

**ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF
THE HINDU RELIGION AND
PEOPLE**

(SOME ASPECTS)

By

DR. C. SIVARATNAM

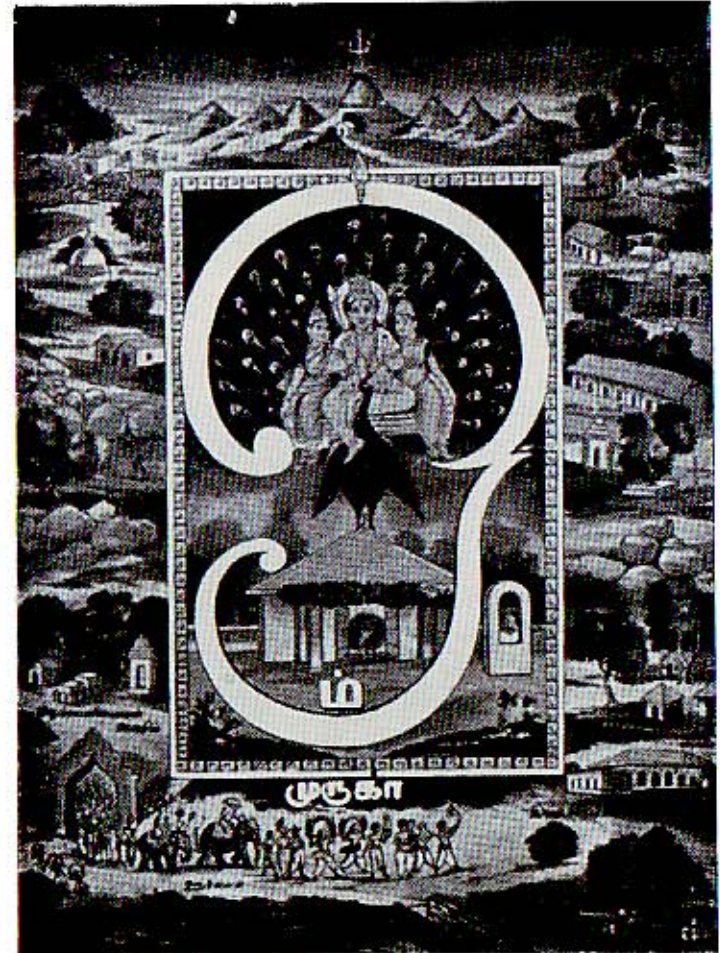
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KATARAGAMA HOLY SHRINE

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**DEDICATED
TO THE AFFECTIONATE MEMORY OF
SARASWATHY**

(Wife of the Author)

and

Mother of Bala, Wigna, Indra and Ratna

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PRAYER GANESHA PERUMAN

மண்ணுல கத்தினிற் பிறவி மாசற
எண்ணிய பொருளெலா மெளிதின் முற்றுறக்
கண்ணுத லுடையதோர் களிற்று மாமுகப்
பண்ணவன் மலரடி பணிந்து போற்றுவம்.

A HUMBLE FOREWORD

Religion is the most important thing or factor in human existence ; and Hindu Religion is ageless and is co-existent with creation. It is called the Sanatana dharma, that is, Religion Eternal, the Religion without beginning and without end, and that is ever lasting. It transcends limitations of geography, history and ethnology and all other limitations. According to Hinduism, all religions lead to God, even as all rivers lead to the ocean.

It is an act of merit on the part of Dr. C. Sivaratnam, an earnest student of our holy religion and silent devotee, to have kindly undertaken the publication of his helpful brochure regarding Hinduism.

It is trusted that the brochure would prove helpful in contributing to the fund of information of the average reader, and in inspiring us to continue to lead a religious life, in howsoever feeble a manner.

This publication is the result of devoted study and conscientious effort on the part of the author, according to the best of his lights.

May the blessings of our Deities be with one and all.

S. Sivasubramaniam

I Member of the Board of Management of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission (Sri Lanka Branch).

II Life Member and Honorary Member, Vivekananda Society Colombo, and one of its former Presidents and Honorary Secretaries.

III Life Member, Jaffna Saiva Paripalana Sabha

IV Co-founder, All Ceylon Hindu Congress.

V Co-founder and Honorary Secretary, Buddhist-Hindu Brotherhood.

PREFACE

Encouraged by the request of many readers, for me to put out, a second edition of the Book "Cultural History and Principles of Hinduism", published by me in 1964, the present venture is in the form of a compendium based on the above volume, to suit the tastes and pressures of time in a life of increasing stresses. It also contains some pleasing features and subtle speculations. My thanks are due to the veteran Hindu leader, Proctor S. Sivasubramaniam for his valuable Foreword, and Advocate S. Canagarayar for making available the use of his private library.

C. Sivaratnam.

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ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF HINDUISM

(SOME ASPECTS)

The word "Hindu" is a geographical name without any religious meaning. It is derived from the Sanskrit word, "Sindhu" the name of the Indus Valley region of seven tributaries of Indus River. Persians who invaded India in 6C. BC who had no "S" in their alphabet changed the "S" to "H" and called Sindhu as "Hindu" (Hindustan, Hinduism etc). Sindhu might have assumed a sacred meaning as it became later, the birth place of the four Vedas.

Hinduism is a collective force of seer intuitions, ocean of mystic knowledge into which all religious ideas flow, confluence of many thought currents. No Brahmin ever thought of converting others to his national religion (Blavatsky) nor any Hindu quarrels nowadays with any other religion for, if you do, you go backward to brute and not Godward (Vivekananda). It is the mother of Buddhism, Jaina and Sikh religions.

Hinduism is the composite integration of two sets of beliefs belonging to two different races, the Dravidians and Aryans, both of them according to one school, immigrants at one time or another into India, from Western regions.

1. Saivism arose out of primitive Dravidian religion, based on, only faith and worship.

2. Vedic Religion ending in the philosophy of Vedanta is the precious gift of the Aryans.

I

(1) SAIVAISM

(Genesis of primitive Dravidian Religion)

Saivaism was the religion of Lanka for a full period of 240 years in the pre-Buddhist kingdom of Vijaya (LVIII YVM.).

Nama Sivyā or Nama-Si-Vayam.

Nama (ours) are the crowd of Siva devotees. Satadarudriya vedic hymns give obeisance to Lord of all strength, Lord of Food, Counsellor at assemblies, to be lauded with hymns and who is also there, where hymns do not reach.

Man is born with a religious feeling but did not arrive in this existence with a ready made religion. He had to carve out his own path to attain knowledge about God, handicapped though, with limited mental resources. Faults were therefore bound to creep in, in the construction of his religion, but there were no objections as long as the efforts were the result of honest work and sincerity of purpose. Man was born helpless, therefore he had to depend on someone greater than himself to help him to procure the essentials of life, food etc for his existence and survival, hence arose the necessity for deities. Belief in spirit is the definition of Hindu religion. The inhabitants of India about 2000 years before the Aryan conquest were North and South Dravidians. These Dravidians believed in benign (animism) and evil spirits (shamanism), from an earliest age of time, Siva and Parvati assumed malignant or benign forms. There were wind spirits like Sendu-bir of Punjab, the whistling wind God, known also as Siva the Terrible, water spirits, animal spirits, tree spirits, village godlings (Grama Devata) such as Gansam deo elephant headed, protector of crops of Pre-Dravidian age, which later in Dravidian period became Ganapathy, Bairon, the fierce God was also of the pre-Dravidian period.

ORIGIN OF SAIVAISM

(1) Worship of Siva, Lord of the Universe is so very ancient, that its origin or beginning cannot be ascertained (T. Canagarayar 1961 Colombo, in his book "Metaphysics of Saiva-Siddhanta" page 2).

(2) The immigrant theory. Saivaism by itself is a synthesis of different forms and objects of worship, belonging to the Proto-Australoid and Proto-Dravidian stock, who (according to the immigrant theory) came into India from Western area 6000 years ago, to make India their home.

a Proto-Australoids, experienced agriculturists, who practised terrace cultivation of rice with knowledge of rice and vegetable curries like brinjal, pumpkins, fruits and condiments, we use today.

They used the "digging stick" as agricultural implement to furrow their fields (plough, perhaps not known to them), whose constant use gave them food and grains. They therefore worshipped this instrument as their God Linga, the erective force of the male principle, Lord of Food, Fertility and Fecundity (phallic cult).

b Proto-Dravidians (advanced Mediterraneans and Armenoids), Aegean race of the island of Crete. They gained the Asian mainland at Asia Minor, where they were called Lycians and came to India across the Asian highlands. In Crete they were known as Termalai, in Asia Minor as Trimmil: and in India as Dramila, Dravida and finally Tamil. Their deity was Mother-Earth, who gave them grains, vegetables and other food. Mother Goddess cult belonged exclusively to Greece where the Mother was known as Durgha (Greek-Trqqas) mentioned in Lycian inscriptions as Uma, Parvati etc. These Proto-Dravidians brought along with them to India the ideals of Aegean Saivaism, the Mother-Goddess cult.

The blood, beliefs and culture of the Proto-Australoids and the Proto-Dravidians were intimately amalgamated together as one new stock, the Dravidian race of India. Simultaneously Siva-Linga the male God of the Australoids and Parvati the Mother Goddess of the Proto-Dravidians joined together figuratively in the nuptials of Siva-Parvati thiru kalyanam (divine marriage), and thus was built up in India, Saivism by the joint fusion of these two races.

(Sources (1) Vedic Age. (1951) and (Vol.I 1965 (Ps. 144, 145, 157, 161, Mazumdar & Pusekar, Delhi and London) (164 and 165.)

(2) Nilakanta Sastri K. A. A history of South India 1955-Ps. 60,61.

(3) Sir John Marshal who in 1924 discovered in his archaeological excavations of the Indus Valley region, Siva in various forms and postures as Pasupati, Linga, Dancing Nataraja, Yogeswara and the Mother Goddess in figurines, concluded "that Saivism had a history going back to the Calcolithic age (2750-3520 B.C.) and thus takes its place as the most ancient living faith in the world."

IMAGE WORSHIP

Image worship is adoration of God through the institution of images, dhyana-yoga, an effortless perceivable and practical path for communication and union with God. It is a compensation by a supreme unseen Being, for the limitations imposed on human mental powers. There is one supreme being, the image is an outward manifestation of inner love of God, a holy medium which aids human communication with God. Image is a symbol in an earthly form of the conscious part of something

greater behind it. Buddhism, Christianity and Islam who had rejected images, came back to the worship of symbols, like statues, portraits, pictures etc. The Sikhs who founded their religion on the abrogation of images came round to the use of Sikh bible as an image for worship, with rites, music, processions. Vivekananda remarked that if a man did not worship an image, he will be worshipping another man. Hinduism is not therefore a province of heathendom.

