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# DRAVIDIAN INDIA

VOL. I

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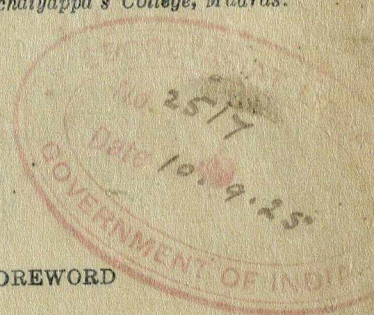
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WITH A FOREWORD

BY

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MADRAS

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## DEDICATED

TO THE MEMORY OF

**Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, Saraswati**

*India's Greatest Educationist*

By whose wondrous exertions, Calcutta University has become the University of Universities in India, setting, in Higher Studies, the example to her Sister Universities ;

To whose many-sided genius, consecrated to the Promotion of Learning in India, India is beholden for the honoured place she has won in the World of Letters and Science ;

And whose vanishing before the completion of his labours, All India deeply mourns as a Great National Calamity.



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## Council of Post Graduate Teaching

SENATE HOUSE

Calcutta, 23rd November, 1923

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I shall be pleased to accept the dedication of your book which I have found very interesting.

ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE.





## FOREWORD

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This book is a valuable introduction to that important but much neglected study—Dravidian Culture and its place in Hindu Civilisation. By a fortunate coincidence I was engaged in reading Mr. Kanakasabhai's *Tamils 1800 Years Ago* and Mr. Madhaviah's rendering of *Manimekalai*—supreme pearl of Dravidian poesy, when this book was sent to me with a request that I would write a foreword. Though I fully recognise my incompetence for this task, being ignorant of Tamil, the holy language of the Dravidians, I have been persuaded by a feeling of devotion to the subject to write these few lines.

Modern scholars are agreed that the Aryans were only one of the elements, ethnic and cultural, that have gone to compose Hindu civilisation, including that part of it in which their predominance is easily presumed, our religion; and that the Dravidians and other peoples also contributed their share to the mosaic. And again the easy equation of Aryan with Brahmin, is no longer regarded as the full truth. I dare say there are yet people who think that by depreciating the Brahmin they





are depreciating the Aryan and vice versa, forgetting that the great founders of the Buddhist and Jain religions were not Brahmins, and forgetting also, as Pargiter has shown, that parts of the Rigveda and much of the Upanishads are of Kshatriya origin.

The difficulty lies in disentangling these various factors of our composite civilisation and giving them their due value. Such an analysis is bound to be largely speculative, and the least that we can expect from a historian of this subject is that he writes in the spirit of history and not of party prejudice. There are topics for dispassionate investigation to meet the ends of disinterested knowledge, and the spirit of controversy should be eschewed as far as possible. To instance one point, Vedism and Upanishadic philosophy, and Buddhism and Jainism must have been current for generations along with the indigenous cults, modifying them and getting modified in turn by them, before the Siddhanta systems were formulated; and it would be difficult to explain this later synthesis without reference to the various bases from which or over which it arose.

However the analysis must not be given up as impossible. If English historians can disentangle the Saxon and other contributions





to the evolution of England, Indian historians may do likewise in regard to India and the various units composing it. Scholars like Mr. Kanakasabhai and the author of this book have shown how well and truly this difficult task can be performed.

Mr. T. R. Sessa Iyengar combines literary art and scientific history in a manner that engages and sustains attention. I hope this book will be but one of a series in which the whole field of Dravidian Civilisation in all its parts will be explored and presented. We, Dravidians, are proud to be shown that as between Aryan and Dravidian, if there has been borrowing on the one hand, there has been giving on the other ; that, if we received, We also gave ; that what assimilation, there has been, has been mutual and not one-sided ; and that the Hindu Civilisation of to-day is the common heritage of both.

As an Andhra, I envy Tamil its possession of two such poems as *Silappadikaram* and *Manimekalai*, for which I can find no equivalents in Telugu Literature. Even in translation they dominate the soul like a charm. What must they be like in the original ?

C. R. REDDY





## PREFACE

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The place of the Ancient Dravidians in Indian History and the solid and enduring contributions they made to Indian thought and life have failed so far to receive adequate recognition at the hands of scholars. Though it may seem presumptuous on my part to intrude into a field of research which distinguished scholars have made their own, nevertheless, I have ventured to put on record a few of the facts that I have gathered during the last twelve years of study and to suggest the inquiry whether certain views have not been too hastily taken for granted with reference to the Dravidian problem. Among most writers on this subject, it has been the fashion to give to the Indo-Aryans the credit for all that was best in Ancient Indian culture. It may be admitted that the population of India is mixed beyond recognition. I am convinced that the whole complex of India's civilization—its systems of polity and philosophy, its art and institutions, and its law and religion, developed by races resulting from mixture, cannot be set down to the credit of any single constituent in the mixture.

