of later days nor of tree, serpent or river worship. During the later phases of the Vedic age, priest-hood seems to have become professionalised and hereditary. Government seems to have been tribal with a king or chief, assisted by his *sabha*, *samiti*, *gramani*, *senani* and *purohita*. There is no clear indication about the method of recruitment to the office of the king. The people were referred to in various contexts as *jana*, *charyani*, *krista* and *vis*. Over 25 tribes are named, among them the Pakthas (modern Pathans). The tribe Kikata who do not deserve to own cows because they make no use of milk for sacrifices were obviously non-Aryan.

The Panis, Dasas and Dasyus were the non-Aryan enemies against whom the invaders fought bitter battles, but in the following centuries, friendly relations were established with some of the Pani/Dasa tribes, so that it is seen during the wars between Aryan tribes, some non-

Aryan tribes allied themselves with friendly Aryan tribes. It is presumed that by the end of the Rg Vedic age, a composite society of Aryans and non-Aryans was emerging, infighting among the Aryan tribes providing the entry point for non-Aryans with positions assigned to the latter.

While three classes, Brahman, Kshatriya and Vaisya were in existence in the Rg Vedic age, their hereditary position or otherwise is not explicit from the texts. It is, however, clear that all occupations did not depend upon birth.

The division of men into four orders-no mention is made of Varnas-appears late in the last, i.e. the Xth Mandala (X. 90th hymn 11, 12). These hymns according to the general consensus among Vedic scholars are later than the compilation of Yayurveda and Samaveda. The material from which the world is made is the body of a primeval giant, Purusha. The act of creation is treated as a sacrifice in which Purusha is the victim. The dismembered parts of the body became parts of the universe.

As Sudras are not mentioned anywhere in the Rg Veda except in the *Purushasukta* the assumption made by Kane and others is that the bulk of the Dasas and Dasyus subordinated by the Indo-Aryans were later added gradually as a fourth order in the emerging social system. Borrowing the term Varna from the later *Brahmanas*, says Ratha, these four may be called Varnas, but by no means castes. In the Rg Vedic age, these classes had no rigid boundaries.

Examples of class mobility are many, the best being those of *rajanyas*. Visvamitra, priest of king Sudas, Devapi, priest of his own brother Santanu (p. 91) and Kanva, the black Rishi who was given a fair skinned woman by the Asvins; while the conquered non-Aryans (Dasyus, Dasas, Panis) generally, occupied low positions in the composite society, some of them were allowed positions of prestige in the composite society. Some non-Aryans rose to the position of seers, while the craftsmen and farmers, workers of the Dasa-Dasyu groups would naturally have found it easy to transfer their loyalty to the conqueror-colonists. The poorest would have joined the ranks of slaves, recruited first from among captives of the numerous wars of conquest. As the Dasa society also was stratified and had high-ranking persons some of

whom were Aryanised and were served by Vedic priest poets (p. 102), another thing that probably happened in the acculturational situation was that some Dasa-Pani groups with their own cultural systems were, as a body, given a status, obviously lower in the total emerging society. This process is described as a creation. Geographic nearness between the two groups tend to obliterate differences, but distance tends to keep them alive. The conclusion drawn is finally summarised :

The data we have presented and the hypothesis we have examined drive us to the conclusion that the castes have developed from erstwhile separate populations and traditions through a process in which some centripetal forces pulled the proto-castes into an increasingly intense and constant articulation and created a new system. In the process the centripetal forces are counter-balanced by some centrifugal forces sufficient to preserve inter-group discontinuities.

Whether the Harappan king was a priest-king or not and whether the Working class was servile or not, are not yet proved though the author has Wheelers' authority behind him. The role of colour and race prejudice need not necessarily have been as great as presumed, as the invading Aryans were in all probability familiar with dark ethnic groups in Iran.

A CASE FOR A SUB-DISCIPLINE : BRAHMINOLOGY

This paper pleads a case for a sub-discipline : Brahminology. The author examines a number of themes that will usefully make up the anthropology of the Brahmins or Brahminology : parochialization of the Brahmin, high valuation of the Brahmins, opposition to Brahmins, Brahmin migrations, social organization, interaction patterns with non-Brahmins, inter-regional relationship, the charging Brahmins, and Brahmins-not priests. In his brief but richly illustrated arguments the author has clarified his-point of view stating as to why he wants such a study and how it could be done.