PERSONIFICATION OF GODS

God created man in his own image and the spark of divinity in man and humanity of God, were well mingled together by clever transference of human attitudes, concepts and experiences to man made images, for instance multiplicity of limbs of some Gods denotes greater than ordinary powers. Villagers venerate Siva as a family friend, a father with a wife and children, dressed in shining jewellery and silk vestments like themselves, with whom they mix up as a companion, offering gifts of food and sharing with God the sacramental meal. The devotees joined their deity in fun and frolic in sacred festivals (thiruvilas), who is easily pleased and who answers their calls in times of distress or disease. The Yogis and other champions of meditation gave their approval to the above practices of the ordinary man, absorbed in various domestic duties, to save their time and energy. This is bakhti-marga, one way of attainment of Moksha, release from all worldly afflictions.

PUJAS

The officiating priest begins his holy ceremonies at the auspicious moment, by invoking the God to the image by invitory mantrams by his mouth, and acts by his hands, the 16 upasarams

which are called panchalartis or panchalankarams. These upasharams consist of displaying before the God certain meaningful items, like the mirror, umbrella, flag, banner, fly whisker and fanning, one after the other, waving of auspicious lights ending at the height of the ceremony with the show and movements of camphor lights, when the devotees shout out in ecstatic prayers. Leaves are torn and scattered over the deity, a form of sacrifice as a substitute for blood letting. Offerings of vegetable products are given like fruits, flowers, leaves, water, cooked milk and rice etc. These "nevethiam" offerings consecrated became prashadam (sacramental meal) which is shared by the devotees.

II

HINDU TEMPLES

Ideals of temples took firmer root during the golden age of Hinduism of the Gupta period, and transmitted down south, through the Pallavas, then the Chalukyas, Cholas and Pandyas. The puissant Gods of the Puranic religion, like Siva, Vishnu and Ammal, requiring Kovils in a settled life of agriculture, took the place of the retreating Vedic Gods of the sky, for whom stationary abodes were not required.

Temples became chief centres for culture, as well as for employment as priests, architects, sculptors, painters, florists, and choristers, musicians, dancers, goldsmiths, coppersmiths etc. Though Hindu worship is individualistic and not congregational, periodical festivals attract large gatherings from different regions thus giving occasions for exchange of culture, new ideas and fashions. Temple precincts were also used as schools, village assemblies, for rural tribunals and sports, and such other healthy village activities.

MODEL OF A TEMPLE

Temples are constructed on certain architectural and sastric principles :—

1. Rectangular or oblong base.
2. A tall gateway tower called Gopuram, over the main entrance.
3. Nandi pavilion with a statue of Nandi (couchant bull of Siva,) as the latter's vehicle.

4. Mandapam (hall with terraced roof supported by 18 columns.)
5. Sanctum, abode of the principal God situated in the deep end of the temple in the west, facing eastward towards the rising sun.
6. Sikharam. Bell or Dome shaped tower over the sanctum or vimana. Sikharam stands for Mt. Kailasa, retreat of Siva and Parvati, a peak on the top of Mount Mera, which is itself a dwelling place of spirits and Gods.

CLASSIFICATION OF TEMPLES

Temples are classified according to the silpasas-tras (Hindu Science of Arts and Crafts).

They are of the :-

1. Nagara or North Indian type.
2. Vesara, Central Indian or Deccan type.
3. Dravidian or South Indian type.

(1) NAGARA STYLE

1. The Sikharam is generally the highest structure covering the sanctum (ardhimoolam in Tamil), darkest and smallest recess of the temple.

Curvilinear in shape covered with vertical lines giving an illusionary appearance of curving upon itself.

Elaborate sculptures of floral and figurine designs on the surface, with a choice for erotic effects.

2. Halls conspicuous by the absence of pillars.
Examples— 1. Lingaraja temple (1000 A.D.) in Orissa.
2. Jeganath temple for Krishna at Puri (1000 A.D.)

(2) VESARA, DECCAN OR CENTRAL INDIAN STYLE

A combination of North and South Indian styles in varying proportions or one or the other. Characteristics are :-

1. Widely spread out, giving a sprawling effect.
2. Low height with flat roof.
3. Pyramidal towers without storeys.
4. Double or even triplicate shrines.
5. Designs on the outer wall are compartmental, graceful and restrained.

(3) SOUTH INDIAN OR DRAVIDIAN STYLE

A terraced pyramidal tower (gopuram) of great height non curvilinear, tapering into the sky by diminishing terraces, the base built of imposing masonry with large surface area for a multitude of sculptural works.

DYNASTIC PATTERNS OF DRAVIDIAN TEMPLES

1. Pallava style

Rock and later structural temples.

a. Rock Temples

- (1) Mahendravarman Group (600 A.D.)
Utchipillayar Temple overlording
the city of Trichi is a beautiful
example.
- (2) Nandivarman I Mahamalla Group
(600 A.D.) They are monolithic
rathas, like temple cars.

b. Structural Temples

- (1) Rajasimha Group (700-800A.D.)
Nandivarman II Group (731A.D.)

CHOLA STYLE

They were the direct inheritors of the Pallava culture. Large size of the buildings represented the prosperity and might of their kingdom and its rulers. Small size was synonymous with the poverty and waning power of the ruling dynasty, after long continued wars. Large number of small temples denoted the rise of fervent devotion due to increased stress and strain of life due to wars. Prosperity of the realm was exhibited by costly jewels, golden idols etc.

PANDYAN STYLE

Renovation and extension of existing temples with additions like mandapams, tanks etc.

HOYSALA STYLE (KANNADAS)

1. Double temple
2. Principal entrances on a side
3. Pillars are monolithic, with razor blade sharp edges.
4. Building is made of dark stone of fine grain.

VIJAYANAGARA STYLE (*Mostly Vaisnavite*)

This art is soaked with richness and abundance expressing the pride, pomp and prosperity of a conquering nation with the development of all that remained of Hinduism against the onslaught of Islam.

MADURA STYLE

Last stage of Vijayanagara, under the Nayakars of Madura.

Meenachiammal kovil with double shrine, one of them for Sundereswar, with four huge gopurams at their four entrances.

SRI RANGA TEMPLE FOR VISHNU AT TRICHI

With seven concentric enclosures with 21 gopurams on these enclosing rings. A golden sikharam projects out of its flat roof.

RAMESWARAM

Noted for its pillared corridors 3000 feet long. 17-25 feet wide. The Aryachakravartis had interests in this temple. Gunaweera Aryachakravarti of Jaffna was once its trustee, (1446 A.D.).

III

SAIVAISM IN JAFFNA

Hinduism was existent from pre-Vijayan times. Sir Williams Jones, a scholar of the 19c AD, after examining various monuments of Hindu antiquity, expressed the opinion "that this Island was peopled time out of memory by the Hindu race". Rev. Philippus Baldaus, a Dutch prelate, who lived in Jaffna for seven years from 1658, observed that there were at his time 329 Hindu temples in Jaffna. The record below is chosen from written texts available to the author.

HISTORIC TEMPLES

KONESWARAM

(Tiru-Kona-Malai)

It was during Pandu's reign 433 A.D. that Kulakodan, a prince of Kaveri-pum-pattinam came to Lanka, to the shrine of Koneswaram, himself personally interested in it as his father Mana-Niti-Kanda Cholan probably a chieftain of Chola-land had previously come on pilgrimage to this shrine and on his return, his queen conceived Kulakodan (Kulang-tank, Kodan temple), builder of a tank and temple. He found Koneswaram in ruins and repaired it. Further, he resolved to establish an endowment for the maintenance of the temple by converting seven tracts of land at Tambalakamam into fruitful groves and fertile fields. For this he lacked water and cultivators. He converted 64 small tanks into one large tank at Kantalai. As for cultivators he got down 51 tribes of Vanniyas, a caste of agricultural experts from the Pandyan coast.

MAVIDDAPURAM KANDASAMY TEMPLE

(Ma-Horse, Vidda-(left off) puram (city))

Mathura-Pira-Vika-Valli, a Chola princess of Tanjore, desirous of being freed of her horse head with which she had the misfortune to be born came to Lanka, visiting place to place, Mantota, Thiruketheschuram, Palavi, Kanniya, Mahaveli, Verukal, Manik river and Keerimalai, in which last spot she was cured of her deformity by the holy waters, she sought after. She resolved to build a Kandasamy kovil as a memento of her gratitude to this holy place. She got down from Chola country through her father, images of Kandasamy, Theivanaiaamma and Valliamma, a Brahmin priest from Tillai, lots of temple utensils, the port where the Kandasamy image was landed was Kasathurai, changed after this event to Kankesanthurai after the image of Kankeya (Kandasamy). Ugra—Singhan, a prince of the Kalinga dynasty, a devotee of Karthekeya and founder of the first Kalinga kingdom of Jaffna in 8c A.D. married princess Mathura-Pira -Vika-Valli, and helped her in the completion of the temple and attended the thusarokanam (1st flag hoisting ceremony), under the asterisk of Ani-Utharam. The king and queen were married at Kantherodai and finally settled down in their capital, Singai-Nagar near or about Vallipuram.

IV

PROPAGATION OF SAIVAISM IN JAFFNA

By The First Aryachakravarti

The Sinhalese tradition was that the rulers in Lanka, whether Sinhalese or Tamils should be of the Buddhist faith. Magha, the last Kalinga King of Polonnaruva however was a bigoted Hindu (Codrington), who tried to displace Buddhist institutions with Saivaite symbolisms. This enraged the Sinhalese princes, who gathered round the standard of Vijayabahu of Dambadeniya, who all jointly drove out Magha from Polonnaruva into the jungles of Mayarata. Vijayabahu's son, Parakramabahu II met Magha later and defeated the latter at the battle of Kalawewa, Magha retreating to far off Jaffna to found the second Jaffna Kalinga kingdom in about 1244 A.D. Magha himself, with Sethupathi Brahmin blood entered Nallur in the midst of Brahmin ceremonies and celebrations, in the company of a Brahmin Prime Minister, Nilakantha Aiyar and a Brahmin prelate, Kangathara Aiyar and his wife Anna-Purani Ammal. Magha dreamt one night, while he was sleeping in his Sappiramanam (decorated couch) that Siva declaring himself to be Kayilaya Natha appeared before the Aryachakravarti, with Parvati and requested him to build a temple for them.

KAILASA NATHAR AND KAILASA NAYAKI AMMAL KOVIL OF NALLUR (1244)

Magha built the Kailasa Natha kovil at Nallur under his personal direction and used it as his private shrine, where he worshipped day and night, and Nallur was known as another Kailayam on earth, the first Kailayam being Mt. Kailasa in the Himalayas, the second was Chidambaram, and the third was Dakshina Kailayam (Koneswaram).

