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Conjeeveram inscription of Mahêndravarman I.
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VEDIC ANTIQUITIES

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I. THE VÊDIC STÛPA : A HEMISPHERICAL TOMB.

It is not necessary to describe here the "Buddhist stûpa" because its architecture is well known to those who are interested in India. They know that it is a hemispherical monument which was used as tomb for the remains of Buddha and his disciples. The shape of this kind of monument may seem wonderful. Mr. E. B. Havell, the well known Indianist, has shown, in his book "A handbook of Indian Art" (London, Murray, 1920) that the peculiar form of the Buddhist Stûpa may be explained only by the following hypothesis: before the epoch of Buddha (*i. e.* before 500 B. C.) ashes of the Âryan chiefs were the object of a sort of cult. These ashes, collected in the urns, were placed in a grave but this grave was of a most peculiar shape: it was

similar to the hut in which the Âryan chief was inhabiting during his life. This hut was made of wood and bamboo and was hemispherical. The following are some of the sentences of Mr. E. B. Havell :

Page 4 : “ The stûpa, as is well known, was a relic shrine. In Buddhist history it was primarily the funeral monument of the royal monk, the Prince of the Sâkyas, who taught the four Âryan truths, the Âryan Eightfold Path, and founded the Sangha, organised after the customs and traditions of an Âryan clan. Although the stûpa apparently belongs almost exclusively to Buddhism or its rival cult, Jainism, its origin cannot be explained in a sectarian sense. Its history did not begin with the death of Gautama Buddha, or of Mahâvira. We shall understand it better by describing it as the mausoleum, or funeral monument, of an Âryan king or chieftain. The Buddha was given a royal funeral by the Âryan tribesmen as the Head of the Sangha ”.

Page 14 : “ To return now to the earliest known Indo-Âryan monument—the stûpa ; its connection with the Âryan tradition of pre-Buddhist India can be traced both in the Vedic funeral ritual, and in the structure of the stûpa itself. According to Buddhist tradition, eight different Indo-Âryan tribes build stûpas to contain the remains of the Buddha, while two more were built to preserve the ashes of the funeral pyre, and the iron vessel in which the Blessed One’s body has been cremated. We know, from the records of Vedic ritual, that it was the Âryan custom for relatives to collect the fragments of bones of a deceased person from the funeral pyre, and to deposit them in an urn which was subsequently buried in the ground. Among Vedic rites was one called “ Pitrimedha”,

or the sacrifice for ancestors, performed when a monument was raised over the funeral urn. The exact character of the monument is not described, but it is clear that the Âryan tribes, in building stûpas to honour the Sâkyan chieftains, were not creating a precedent, but following an ancient Vedic tradition. The Buddhist stûpa, when it was not merely a cenotaph or memorial, was built to contain a funeral urn."

Page 17 : "The stûpa in its earliest known form was a dome roughly hemispherical in shape..."

"The stûpa, as it now exists, is nearly always a solid structure of brick or stone, but probably it was originally a domical hut built of bamboo or wooden ribs. Thus the earliest stûpa may have been the Âryan chieftain's hut or tent, imitated or reproduced in Vedic funeral rites as a temporary abode for the spirit of the deceased, until the due performance of the "shrâddhas" by his relatives helped him to pass from the earthly sphere".

And page 24 : "The interior (of the Lomas Rishi cave, near Gâyâ, in Bihar) consist of a hall 33 feet long and 19 feet wide, with a semi-cylindrical roof. The walls, floor, and ceiling are quite plain, but have a very fine polish. At one end of the hall a narrow door opens into a domed chamber, or shrine, nearly circular in shape like a hollow stûpa. In a similar adjacent hermitage known as the Sûdâma or Nyagrodha cave, the rock is cut over the entrance so as to simulate the thatched roof of the shrine or stûpa. Possibly we have here a representation of an ancient Âryan stûpa with the assembly-hall or chapel where the "shrâddha" rites of the deceased hero were performed."