Indians claim, with some justification, that they are an intensely religious people. Indians also spend a very high percentage of their GNP on religious activities. In a Tamil Nadu village which I am now engaged in studying, there are twenty-seven temples, large and small. Each of its Harijan hamlets with 5-60 households on an average has a Mari Amman temple and a prayer hall dedicated to Vishnu of Tirupati, the Lord of the Seven Hills (*Exhu Malaiyan*, in Tamil). The City Transport Corporation of Madras has about 5% of their buses carrying devotees every day to two holy places near-by which have shot up to prominence during the last two decades. I have no doubt that on several other empirical indicators, the unabated religiousness of the Indian population can be convincingly established. The chief role players in Hindu religious activities in rural and also in urban areas, now as in the past, have undoubtedly been the Brahmins. Hinduism cannot be anthropologically understood from the Hindu scriptures alone. Textual Hinduism and the models and categories set up in the scriptures provide, of course, the background for the understanding of Hinduism, but between actual religious behaviour and the textual norms the gaps are often very wide. In order to understand religion and religious personnel properly we have to observe behaviour and collect data in ways that anthropology has now made its own methodological speciality.

A fresh, synthesizing anthropological study of Hinduism is riddled with problems. One way of managing the problems is to make a beginning with crucial institutions or with the key actors in the social structures of the Hindus, namely, the Brahmins. In this context I should like to

quote in translation what a Brahmin author of Kerala has written with special reference to the history of Brahminism :

The Brahmin did nothing in the past which was not tied up with religion. Now he does not do much ... Social life of the people of Kerala is an integrated whole. To write a proper history of the country, both social relations and customs and manners of the people have to be carefully studied ... Many of the traditional *acharas* and social relations have disappeared, but there are some knowledgeable individuals who remember them. If they undertake to investigate and analyse them the history of the country can be understood. If we delay another generation the historian's task would become indeed very difficult.

No one in India has as much familiarity with Hindu religion and tradition as the Brahmins. Others, however learned, cannot acquire the intimate and core knowledge of the Brahmins who practise them. As the Brahmins did almost nothing that was not directly or indirectly religious, a correct history of the country would emerge only from the efforts of the Brahmins in that direction.

There is a great deal of truth in what my Brahmin friend claims. If the emic blind spots and warping of view of the Brahmin scholars are corrected by scientific training, Brahmin students of Brahminism in particular and of Hinduism in general have definite advantages over others. When, some years ago, I planned an all India study of Brahmins using the comparative method, I had not read the Brahmin author whom I have just quoted, but in my choice of collaborators from the various regions of India, my first preference was from Brahmin anthropologists or sociologists. I have no doubt that what they know by their direct participation in Brahminic practices, beliefs and attitudes can be a great advantage in a scientific study of the Brahmins. The emic/etic distinctions are likely to be minimal in the case of Brahmin researchers as the Brahmins have been engaged off and on in self-criticism and they have often been the targets of criticism by others.

I cannot now recollect how I got interested in the study of the Brahmins. I guess the chief factor was my own ignorance of many aspects of the sociology of the Brahmins. Years ago, I found that the Brahmins in Punjab were held in much less esteem than the Brahmins of my home state, Kerala. During a short visit to Bengal villages near Calcutta, I found that the social distance between Bengali Brahmins and non-Brahmins was slight when compared to, the situation both in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. I asked myself whether it was the relatively higher economic status of the Kerala Brahmins or some other factors in addition to wealth which could account for the high prestige of the Kerala Brahmin. Comparing Kerala and Tamil Brahmins it was not difficult for me to note that there was a great gulf of difference in their modal personality structure.

I was given another, more important stimulus by the full day discussion we had on sanskritization at a seminar which the Social Sciences Association organised at Madras (Aiyappan and Bala Ratnam (eds), 1956). Hinduisation and Brahminization were the older terms for the processes which Srinivas covered by the apter term sanskritization. Whether or not the immediate models imitated in sanskritization were Brahmins or others, the concerned values and norms were those created and practised mostly by the Brahmins. The general impression created in me by many discussions is that we seem to equate sanskritization with status climbing secular mobility—of the sociologist. Watching sanskritization in Kerala, I have come to believe that sanskritization has a spiritual ideological dimension which needs empirical study. The spiritual climate of sanskritization is that provided by the Brahmin seers. My plea therefore has been that in order better to understand sanskritization, the Brahmin should be studied more intensely than we have so far done.

Parochialization of the Brahmin

In discussions by anthropologists about sanskritization, another parallel reverse process that has been going on among the Brahmins themselves in the various regions of India has been generally ignored. For want of a better term, I shall call it the parochialization of the Brahmins. Wherever they settled in the course of their migration from Aryavarta, they indigenised themselves to varying degrees, gave up their original

mother tongues, changed their kinship systems, and absorbed local cults. What local traits went into the new sub-cultural synthesis is an apt subject of research. What exactly was the nature of the immigrant Brahmin's culture is at present difficult to know exactly but historians would perhaps be able to help us. The process is still going on which some of us may be able to observe, analyse and record.