He built three halls for images, granaries, alms houses and other akkirarams, streets for cars, monasteries, halting places for travellers, and such like establishments, surrounding the area with walls and towers, He sent for the Kethara Linga of Kasi which Manmathan (God of love) worshipped and invited the priest Kangathara Aiyar of the Kasi race through Sethupathy, the chief of the Ramana-thapuram group of Brahmins. He ordered his Brahmin Prime Minister to build four other temples, round the main shrine, Vailakunthar, Saddanathar, Kandasamy and Veerakaliamman temples. He got down from Chola land 12 colonies of ardent Saivite-vellalas and settled them down in twelve different localities to serve his double purpose of spreading and consolidating Saivaism and to convert the Jaffna sandy wasteland into agricultural fields.

He wore the sacred Brahamana thread on his left shoulder signifying his attachment to Saivaism and his blood ties with Sethupathy Brahmins. The Brahmin thread "Upavita" consists of 96 strands representing 96 tatvas, constituents or categories of the Universe (Sir P. Arunachalam). He also had the impress of "Sethu" in his coins, the insignia of Rameswaram. The crest of the Jaffna kings and Rameswaram was "Nandi" (Couchant bull). Nandi is a bull form of Siva's energy; the bull form of Siva's energy was sent to earth as an incarnation in the form of a Cannarese Brahmin by name Bassava (bull force), the Prime Minister of the Jain King Bijjala of Mysore (12C). Bassava assassinated Bijjala because of his heterodox faith, in other words, Siva's bull force destroyed Jainism and re-established Siva Linga worship among the Cannarese people, now called Vira Saivas or Lingayats, worshippers of both Lingam and Nandi. Bull is therefore now the favourite rite (Vahana) or vehicle of Siva. Nandi in Saiva Siddhanta philosophy means the "soul" (Pasu-soul).

KAILASA NATHA BECOMES KAILASA PILLAYAR KOVIL

In 1620 A.D., under threat of Portuguese vandalism of Hindu temples, the chief priest took the idol of the "Lingam" and "Devi" to his native village, Madduvil and dropped them into temple ponds in two different places. During the later and liberal period of Dutch rule, a peasant was directed in a dream to take the image of Lingam from the pond and now it became the image of the Madduvil Sivan temple (N-Hinduism P 5).

The Dutch later destroyed this shrine and made use of its debris to build fort Hammenheil at Kayts. The inhabitants later discovered a Pillayar idol belonging to this temple on a sand heap, removed and kept it under a vilva tree, and performed pujas. Sri-la-Sri Arumuga Navalar, the great Saiva reformer and revivalist put a cadjan shed over the image of Pillayar in about 1850 A.D. T. Kailasapillai, a local resident and a nephew of Arumuga Navalar converted the shrine into a stone building, under his own trusteeship. The temple now goes by the name of Kailasa Pillayar kovil under the trusteeship of members of the family line of Navalar.

THE PRESENT EDIFICE

The late Mr. C. Suntheram, C.C.S. and I.S.O., who had great influence with the Government and people of his time, father of the late Saraswathy (died 1977) and wife of the author, was approached by the resident neighbours of this shrine, with a request for its reconstruction and expansion to which he acquiesced. Mr. Suntheram had practically completed the building of the double temple and was relaying the pavement of the floor, when he was taken away by death in 1924. Kumaraswamy Kurukkal was the

chief priest at this time. Mr Suntheram's widowed sister Tirumathy Manickammaiyar Sabapathy Mudaliar, a great Saiva devotee like her father took the burden on her devout shoulders and continued the good work undertaken by her brother with steadfast faith and enthusiastic effort. With collections in trickles and donations of various sizes over twenty years, she fulfilled her object by celebrating the Maha-Kumbhavishekam in 1946 and passed away in 1962.

THE FIRST KUMBHA ABHISHEKAM OF KAILASANATHAR KOVIL BY KULANGAI SINGAI ARYAN (KALINGA MAGHA) FOUNDER OF THE GREATER HINDU KINGDOM OF JAFFNA (C 1236)

From "Kailaya Malai" written by Mutturasar in high Tamil (C.1591 A.D.) and presented by A. Mootuthamby in the National Review of January 1907. **Description.** The temple in and outside the walls were tastefully decorated with booths constructed on sandal posts and ceiled with variegated cloths of artistic designs in different colours, and finished with fringes of cloth and flower garlands, and with tassels of pearls at regular intervals. The booths were adorned with numberless hoisted flags and the fronts with bunches of plantains, arecanuts and kew pine fruits. The streets were decorated on both sides with plantain, arecanut and sugarcane trees, with cords hung with garlands.

The floor of the temple was smeared with fragrant sandal paste and there, a throne of great splendour set with rubies, blue sapphire, cats eyes, diamond and pearls were placed. The **Brahmin** priest drew the figure of a bull on the floor and over it heaped rice brought from all the eight quarters and spread it in the shape of a lotus—afterwards chanting mantrums, he set there the images of Siva

and Uma ———He heaped like hills piles of mangoes, jak fruits, plantains and other sweet fruits. He made offerings of coconuts, honey, ghee, fruit juice, milk and curd and finally betel and nuts in beautiful trays. At last the priest took the golden pot filled with holy water and poured over the images and consecrated them in the midst of great roar of musical trumpets, drums of various kinds, praises, songs and hymns and called Siva by the name of Kailaya Natha and invoked him to the image..

And God Siva, who is not visible even to the Devas, holy sages and to those who renounced the world, who cannot be perceived by the mental faculty who cannot be described by words or even Vedas who had no beginning, no end, and no middle, who is all pervading though invisible even to the great Vishnu or Brahma———who shines within the syllable A.U.M. who formed the soul of all the letters——— who still is not affected by happiness or sorrow——— who is existence and non-existence gracefully pleased to take Nallur as his third Kailaya as one of his favourite abodes, and accordingly came down with his divine following to dwell in the image and grant to his devotees thier wishes.

V

SAIVA SIDDHANTHAM

(*The Philosophy of the Tamil race*)

Sid (seers), antham (end), is the accomplished end of ends of different schools of Indian philosophy. This formulation took place in the Siva gnana bhotham (enlightment of Siva's knowledge), in Tamil by Mey Kanda Devar (divine seer of truth), a pious Vellala of Madras in, 13c. A.D. It consists of 12 stanzas translated from the Sanskrit Raurava agamas into Tamil, found in Tholkappiyam and recited by Nayanars.

It teaches the existence of God, soul and world, their nature and attributes, means of attaining truth and realisation of truth (Sivagnanabhodam). Delegates from Jaffna were sent in 1909 to a conference of the formulated doctrines of Saivaism at Trichy. The conference opened with recital of devarams, scriptural phrases, analogies and arguments but with great respect and tolerance for other religions. According to Saiva-Siddhantam "Siva accepts worship done to other Gods as done to himself provided of course, that the worship is done with devote heart". No religion is condemned because all religions tend to raise the soul from low desires and selfish instinct, towards the realisation of a supreme God.

PRINCIPLE OF THE PHILOSOPHY

There are three catagories of reality :—

I. Siva (God) is the efficient cause of creation, cause of all causes, the first and ultimate cause, with form and without form, with no likes or dislikes.

II. Cosmos (maya or illusion, matter).

III. Necessity of creation of Cosmos. It is an act of grace of God for the flock of souls to work out results of their karma or deeds.

The souls that require salvation through the institution and use of Cosmos are the impure souls. Pure souls have no business interest in Cosmos because being not impure have gone into the substance of God. Iswara is represented in images in temples to satisfy needs and understanding of the common people.

IMPURE SOUL

The impure soul is afflicted with "Mala" or defilements which are three in number :—

1. Anavam (ignorance and egotism).
2. Karma (deeds and sins).
3. Maya (illusion).

These three form the three strands of a rope of bondage Pasam, which means desires of the world. The rope (Pasam) of 3 strands must be snapped or burnt for the soul which is tied down to the body, in love of world affairs, to be liberated and get into the substance of God.

MEANS OF MUKHTI OR RELEASE

Attainment of the soul's liberation, burning or snapping of the rope of Pasam can be obtained by :—

1. Charya margha, as attendants to priests and other temple services.
2. Karma or Kriya marga, adoration of God in images with rituals.
3. Yoga marga, vision of God and revelation through disciplined meditation.
4. Jnana marga, path of knowledge, i.e. study of scriptures, philosophy etc.
5. Bakhti marga, a short cut worship of God, in a simplified manner for the busy man.

These five may overlap each other.

THIRU NEERU

The Tamils belonging to Saiva-Samayam distinguish themselves from others by drawing three horizontal stripes of holy ash across their foreheads the forehead which is the sacred abode of Shaiva-Sakhti. Thiru-neeru (Sanskrit "Vipoothee") is the gift of Saivism. Vaithianathan calls it the image of the love of God, Parasakti. Ratna Navaratnam explains the holy ash as a symbol of "the impermanence of life, worldly position, power and possessions". The three lines are constituent parts of Saiva Siddhanta philosophy. Thiruneeru is the purified ash obtained by burning the dirt, cow dung. The impure cow dung represents the impurities of the soul, (1) Anavam (2) Karma and (3) Maya.

These three strands form the rope, Pasam-desires of this world that binds the self (soul) to this world— when the rope Pasam is burnt, the soul is set free to identify itself with Siva or God.

1. Pathi is Siva (God of sacrifice)
2. Pasu is self or soul.
3. Pasam (desire for worldly life), that binds the soul to this world.

When the rope Pasam is burnt, the soul is set free to identify itself, with Pathi (God). This is the doctrine of Tripadarti, three element realities of Saiva Siddhantam.

2. VEDIC RELIGION

The second component of Hinduism is the Vedic religion elaborated in Indian soil, a thousand years later by a third race, the Indo-Aryans who arrived in India with among the shining ones in the sky, Indra, the rain begetter and completed the religion in India, the home of Hinduism. The Indo-Aryans belonged to the Indo-European group of South Russia, herdsmen wandering about the Kirghes steppes with their cattle, in search of grass for their flock, which in turn gave them their main food, meat, milk and its products. They came in search of Indus river waters, through Russian Turkestan, Iran and the western passes and settled down 1200-1000 B.C. in Sapta-Sindhu, land of seven tributaries, exterminating here the North Dravidians (Dasa-Dasyus) inhabitants. The Aryans found these Dravidians with a city culture, fortifications, palaces and castles. The Aryans were accompanied by some of the brilliant bards, with great feats of memory and poetic imagination, "who feasted, drank Soma" wine produced from a Himalayan tree, danced, made merry and sang vedic hymns in praise of sky gods" (H.G.Wells). Several phases of Vedic thought are not confined to different compartments as appear to be, but belong to one developing theme, a continuous chain attached to each other with inter links, the Upanishads are matured from the Aranayakes, just as much as the latter are attached to the Brahmanas, which in turn are connected to the last of the Vedas, the last three Vedas being rearrangement of the important vedic chants.

VEDAS ARE FOUR IN NUMBER

1. Rig-Veda (1200-1000 B.C.) composed and completed in Sapta-Sindhu region. Veda means knowledge of God and the hymns are praises of nature

gods, The Rigveda is the most important with 1028 hymns in ten books.