I think the above is quite clear : Mr. E. B. Havell

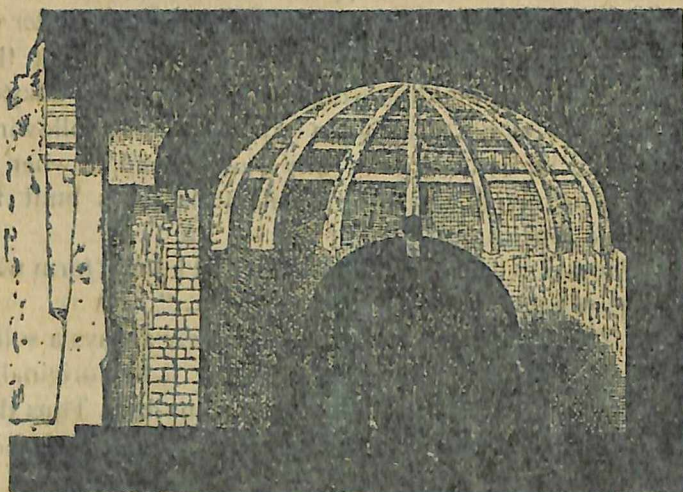


Fig. 1. Longitudinal section of the Buddhist rock-cut cave at Guntupalle.

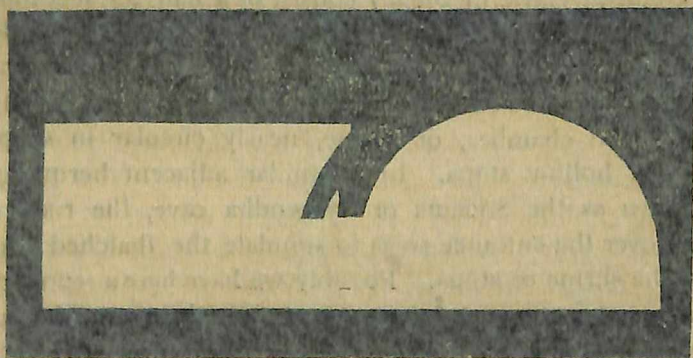


Fig. 2. Longitudinal section of the Sudâma rock-cut cave near Gâyâ.

tells us that the Âryan tombs had the shape of a "hollow stûpa", representing the hemispherical hut, built of wood and bamboo, of the Âryan chief, whose ashes have been the object of ceremonies (shraddhas) performed in an assembly-hall situated at the entrance of the stûpa. We reproduce here (fig 2) the longitudinal section of the Sudâma cave according to the Pl. II. B. facing page 24, of the book of Mr. Havell.

Our fig 1, which represents the cave of Guntupalle, is taken from the Annual Report, Archæological Department, Southern Circle, Madras, for 1916—1917, by Mr. A. H. Longhurst. It is clear that the hemispherical dome represents a spherical hut : in fact, at Guntupalle, the vault has still its frame work made of wood.

This vault was often sustained by a pillar in wood situated exactly in the centre of the hemisphere. This is proved by the ancient representations of the Stûpas. Mr. Foucher, in his remarkable work "The beginnings of the Buddhist art", has proved that the symbol which they have confounded with a bow and its arrow was nothing but a Stûpa with a pillar in its middle.

The shape of the Âryan grave in the Vêdic times was thus extremely peculiar : it was a hemispherical vault borne by a central pillar ; and it is exactly the shape of the cave I have discovered at Mennapuram, near Telli-cherry, in the Malabar district.

The caves of the Malabar district were till now more or less completely unknown.

In 1820, in a communication to the "Literary Society of Bombay", Babington described the caves of Bangalamottaparamba under the name of "Prehistoric antiquities".

In about 1886, Mr. W. Logan was collector of the Malabar district. He was informed of the existence of caves in a great number of villages in the Malabar district. The names of these villages are mentioned in the "List of Antiquities of the Madras Presidency" of Mr. R. Sewell ; they were nearly one hundred of localities.

From the geographical view point these caves are altogether located in the Malabar district, *i. e.* in the environs of Tirur, Calicut, Tellicherry, Cannanore. None of them are to be found in the neighbouring districts of North-Canara, Coimbatore, and the Travancore State. Thus it seems that the caves are the product of a civilisation altogether special to the Malabar district.

But in that country they are very numerous. It is probable that with careful searching they might find some caves in each locality of Malabar.