Brahmins of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra and Tamil Nadu adopted the local type of marriage alliance including cross-cousin marriage, so repugnant to the rest of the Brahmins. In Kerala alone the Nambudiri Brahmins resisted cross-cousin marriage. In Kerala, Brahminical adaptation included the adoption of Malayalam speech and hair style (with top knot), the worship of several indigenous deities, and morganatic marriages with matrilineal non-Brahmin women, endogamous marriages being limited to the eldest of several brothers in a family. Rigid vegetarianism in food also was an adaptation of the Pancha Dravida Brahmins in response to local conditions. Tantric cults made different degrees of impact on the religious practices of the Vedic Brahmins. The socio-cultural milieu of these and other transformations would be an exciting area of research.

High valuation of Brahmins

From the epic age onwards, the Brahmins as a class, were regarded as a highly useful, honoured and therefore privileged group. Birth as a Brahmin was regarded as the reward for accumulated grace (*punya*) of a series of previous birth. The Brahmin on his part was expected to act in strict conformity with the prescribed *dharmic* principles. So holy was the Brahmin considered to be that, until recent times, in Hindu kingdoms such as Nepal, Cochin and Travancore, no Brahmin criminal was to be given death sentence. Killing a Brahmin was considered to be the most heinous of crimes for which there was no *prayaschitta* (expiation). Gifts to the Brahmins were prescribed in expiation of sins. Raja Martanda Varma of Travancore in the 18th century made an offering of his whole kingdom to the temple of Padmanabha and made gifts to thousands of Brahmins to wash away the sins of the atrocities he committed during his conquest of several neighbouring chieftains. In the *Mahabharata*, the one strand that runs through the whole of the lengthy epic is the glorification of the Brahmins. Its author/authors

seem to have had tremendous confidence in their achievements, capacities and worthiness. The rest of Indians, seem generally to have conceded their claims though I have come across some rare reservations about the Brahmins' capability as administrators reflected, for example, in an Oriya saying that a Brahmin entrusted with rulership will ruin the country in a day.

In my home state, Kerala, where there has been no trace of the anti-Brahmin movement which characterised most of the south Indian provinces between 1920 and 1940, the Nambudiri Brahmins have always been held in the highest esteem. the Nambudiri Brahmin community of Kerala, let us remember, gave the Nation two Sankaras, Sankara the Advaita philosopher in the 9th century A. D. and Sankara the Secretary of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in the 20th century, both great men in their own different ways. I give below two statements about the Nambudiri Brahmins, one by a Kshatriya professor and another by a Nayar journalist :

No praise can be too much for the extra ordinary virtues of the Nambudiri Brahmins-their scholarship in the Vedas, their special *acharas*, their morality, hospitality, their guileless conduct, their kindness....In recent times, there has taken place some deterioration in their standards of conduct. (Prof. A.R. Rajaraja Varma in Parayil Raman Nambudiri (ed), 1918:45).

Looked at through the microscope of the 20th century, we may find some bad features among the Nambudiri Brahmins The Kerala people owe all their progress and things in the past to the Nambudiris. They have done nothing that is evil. To speak ill of them would be gross ingratitude (C. Kunhirama Menon in Parayil Raman Nambudiri (ed), Essays in Malayalam 1918:137-138).

On account of their high level of commitment to their own culture, the Nambudiri Brahmins, naturally, were unwilling to learn English and make adaptations to the pervasive changes forced on us by the colonial rule of the British. In the new set up, they found themselves losing ground to those who occupied lower ranks in the social and even economic hierarchy. And finally, in more recent times, the land reforms

in Kerala deprived them of their landed estates. This was the last and most shocking blow to their status. The younger generation of Nambudiri Brahmins are struggling to make good, and there is every likelihood of their doing so.

Opposition to Brahmins

It should, however, be remembered that, off and on, there were massive or sporadic opposition to the Brahmins. We get echoes of it in history and literature but details are lacking. In Tamil Nadu, we have sufficient evidence to suggest that the superiority of the Brahmins was often questioned. In the 7th century Tamil Buddhist epic *Manimekhalai*, a character, Aputra, illegitimate son of a Brahmin woman, who was abandoned in a bush and was brought up by a Brahmin enters later into a tirade against the Brahmins questioning their claims to superiority. In another 14th century work *Paychellur Patikam* by a poetess, Uttaranallur Nangai, the same style of questioning of the hereditary superiority of the Brahmins is found :

A Brahmin boy was learning the Vedas on the banks of the Kaveri. A Harijan girl of the same age used to graze cattle in the same place. Every day, in his innocence, the boy taught her all the Vedic verses which he learnt. Later on, the boy's parents arranged his marriage. When the boy told the Harijan girl of this, she said, 'Why don't you marry me ?' As he had grown to like the girl, he said he would tell his parents about her suggestion. They got very angry and with the help of the Brahmins of their *agraharam* set out to burn the whole Harijan hamlet. The girl however stopped them and argued her case successfully.