2. Sama Veda (melodies).

3. Yajur-Veda (prose) (1000-800 B.C.) on manual work and sacrificial duties.

4. Atharava Veda (spells and Magic)

Vedic Gods. are classified into five groups:-

1. Celestial (sky) Gods.

2. Atmospheric (upper air) Gods.—Indra.

3. Terrestrial (earth God)—Soma or Indu (bright drops) divine exhilarant, stimulant of imagination and inspirer of hymns.

4. Abstract God—Tvasti, fashioner of Indra's thunderbolt.

5. Vedic Sacrifice—Requirements are Vedic Gods and hymns, priests, oblation and oblation bearers, altar and sacrificer, the latter is a passive on looker the only job for him is to give offerings to God.

ORIGIN OF VEDIC THOUGHT

"Divine, themselves authorities and no other authority, bringing the message of God, beginningless and without end, discovered and recorded by the rishis close to God in every age, while in a transcendental stage of consciousness, claiming to go deeper than human experiences. "Buddhism and Jainism accept the authority of revealed knowledge and transcendental experience, though they deny the authority of the vedas, particularly the ritual portion, as a result of certain historical circumstances, to be discussed later. When spirit of veda is lost and priestcraft reigned supreme, Buddha urged the people to live a life of pure conduct from burden of sorrow, that is to attain Nirvana (transcendental state of consciousness). "Teachings of Buddha and Mahavira do not contradict the spirit of Veda, but are in entire harmony with it" (Swamy Probhavanda).

VII

NEW PHASE IN METAPHYSICS AND RISE
OF THE CASTE SYSTEM

For some reason or other, the Aryans decided to vacate the Sapta-Sindhu region and migrate to the Gangetic plain, without measuring the quality of resistance of their enemy the Dravidians, battles were fought furiously between Sindhu and the Yamuna, the Aryans getting into more difficulties and danger. The Aryans therefore adopted two new strategies.

1. They invoked Indra as their national leader, attributing demoniacal powers to the Dravidians, describing them as celestial foes of Indra who then destroyed the fortifications and castles of the Dravidians.

2. The Aryans themselves separated into two castes the Brahmins to take charge of the altar and sacrifices, and the Kshatriyas as warrior class to conduct the war with all concentration, thus was started the caste system among the Aryans, who were up to now a casteless people. The Dravidians, whom the Aryans designated as Sudras were finally defeated at the battle of Yamuna.

BRAHMANAS 700 B.C.

They are prose treatises on devotion, prayers and magical spells. Place Brahmvarta (between Sindhu and Yamuna) land of holy prayers and sacrifices, Brah-spirit, mana-wondermaking (Wondermaking spirit). We now enter an area of smoke, incense and intensified sacrificial fire, a mechanical sacerdotalism, concentration on the rituals than on Gods. The Brahmins said "when the heart becomes purified by performance of sacrifices there arises

hunger for the knowledge of Brahma". The priests made a thriving business, out of religious profession by increasing the tempo of their alter activities, to satisfy their greed for more dakshinas (income). Further, they assumed gigantic powers over Kshatriyas and kings with their spells and magic.

The Kshatriyas revolted against them and turned their back on Yagnavidiya to atmavidiya (meditation or mental sacrifice).

YAGNA

The Vedic people did not adore gods in images in fixed abodes as they were a moving people Indra was in the sky for ever to them, their worship performed by reciting mantras (hymns) with offerings in sacrificial fire. This type of worship is known as "yagna".

The Brahmana treatises described the different kinds of yagnas and prescribed the appropriate mantras to the particular yagna involved.

ARANAYAKES

These forest treatises deal with explanations of changes from yagnavidiya to atmavidiya, that is from sacrifice to meditation.

VIII

UPANISHADS, ORIGIN OF VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY (VEDANTA- END OF VEDAS)

700 B.C.

AUM

Upanishads begin with an exposition of the significance of AUM, what is to be, primary reality is spirit alone. The Vedas had some passing references to spirit of man. AUM is a lonely syllable denoting nothing more than assent "Yes" in English and "Om" in Tamil to be pronounced at the beginning of Vedas, and that is all its assignment, just a symbol of spirit of man. It is the repetition of this syllable, which is of all importance, that produces on the mind an effect like the vibrations of ether in space, found figurative expression in the dance of Nadaraja, sequence of sound and rhythm control, that accomplishes concentration of mind leading towards meditation. Vedas had only vague notions of spirit of man. By this time the Aryans had reached the forest, surrounding the Ganges and found it just the appropriate place for them to meditate in the silence of the forest. Upanishads are the results of Upanishads (closely), ni (devotedly) sad (sit), which means secret meetings. Kings, commoners, ladies, wives of kings, sages etc. all went into "tapas", that is meditation. It was mainly a Kshatriya movement, which the Brahmins later joined. They had dialogues over the results of their meditation in secret councils and announced to the world three main discoveries:-

1. The sacred dictum of Upanishads, Monism.

TAT—TVAM—ASI- which means Thou art that, 'that' in neuter gender stands for the impersonal God, Brahman, thou for self of man-(atman). Nature of

Brahman is indefinable and predicateless. Identification of Brahman and atman as such and their mutual relationship is the supreme discovery of the Upanishad seers, through meditation.

2. Discovery of Karma and Rebirth.
3. Value of meditation.

Samskaras are impressions of Karma (deeds and experiences) embedded in silence in the unconscious mind, which is their storehouse. A new born baby carries forward into this world from previous birth old samskaras in his unconscious mind. He gathers in this world also, new good and bad samskaras. Evil samskaras can be washed away in this world by good samskaras in proportion to the quantities present. These good and evil samskaras remaining at the tail end of one's carrier give personality and colour to the possessor, reflected in his habits, nature, behaviour and inherited tendencies. A psychoanalyst or rishi may be able to write a balance sheet and give an assessment of his distance from the goal of moksha or how many more re-births are awaiting, or not.

MOKSHA

Moksha is freedom from all limitations, bondage and imperfections, release from birth and death, state of oneness with God, the birth right of every man, freedom comes with a knowledge of his true self. Upanishad emphasises this truth "Blessed is he who attains illumination in this very life, otherwise it is his greatest calamity, but it is immediately pointed out that if a man fails to attain the supreme goal in this life, he must attain it in some other life, for he will be given many opportunities by rebirth, to reach

the goal of perfection. There are many paths or ways, like the Yogas, study of the Vedas, indicated to reach mukhti. Vedanta philosophy is the precious gift of the Aryans to Saivaism, universal philosophy of all sects of Hinduism, established monism and gave proof of the usefulness of meditation. Upanishads came to an end with the indentification of Atma with Brahma. Sankarachariar went further in his advaita-Vedanta (1) to establish the relationship between soul and universal soul (2) their nature and (3) to find methods of release from this life and union with God.

IX

COMPROMISE OF TWO FORMS OF WORSHIP, PUJA AND YAGNA

All Indian temple rites this day, are derived from the Tamil word "pu" flower, chey "to do" puja, same as Sanskrit "Pushmakarma", a Dravidian ahimsa ritual, a vegetarian ceremonial without blood spilling, where the offerings consist of only flowers, vegetables, fruits, leaves and water. Puja had taken the place of Yagna, Pasmakarma, sacrifice with destruction of an animal, non ahimsa cult. Puja got its charter from Lord Krishna "If any one whose soul is disciplined offers me in devotion, a flower, a fruit, leaf or water I receive that". The Dravidian warp and the Aryan weft which gave strength to the common texture of Hinduism is now an inseparable and undistinguishable bond. When North India was distracted by Mohamedan irruptions, all religious leaders were born in South India and it was the intellect of the south which really governed India at this period (Vivekananda), flow of belief, being from South to North Ramakrishna a Vedantist became a temple priest at the Kali temple of Dakshineswar In the Hindu marriage ceremonies of Lanka is enshrined the confluence of Arya-Dravidian culture and a synthesis of vedic and saivaite forms of worship, in the Homa sacrificial fire and Siva Parvati and Pillayar pujas.

X

BAKHTI MOVEMENTS

Bakhti movements were found to be invariably a mass movement with intensified fervour, to protect Hinduism against possible encroachment of other religions like Jainism, Buddhism, Mohamedanism and Christianity.

1 ST BAKHTI MOVEMENT**Imperial Gupta Period (320-490 A.D.)**

From the Mauryan empire to 6c. A.D. there was a gradual ascent of Hinduism, Brahmins regained their glory from Buddhism. During the same period, the anthropomorphic form of Hinduism arose in defence against the inroads made by Buddhism and the tyranny of Brahmanism. Indra and Varuna retreated before the onrush of the puissant Hindu Gods, Vishnu, Siva, Sakhti and Lingam with idols in temples, awakened by music, dances and processions. Although there were during the Sangam age (1-2c. A.D.) at Madura and Tiruchandur worship of personal Gods in image in temples this institution was reinforced and given fresh impetus by the puissant gods of the Gupta period through the Pallavas, Chalukyas, Cholas and finally Pandavas and also Rajputs. The Hinduism of our present time owes its origin to the golden age of Hinduism of the Imperial Guptas in its well formulated form. Siva, Vishnu, and Uma took definite shape in the place of altar sacrifices, a change from the abstract to the concrete. Brahmin priests were at first opposed to do service in Sivan temples because Siva was a non Aryan God (6c. A.D.), until Varahamira induced them as Brahmins, to accept this deity.

2ND BAKHTI MOVEMENT
Nayanar or Devaram period

Tamil country (7-12c. A.D.)

The pantheon was Siva, Vishnu, Muruga, Indra and Krishna. This was a mass movement headed by Nayanars (Saivites) and Alvars (Vasnavites) against the expansive move by Jainism and Buddhism. There were some 63 Nayanars belonging to different social strata, all the hymns were collected together into the Saiva canon called Tirumurai (holy sayings) under king Rajaraja, Chola-Deva (985-1010 A.D.). The devotional songs of the Nayanars were of a mystic rapture over the works and grace of Siva, conveying the ecstatic joy of release from bondage (Mukhti) of ignorance and Karma. The prominent Nayanars were, Thirugnanasambandar, (670-700), Thirunavukkarasu alias Appar (603 A.D.) Sundaramurthy Nayanar and Manikavachakar (800 A.D.).

3RD BAKHTI MOVEMENT

Influence of the Sufi cult of Islam.

Islam means absolute surrender to one God through a Preceptor. The leaders were all North Indian Hindus and not Muslims. They were Ramananda, Kabir, Nanak, Dadu, Saints of Vijayanagara and Maharashtra. They sought harmony between Hinduism and Islam. Kabir:- "Hindu and Turk were pots of the same clay", with emphasis on monotheism, anti-casteism, teaching their beliefs in peregrinations, songs and dances, with ecstatic feelings.

4TH BAKHTI MOVEMENT

(British Period 18-20c. A.D.)

Induction of the Christian spirit of service into the Hindu spirit of worship.