I hold that the Dravidians have established their titles to greatness and to fame in





every sphere of human activity. In the following pages I have endeavoured to show that the contributions of the ancient Dravidians to the totality of Indian culture do not by any means form a negligible quantity. Hypotheses of the kind proposed in this book are, I am aware, viewed with suspicion and sometimes assailed with ridicule. Nevertheless, I have ventured to submit my views to the candid judgment of the public, believing as I do that the existing theories on this subject have preceded, not followed, a careful and searching study of facts. I hope I have succeeded in avoiding the danger that threatens the writer who, with an elaborate pretence of research,

“Just records

What makes his case out, quite ignores the  
rest,

Such an author is paid and praised for his

Untiring industry and brilliant insight ;

But there is another side to the picture :

There is plenty of ‘How did you contrive to  
grasp

The thread which led you through this  
labyrinth ?

How build such solid fabric out of air ?

How on such slight foundation found this  
tale,





Biography or narrative ? or in other words,

How many lies did it require to make

The portly truth you here present us with?"

It is a matter of profound gratification to me that the late lamented Sir Asutosh Mookerjee was pleased to accept the dedication of this work. It is singularly appropriate, as it is a work which deals with the contributions of the ancient Dravidians to Indian culture, whose promotion and advancement lay nearest to his heart. But alas ! before the work could be actually published, he was carried off in the prime of a distinguished and glorious career to the detriment of all oriental scholarship, for which he had always evinced a warm and generous sympathy.

It remains to offer my grateful thanks to the Hon'ble Mr. G. A. Natesan, B.A., Member Council of State, Principal M. Ratnaswamy, M.A., Bar-at-Law, M.L.C., and Mr. T. Rajagopala Row, B.A., of the Madras Christian College for the kind permission they have accorded to me to embody in this book those articles of mine, which first appeared in their respective periodicals. I also desire to acknowledge my obligation to Mr. C. R. Reddy, M.A., M.L.C., for his valuable Foreword.

MADRAS, }  
6th May 1925. } T. R. SESA IYENGAR.





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# THE ANCIENT DRAVIDIANS

## CHAPTER I

### THE INDO-ARYAN EPICS AND SOUTHERN INDIA

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Researchers in the field of South Indian History in their laudable endeavour to reconstruct the lost early history of South India explore the pages of the two grandest Indian epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, justly celebrated as the two unrivalled diamonds whose lustre has alone sufficed to confer imperishable and deathless glory upon the Indo-Aryan race, under the impression that a study of these works forms the starting point of all inquiry into the early history of South India. How far such an impression is justifiable, whether the epics, subjected to a thorough and searching investigation according to the accepted canons of western historical criticism, could be made to yield results valuable to the historian of ancient South India, how far the alleged hoary antiquity of the epics can be





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substantiated, such are a few of the problems which we shall here endeavour to elucidate. Something will be gained, if at least the prevailing misconceptions with regard to the issues raised above—misconceptions which stand as a stumbling block to all progress and advance in the resuscitation of the lost history of this part of the country—are no longer allowed to warp the judgment of the historian.

At the outset, one is confronted and confounded with a bewildering mass of opinions and theories, respecting the ages of the composition of the epics, and the last word on the subject has not as yet been authoritatively pronounced by scholarship, Indian and European. The determination of the ages of the epics constitutes an indispensable prelude to the study of the political condition of the peninsula as portrayed by the genius of the epic authors.

We are warranted in assuming that the epics are associated with the close of the Vedic period. The texts of the Brahmanas refer to works of an epic nature, wherein were made references to men, demi-Gods, and Gods. The name Valmiki occurs among the teachers mentioned in a Sutra work attached to the Black Yajur Veda. The patronymic of the reputed author of the Mahabharata, Vyasa Parasarya,





occurs in the lists of teachers of the White Yajur Veda. The Aitareya Brahmana mentions Janamejaya, the son of Parikshit, and Bharata, the son of Dushyanta, as powerful potentates. That some of the elements of the story in the Mahabharata possess a high antiquity need no further proof. F. E. Pargiter seems to hold the opinion that the Mahabharata War should have been waged about 1000 B. C. The late lamented erudite scholar, Romesh Chunder Dutt, assigned the date of the War of the Mahabharata to a period between 1,400 and 1,200 B. C. Dr. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, the distinguished Professor of Indian History and Archæology, whose devoted services to the cause of South Indian historical research have been incalculable, lends the weight of his authority to the view that the inter-tribal wars, typified in the Mahabharata, took place in the period between 1500 and 1000 B. C., while the events of the Ramayana should be placed between 1,000 and 750 B. C. \*

During the days of Panini, the legend of Mahabharata was current, and therefore in the opinion of Dr. B. G. Bhandarkar† of international reputation, a Mahabharata existed before Panini who flourished in the 7th century

\* *Ancient India*, p. 3.