Mr. Logan himself visited only one spot, and was fortunate enough to find some tombs intact there. It was at Padinyâttamuri. The caves were opened in the presence of Mr. Logan himself who collected the objects that were found in, sent them to Madras, and wrote an article in the Vol. VIII. of the "Indian Antiquary", page 309, about those "prehistorical potteries," found in the caves. Mr. Logan gave a plan of these caves which we reproduce in our fig. 6 ; their architecture does not seem to have attracted his attention as he mentioned in his article only the objects found in those caves. But there was in the article of Mr. Logan an extremely interesting detail : in each of the four caves, which constitute the group of Padinyâttamuri, there is a place for burning the fire which, in his plan, Mr. Logan designs by the letter L "fire places,"

In the year 1910 - 1911 several caves were opened by the Archæological department at Perungulam, 8 miles south-east of the Tellicherry Railway station (see pages 10 and 11 of the Annual Report of the Archæological Department, Southern circle, Madras for the year 1910 - 1911, Madras Government Press). Iron implements in great abundance, potteries of various forms, a grinding stone (mortar), a pestle, etc. were unearthed.

In June 1921, I visited that parts of Malabar district which was not so well known, and more particularly those caves which deserve an attentive survey and a more complete study than those which have been made by Babington and Logan. It is thus that I discovered a sort of cave almost peculiar and till now unknown which I will describe under the name of "Hollow Stūpa with central column." The best specimen of this sort of cave is to be found at Mennapuram. This village is in British territory ; it belongs to the Kottayam taluk and is six miles from Tellicherry, not far from Mahé, and near the French village of Pallur.

There are four caves in that place ; the one which I shall describe now is well preserved.

The figure 3 shows its ground plan and the figures 4 and 5 show its longitudinal and transversal sections.

The principal part is formed of a vault perfectly hemispherical and neatly cut in rock (laterite.)

In the centre is a column cut in the same rock. The hemispherical vault of the rock-cut cave being very strong, it is evident that the pillar was not necessary ; moreover it is very frail and slender ; there is no doubt that it imitates a wooden beam bearing the vault of a hut. This hypothesis is confirmed by a sort of capital

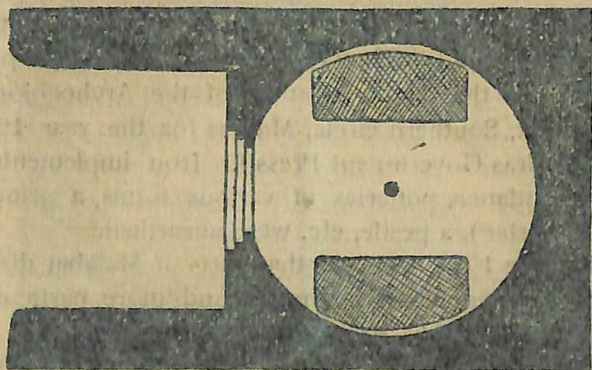


Fig. 3. Ground plan of a Hollow Stupa at Mennapuram.

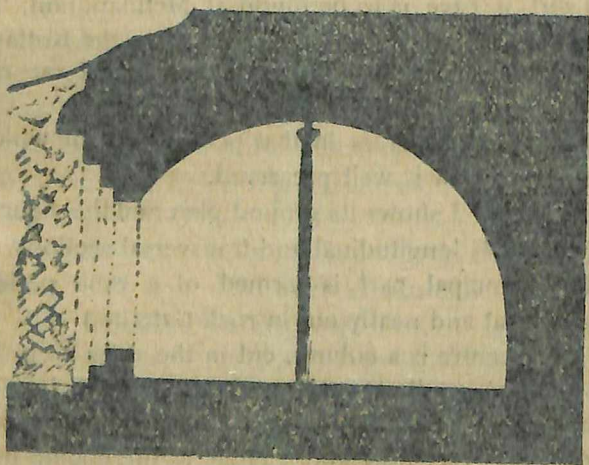


Fig. 4. Longitudinal section of a Hollow Stupa at Mennapuram.