Said she : You say the sandalwood is superior to the margosa tree, the reason being that when burnt the sandalwood emits fragrant fumes, while the margosa wood emits stench. On the other hand, a Brahmin and Paraiya (Harijan) both emit stench when burnt. Is the one superior to the other?

Further said she : The palmyra palm produces flowers. The inflorescence produces palmyra fruits. Another inflorescence is tapped and produces toddy. You say the fruit is good and

toddy is bad. The tree is not responsible for the bad thing produced. It is man. In this way, she argued and proved that the difference between the Paraiya and Brahmin is man-made and can be un-made. According to the story, the Harijan girl and the Brahmin boy married and their son became a mystic and poet known as Siddhar Sivavakyar.

Clashes between Jains and Brahmins and between Buddhists and Brahmins are mentioned in south Indian history but ultimately the winners were the Brahmins.

Brahmin migrations

Very little is known of the prehistoric migrations of the Brahmins. As regards southern India it is surmised by Nilakanta Sastri and others that it was a peaceful penetration, though others question this (for example, Dr. Suvira Jayaswal of Jawaharlal Nehru University). Later immigration both in Orissa and southern India was in larger numbers on the invitation of the rulers who took pride in having large colonies of learned Brahmins in their kingdoms. As in the case of the Sasani Brahmins of Orissa, so in Tamil kingdoms, land gifts were made to exclusive Brahmin villages (*sasan*, *agraharams*). Very often it was stipulated that these Brahmin villages were to be autonomous and as in the Gupta Kingdom, the state officials were expected not to interfere in the internal administration of the Brahmin village communities. Under the Vijayanagar rule in south India, the Brahmin managers of temples had the authority to punish by imprisonment weavers and others who had to provide cloth and other goods to the Brahmins who constituted the *sabha*. In Travancore, the management of the Padmanabha temple at Trivendrum, presided over by a Brahmin sanyasi, did occasionally fine the ruler himself if he committed excesses. Great indeed was the kudos enjoyed by the Brahmins.

Historians and archaeologists tell me that it will be possible, of course, with considerable research effort to trace the main routes of Brahmin migrations in the various regions of India.

Social organization

As students of societies, we feel the need for data on the social organization of the Brahmins. While there is a vast corpus of data on Brahminical religion, rituals, law and philosophy, the same cannot be said of their social organization. The barest outline of their structure is available in the volumes on their ethnography published mostly towards the close of the 19th century. Academic anthropology was a late starter in India and when research began, efforts were concentrated on the tribal communities and after Independence on village studies. To questions about the organization of the intellectual tradition of the Brahmins-how the Vidyapiths and Vedapathasalas were organised, supported and regulated-our historians have told us very little and our anthropologists much less. Kasi (Banaras) was both the Mecca and Oxford of Hinduism. We learn from Kane that when Sivaji, a Sudra ruler, was to be crowned in the Vedic style as a Kshatriya monarch the approval of the great pandits of Banaras was sought and obtained. Dr. Baidyanath Saraswati has begun his study of Banaras from the antropological point of view and from him we expect a good deal of light on the role of Banaras. The Anthropological Survey of India has initiated the study of Mutts in Mysore, but we do not know what progress they have made. Crooke (1896) mentions 905 sub-divisions of the Brahmins in his *Tribes and Castes of Northwestern Provinces and Oudh*, and Enthoven lists 93 divisions in Central Provinces but gives very little idea of the nature of the subdivisions except that most of them were exogamous based on regional or political segmentation. About the internal organization of the sub-regional Brahmin groups of the various linguistic areas of India, we have only hints. H. A. Rose says (*Tribes and Castes of the Punjab*, II, p. 12) that 'the Saraswat Brahmins of the Punjab are probably descendants of the original Khatri priests who have become Brahmins' but we do not know in detail how he arrived at this conclusion. About the historical interrelationship between and the internal organization of the Sarawat, Gaur, Kanyakubja, Maithil and Utkal Brahmins, we need more information. About the Desastha, Konkanastha, Karhara and Chitpavan Brahmins we have some new data, especially on their genetic relationship, thanks to the work of Iravati Karve. Of the traditional, regional endogamous Tamil Brahmin *jatis* such as Vadama, Brihatcharanam, Ashtasahasram,