The impact of British realism and Christian religion of salvation on the ancient civilisation of India, left many changes and impressions on the life of the Indian people at a time when all phases of Indian theology were exhausted and came to a standstill with Chaitanya, leaving behind unperceived by the people, the abuses and disabilities of caste system, suttee (widow immolation) child marriages, polygamy and other social disorders, for correction. These challenges were somewhat abated by the joint efforts of the new empire builders and the home people through institutions fashioned on Western lines like societies, sabhas, maths, missions, Samajs etc.

Evangelism — The easiest method of propagation of the Bible was by the establishment of Christian schools in English medium, when the mind of the child can be captured at its impressionable age, and knowledge of the Bible thrust in. Results were variable. Partial success meant dilution of faith in the child's own religion, some doubts might linger in the child's mind, about certain features of Hinduism.

Partial success with little coaching later in life, may bring complete success — proselytism.

Examples of this are many :—

(1) Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833), the first product of English education, who studied the Bible thoroughly, founded the Brahma Samaj (abode of universal religion) without image worship, but upheld the vedanta philosophy and escaped full conversion.

(2) Keshab Chandra Sen, founder of the Society of Prayers (Prathana Samaj) followed Christ's teachings, but later gave it up in favour of Chaitanya's philosophy.

(3) Dayananda Saraswati (1883) of Arya-Samaj decried images, but instructed his followers to go back to the Vedas.

(4) Ravindranath Tagore (1861-1941) put up a notice in his open air school, "no images are to be adored, no man's faith is to be despised."

(5) Ramakrishna himself is said to have had the vision of Christ, Vivekananda Swamy is credited to have opened his first math on a Christmas evening retelling the story of Christ.

(6) Radhakrishnan studied the New Testament at Christian College, Madras and wrote his thesis on ethics of Vedanta at the age of 20 years. His thoughts were flavoured with Christian influence.

Although the above saintly people had a deep knowledge of Christianity, they were all saved from total conversion by the knowledge and the steadfast faith in Vedanta. The people who were benefited most by Queen Victoria's proclamation (~~1803~~) assuring legal protection to all religions, were the Evangelists and not Hindus. When Evangelism was in this way making headway among the institutions of Hindu society in Calcutta, Madras, Malabar etc. casting doubts in their minds about certain aspects of Hinduism, Ramakrishna was born in 1838, the Christians insisting their religion was the only path to God and no one else. It is at this moment Ramakrishna announced his peaceful message :— All religions are different paths to the same God, all religions are the same, people call them by different names, every man must follow his own religion, the Christians must follow Christianity, the Mohamedans Islam, for the Hindus, the ancient path of the Aryan Rishis i.e. Veda-Vedanta. This message set at rest all Hindu scepticism, curbing also the pace of evangelism. Vivekananda stated that Vedanta was the proper name for Hinduism. It is Vedanta that saved Hinduism from all proselytism,

EPOCH MAKING AND CHANGING SITUATIONS

Annie Besant named "an eccentric English woman" by a recent British writer, succeeded in 1907 Colonel Olcott, as President of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, Madras (Universal brotherhood of Humanity). She felt that the present ills of India could not be solved, except by the restoration of ancient ideas and institutions, and for all that, what was immediately required was "Home Rule". She meant what she said, and became its first indefatigable agitator and consistently carried on her mission up to death in 1933, when Mahatma Gandhi picked up the thread and extracted complete independence for India in 1947.



XI PLACE OF AGRICULTURE IN HINDUISM

Agriculture, says Mortimer, Wheeler is one of the three wonders of human creation, the other two are:- (1) Kindling of the fire. (2) Detonation of the Atom Bomb. (3) Successful visit of the man to the moon may be added as a fourth wonder. Food and water are the foremost urgencies of primitive living beings, they also wanted the aid of someone else more potent than themselves, to procure these necessities, they are the deities.

The three main races who immigrated into India in search of water and food and did form the Indian population, brought independently their own deities in their hearts and built up the common Hindu religion in Indian soil.

SIVA LINGA

First people to migrate to India five thousand years ago were the Proto-Australoids already well known for rice cultivation. They came with their "digging stick", an agricultural implement to furrow their rice fields and whose constant use gave them grain and prosperity.

They therefore reshaped this instrument into a post with knob above, imitating the male organ and called it as Linga or Siva-linga, symbolic of the fructifying powers that prevade nature, the Lord of Fertility, Food and Fecundity.

PARVATI

The second people to come to Indus valley region were the Proto Dravidians from Crete, a Greek Island, the Mother Goddess cult was exclusively Greek called Durgha (Greek-Tqquas), known to Asia Minor as Uma and Parvati, in India as Parvati, Amman, Annapurana, lady of bounteous rice, Bhumadevi etc,

INDRA

The Third People

Indo Aryans belonged to a different order. They were herdsmen of South Russia wandering about here with their flock, and came attracted by the Indus waters to nourish grass which was fodder to their cattle, who in turn gave them milk and meat as food. They discovered in the sky, Indra the rain God who thundered with lightening and storm and showers of rain water, and in gratitude they sang the vedic hymns in praise of Indra.

RAIN

Thirukural which devotes one chapter on rain says:- Since the world of living beings, man, animals and plants are sustained by rain, it should be considered the ambrosia of living beings. If the sky gets clear free from clouds, there would be no more festivals, religion or offerings to divine beings here on earth. If the clouds deny the boon of rain water, there will be no tapas or charity in this wide world.

OTHER DEITIES OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

1. Pillayar (child of Siva by Parvati), Lord of agriculture and protector of corn fields. He is always in a sitting position, ever ready to eat the first fruits of the fields which he had protected, milkrice, plantains, sugar from sugarcane etc. a feaster, therefore a fat God with paunch belly. His vehicle is a mouse, held in check under his feet so that the mouse may not stray, gnaw and destroy crops.

2. Lakshmi (consort of Vishnu) In addition to wealth, she is also Goddess of corn and harvest,

3. Ayanar. Ayanar came on a white steed from Malayalam to Lanka through Jaffna to be worshipped here with twigs and sprigs of leaves (Raghavan). Rides on a bridled horse as a night watchman of jungles, tanks, lakes and as guardian of paths.

EMPHASIS ON AGRICULTURE IN RAMAYANA

Sita is the other name for a field furrow. When her father King Janaka of Videha was levelling the ground to prepare a fire altar, Sita was miraculously born out of this field furrow. When Rama invited Sita a second time to prove her chastity before an assembly, she proved her innocence by invoking Mother Goddess to open her arms, when she was swallowed by the Goddess and vanished into the field furrow from which she was born.

COLONISATION OF JAFFNA BY SAIVA AGRICULTURISTS

When the first Aryachakravarti entered Jaffna, he found the place a barren sand land, and to convert it into fruitful fields, and build it into a Saiva agricultural kingdom, he called forth mostly from Chola land, people with double qualifications, Saiva-Vellalas, twelve families with their kins and retinues came and settled down in twelve different villages in Jaffna. A branch of Vellalas, the old ruling caste of Tamil land, claimed to have received grains and instructions on its cultivation from the Earth-Goddess, were called Pillais (children of Parvati). "Kings also drove the plough" (Arunachalam).

XII

RAMAYANA IN LANKA

Rama, another incarnation of Vishnu, written by Valmiki (2c. BC-2c AD) Events of 6 century BC at Ayodhya. King Dasaratha of Ayodhya decided to retire from his throne, putting his eldest son Rama on the throne. The king's favourite wife Kaikeyi intrigued. She had already extracted a promise from her husband to (1) put her own son Bharata to the throne and to (2) banish Rama for 14 years to Dandaka forest. In the meantime Rama entered a tournament at the court of king Janaka of Videha and wins the king's daughter, Sita as his wife. Sita and Rama's brother Lakshmana joined Rama in his banishment.

JANASTHANA

The party had arrived at the province of Janasthana around Nasik in the Bombay district which was a colony of Rakshas, who had regular communications with their relatives in Lanka, the kingdom of mighty Ravana.

REMOTE CAUSE OF RAMA RAVANA WAR WAS THE CONFLICT BETWEEN:

Yagna-Vidhya and Ahimsa-Vidhya
Blood sacrifice vs Vegetable cult
Aryans vs Dravidians

The Rakshas were always disturbing the sacrificial arrangements of the rishis, who were sparsely scattered over South India with their fire altars and cattle, one of them Visvamitra complained to his compatriot Rama in exile of these nuisances, he exterminated them. This holocaust was reported

to their chief in Lanka, Ravana, who was a wise individual, instead of launching a great war against a more powerful enemy, planned and worked out a scheme to abduct Sita so that Rama would feel the loss of his treasured wife and commit suicide. Ravana abducted Sita to Lanka in his magical aerial car, and confined Sita at Asoka gardens near his capital.

RAMAYANA IN LANKA

Asokavanna or Sita-thaluwa even now abounding with Asoka trees is where Sita in captivity was discovered by Hanuman. This place runs from the foot of (Pedrutalagala mountain) to Hakgalle Garden across the present city of Nuwara Eliya, a parched up grey land of thick manna grass burnt by the curse of Sita while confined by Ravana. Here is a Sitammal Kovil for Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, Hanuman, Krishna and Ganesha, built few decades ago by Sivamayam Sankara Swamy from Malayalam.

RAMA'S INVASION OF LANKA

The theatre of Rama-Ravana war as Lanka, is confirmed by place names and local incidents in Lanka. A divine being suggested Rama to get the help of someone to assist in his adventure. Rama went southwards to lake Pampa near Pannair, probably south of Madras, freed Sugriva, king of the Vanaras (monkey race) from his thralldom, who helped back Rama by lending his Prime Minister, Hanuman to go to Lanka to locate Sita. Sita was found out by Hanuman in the Asoka grove, emaciated with tears and sighs for her husband. Now start Rama's campaign with a Durgha puja.

RAMA'S BRIDGE OR SETHUBANDAYA

The above joined Sri Lanka to India up to AD 1840 when a storm enlarged the breach through

the rocks and foot traffic ceased. These rocks might have been the ones that Hanuman, General Nala and his monkey army filled up with trunks of trees and rocks. Rama, Sugriva, Hanuman and Nala's monkey army crossed over to Lanka.

BATTLE OF RAVANA

The war starts with great losses on both sides, hundreds of monkeys were wantonly killed. Hanuman was ordered to fly to the Himalayas and bring medicine to cure Lakshmana's war wounds, carried back the Sanjeeva Parvata, when he staggers under its weight in an island near Mannar, which island assumes the name of "Thalaadi" (meaning staggering). Hanuman now brings to Sita news of Rama's victory and her freedom.

OTHER PLACE NAMES AND INCIDENTS IN LANKA

1. Lankapura (probably Nuwara Eliya) situated on the top of Trikuta, mountain of three peaks (Pedrutalagala). Trikuta is referred to as situated amidst a semicircle of hills that formed the background of Sita-Eliya (well lit plains of Sita) Ravana flag was the ancient flag of the Newera-Eliya district (M. Obeyasekera C.D.N. 23-2-78).