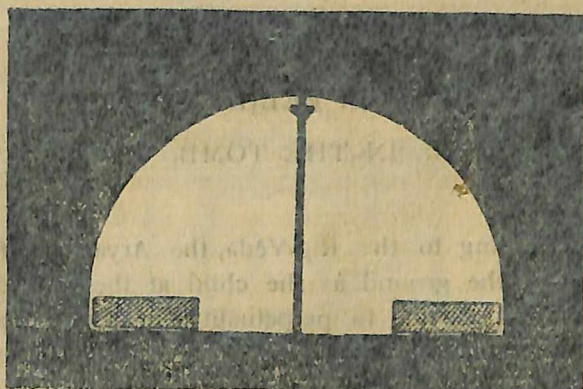


Fig. 5. Transversal section of a Hollow Stûpa at Mennapuram.

on the top which has a very curious shape: it is composed of a crown of eight small corbels around the column. The object of the capital is to bear a wooden frame work and the capital itself seems to be an imitation in stone of a wooden work.

On each side of the cave are two large stones.

They penetrate in the cave through a rectangular entrance.

To sum up, the rock-cut tomb at Mennapuram is a perfect specimen of a Vêdic stûpa of the Pre-Buddhist age: it is a hemispherical tomb for the ashes of the Âryan chief and an imitation of the primitive hut where the Agni and Sôma sacrifices were performed.

The hut was a hemispherical dome made of timber covered by clay. A central wooden pillar was sustaining the vault.

II. AN ÂRYAN BELIEF: THE LIFE IN THE TOMB.

According to the Rig-Vêda, the Aryan chief was resting in the ground as the child at the pale of his mother and staying to perpetuality in the tomb, the "narrow home of clay" (Rig-Vêda, X, 18, 10-13 ; VII, 89, 1 ; see also : Auguste Barth, *les Religions de l'Inde*, I. Religions védiques ; Tome I — Œuvres de A. Barth, Paris, 1914, page 33) .

The words : " the narrow house made with clay " is very important for the Vêdic archæology.

The Vêdic tombs were made with clay, and it is the reason for which we have never found any Vêdic antiquities in Âryâvarta (Northern India) : these buildings made of perishable materials (timber and clay) have all been destroyed.

In Kêrala we have a peculiar stone, the laterite, a natural clay ; and the solidness of the soil has preserved the precious Vêdic remains.

In the precedent chapter, we have seen that the Vêdic tomb was a perfect reproduction of the Aryan hut made with clay and timber. Now we shall see that tomb was a comfortable home because according to the Aryan belief the died was living in the tomb.

The caves excavated in Padinyâttamuri by Mr. Logan (Ind. Ant. VIII, page 309) presented the great advantage of being intact and not violated. Mr. Logan could thus in

opening himself for the first time those tombs find "in situ" all the objects which contained those caves. In our fig. 6 we reproduce the map given by Mr. Logan.

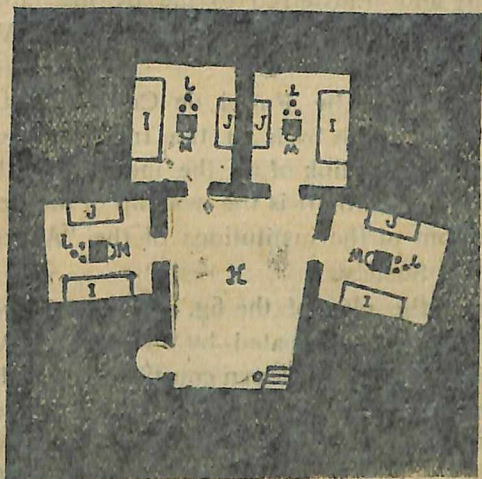


Fig. 6.

Ground map of the rock-cut caves at Châllil Kurinyôli Paramba, near Padinyâkamuri H. Central hall.