† *Vide* Bhandarkar's article, *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. I, p. 350.





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B.'C. In the opinion of Grierson, a Ramayana was current in India in the 8th century B. C. That many ancient fragments of the Mahabharata are encrusted in its modern form is irrefutable\*. Nevertheless, it must be conceded that the texts of the epics in their present form do not in any way resemble the older texts supposed to have been in existence eight centuries before the Christian era.

The question then arises as to the age when the texts, in the form in which they are available at the present day, were composed, and on this subject there has been the least unanimity. Prof. Weber holds that the Mahabharata assumed its present shape centuries after the commencement of the Christian era. Dr. Buhler argues that, though it existed in the fifth century A. D., its composition should be pushed back by four to five centuries. The author of a book entitled *Transformed Hinduism* gives it as his opinion that the Mahabharata was arranged in its present form about the third century A. D. Dion Chrysostom, who flourished in the first century of the Christian era, adduces direct evidence as to the existence of the epic. Megasthenes in his *Indika* makes no reference to the epic. It is therefore surmised by some that the origin of the epic should be sought in the interval between

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\* James Fergusson's *Tree and Serpent Worship*, p. 58.





his time and that of Chrysostom. Mahabharata characters are referred to by Patanjali in his *Mahabhashya*, a work ascribed to the 2nd century B. C. Prof. Kielhorn observes that the epic Sanskrit and the Pali of the Jataka do not materially differ from the language employed by Patanjali. The Bisastainyopakhyaṇa of book XIII, Chap. 93 and 94, of the Mahabharata occurs in the Pali and the Sanskrit Jataka collection with remarkable coincidences of detail, and is represented on the stupa of Bharhut which was constructed about 150 B. C. Asvaghosha, who, though living in the first century A. D., drew from older sources, alludes to many epic personages in his *Buddhacharita*. In the Pulumayi Inscription, which dates before 150 A.D., Krishna, Arjuna, Nahusha, and Janamejaya are mentioned. J. Kirste in his article on the Mahabharata question contributed to *the Indian Antiquary*, Vol. 31, expresses the view that, when Pushyamitra killed the last of the Maurya kings, Brihadratha, in 183 B.C., the Brahmanas re-established their ancient ascendancy, and the decline of the Buddhist religion followed. During this period, the Brahmanas collected all the legends of Vaishnavitic and Saivitic stamp into one large work, translating them, at the same time, from Prakrit into





Sanskrit. This was handed down orally till the second century A.D., and then reduced to writing. Thus, the period of the Indo-Scythians (45-225 A. D.) towards the close of their power witnessed, according to this high authority, the compilation of the "Mahabharata epic." Brahmanic India, threatened by the barbarian world, gathered up the scattered treasure of her traditions and institutions, and composed their epitome in the Mahabharata and the Manava Dharmasastra, both animated by the same spirit, constructed partly from the same material, and both looking out on the same alien horizon, the Yavanas, the Pahlavas, and the Sakas.' In the opinion of Prof. Hopkins, the Mahabharata first took shape during the period 400-200 B. C.\* In the Asoka edicts, the names of the Greek kings of the time of the *Diodochi* are mentioned. In the Mahabharata, heroes of the poem appear on terms of intimacy with certain Yavana kings. As the latter are referred to as ruling in the very localities in the North-West of India, which were under the sway of the Diadochi, it can safely be asserted that the compilers of the epic knew these princes as their own contemporaries, and hence established a connection

\* *The Puranic Histories of the Early Aryas*, J. Kennedy, J. R. A. S., 1915, p. 507.





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between them and their epic heroes. From the Mahabharata we learn that the Yavana king, Bhagadatta, was an old friend of Yudhishtira's father, that the Yavana king Kaserumant was slain by Krishna, that the formidable Kalayavana shared the same fate, and that the Yavanas, the Sakas, and the Pahlavas participated in the Titanic conflict between the Kurus and the Pandavas.\* These circumstances lead one to suppose that, at the time when these passages were written, collisions of the Northern Aryans with the Greeks had already happened.† It is therefore argued that the present text of the Mahabharata belongs to the period which witnessed the widespread influence of the Greeks, Indo-Scythians, and Parthians. The epic professes itself to be written down, and therefore it is contended that nothing written has been found which goes back to a time before the third century B. C. But this view of the matter has not behind it the weighty support of discerning scholars. The late lamented historian, Dr. Vincent Arthur Smith, considers that the middle of the 7th century B. C. was a period of progress marked by the diffusion of a knowledge of the art of writing in India.‡ In the opinion

\* Grierson's article on *Weber on Ahalya*, *Ind. Ant.* 1888, p. 302.