2. Moon Plains. that surrounds Sita-Thalawas was combed and fired by Hanuman in a search for Sita, driving away evil spirits. Rama ordered these plains to be kept open as a memento of Hanuman. This is now covered with tea gardens (Harry Williams)

3. Asoka-Aramaya, pleasure gardens of Ravana spreading from Adam's Peak to Horton plains adorned again with tea fields (Harry Williams).

4. Ravana Ella caves. Secret retreat of Ravana which opens into Sita Eliya plains, where Sita spent her sojourn in the misery of loneliness,

this cave is situated near Ella Rest House and Ella Pass, one mile away is Ravana's waterfall with a drop of 80 feet.

5. Uva (Sinhara), pleasure garden of Ravana.

6. Sita-waka near Avissawela is the place where Indrajit produced the magical Sita to be shown to Rama.

7. Polonnaruva, Pulistipura, City of Pulistiya, grandfather of Ravana.

8. Negombo after Nikumba, son of Kumbakarna brother of Ravana. Ravana went to this place to do some magical rites during the war.

9. Kalyanapura (Kelaniya) capital of Vibhishana, brother and successor of Ravana.

10 Vil-undi near Jaffna where Rama struck his bow and got perennial clear water for his army.

11 Sea-Forts of Ravana-The great and little Bases.

Comments Rama stands for sacredness of plighted word, honesty, sincerity and righteous rule, Sita for chastity and steadfast love for her husband, an ideal woman of Hindu culture, Bharata and Lakshmana for brotherly love.

Ravana was a towering personality and a Siva worshipper who could not have been killed by Rama if the latter had not been in possession of the magical brahma-astra. Ravana took the correct decision, in trying to punish Rama for his extermination of the rakshasas in India, who appealed to their guardian Ravana for help. According to Jaina traditions,

rakshasas and Vanaras (proto-Dravidians) were both Vidyadharas, who made their own aerial vehicles and Kheceharas, who piloted cars in the air. Indrajit dropped bombs from the air, which made the people unconscious. Vanaras were not monkeys, simply carried the emblem of monkey on their flags. These two races studied grammar and literature.

XIII

MAHABHARATA AND ITS CONNECTIONS WITH SRI LANKA

Mahabharata does not mean a war but Maha (great) Bharavat (weighty) treatise on the principles of material welfare, righteous conduct and spiritual realisation, an epic event of about 800 B.C., an addendum to Hinduism written in a war theme.

There are three themes running as three streams in this epic.

1. Arjuna, the hero of this war.
2. Yudhisthira, (Dharmar in Tamil. means an embodiment of uprightness and all virtues), yet with one dangerous weakness for gambling, even with his sworn enemies.
3. Sri Krishna as Arjuna's charioteer, God Incarnate, philosopher and teacher (vide Bhagavat Gita).

Brahma the great God of this time, Siva and Vishnu, God of the author's time (200 B.C.-200 A.D., according to some, the Gupta period).

The history of the Kurus and their kin races

The origin of the Karawas of Sri Lanka and the Kurukulams of Jaffna (Karaiars) goes back, it is claimed by them to earliest period of Indian history, the Aryan invasion of the Indus region (Sindhu) just after the completion of the Rigveda. Two historical tribes Bharatas (war like) and Purus settled down on either side of the upper and low reaches of the Saraswati river (a branch of the Indus, as traditional enemies fighting each other, a Dravidian army under

Commander Balbutha helping Purus, latter being defeated at the battle of Ravi (eastern branch of the Indus river). The "Bharatas" gave their name Bharata to India Both tribes later made friends and called themselves, Kurus. By this time, the Aryan culture was shifting from Saraswati to Kurukshetra, breaking down on their way the Dravidian resistance. Kurukshetra (means sacred spot), is the plain within the Ganges and its big branch Yamuna, the battle field of the Mahabharata. The epic narrates the struggle for the throne of Hastinapura (near Delhi) between two families of the ruling Lunar race, the Pandavas and Kauravas both alike descended from Royal Bharata, the war ending in victory for the Pandavas and their allies, the remnants of this war becoming exiles, Here is a list of the sound names of the subdivisions of the Kurus and Bharatas.

- (1) **Bharata** Bharathavar, Parawa, Paravar-Parather-Pandu-Pandava-Pandiya etc.
- (2) **Kuru** Kauravars, Karawa in Lanka and Kurukulams in Jaffna. All the above people were of the same origin in blood and place, Aryan Kshatriyas.

Story of the War in Brief

JEALOUSY, THE CAUSE OF THE WAR

Many things that happen in this world among members of a family, friends, states and empires are due to jealousy, a state of continuous rage, sometimes disguised, the cause of great conflagrations, under some pretence or other. The war was between the Pandavas and Kauravas, both of the clan of Bharata or Kurus which lasted eighteen days with the defeat of the Kauravas.

There were two brothers in the Kuru family, Dhritarashtra and Pandu with his five sons. When Pandu died, Dhritarashtra brought up his nephews, the

Pancha-Pandavas in his palace with his own sons. There were practices in archery and wrestling among the children when the Pandavas ousted their cousins, the first cause of jealousy, resulting in serious fights. To avoid personal trouble to himself, Dhritarashtra divided his realm and gave off a desert terrain to the Pandavas with Indraprasthana (near Delhi) as their capital. When Duryodhana, the eldest son, heard that Dharmar was ruling the country with justice to the happiness and satisfaction of his subjects and when his fame was rapidly spreading, this was the second cause of jealousy, Duryodhana's bosom was again kindled with jealousy, To make things worse, there was an archery contest at the court of the King of the Panchala for the hand of his beautiful daughter, Draupadi, where Duryodhana failed, and Arjuna successfully hit the target. Duryodhana can no more bear the torments of jealousy. On the advice of his uncle Sakuni not to go in, for a direct battle, Duryodhana draws out the Pandvas for a game of gamble. Even a saint like Dharmar, master of all virtues, had a private fault i.e. for gambling, lost all his stakes, even his own self and finally Draupadi whom Duryodhana disgraced by trying to undress her, when Draupadi appealed to Lord Krishna, they were all set free. Duryodhana calls again the Pandvas for another gamble, Dharmar shows his folly to allow himself to be snared a second time. They lose the gamble and go into banishment for 12 years. When the exile period was over, Pandavas sent a message to Duryodhana to give back their share of the kingdom which Duryodhana refused, hence the preparation for war, in which war, Duryodhana dies of bleeding. Dharmar then became King of the Kurus at Hastinapura, some of the remnants of the Kurus went out as exiles.

EXILED WHERE TO ?

The exact location of their permanent settlement in exile is not clear. Some useful information

gathered from a brochure "Who are the Kuru-Kulams of Jaffna?", published by the North Ceylon Maritime association, 1956, Colombo gives us very valuable assistance. Father Heras remarked in this connection that "Many people from North India came down to the South in search of fertile land and peace". There were several Kuru colonies all over South India, in Madura the Bharatas (Paravas) and members of the Pandyan royal dynasty. In Madras (Thurston), they called themselves Ariyas (Aryans), Kurukula vamsam, Varuna-Kula mudali and Kauravars etc. Tanjore, (Varunakulata). Winslow—The Bharatas popularly known now as Paravars have always claimed to be descendents of Bharatas, the immediate ancestors of the Kurus of North India. It is not therefore surprising that Kauravas, and Parathers who are described as "merchants" and inhabitants of the coast are the only two races in South India who represent the Chandra race of Delhi, with the same origin in blood and as Kshastriyas.

Casie Chetty : Admits of the presence of Paravas or Bharatas in South India. According to Soodamani Nigandu (Casie Chetty) the original country of the Karears was Kuru-land which is the land of the ancient Kshastriyas and that in his day, as even now, portions of them were still called Kurukulams in Jaffna.

Dalton : The Karavas of Central India maintain their descent to be from Kuru refugees who were exiled from Kuru-rata after the defeat of the Kauravas in the Mahabharata war.

Hugh Nevill the great scholar states :- Karawas are no doubt the northern remnants of a race that in Ceylon and South India form a distinct caste, exact period of their migration is about 10c. A.D. This caste is called in Tamil Karear (meaning coastal people) and in Sinhalese, Karawa.

William H. Gilbert : Karawa caste members have laid claim to Kshastriya (Satirya) status, rather the Karavas always claimed this, and were accepted by the kings as such.

Pattanam takes its etymology from Pattavanan, a community of Karears who dwelt in the coastal towns like Chennapattanam (Madras), Nagapattanam and Kaveripattanam on the sea board of Kurumandalam, and Kareara Peria and Chinnapattanams of Mannar, Periapattanam, the present Moor village of Erukampididi and, Chinnapattanam where Sangili Raja Senior, put to death Catholic converts in December 1544, and Jaffna Pattanam.

THE EMBLEM OF THE FISH

The fish was already a royal symbol and seen to have been an emblem of Kuru-land (Delhi region), where all the Kurus and Kauravas trace their origin. In the Vishnu-purana, (Kuru-land) Kurukeshtra between the Ganges and its main branch Yamuna, is geographically fish shaped, and that is how the fish emblem arose and been kept up by its descendents, Kurus and Bharatas, and nothing to do with fishing occupation. It must be noted that there was no sea in or about Kurukeshtra. It was also the emblem of the South Indian Pandyan kings who claim relationship with Kurus of North India and hence called the Fisher.

Makara, (Sea monster) which the Tamils call Shark fish, is the symbol of all Kuru race. Further the principal goddess of the Pandyas of Madura is Meenatchi Ammal, the fish eyed lady, eyes beautiful and luminous like that of the "Kayal Fish" probably shining divine symbol of Kurukeshtra. According to Fr. Heras, the Indus Valley inscriptions show that there is some historical connection between the Paravas and the moon and further states

the Meenavan of the two fishes of Mohenjo-Daro and his Moon Parava subjects very likely were ancestors of Pandyan kings of Madura and their Parava subjects of the Fishing Coast.

Pandyans were therefore shown as Aryans and Kshastriyas belonging to the Moon race, with Fish as a symbol. It is probably for the above reason. Prince Vijaya of Lanka and his 700 companions married from among the Pandyan dynasty of Madura, before his coronation in Lanka, himself being an Aryan Kshastriya.

Janawamsa (1240) :- Karawa cheiftain, Prince Karavanti was Vijaya's Uvaraja who later became King of Kanchi. The Karavas were relatives of kings from whom the kings were chosen.