I. Stone bed.

J. Bench.

L. Fire place.

M. Stool.

O. Stairs.

There are four funeral rooms all communicating with one central room H. It's a family cemetery. Here, as well as in Europe, it was the "familia" which was the nucleus around which the "Cité Antique" was established, as described by Fustel de Coulanges (Book 1, Chap. IV): "Each family had its tomb where their dead came one after the other to rest together...there were celebrated the ceremonies and the anniversaries.....The sacred fire, which was so closely associated with the worship of their dead had also as essential character to belong in common to each family. It represented the ancestors...All these gods: the Hearth, the Lares, the Manes, they were called the hidden gods or the gods of the interior...Each family had their own ceremonies

“their particular feasts, their forms of prayer and their hymns....So it was in India ; “ I am strongly opposed to my enemies, with the help of the songs which hold from my family and transferred to me by my father, “ says the Brahmin. (Rig-Vêda, translation Langlois, Vol. I, p. 113).”

As justly remarked by Fustel de Coulanges it is the family which was the basis of the Indo-European society, and the common link of all the members of the same society was the tomb. It is the worship of the dead that is in the bottom of the institutions of the “Antique City” in the Aryan Society.

Let us turn to the plan of the fig. 6 ; we go downstairs into the central hall indicated by the letter H. Mr. Logan gives to it the name of “open court”; this is probably incorrect : in those caves of the kind I visited there are columns in stone which clearly show that this part was protected by roof. This central room is in reality the “Assembly hall” where the Shrâdda rites were performed.

Here again we must recall a page of Fustel de Coulanges (La Cité Antique, Book I, chap. II) : “The worship of the dead is found among the Hellenes, the Latins, the Sabins, the Etrurians : they find it also amongst the Aryas of India. The hymns of Rig-Veda do mention it... The worship was the same in India as in Greece and Italy. The Hindu must provide to the Manes the meal which is called Sraddha. The Hindu as the Greek consider the dead as the divine beings were enjoying of a blissful existence. But there was a condition to their happiness ; offerings should be regularly taken to them by the living. If they ceased to accomplish the Sraddhas to the dead, its soul came out

“of its peaceable grave and become a errant soul, which
 “tormented the living... The Greeks and the Romans
 “had exactly the same opinions.”

But let us continue the investigation of the plan represented in our fig. 6. The central room (H) communicates by the doors to four identical underground rooms. Their entrances are carefully closed by the slabs.

In examining the interior of the funeral rooms, we find the representation of the primitive hut of the Aryan chief. In the centre, the only pillar which bears the vault. Of each side, the slabs imitate the beds (I) and the tables (J). But it is in the centre of the cave by the side of the central pillar where the principal object is found, represented in the plan of Mr. Logan by the letter L. It is the fire place where resides a divinity, the domestic fire. Regarding the subject we will have to quote the whole Chap. III of book I of the “Cité Antique” by Fustel de Coulanges ; we will only take some of his sentences :
 “The worship of the sacred fire did not exclusively belong
 “to the populations of Greece and Italy. We find it in
 “the East... The Brahman has his fire place which
 “he has to entertain day and night... as the Greeks
 “and Italians offer it with wine, the Hindu pours on
 “it the fermented liquor called the soma”.

In the caves at Padinyattamuri, Mr. Logan has found a great number of objects in iron and this discovery of iron is very important for us as it helps us regarding the date of those monuments. It is impossible hereafter to rank them in the catogary of the prehistoric monuments of the Paleolithic or Neolithic epochs. The presence of the iron in those caves indicates a much more recent date. Vincent A. Smith has written (Oxford History of India,

page 4) "Iron certainly was known to the authors of Atharvaveda, a very ancient book, and was in common use in 500 B. C. We may safely assume that the metal was utilised in Northern India from at least 1000 B. C. In Southern India the discovery or introduction of iron may have occurred much later "

In the caves at Perungulam opened in 1910 - 1911 (Annual Report of the Archaeological Department ; Southern circle, Madras, for 1910-1911, page 10) they founded a great abundance of iron implements : a sword measuring 3'2" in length, one dagger, one tripot, one knife, one trisulam, one hook nail, one spear head, two chisels and twenty-six other pieces of iron. But the most important discovery is that of a mortar (grinding stone with four legs) and a pestle in perfect condition (see Report, plate II). Here we have no room for doubting that the stone mortar has been placed in the tomb for the domestic use of the dead, because a grinding stone with its stone roller are essentially kitchen utensils.