† *The History of Indian Literature*—Weber, p. 188.

‡ *Early History of India*, p. 27.





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of Mr. Cust expressed in the *Royal Asiatic Society Journal*, Vol. 1886, the Phoenician alphabet singles out the sixth century B. C. as the period when the Indian writing was first used extensively. It follows therefore that a written Mahabharata might have been in existence before the third century B. C. Prof. Wilson\* maintains that the Ramayana should have been written about 300 B. C. Dr. Arthur A. Berriedale Keith says that there is no reason to go below a date before 300 B. C. for the kernel of the Ramayana, while the date before 500 B. C. cannot be maintained.† The author of the *Transformed Hinduism* holds that the Ramayana was composed about the fourth century B. C. On the other hand, Prof. Rapson asserts that, while certain portions of the two epics are very early indeed, the greater part of the Ramayana in its present form must date from 500 B. C., and the oldest portions of the Bharata must at least be of equal age. Dr. Krishnaswamy Aiyangar says that both the works may have to be referred to the fifth century B. C.‡. Such are some of the conflicting theories propounded by different scholars, every one of whom has established a claim to respectful hearing

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\* *Vide* Prof. V. Ball's article *Ind. Ant.* 1884, p. 229.

† *The date of the Ramayana J. R. A. S.*, 1915 p. 327.

‡ *The Beginnings of South Indian History*, p. 64.





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by his profound scholarship in Indian antiquities.

However, the following account of the history of the national epics of India, supported as it is by the high authority of Prof. Macdonell,\* seems to me to approximate more nearly to the truth than any other explanation that has so far been offered. The historical germ of the two great epics is to be traced back to a very early period, say, the tenth century B. C. Old songs about the ancient feud between the two tribes, the Kurus and the Panchalas, and about the stirring martial exploits of the heroes who played a notable part in it must have been transmitted from generation to generation by word of mouth, and recited in popular assemblies or at great public sacrifices. These disconnected battle songs were worked up by some poetic genius into a comparatively short epic describing the tragic end of the Kurus who were overthrown by the treacherous Pandavas. To this period is ascribed the conception of Brahma as the Supreme Deity. The Pali literature affords evidence to show that Brahma already enjoyed this unique position in Buddha's time. It may be admitted therefore that the original form of the Mahabharata epic was composed about the 5th century B. C. The next stage in the history

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\* Macdonell's *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 285.





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of the epic is marked by the development of the original epic into a long poem of 20,000 slokas. In this enlarged epic the Pandavas are praised for their virtues; Siva and Vishnu are introduced on an equal level with Brahma as Gods of the Hindu pantheon; Krishna is deified as an incarnation of Vishnu, while distinct mention is made of the Yavanas, the Sakas, and the Pahlavas. Megasthenes notes in his time the increasing prominence of the two Gods, Siva and Vishnu, and refers to the division of Hindu society into Saivites and Vaishnavites. Thus, one is irresistibly led to the conclusion that an extension of the original epic should have taken place about 300 B.C. Prof. Macdonell, in discussing the question as to the age when the Mahabharata attained the form which it at present possesses, refers to an inscription in a land grant dated 462 A. D., or 532 A. D., which proves conclusively that the epic about 500 A. D., consisted of 100,000 slokas. Prof. Macdonell points out that further researches might enable us to put back this date by some centuries. In his opinion it would not be far from the truth to say that the great epic had become a didactic compendium before the commencement of the Christian era. Thus there are three different stages in the growth and development of the Mahabharata epic, the





first belonging to the fifth century B.C., the second stage to the third century B.C., and the third stage belonging roughly to the first century B.C. In our attempt to get a correct picture of the political condition of South India, we shall confine our attention to the oldest portion of the epic *viz.*, that portion composed in the fifth century B.C.

In Ayodhya there should have been current among the court bards a number of epic tales recounting the achievements of the Ikshvaku hero, Rama. Regarding the age when the oldest part of the Ramayana was composed, it must be remembered that the original part of the poem was completed at a time when the epic kernel of the Mahabharata had not as yet taken definite shape\*. The poem of Valmiki was generally known as an old work, before the Mahabharata assumed a coherent form. Prof. Macdonell points out the pre-Buddhistic origin of the original Ramayana. We receive further support from Prof. Jacobi† whose researches have reduced the original Ramayana to a volume of moderate compass. References to foreign nations like the Yavanas, Sakas, and Pahlavas are shown to

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\* Macdonell's *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 306.

† *Ind. Ant.* 1894, Vol. 23, p. 54, Grierson on *Indian Epic Poetry*.