Kurukula Desha. From all considerations, the greatest concentration of Kurus-in-exile appear to have been in Kuru-Kula desha, covered by the Kurumandal Coast (Coramandal), named after their race with their harbours at Kanchipuram, Kaveripattanam, Chennapattanam (Madras), Nagapattanam, Keelakarai (Pandyan Coast) etc. and their hinterland, Pallava, Chola and Pandyan territories in southeast India. When the Kurus reached their new homeland, Kuru-Kuladesha, they had landed in the midst of the dynastic wars between Pallavas, Cholas, Pandyas etc. which situation was the best for them to join in, and display their hereditary war like qualities. Kurumandalam became therefore a veritable reservoir for military man power, from which the Pallavas, Cholas and Pandyans drew their soldiers for their wars and oversea invasions of Maldives, Bassein etc. They fought only under their commanders, Thalaivans, Devars, Mudiansas etc. The appearance in Sri Lanka of Pallava coins engraved with emblems of sailing vessels, fish and other sea products and inscriptions of Pallava Granth scripts, testify to the seaborne invasions of Lanka.

KURUKULAMS OR KAREARS (COASTAL PEOPLE,) AND KARAVAS OF SRI LANKA

The Kurukulams of North Ceylon have always considered themselves along with the Karawas of South to be Kshastriyas (warriors). The tradition current among the Kurukulams of Jaffna is that they came from Kanchipuram, Kaveripattanam and Keelakarai, Kurukula desha, brought under their Kurukula and Varnakula chiefs as soldiers in the times of the Singhalese and Tamil Kings, and spread out along the coast of Jaffna, Mantota, Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Mullativu districts. Some of them in the Eastern Province were called Kauravars like some in South India. Hugh Nevill's collection of Sinhalese scripts contain several documents which support the Karawa's claims in everyway. As for Mannar, according to Father Anrrigue, first Parish Priest of Mannar (1564) the big town Peria-carea-pattanam consisted of Karears and Paravas who according to him migrated from the fishery coast to Mannar. In Janawamsa A.D. 1240, Karawas are referred to as ship-builders, navigators and rich merchants of the Mahasammata or Royal race. Some Karawas carried the Bo-tree saplings for Sangamitta and settled down at the point of disembarcation, Mathagal. The Kurukulams had their slaves, their symbols of authority, ranks and titles and the word "Kurukulam" inserted in their tombos, land deeds and subregisters.

NAVIGATION AND ALLIED TRADE

When the exiles who were used to living in inland country came in contact with the open sea of Coramandal coast and North Lanka, they eagerly turned their attention towards navigation and allied enterprises. They became ship builders, owners of ships and godowns, rich merchants in rice and timber, guardians of Kings' coast and customs collectors.

They kept alive the commerce and connections between Jaffna and Coramandel Coast, carried trade further to the Arabian coast, Persian Gulf, Burma etc., a good part of Karaiars formed the king's navy under their own Kurukulam captains, in peace time, they made up the merchant fleet. They were seasoned meteorologists and astronomers who could accurately forecast the change of winds and weather and guide their ships, by observation of stars and flight of birds.

Mukkara Hatane (Nevill's manuscript describes the arrival of an army on an appeal from Parakramabahu VI led by their Pattankattinars (Sgh-Patabende), leaders with war decorations, 7740 strong from Kanchipuram, Kaveripattanam and Keelakarai of Kurukuladesha and defeated the invading Mukkuars and Thulukkaras. "Parakramabahu inquired of their lineage and was glad" and settled them as citizens in his country for his benefit to use them when necessary in his wars. He gave them whole streets in Negombo as Parvenu and permitted the use of 18 harbours, free with no intention of fishing, it appears, but note for sea going trade. The first settlement, was for high class leaders like, Pattankattinars, at Kalutara. Father Queyroz, a Portuguese historian says:- It was the Kareara people who saved the kings of Jaffna, when they were faced with military disasters. They also fought for the kings of Kandy in their struggle with the Portuguese. The last king of Jaffna Sangili Kumar begged for military help from the Naik of Tanjore, who sent a fresh army of Karears under their commander (Varuna Kulata,) Cem Naque. Queyroz describe often, the Karears as a war like race. It is of some significance that the term Karayoor was given to the present Jaffna town the original home of the Kaurava which now consists of the cathedral, seminary, St. Patrick's College, Holy Family Convent, Lady of Refuge, St. John's Church, Central College Court

Houses and the Fort, with Pannaithurai as its port. It must be mentioned here that the name Karayoor was recently changed to Kuru-nagar to suit its ancient history.

DECLINING PERIOD OF ANCIENT KURUKULAMS OF JAFFNA

In the pre-Kotte period, the infestation of the Arabian Sea with Moor pirates as well as the increasing Arab competitive trade, had a depressing effect on the sea borne trade of the Kurukulams. Colombo at this time was a powerful pirate station of the Arabs. Colombo itself was an Arab city, its name was Arabic "Kalambu" meaning a splendid harbour, that was why Alagakkonar III founded the city of Kotte near Colombo as a counter weight to this city. The Portuguese who followed in the foot steps of the Arabs swept the Arab fleet off the sea, captured the ports of Goa, Calicut, Colombo and dominated the Indian Ocean. The Kurukulams were thereby wedged in badly now, between the loss of the freedom of the sea and engagements in land warfare, and were commercially and politically ruined. **CASTE** is a Portuguese word for purity of race, introduced into India by the Portuguese to weaken national cohesion creating dissensions among their subjects and ease the ruler's administrative difficulties as foreigners. The term Karear used by the inhabitants of Jaffna means coastal people with no other meaning. The Tamils had never accepted the fourfold Aryan caste system

Dravidians spread out on geographical lines those who lived on the sea coasts were called Neydal people, those who lived on plains or banks of rivers were called cultivators or Vellalas. The Portuguese laid emphasis on casteism, called the Kurukulams, Pescadores, making again a thin line of separation, Pescadores who did not fish, and Pescadores who

fished, Melonkees and Keelonkees. The Dutch called them *Vissers*, the British called them *Fishers*. The British were themselves a nation of fishers, until they built their mighty imperial navy. British interest in Ceylon affected the Kurukulams in various and indirect ways, through the replacement of the method of transport system, inland railway (1905), Indo-Ceylon Railway connection (1914) regular steamer service round the coast of Lanka and later motor transport, drove the last nail of their commercial coffin, where the high ups were able to receive high government offices as *Respadores*, *Mudaliars*, *Moopoos*, *Headmen*, tax collectors, etc, the poorer resorted naturally to fishing, as father *Gnanapragasam* observed for want of a better occupation. *Vyasa*, the author of our epic was the son of a fisher woman.

It is therefore unbecoming to call a great people with a glorious past who had changed the destiny of South India and the course of events in Lanka by the lower status of "fishers".

Change of religion of Karawas and Kurukulams Both were the same people said to be *Aryan Kshatriyas* in origin, Tamil speaking *Hindus* belonging as revealed in their names to the *Murugan* cult of the *Saivite* sect, *Velan*, *Velata*, *Kandappu*, *Arumugan*, *Valli Amma*, *Theivanai* etc. The *Karawas* were converted from *Hinduism* straight to *Catholicism* during the *Portuguese* period, "let loose from their *Hindu* moorings were caught in the net of *Catholicism* just before they got enmeshed into the social structure of the *Sinhalese* race, and first to be *westernised*. Their names also changed to *Portuguese* personal names as *Fernando*, *de Silva*, *Perera*, etc.

While the *Karawas* adopted the *Sinhalese* language and were assimilated into the *Sinhalese* nation by wedlock, the *Kurukulams*, remained *Tamil*,

changing only the names not to *Portuguese* names, but to those of the *Catholic* saints, like *Nicola Pillai*, *Celestin*, *Francis*, *Anthony* etc.

"Suffice it to say that the *Karawa* whether villager or urbanised never covers up his caste, to the contrary he is usually proud of it" (*Bryce Ryan-Castes in modern Ceylon 1953*).

DRAUPADI AMMAN WORSHIP IN LANKA

There are two places in Lanka, for worship of Goddess *Draupadi*, *Udappu* in the North Western coast in the *Puttalam* district, and *Paddiruppu* in the *Batticaloa* district.

DRAUPADI AMMAN KOVIL AT UDAPPU

Udappu is a salty flat land inhabited by *Hindu Varnakulams* where a ten day festival takes place once a year in the *Tamil* month of *Avani* (*August*) where a quiet hamlet rises like a mushroom to beehive activity with booths, hawker's tents, ice cream vans, stalls etc. *Firewalking* ceremony on the last day of the festival attracts socialites and non *Hindus*. Festival starts with a flag hoisting ceremony, pageant shows of episodes from the *Mahabharata*, such as *Draupadi's* marriage contest, the gamble, exile, *Arjuna's* penance are shown. Offerings are made to the weapons of the *Pandavas* and *Draupajas* performed in honour of the brothers and *Draupadi*. On the last day is the grand procession with the triumphal march of *Dharmar* with effigies of his brothers commemorating the *Bharata* victory and the town once again lapses into obscurity. There is only one brick building which is the temple and one priest (*Esme Rankin*).

KURUKULATHARS AND KAMALAKANNI IN LANKA

A king of a neighbouring state belonging to a low caste took a fancy for princess Kamalakanni of the Kurukulathars and made love. To avoid any further problem, they abandoned their native country trying a bitch to a bridal post, a sign of their contempt for the king's lower status and migrated to Lanka. They came with their servants, priests, flags and hereditary emblems of their clan, ignoring the king's message and landed at Mannar, trekked southwards by way of Calpenty, Puttalam, Mundal, finally settling down at Udappu and installed their goddess at Draupadi Kovil. The virgin princess after her voluntary immolation was deified as a household goddess in the form of an unbroken water pot, as a symbol of her virginity with no image for her. Being a virgin, she is approached and worshipped by only women folk, once a year with flowers (Esme Rankin).

XIV

BHAGAVAD GITA

(Song celestial)

It is said to have been inserted into the Mahabharata between 5-2 c.B.C. by Sanjaya (probably a sage), most popular of all the the religious literature in India, wide publicity given to it, by Christian divines and foreign scholars who studied it with zeal, because Krishna the incarnate, was perhaps Christ-like. This literature is Smriti (traditional and not Sruti, revealed truth). It accepts and elaborates the central doctrine of the Upanishads. It is in the form of a dialogue between Krishna the charioteer as Godhead, and Arjuna, the disciple, just before the commencement of the Mahabharata war. Arjuna inspects the enemy lines, to find there, his friends, his kinsmen, uncles, his own archery teachers etc. Arjuna complains to his charioteer :- "This sight makes my limbs give way, my mouth parches, my body trembles. How can we be happy, killing our own people and teachers?" He sinks down in his seat overfilled with grief. "My mind is perplexed about my duty, Guide me O Krishna." Krishna replies "if thou do not wage this righteous war, thou will relinquish thy honour and will incur sin. Work alone thou art entitled to, not its fruits; so never work for reward in this world or in heaven, nor desist from work, work with an even mind without attachment, you are only an instrument, I have already slain them."

Two ideals spark out of this dialogue :-

- (1) Special emphasis on Karma-Yoga (work or deeds).
- (2) Un-attachment, work without expectation of reward.