Vathema; our information is meagre. In Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, we find sectarian divisions into Smarta, (essentially Saivite) and Vashnavite Brahmins, the latter generated by the great Acharya Ramanuja. And there is a division consisting of the followers of Madhva. The status of the temple priest is low in almost every region. In Tamil Nadu, the temple ritualist category known as Gurukkal does not enjoy even the privilege of commensalism with the rest of the Brahmins. In Kerala and Tulu Nad, on the other hand, the temple *pujari* Brahmin is not regarded as low in any way. Here the lowest category of the Brahmins are the Nambidi Brahmins who adopted the profession of arms, and slightly above them in ranking are the Mussads who took up the profession of medicine and the Elayad Brahmins who served the Nayars at the purification ceremony from death pollution. Surprisingly I found that in Orissa Sasani Brahmins who practised medicine did not have any stigma attached to them. That is why it has been suggested by social historians that immigrant Brahmin groups in various cultural sub-regions of India may have absorbed local women by marriage into their group and recruited local ritualists and others into their fold when they annexed their cults to their own. Geneticist Dr. Sanghvi in his study of the Mahars (Harijans) and the Brahmins near Nagpur found that the two have a similar genetic pool and should have inter-mixed. But in course of time, boundary maintenance became stricter and social distance grew wider. In Tamil Nadu also there is evidence that the Brahmin's social distance from others has been progressively increasing. Suggestions (which still require further scrutiny) have been made that the Gurukkal Brahmins may be local temple priests brahminised and elevated by the immigrants. Whether ethnohistoric probing will succeed in solving the problems raised by these suggestions remains to be seen, but the physical anthropologist may be of immense help. Similar issues of ethnic origins have been clinched in Europe by serological studies.

We find in the *Mahabharata* (especially *Bhagavadgita* and in *Manusmriti*) references to miscegenation (*varna sankara*) and its evil consequences. To Arjuna who raised this problem, Krishna says that his (Arjuna's) doubts are un-Aryan, perhaps implying that Aryans did or could allow some degree of mixing up of varnas (personal communication from Mr. U. C. Mohanty). *Manusmriti* however gives us the impression that the

prevalence of sex and marital relation across emerging caste frontiers of the time were recognizably rampant.

Social ranking in Kerala was somewhat like this. The highest rank went to those proficient in Vedic studies; next to those skilled in the Vedic sacrifices; next to those qualified as *purohits*, followed by those proficient in the *shastras*, arts etc., and those working as *pujaris* in temple. The Kerala pattern seems to be the ancient rank order.

As regards kinship and marriage there are striking points of difference between the northerners (Pancha Gaudas) and the southerners (Pancha Dravidas). *Kulinism* in Bengal is matched in the south by the *sambandham* marriage of the Kerala Brahmins with local Kshatriyas, temple service castes and Nayars—a kind of hypogamy. The so-called *desacharas* in Brahmin marriages will be a fascinating area for comparative study. Why did the Dravidian Brahmin adopt the *tali* (marriage badge) from their regional non-Brahmin neighbours? There will be dozens of such questions to be answered when we deal with marriage.

In the matter of kinship more detailed work yet remains to be done. Dr. S. N. Ratha (1971) in a recent paper shows how even without cross-cousin marriage the kinship terminology of the Danua Brahmins of south Orissa has been influenced by their dominant Telugu neighbours. Iravati Karves's pioneering all India study of kinship needs to be followed up to make wider comparisons possible.

Interaction patterns with non-Brahmins

When the Brahmins were an open society their interaction patterns with non-Brahmins would have been fluid and less rigid than it became prior to the time of the *Manava Dharmasastra* of about 5th century B C. Likewise, the early migrants from Aryavarta to the various regions were probably less strict about the maintenance of boundaries between themselves and their new neighbours.

Coming to times nearer to us, we know in some detail that the Brahmins were fully involved in their local *Jajmani* tenurial, administrative and educational systems, but little is known about the roles of non-Brahmins in the ritual and religious activities of the Brahmins. At the *atiratra* vedic sacrifice which was conducted at Panhal in Kerala in 1973 which I had the good fortune to witness just for one day.

I learnt that several local castes had to render their prescribed services. It was the duty of Nambidi Brahmin chief of Kollengode (who now styles himself as a Varma) to supply *soma* plants, deer skin and so on; of the Nayar potter (Anturan) to make the large number of bricks and earthen pots; of the carpenter (untouchables in Kerala) to make the small chariot and the sacrificial hall; of the Sudra Nayar milkmen to provide the *ghee* and so on. The sociology of the various sacrifices would be a most interesting area of research.