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be later interpolations. Traces of Greek influence are shown to be non-existent in the original portion of the Ramayana. There is no mention of Pataliputra, though Rama was traversing the very spot where it stood in subsequent times. The society was in a patriarchal stage. Asoka's empire is not referred to at all. One is struck with the small size of the kingdoms. The original Ramayana was composed, when the ancient Ayodhya had not yet been deserted, but was still the chief city of Kosala, when its new name Saketa was unknown, and before the seat of government was transferred to Sravasti. Prof. Jacobi concludes that the oldest portions of the poem were composed before the fifth century B. C., and probably in the 6th or 8th century B. C. Notwithstanding the serious objections raised to the assumption of a high antiquity to the epic by Professors Garth and Grierson, we are forced to side with Prof. Macdonell, and say that Valmiki worked up the current legends and tales into a single homogeneous production before the fifth century B. C., say roughly in the 6th century B. C.

The original epic of Valmiki was either recited by professional minstrels, or sung to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument, being handed down orally in the first place by Rama's





sons, Lava and Kusa. These names are considered to be pure inventions of popular etymology intended to explain the word Kusilava, bard or actor. These rhapsodists made additions in the original text to suit the tastes of the audience. The Ramayana, though it consists at present of seven books, originally consisted of five books only (II-VI). The seventh book is presumably a later addition ; for the conclusion of Book VI at one time marked the close of the whole poem. Besides, several passages in the first book are found inconsistent with the statements made in the later books. Some cantos in the five genuine books are evidently interpolations. A considerable time must have elapsed between the composition of the original poem and that of the additions ; for the tribal and the human hero of the former has been transmuted in the latter into not merely a national hero but also an *Avatar* of Vishnu. Valmiki, the author of the epic, appears as contemporaneous with Rama. A long interval of time must have elapsed for such a transformation to be effected. Prof. Macdonell is therefore convinced that the additions to the original poem were made some time after 300 B. C. We may not be far wrong, if we place the additions to the original poem approximately in the third century B. C.





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Having made an attempt, however feeble and imperfect, to fix the ages of the composition of the two celebrated epics, it will be our task now to describe the political condition of India as revealed in the pages of these poems. If the conclusions we have arrived at are sound, then it follows that the outlines of a picture, however dim and shadowy, may be obtained respecting the political condition of Southern India as it appeared in different times to different authors, to Valmiki in the 6th century B. C., to the compiler of the Mahabharata in the 5th century B. C., and to the author or authors of the additions made to the Ramayana in the third century B. C.

### *South India in the sixth century B. C.*

The story of Rama brings South India definitely into view for the first time. The Tamilians, a non-Aryan people with distinct traditions, language, history, civilization, and nationality of their own, are brought into contact with the gifted and the virile Aryans from the North. It is maintained with some warmth that the Tamilians formed an empire in the South of India and in the contiguous islands, and that prince Ravana reigned over these contemporaneously with Rama. Ravana's kingdom in Ceylon was flourishing and prosperous. The settlement of the Rakshasas on the lower





Godavary valley called Janasthana formed part of Ravana's realm, and there must have been intercourse between Ceylon and Janasthana by sea\*. Janasthana and Kishkhinda, the modern Hampi, in the Bellary District, ruled over by Vali, had both attained a considerable degree of civilization and prosperity so early as the 6th century B.C. The three great kingdoms of the Chera, Chola, and Pandya that played a grand, illustrious, and ever memorable, but undeservedly forgotten, part in the up-building of Dravidian culture and civilization were either non-existent, or not known to the poet. The rest of South India was a veritable wilderness known as the Dandakaranya. It is said that Rama on his march towards Lanka encountered no cities, no tenants of wood and cave except anchorites, monkeys, bears, vultures, imps, and demons. The Dandakaranya was infested by savages headed by monsters such as Viradha, Kabandha, Dundhubi, Khara, Dushana, and Trisiras, all of whom acknowledged the sway of Ravana, and disturbed the rites and penances of the Aryans, swallowed all the oblations offered by them to the Gods, and also stemmed the onrush of the advancing Northern Aryans. South India consisted of

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\* *Earliest Indian Traditional History*—F. E. Pargiter, *J. R. A S.* 1914, p. 285.





dense forests inhabited by hill and savage tribes called by Valmiki Rakshas, Yakshas, and Vanaras.