NOTEWORTHY TEACHINGS OF THE GITA

- (1) Krishna says "In whatever way men worship me, the same way I fulfil their desires", a spirit of universality, a spirit of harmony rather than conflict, on synthesis and toleration rather than opposition or sectarianism. Rigveda states :- Truth is one, sages call it by various names.

Aurobindo Ghosh : Gita is not a weapon of dialectical warfare, it does not cut up or build walls or hedges to confine our vision.

- (2) Ways of spiritual attainment are by the yogas (yoga means path of union with God) :-
- (A) Jnanayoga, through knowledge and learning.
 - (B) Rajayoga, realisation by meditation and psychic control.
 - (C) Bakhtiyoga (through love and devotion).
 - (D) Karmayoga :- Gita has already given special emphasis on this, work and action.
- (3) Renunciation. Not the renunciation of the world, but of worldliness, not merely family life and the performance of ordinary domestic duties, but a life of non-attachment in the midst of these duties, is the real message of Gita.
- (4) Gita consists of 18 chapters divided into three sections of six chapters each :-
- 1st — 6 Chapters deal with Karmayoga.
 - 2nd — 6 Chapters on Jnanayoga.
 - 3rd — 6 Chapters on Bakhti yoga.
- Rajayoga (meditation) runs through like a thread across the three sections.

- (5) Upanishads. From another angle, acceptance and elaboration of the doctrine of Upanishads :-
- 1st — 6 chapters deal with "Tvam" (self or soul).
 - 2nd — 6 chapters deal with Tat (world soul).
 - 3rd — 6 chapters deal with (identity of thou and that.)
- (6) Law of Karma and Rebirth, the central doctrine of the Upanisads.

Karma is the only valid explanation of the moral order of the universe. Gita accepts and elaborates on this doctrine. "Self is to be saved by only oneself, self alone is either friend of self or enemy of self.

A deed (Karma) is done and forgotten, but it is not altogether lost, for it produces thought waves which in turn subside and remain in the subconscious region of the mind as impressions (samskaras). Countless such impressions good and evil of the former existence, as well as present, are stored up in the subconscious mind-at death, a balance sheet is prepared between the good and bad Samskaras in order to assess the type and number of rebirths to be attached to him.

- (7) Avatarhood (Avatar, made of flesh). Man can pass through several incarnations in different ages and different forms. Krishna says :- When there is decline of Dharma and rise of Adharma, then I body myself forth, for the protection of the good and destruction of the bad. An Avatar is a superman and must have therefore higher qualities.

XV

BRAHMANS AND EARLY SRI LANKA
BUDDHISM

Once the Buddha had attained Nirvana state, where there is neither pain nor pleasure he naturally lost interest in this world of pleasures and pains, it is therefore no use praying to Him for benefits, which he says will not be answered, you might therefore remember or revere him by offerings of flowers etc. Buddha however believed in invisible gods on earth, but according to him, they also needed salvation, they are mortal. People therefore turned to these gods for worldly boons.

With thankful acknowledgement to Dr. P.B.J. Hevawasam whose instructive and excellent research thesis "Images of Hindu gods in Buddhist temples" appeared in the "Tribune" of October. 22.10.1977. Dr. Hevawasam classifies these gods according to their nature into two varieties :-

- (a) Buddhist or Lanka gods. They are the four guardian deities of Sri Lanka.
- (1) UPULVAN, guardian of all Lanka, of the same blue complexion as that of Vishnu, were identified as one and the same, Upulvan's name later dropped off, except in old books, Vishnu becoming now the more popular god of the Buddhists. Upulvan was a descendant of the Indo-Aryan sky god, Varuna.
- (2) SAMAN, descendant of the Indo-Aryan god Yama (C.H.C. 331), guardian of Adam's Peak and Sabaragamuwa.
- (3) VIBHISANA, deity of Kelaniya temple, brother and successor of Ravana.

- (4) KATHIRGAMA-DEO, protector of Ruhuna changed into the Hindu God Skanda Kumara, called also in Tamil Murugan, Kathiravelu or Velauthan (spear weaponed).

GANESHA LATER, protector of the Bo-tree Anuradhapura (N.10).

- (b) HINDU GODS, Siva, Parvati, Kali, Vishnu, Skanda, Ganesha, Pattini etc.

The differences between Buddhist and Hindu god are :- The former is mortal, and benevolent only, the latter immortal according to Hinduism, with benign or malignant, or with both qualities.

For example Uma as Sarvamangala (always auspicious) may be also a fierce goddess, as Kali the black one, to whom the devotees are able to appeal to bring out misfortune or calamities to the devotee's enemies; that is why the Buddhist monks, many of whom were admirers of Hindu gods, had given the latter abode in their own temples, convenient to the votaries.

"Popular Buddhism was resilient enough to permit the transformation of the beliefs and even the gods of earlier tradition into seemingly new shapes and forms under new names".

The pattern of Buddhist worship is :- Devotees pay obeisance to the Buddha first with flowers pirth chanting etc, thereby gain merits for themselves, some of which they transfer to the adjacent gods by which act of compassion, they not only abate the karma of the god but gather additional merits for themselves again. Then they make vows to the god to obtain personal gains.

THE ROLE OF BRAHMANAS IN SRI LANKA BUDDHISM

The Brahmanas were another body of men who must have been necessarily involved in this transfer of gods to viharas, as protectors of Hindu deities and temples strong in numbers and influence with ruling monarchs and adept in the art of compromise and accomodation.

Status of Brahmanas in Sri Lanka. From the foundation of the kingdom of Sri Lanka to its conquest by the Portuguese, Brahmanas came from the opposite coast and settled down all over Sri Lanka at various periods in history in different villages, Mantota (6 c.A.D.), Devinuvara (7. c.A.D.), Kantalai (11- 13 c.A.D.), Kurunagalla (14 c.A.D.) with five hundred houses and a street, Weligama etc.

There was a great migration of Brahmanas in the Chola period and a similar one in 14-15 c.A.D.

In ancient times ;-

- (1) Upatissa a Brahmana, ruled for a year after the death of Vijaya.
- (2) Dutugemunu (165 B.C.) bought goods from a Brahmana trader, Kundali, brought from overseas.
- (3) Sri Naga (250 A.D.) a Brahmana and his descendants ruled for fifty years. Medieval period :-

There was a gradual ascent of Hinduism from the downfall of Polonnaruwa to the Kotte Kingdom.

Vijayabahu I (1110 A.D.) The conqueror and enemy of the Cholas did not discriminate against the Brahmanic form of worship, but built Hindu temples himself. Bramanical influences were very strong in his reign.

Parakramabahu I (1153 A.D.) Himself with some Brahman blood and leanings towards Hinduism went through the five ceremonies of the life of a Brahmana and was found in sculptures wearing the Brahmana thread on his left shoulder. Homa sacrifices were performed in his palace.

Parakramabahu VI (15-c. A.D.) gave equal treatment for both Buddhism and Hinduism. Tamil was the court language (Codrington). He gave big donations of land to Munneswaram Temple, deeds written in Tamil. He was a builder of a Pattini Temple at Kotte. Brahmanas and Monks flocked to his court for alms.

Rajasingha I became a Hindu in 16 c.A.D. He built several temples.

Bhuvanakabahu VII in 16 c.A.D. sent a golden effigy and crown of his grandson, Dharamapala, in charge of a Brahman prime minister, Radharaksha Panditha, to the court of Lisbon for the coronation of Dharmapala, in his absence.

BRAHMANISM AND BUDDHISM managed to exist without opposition right through the remote periods in Lanka except during the rule of Mahasena in 4 c.A.D. and Magha's reign in 13 c.A.D.

Mahasena built a vihara in the village of Brahman Kalanda, while Arya Kana Deva a Brahmana founded the Saman Devala in Sabaragamuwa. Brahman Tivikka was second to the king to receive the Bo-tree when it was first landed at Mathagal on the northern coast of Jaffna. Brahman Sri Ramachandra Kavibharati composed in Parakramabahu VI's times in Sanskrit, devotional stanzas dedicated to the Buddha.

Rituals at Ruvanvalisaya Dagoba were not performed without the presence of Brahmanas. The above instances are cited to testify to the cordial relationship and harmony in those remote times, between Buddhists and Hindu priests and kings. "No Brahman ever thought of converting others to his national religion" (Blavatsky). Homa sacrifices were performed in palaces, sustaining the peoples' beliefs in the divinity of the kings. "The mark of a good king is not to hurt the feelings of a Brahman" Brahmanas were a class of men who swayed the mind of kings and peasants and received their homage not by force of arms, but by the rigour of their hereditary culture and self restraint. They were active members of the society in which they lived as officials, merchants, poets etc. Their presence in the courts had a profound cultural influence on Buddhism and its votaries (N101).

During Vijayabahu I's reign no image of any Hindu god (C.H.C. 266) appears to have been installed in Buddhist shrines. Hindu gods began to be worshipped in devales attached to viharas or to the viharas themselves in about 1344 during Bhuvan aikabahu IV's reign at Gampola, the first temple admitting gods was probably Gadaladeniya Temple (N28).

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EPILOGUE

Hinduism is based on three categories :-

- (1) Hindu worship
- (2) Hindu philosophy and
- (3) Hindu dharma.

1. HINDU WORSHIP

A new born baby's conscious mind is a blank, he does not therefore know whether he was newly born or not. Even when his conscious mind is developed in the years, he does not know the purpose of his existence. Under these stricken circumstances of utter helplessness, the man seeks the assistance of some one more potent than himself, the Almighty, but he is unknowable and invisible. Man now has established his right to summon his imaginative and emotional powers resident in him, to conjure up an imaginary picture (mental image) and project it as an external image, with shape and form in stone and clay. The Jaffna Hindu Organ of 2.8.77' quotes the Buddhist text "Diviyanadana", "it is not the clay and the mould figure that is worshipped, but the principles that are referred by the mould form." Formulation of image as a representative of God is a triumph for human ingenuity.

2. HINDU PHILOSOPHY

Deals with a search for knowledge of the human soul, its function and nature, and destination, crystallised ultimately as Advaita-Vedanta. Hinduism is pantheism, a spiritual religion, with message of hope, whose ultimate goal is the reunion of the spirit of man with the spirit of God.

3. HINDU DHARMA

Hindu Dharma that percolates through Indian life and thought means in short ethical idealism. It embraces all virtuous activities, charity, morals and manners, religion and religiosity, rights and rites, cults and cultures, freedom of thought and expression as shown in acts of meditation, tapas and wandering asceticism, homage to traditions etc. The Dharma-sastras, dance and drama, epics and puranas, cinema themes were written to uphold dharma. Incarnation of Vishnu etc. had come down to earth to safeguard dharma when in peril. Victories of dharma over adharma are being celebrated annually in the Deepavali, Dasara, Navaratri and other such festivals.

Finally, according to the findings in this book Hinduism appears to be a system built up by sentient beings and ought to have a beginning. The rishis and philosophers assert that vedic thoughts, the basis of Hindu philosophy concentrated in Vedanta, is divine and eternal, beginningless and without end.