I would illustrate how non-Brahmins participate in the domestic life of Brahmins by examples from Kerala. During the ten-days of birth pollution of Brahmin women, a Sudra Nayar woman lives with her to attend on her. The Brahmin lady then is allowed to eat food touched by the Sudra attendant. At all passage rites, the Sudra servants have certain duties to perform. A Nayar ritualist-not the usual barber-a Sitikan shaves the head of the child and the hair is received in a towel by a Sudra servant. At Nambudiri marriages, welcoming by waving lighted wicks, is done by Sudra servant women dressed in Brahmin style. A sub-caste of Nayars, known as Pallichan, whose *jati* occupation is that of palanquin bearers have the duty not only of carrying the bride to the groom's house, but also that of 'waving lights' in front of the bride who is welcomed ceremonially in the central hall of the house, seated on a *kalam* (a maize design) painted on the floor with rice powder. While performing his ritual duties, the Sitikan's or Pallichan's touch is not polluting to the Brahmin while on other occasions, any Nayar's touch pollutes the Brahmin. In this manner we should like to know how services for Brahmin rituals were organised in the rest of India. In the course of such a study, we are sure to come across strange phenomena such as Muslim barbers in Kashmir serving at Brahmin *upanayana* ceremonies for the simple reason that there are no Hindu barbers now in Kashmir (oral communication, Dr. T. N. Madan).

Inter-regional relationship

During the last ten years of informal data collection, I found that there is a lot of ignorance and prejudice among the Brahmin themselves about their peers in regions different from theirs. Space does not permit my going into details. Recently I came across a 17th century Sanskrit *Champakavya-Keralabharanam* by Ramachandra Makhin, son of Kesava

Dikshita who lived in Coimbatore and in Tanjore before it came under the rule of the Maharattas. Here the Tamil Brahmin poet, evidently a good scholar and who, as can be guessed from his title *Makhin*, had performed vedic sacrifices, devotes the entire poem to ridicule Madhva and Vaishnava Brahmins and all other regional Brahmins known and unknown to him. He says Anga, Vanga, Kalinga, Nepala and Gurjara are not even worth visiting because of their acharas widely deviating from the sastras. Their practices repugnant to him include meat-eating, eating *prasada* cooked by outcastes at Puri (Purushottamapura), easy purification of deviant Madhva Brahmin women by sprinkling over them ghee or water touched by the *salagrama* (Rama Bai, unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Madras University 1974 : 20).

How recent Brahmin immigrants from one region are treated in another contiguous region, I shall illustrate by the example of Tamil Brahmins settled in recent centuries in Kerala. There is a very large immigrant Tamil Brahmin population in Kerala, their largest concentration being in the Palghat district which in pre-British times was under a Kerala Kshatriya ruler, the Raja of Palghat. During the 15th or 16th century, there was a confrontation between the Nambudiri Brahmins and the Raja House of Palghat; the Rajas were declared to have lost caste and along with them about 200 Nayar families. Most of the Nambudiri Brahmins left Palghat and they refused to serve the Raja who was obliged to invite large numbers of Tamil Brahmins to settle in his kingdom. (More particulars about the Rajas of Palghat have been given in my forthcoming book on the kings and chieftains of Kerala).

In the kingdom of Cochin, Tamil Brahmin (*Pattar*) textile traders were settled in the 18th century by Raja Saktan Tampuran who modernised the administration of the State. These *Pattar* merchants were given shops in the towns and the pioneers among them were provided with food at the temples and their caravans were afforded special protection. Being shrewd business men, they soon became wealthy and influential. The cleverer ones among them became business agents of the East India Company. After the defeat of Tipu Sultan, the Malabar area, i.e., north Kerala, became part of the Madras Presidency. A *Pattar* Brahmin became the first administrator appointed with the approval of

the East India Company to collect taxes for the Zamorin Raja of Calicut who was reduced first to the status of a Zamindar before he was shorn of all political and administrative authority.

In the territory of the Raja of Travancore, the Tamil (*Pattar*) Brahmins filled the ranks of higher level administrators. A Brahmin, Ramayyan, was both Commander-in-Chief and Chief Administrator of Travancore under Raja Martanda Varma in the 18th century. Martanda Varma seemed to have greater faith and trust in his Tamil Brahmin officers than in the local Nayars.