In resume, the Kêrala tomb is a reproduction in laterite stone of the hemispherical hut with a central wooden pillar and covered with timber and clay. The died hero was living in the tomb ; there were, a bed a table, a chair, a fire place, many potteries, many iron pieces: knives, chisels etc, and also kitchen-utensils : grinding mortars and rolls etc.

III. THE LAND-OWNERS OF KĒRALA: THE ÂRYA BRĀHMANARS. THEIR VĒDIC TRADITIONS.

Very numerous rock-cut caves in Malabar prove that in ancient times the chiefs of the land used a very peculiar kind of sepulture. But who are the traditional chiefs of the KĒrala country? We shall see that the land owners, forming the higher caste of the country, call themselves Arya Brāhmanars; they adore Vēdic deities, sing Vēdic hymns, practise Vēdic ceremonies.

Vincent A. Smith, in "the Early History of India," wrote: "A learned writer, the late Mr. P. Sundaram Pillai, who was a native of Travancore, rightly claimed that his country possessed claims to exceptional interest..... It never was affected seriously by the Muhammadan conquest, and 'plays in Indian anthropology the part of a happy and undisturbed fossiliferous stratum'..... Unfortunately, the rich mine thus offered for research never has been thoroughly explored."

These sentences are as true as regards the neighbouring district of Malabar. While foreign invaders, Persians, Greeks, Śakas, Kushanas, Hunas, Mahomedans, were successively clearing different parts of India, the district of Malabar was keeping intact ancient customs and institutions, and we still find there in our days an Âryan race and a Vêdic religion.

This confirms to the tradition that Kêrala has been populated by Aryans that came from the North and this is confirmed by the habits of the certain castes of the Malabar district which are quite different from those of the rest of India and are analogous with the habits of the Aryans during the Vêdic and Epic periods of the History of India.

According to the legend, it is the caste of the Nambûdris that should be of pure Aryan origin, having been transfered from the North of India by Parasurâma.

We read in "Malabar" by W. Logan (Madras, 1887) Vol I, p. 126 : "As a rule the people of this caste lead very simple lives ; and the simplicity of character of a Nambûtiri is in some places proverbial. They rise very early in the morning, 3 A. M., and immediatly bathe in the cold water of their tanks. They spread their cloths out to dry and proceed almost naked to their religious exercises in the temple. After this and till eleven o'clock the more religious of them read or recite their Vêdas." And in Travencore Census, 1871 : "The Nambûtiri's hospitality and charity is proverbial."

In general, the Nambûdri brahmins live in the country ; they are the richest land owners, which seems to confirm the legend that Parasurâma presented them with the Kêrala country and it is not without reason

that Mr. N. Subramania Ayer (*Malabar Quarterly Review* VII, I. 1908) has written : “ As the prehistoric heirs to the entire land of Kērala, the Nambūtiris live on agriculture ”. Thus does the Nambūtiri represent the aristocracy of the country.

According to an official document of Travancore cited by Thurston (*Castes & Tribes*, Vol. V, page 160) “ His person is holy ; his directions are commands ; “ his movements are a procession ; his meal is nectar ; “ he is the holiest of human beings ; he is the representative of God on earth ” ; and according to Mr. Thurston (*loc. cit.* page 157) : “ He is perhaps, as his measurements seem to prove, the truest Āryan in Southern India, “ and not only physically, but in his customs, habits, and “ ceremonies, which are so wedded to him that forsake “ them he cannot, if he would ”.

The Āryan origin of the Nambūdiris, which is proved by the anthropometrical measures of their skulls, is confirmed by their traditions, as they call themselves Āryans, and Mr. Thurston has written (*Castes and Tribes*, Vol. V, page 235) : “ The Nambūtiris call themselves Arya Brāhmanar. Their legendary transmigration to Malabar from Northern India is doubtless true. Theirs is by far the purest form of the Vēdic Brāhmanism to be met within Southern India ”.

Vincent A. Smith (*The Oxford History of India*, 1919, page 24) wrote : “ Even now the Vēdic deities are not wholly without honour, and, in Southern India, the Nambūdri Brāhmanas of Malabar devote their lives to keeping up Vedic ritual ”. And Mr. Thurston (page 160) : “ Every Nambūtiri is theoretically, a life-long student of Vēdas ”.