*South India in the fifth century B.C.*

The picture of South India presented in the Mahabharata is in marked contrast with that of the Ramayana, and exhibits a later and more advanced stage in civilization. The vast areas of wildernesses mentioned in the Ramayana have given place to large and flourishing kingdoms. There is ample reference to many South Indian kingdoms in the Mahabharata. In the Adiparva, a Pandya king is referred to as one of Draupadi's suitors. Sahadeva in his southern expedition, before the celebration of the Rajasuya sacrifice, is said to have conquered the Pulindas, and then marched into the Pandya country. We learn from the Sabha Parva LI of the Mahabharata that the Cholas and the Pandyas carried sandal oil in golden jars, piles of sandal and aloe wood from Malaya and Dardura (Nilgiris), gold, jewels, and fine textures. This is eloquent testimony to the industrial and commercial progress of the Tamil kingdoms. South India enjoyed direct communication with the rest of India. In the Sabha Parva, the kings of Kalinga, of the Andhras, and the Dravidas are mentioned. The kingdom of Vidarbha had already become conspicu-





ous among the nations of India for the splendour and magnificence of its court and other marks of progress. Agastya, the pioneer of Aryan colonisation into the south, is said to have married a Vidarbha princess known as Lopamudra. Damayanti's Svayamvara will give one an adequate idea of the grandeur and the glory which Vidarbha had attained in those early times.

*South India in the Third Century B. C.*

There is not much difference between the description of South India as portrayed in the enlarged Ramayana of the 3rd century B. C. and that of South India in the 5th century B. C., the only difference being that the South Indian kingdoms and people are here given a more detailed notice than in the earlier work. The epic speaks of the Deccan quite as familiarly as of the rest of India, and asserts that it was governed by kings, and organised into nations. We learn from Sugriva's geographical instructions to the monkey chiefs the names of various kingdoms in the South. Allusions are made to the kingdoms of Vidarbha, Rishika, Mahishaka, Kalinga, Kasika, Andhra, Pundra, Chola, Pandya, and Kerala. The capital of the Pandya kingdom is Kavatam, the golden beautiful city adorned with jewels and worthy of the Pandyas. Mention is made of





Musiri, a great emporium of the Chera kingdom. Svetharanyam near Puhar in the Chola territory is referred to as the place where Anthaka lost his life at the hands of Siva. The four cantos in Book IV of the original Ramayana, which, in describing Sugriva's instructions to the monkey chiefs, represent Dandakaranya as occupying only a limited portion of South India, and make copious allusions to the flourishing kingdoms of South India, are here taken to be interpolations belonging to an epoch later than the 6th century B.C., and there seems to be a general consensus of opinion in favour of this view. But some scholars contend that these four cantos formed portions of the original Ramayana itself, that Dandakaranya even in the sixth century B.C., did not extend over the whole of South India, and that therefore the existence of Dandakaranya was quite compatible with that of large kingdoms. Hence they conclude that these portions are not interpolations at all. Mr. Thomas Foulkes writes in *the Indian Antiquary*, Vol. 8, "Notwithstanding the poetical mould in which Valmiki has cast his conception of the state of the Deccan for the special purposes of his poem, he also had clearly before his mind a more real prosaic picture of its condition which was ready to be produced, when the practical side of his events





required it to be done. He has shown as distinctly that, at the very time when Rama was wandering in exile through the wilds of the Dandakaranya the Deccan, in which that *aranya* was situated, was occupied by the Vidarbhas and other nations, to all of whom emissaries were sent to search for the lost Sita. Moreover, the collocation of the Dandakaranya with the 41st Chap. of Book IV of the Ramayana shows that Valmiki regarded it as occupying a limited portion of the Deccan in the midst of these nations, but yet quite distinct from them. Dandakaranya is not spoken of as extending over the whole of the Deccan. Its existence was quite compatible with the contemporaneous existence of several strong kingdoms and of much civilization in the regions around it." Such a view implies the admission of a very high antiquity to the South Indian kingdoms. We shall only content ourselves with remarking that further researches may some day ensure the universal acceptance of this opinion of Mr. Thomas Foulkes.

Thus, we have succeeded in getting a bare outline regarding the political condition of Southern India in different periods *viz.*, 6th century B. C., 5th century B. C., and the 3rd century B. C. This division, though apparently arbitrary, has been made after an exhaustive





study of the whole literature on the subject. After all, the picture is extremely vague, and is not productive of much benefit to the student of the ancient history of the South. Much will be gained, if the prevalent faith in the high historical value of the epics for the purposes of the ancient history of the peninsula receives a rude shock. The periods, which are depicted in the epics, are more modern than the student of ancient South Indian History hopes to find, and therefore the impression that is left upon the reader's mind after a critical study of the two great epics of the Indo-Aryan race is that the future historian of ancient South India will do well to seek for his material in the numismatic, epigraphic, literary, linguistic, traditional, and archaeological records of the Dravidian people rather than in the epics of Aryan India.





## CHAPTER II.

## DRAVIDIAN ORIGINS.

The Ancient Dravidians were the direct ancestors of the Tamils, Malayalees, Telugus, Canarese, and other tribes now occupying the greater part of Southern India. These had planted their settlements throughout both Northern and Southern India in ancient times. The fact that several Dravidian dialects, such as Brahui, Villi, and Santal, are found stranded in the midst of other tongues in Baluchistan, Rajaputana, and Central India testifies to the once universal diffusion of the Dravidians in India.