The changing Brahmins

Brahmins are often said to be conservative, but in fact they have been changing though slowly through the centuries. Till about the 6th or 5th century B. C., the Brahmins were an open occupational group to which recruitment was made from other ranks. Some *Rishis* (sages) such as Viswamitra were originally warriors. According to D. D. Kosambi, Agastya is likely to have been a non-Aryan who was admitted to the ranks of the highest order of Brahmins. Along with the growing complexity of rituals, trade unionism of a sort also developed and the Brahmins became a closed group segmented into various categories of specialists.

Brahmins taking up the profession of arms may be a survival of the age during which there was free occupational mobility between priests and soldiers. Acharya Drona, the Brahmin preceptor in weaponry to the Pandavas, received all the honours due him as a Brahmin. Drona had no qualms of conscience in being revengeful and in giving military training to his son Aswathama.

Brahmins who took up the role of rulers in some rare cases are also known. The Sunga, Vakataka and Kadamba dynasties were established by Brahmin adventurers in ancient times. Maharashtra provided a later instance of the Chitpavan Brahmin ministers of Sivaji becoming rulers. During the Chola and Rashtrakuta rule in southern India, there were some Brahmin army commanders. In Kerala, there were three Brahmin ruling chieftains-the Nambidis of Kakkad, the Devanarayanans of Chempakasserri and the Raja of Parur. Analysing 1911 Census data of Brahmin occupations, M. N. Roy found that over

63% of Indian Brahmins were engaged in quite un-Brahminical professions. Change seems to have been the rule rather than the exception more in the case of Indian Brahmins than in the case of other castes.

Brahmins - not priests

The description by nineteenth century European writers of the Brahmins as a priestly class has been responsible for a great deal of confusion. To the early Greek diplomat, Megasthenes, the Brahmins were philosophers of or Wise Men. Roberto De Nobili, the Jesuit missionary at Madurai at the beginning of the 17th century, who has been described by Max Muller as the first European to study Sanskrit, has argued in detail how it is wrong to equate the Brahmins to mere priests. Knowledge of truth, De Nobili argues, is recognised in India to be a man's foremost title to nobility, and he quotes the couplets from Manu which means :

Four beings boast of superiority : the Brahmins among men,
the sun among the stars, the head among the members; and
truth among the virtues.

The pursuit of wisdom being the noblest of all pursuits, the Brahmin is entitled to the highest honour even from kings. Pursuit of knowledge, according to Manu, is the Brahmins' hereditary right. De Nobili cites the example of the Vijayanagar kingdom where even the Emperor showed the highest honour to the learned Brahmins, but not to those Brahmins who had left vedic studies and taken up service under him (Rajamanickam, 1972). If India has to be understood, we have to understand the Brahmins for they as a class have been in the forefront of her thinkers, ideologues, educators and creators of culture.

From what I have said so far, it becomes clear that Brahminology will have to be an inter-disciplinary study. In advancing it social anthropologists will have to lean heavily on the historian, sanskritist, archaeologist and physical anthropologist. In India, Dr. R. S. Sharma, Dr. D. D. Kosambi and Dr. Romila Thapar and perhaps other historians with whose works I am not familiar have utilised anthropological methods and concepts in their historical researches. Our concepts like clans, tribes, cultural diffusion, culture traits, social mobility and

sanskritization have been utilized by them in their historical analysis. A body of researchers drawn from the several disciplines mentioned could be formed after our discussions here to carry forward our joint suggestions, especially detailed analysis of vedic myths, reappraisal of *Manusmriti*, in addition to the anthropological themes mentioned in this paper.

RECOLLECTIONS AND REMINISCENCES

About five decades ago, when I began my apprenticeship to Anthropology, there were only three anthropological posts in India. Anthropology which began modestly in the museums of India, about a century ago, made rapid strides, so that it is now time to think of an anthropological tradition in India, for tradition is a sign of respectability.

Among the pioneers who built up an anthropological tradition in India—one of the leaders whom South Indians remember with gratitude—was Dewan Bahadur Dr. L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer, who had the distinction of being the first full-time teacher of Anthropology in the first Indian University to have a postgraduate teaching department. The late Sir Asutosh Mukherjee, Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University, had the rare foresight to recognise the potentialities of Anthropology, and to locate the best teacher then available in the field; and thanks to his acumen, Calcutta University led the rest of India in broadening the academic base of higher teaching and research. Conservative Madras which had a lead in Anthropology at the beginning of the present century under the enthusiastic Superintendent of the Madras Museum, Dr. Edgar Thurston, lost it to Calcutta.