But they do not only adore the Vêdic divinities and sing the Vêdic hymns, they practise also pure Vêdic ceremonies. These have such a great importance that their caste is divided in three catagories, according to the nature of the sacrifices they make :

(1) The Adittiris are those who celebrate the yâga called Agniadhana. Mr. Thurston (page 162) so describes the ceremony which permit to a Nambûdiri to obtain the title of Addittiripad : "At this, three Nambûdiri Vaidikars, or men well versed in the Vêdas, must officiate. A square pit is made. Fire raised by fricton between two pieces of pîpal (*ficus religiosa*) wood with a little cotton is placed in it. This fire is called "upâsana." The sacrifice performed by the Adittiris is called "Adhana" (Cochin Census Report, 1901).

(2) The Akkittiris are those who have performed the Agnichayanayâga. They are also called Agnihotris because they perform the Fire Sacrifice.

(3) And those who practice the Sôma Sacrifice are called Somayagis or Chomatiris.

So, tradition, ethnography and archæology concord to prove the Aryan colonisation of Kêrala.



IV. THE AGNIDRĪYA.

But how great will be the surprise of the reader when we will inform him that in Malabar they find also still more extraordinary monument : "the house of the sacred fire", the Agnidriya.

Let us return first to the so suggestive work of Mr. E. B. Havell (A Handbook of Indian Art, p. 56) :

"Such were the tabernacles in which the fire and Soma rites of the Āryan tribe were performed in Vedic India. In the Sathapatha Brahmana, a special form of tabernacle called the Agnidriya, or fire-house, is mentioned. It was in charge of a special fire-priest, the Âgnidhra, and through the kindling of the fire it became the dwelling-place of the All-gods (Visve-devas)".

Page 8 : "Furthermore, as the lighting of fires was an essential part of the Vedic ritual, it may be assumed that the sacrificial chamber was constructed so that the fire might burn effectively, and with the least inconvenient to the sacrificer—*i. e.*, it must have had some kind of chimney with appropriate vent-holes for the smoke."

This is the explanation of the very curious monuments which are cut in the rock in many places of the Malabar district and particularly at Bangala Motta

Paramba (Trichamaram Dêsam ; Taliparamba Amsam ; Chirakkal taluq, 12 miles to the north of Cannanore). The figures 7 and 8 give an idea of the very particular shape of that sort of "cave." This is more or less hemispherical, but the superior portion of the dome is continued in a sort of pipe which communicate the cave with the outside atmosphere and which was used as chimney during the ceremonies ; it was afterwards closed by a large stone.

The discovery of the complete specimen of the Agnidriya may seem so surprising to some readers that these might perhaps doubt of the absolute correctness of the description I give here. I will remind the reader that the plans and drawings of the caves at Bangala Motta Paramba have been reproduced in "Malabar" of Mr. Logan, Vol. 1, Madras, 1887. It is easy to verify the correctness of the figures 7 and 8 which we give here. The existence, in Malabar, of the Agnidriyas could not be doubted, however extraordinary the discovery may seem.

Mr. Logan who had the good fortune of opening caves which remained untouched has found in each of them what he calls "fire places". The Sôma was poured on the fire and the smoke of the sacrifice going up to the Gods was taking to them the prayers for the dead.

Around the cave is a rail in stone, the "Vedikâ" which surrounded the sacrificial ground in Vêdic rites.

We have told that the Agnidriya is a hemispherical dome surmounted with a chimney, but this chimney occupies exactly the place of the "Harmika" of the Buddhist monuments. The origin of the Buddhist "Harmika" was until now without explanation and I am persuaded that this top portion of the Stûpas represents the chimney of the Agnidriya.

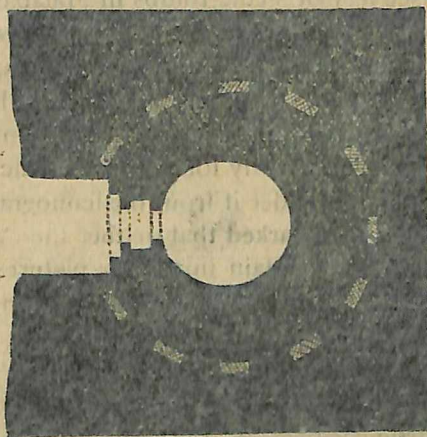


Fig. 7. Ground map of an Agnidriya at Bangala Motta Paramba.