The following is the account gathered from Indo-Aryan traditions as regards the origin of these Dravidians :—\*Among the Dasyu tribes, which, according to the *Aitareya-brahmana*, were descended from the Rishi Visvamitra, are mentioned the Andhras. Manus specifies the Dravidas as among the tribes which had once been Kshatriyas, but had sunk into the condition of Vrishalas (Sudras) from the extinction

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\* Muir's *Sanskrit Texts* Vol. II Sec. 5, p. 422.





of sacred rites and the absence of Brahmans. In like manner the Cholas and Keralas are stated in the *Harivamsa* to have once been Kshatriyas, but to have been deprived of their social and religious position by king Sagara. In the same way, it appears that several Puranas, the Vayu, Matsya, Agni, and Brahma, claim an Aryan descent for the southern races by making their progenitors or eponyms Pandya, Karnata, Chola, Kerala to be descendants of Dushyanta, the adopted son of Turvasu, a prince of the Lunar line of the Kshatriyas. Turvasu, the Puranas say, was appointed by his father to rule over the south-east. Thus the *Harivamsa* relates, 'Yayati', son of Nahusha, having conquered the earth with its seven continents and oceans, divided it into five portions for his sons. This wise king placed Turvasu over the south-east region. According to the legend, Turvasu, in common with most others of Yayati's sons, had declined to accede to his father's request that he should exchange his condition of youthful vigour for his father's decrepitude, and was in consequence cursed by the old man. The Mahabharata I, 3478 gives the following particulars of the curse :—'Since thou, though born from within me, does not give me up thy youth, therefore thy offspring shall be cut off. Thou fool shalt be king over those degraded





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men who live like the mixed castes, who marry in the inverse order of the classes, and who eat flesh. Thou shalt rule over those wicked Mlechhas who commit adultery with their preceptors' wives, perpetrate nameless offences, and follow the practices of brutes. The Andhras, Dravidas, Cholas, and Keralas, who have been mentioned in the foregoing pages as degraded Kshatriyas, or as descendants of the adopted son of Turvasu, were the inhabitants of Telingana, of the Central and Southern parts of the Coromandel coast or the Tamil country, and of Malabar respectively'. It is evident that the legendary notices referred to above do not throw any light on their origin. It will be shown in the next chapter that the languages spoken by these peoples are distinct in stock from the languages of the Aryas. If the Dravidian languages be of a stock altogether distinct from Sanskrit, it follows at least as a *prima facie* inference that the races, which originally spoke these two classes of languages, must also have been distinct from one another in their descent, and could not have belonged to the same branch of the human family.

Who, then, are these Dravidians? They are distinguished, says H. Risley, by their low stature, black skin, long heads, broad noses, and long fore-arm from the rest of the inhabit-





ants of India\*. They form the original type of the population of India, now modified to a varying extent by the admixture of Aryan, Scythian, and Mongoloid elements. Topinard † divides the population of the Indian peninsula into three strata, (*viz*) the Black, Mongolian, and the Aryan. The remnants of the first are the Yenadis and Kurumbas. The second has spread over the plateaux of Central India by two lines of way, one to the north-east and the other to the north-west. The remnants of the first invasion are seen in the Dravidian or Tamil tribes, and those of the second in the jhats. The third was the Aryan'.

The Indo-African-Austral origin of the Dravidians has its supporters in Messrs. Keane and Morris. Tamilian traditions say that a large continent once existed in the Indian Ocean which was connected with South India, and which was overwhelmed and submerged by a huge deluge. The Hebrew scriptures have preserved a distinct account of an appalling deluge occasioned by continuous showers of rain for forty days and nights, coupled with the overflow of the waters of the ocean. Geological research has shown that the Indian Ocean was

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\* H. Risley's 'The People of India' p. 46.

† Anthropology.





once a continent, and that this submerged continent, sometimes called Lemuria, originally extended from Madagascar to Malay Archipelago, connecting South India with Africa and Australia. According to S<sup>y</sup>later, the Dravidians entered India from the South long before the submergence of this continent. There are unmistakable indications in the Tamil traditions that the land affected by the deluge was contiguous with *Tamilakam*, and that, after the subsidence, the Tamils naturally betook themselves to their northern provinces. The assertion of the geologists that Lemuria touched China, Africa, Australia, and Comorin will only show the vast extent of the Tamil country, and can never help to dogmatise that the Tamils came from any of these now far-off regions, and settled in South India. On the evidence of the very close affinities between the plants and animals in Africa and India at a very remote period, Mr. Oldham\* concludes that there was once a continuous stretch of dry land connecting South Africa and India. The aborigines of Australia have been associated by many distinguished ethnologists with the Dravidians of India. The affinities between the Dravidians and Australians have

\*Quoted on p. XXIV in Vol. I Castes and Tribes of Southern India-Thurston.





been based upon the employment of certain words, and upon the use of the boomerang, by the two peoples, and upon certain correspondences in their physical types. But Sir William Turner's studies of the characters of Australian and Dravidian crania have demonstrated the baselessness of the Australian affinities of the Dravidians.