Reckoned as Classics

The official recognition of anthropological research by the Government of India was largely due to the efforts of Sir Herbert Risely who inaugurated the Ethnographic Survey of India in 1901. In response to the directives from the Government of India, most of the Provinces and Princely States appointed Superintendents of Ethnography, most of whom were members of the Indian Civil Service. In Madras, Dr. Edgar Thurston conducted the survey, assisted by Dewan Bahadur K. Rangachari. In the erstwhile State of Cochin, Dr. Ananthakrishna Iyer, who had a distinguished career as science teacher at the Maharaja's College, Ernakulam, and in whom the Government had recognised

some of the lineaments of the future anthropologist, was appointed Superintendent of Ethnography to investigate the cultural and racial problems of the different communities inhabiting that small but extremely interesting State. He immediately found himself in his element, and addressed himself to the task with his characteristic energy and enthusiasm. Though he was not provided with all the equipment necessary for his investigation, still this deficiency was amply made good by his insight and perseverance, and the results that he achieved under such circumstances have received great approbation from his European colleagues and friends. In 1908, his first volume on the *Cochin Tribes and Castes* was issued by the Government, and this was followed by a second volume in 1912. The publication of these two sumptuous volumes, reckoned as classics of Indian Anthropology, elicited the warmest encomium from Dr. John Beddoe and Dr. M. Bougle who were impressed at once by the painstaking industry of the author and the care with which a great mass of facts had been sifted and recorded in true scientific spirit. These were followed in 1924 by a thorough study of the Syrian Christians.

Even while he was in the midst of his anthropological studies, Dr. Ananthakrishna Iyer was deputed by the then Dewan, Sir Albion Banerjee, to organise a Zoological Garden and Museum for the Cochin State, and although he was entirely new to this branch of knowledge, still his capacity for acquisition of fresh knowledge and his power of utilising it were responsible for the creation of an exceedingly interesting institute in Trichur, whose popularity and educational value in the collection and arrangement of the exhibits attracted the notice of the Government as well as of the foreign visitors to the State. This museum is even today one of the best among the small museums of India, and stands as a lasting memorial to its first Superintendent. When I first visited it in 1916, little did I dream that I would follow its organiser, enter the fascinating vistas of Anthropology—the science of man through its museological portals and turn myself into a teacher of Anthropology, and have the privilege of associating myself with the organisation of his birth centenary celebrations in July 1962 !

It was in 1920 that, on his retirement from Cochin Service, Dr. Ananthakrishna Iyer was invited by the University of Calcutta to

organise the Department of Anthropology. He remained the Head of the Department and the Chairman of the Board of Studies in Anthropology till his retirement in 1932. Even here his activities were never confined to one place or locality; after the usual lectures of the seasons he took the students to backward tracks to train them in fieldwork.

While engaged in his teaching assignment, Dr. Iyer was simultaneously occupied with the ethnographic survey of Mysore. His work in Mysore comprehended a critical survey of about 100 tribes and castes published in four superb volumes, most beautifully edited and illustrated. These four volumes will always remain a monumental contribution to the descriptive science of South Indian Anthropology.

Unique Services

Early in 1934, Dr. Iyer visited Europe, and lectured at a number of universities. He was honoured wherever he went. On his return he was invited by the Chief Commissioner of Coorg to conduct an ethnographic survey of that interesting area which he did in collaboration with Dr. Lidio Cipriani of Italy.

Dr. Iyer passed away peacefully on February 26, 1937, at his village in Lakshminarayanapuram, Palghat. When I met him for the third and last time a few months before his death, he told me that he was keeping himself busy renovating his village temple. And from his grandchildren I knew that the old veteran was trying always to inculcate the discipline of systematic hard work which was the secret of his success.

I met Dr. Iyer first at Bangalore at the meeting of the Indian Science Congress where I was to read my first paper, and Dr. Iyer was the Chairman of the Section of Anthropology. He was as thorough with the rules of the Science Congress Association as with the problems in Anthropology. There was no fuss, hurry, temper, or intolerance in anything he said or did, or in his gait. His concern for youngsters like me was a source of great encouragement to them. Academic squabbles were not absent then, too, but like the elephant he was calm and majestic.

Dr., Iyer had the widest possible international contacts with the leading anthropologists of Europe and America, and was an honorary or corresponding member of several learned bodies. His book *Lectures on Ethnography* is his main theoretical work. His own views on theoretical problems are scattered throughout his volumes on ethnography. It is, however, not as a theorist but as a sound ethnographer that Dr. Iyer will be remembered by posterity.... Future generations of anthropologists will be grateful to Dr. Iyer for the authentic, basic data which he gathered with meticulous care, and analysed and recorded without prejudice, and with the greatest objectivity. Kerala and Mysore are better known anthropologically than most other regions of India, thanks to his labours. We salute him for his unique services to Anthropology.