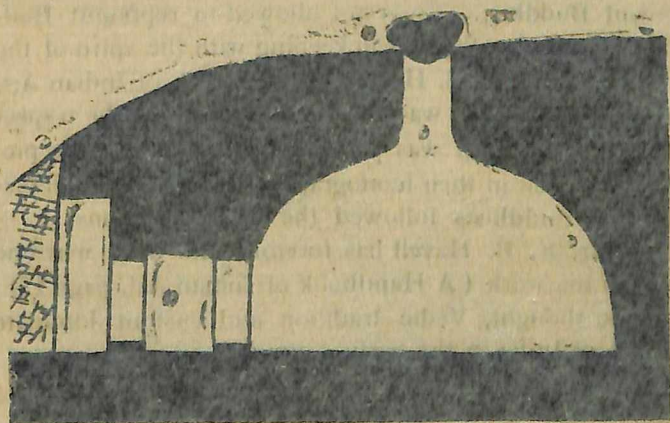


Fig. 8. Longitudinal section of an Agnidriya at Bangala Motta Paramba.





The discovery of Vêdic tombs in Malabar illuminate the question of the origin of the rock-cut caves in India. Indeed the most ancient Buddhist monuments, the viharas and chaityas in the Nâgârjuni and Barâbar hills and at Guntupalle are cut in the rock. We know now that the Buddhist monks have only followed a Vêdic tradition.

Let us now consider it from the iconographical view point. It is to be remarked that neither the Vêdic Stûpa nor the Agnidriya contain images or pictures of divinities. We could find nowhere idols representing Agni and the other Vêdic divinities : Indra, Varuna, etc. In a word : "Vêdic iconography does not exist." This verification will permit us to understand one of the most curious particularities of the Buddhist iconography. We know that in the most ancient Buddhist images which are anterior to Jesus-Christ, at Bharhut, at Sanchi, etc. the Buddha was never represented : "The devout Buddhist.....was not allowed to represent Buddha himself—a rule quite in keeping with the spirit of the Upanishads" (E. B. Havell, *A Handbook of Indian Art*, page 34.) This rule was Vêdic : on account of the respect due for the Gods it was prevented to represent their pictures. So then in their iconography as well as in architecture the Buddhists followed the Vêdic traditions.

Mr. E. B. Havell has foretoled the truth when he said in his work (*A Handbook of Indian Art*, page 12) : "Vedic thought, Vedic tradition and custom dominate the art of India in the earliest times."

V. CONCLUSION.

In 1914, Mr. Srinivasa Aiyengar, in page 356 of his "Tamil Studies" remarked : "If at all there is any Indian province in which little or no real archæological work is done, it is Kêrala... no systematic explorations have yet been made".

I came in Kêrala, and made interesting remarks.

It was an Âryan belief that the dead was living in the tomb. For that reason the Vêdic tomb was a reproduction of the hemispherical hut of the Âryan chief ; it was made in timber and covered with clay. Such was the "hollow stûpa" of Mr. E. B. Havell. Shraddhas were performed for the nourishment of the Hero, resting in his "narrow clay home" as described in Rig-Vêda. The principal ceremony was the fire sacrifice, and the special monument, the Agni-driya, was well characterised by a chimney for the smoke.

In Kêrala, the traditional land owners are Ârya Brahmanars and perform Sôma and Agni sacrifices. So, the colonisation of Kêrala by Vêdic Âryans is not doubtful.

Archæology concord with tradition and ethnography to prove it. The laterite-cut caves are hemispherical in shape and are perfect imitations of huts. In the caves we found beds, tables, chairs, fire places, poteries, kitchen utensils, iron implements and there is no doubt that the ancient inhabitants of Kêrala adopted this peculiar kind of sepulture because their deads were living in the tomb.

At last, we found in Kêrala very peculiar rock-cut monument, the cave with chimney, the house of the sacred fire, the Agnidriya.