Another theory of the origin of the Dravidians is put forward by Sir William Hunter.\* According to this view, there are two branches of the Dravidians—the Kolarians, speaking dialects allied to Mundari, and the Dravidians proper whose languages belong to the Tamil family. The Kolarians, who entered India from the north-east, were split into fragments by the Dravidians.\* The Dravidians found their way into the Punjab through the north-western passes, and pressed forwards towards the south of India. Bishop Caldwell on a comparison of the grammars and vocabularies of the Scythian and Dravidian languages, rushed to the conclusion of a relationship between the Scythians and the Dravidians. However, latest investigations show that there are marked mental and physical differences between the Scythians and the Dravidians. Besides, Caldwell's theory is based on linguistic

\* Sir William Hunter's 'The Indian Empire'.





similarities which are themselves questionable. A study of the Behistun Tablets on which Dr. Caldwell depended makes it clear that the Dravidian languages are not derived from the Scythian. The absence of striking identity in the vocabulary of the Behistun Tablets and the South Indian languages and the difference in the syntactical order of words in these languages lead one to conclude that it is no easy matter to make the Dravidian languages members of the Scythian group.\* Thus, the theory of Caldwell, that the Dravidians belonged to a Scythian family, and that they entered India through the north-western passes, does not rest on sufficient data. The Mongolian origin of the Dravidians is based on the fanciful philological musings of Mr. Kanakasabhai.† Sir. H. Risley dismisses all theories which assign a trans-Himalayan origin to the Dravidians. Some ethnologists consider the Dravidians to be a branch of the great Caucasian stock, and affiliated therefore to Europeans.

According to the theory of Elamite origin for the Dravidian races, India was originally occupied by two batches of Elamite invaders, one taking the sea-route by the Persian Gulf and settling on the west coast of India, and the

\* South Indian Research Jan. 1919 p. 208.

† Tamil Studies, p. 32, M. Srinivasa Iyengar.



other choosing the land-route through the Bolan Pass and occupying North India. The theory is based on the puranic myths of the deluge and the Ark common to India and Elam, and on the so-called philological identity of words in Tamil and Accadian tongues. This theory\* gives the Dravidians a Mesopotamian abode in the hoary past. Z. A. Ragozin† regards the connection between the Dravidians and the first Babylonian Empire—the Babylonians of Shumero-Accad before the advent of the Semites as capable of easy explanation. Archaeological evidences establish the connection of India with Persia and Assyria. The Indian oblong sarcophagi discovered at Chingleput and North Arcot resemble those of Bagdad. The author of *Manimekalai* ‡ enumerates five methods of disposing of the dead as prevalent in his time among the Tamils. They were cremation, exposure in an open place to be eaten by jackals and vultures, burial, stuffing the corpse in natural pits, and the covering of it up with big earthen jars. The only early nation who exposed the dead in this fashion was the ancient Persians.

Expounders of the diffusionist theory like Prof.

\* p. 105, *S. Dipika*, Vol. IV.

† *Vide Vedic India*.

‡ M. Srinivasa Iyengar's *Tamil Studies* p. 39.





Elliot Smith and Prof. W. J. Perry trace all civilized beginnings to an Egyptian and Mediterranean source. Prof. Perry\* says that Egypt was the home of civilization, that the Egyptians were the master people of antiquity, that Egypt was the great source of inspiration for many centuries for the surrounding civilizations, and that the culture of Sumer and Elam was Egyptian in origin. According to this school, the main racial element in the Dravidian population is a branch of the Mediterranean race. The resemblances between the Mediterraneans and the Dravidians in the shape of skull, colour and texture of hair, colour of eyes, in features and build are striking. Those race-marks of the Dravidians, which are deviations from the Mediterranean type, are easily explained by Dr. Slater† on the hypothesis of interbreeding of the Dravidian with other types in India. According to Haeckel,‡ three of the twelve species of man—the Dravidas, Nubians, and Mediterraneans—agree in several characteristics which seem to establish a close relationship between them, and to distinguish them from the remaining species. According to the diffusionist school, the Dravidians

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\* Growth of civilization p. 53.

† Gilbert Slater's 'Dravidian Element in Indian Culture.'

‡ History of Creation.





migrated into India at a remote date from their original home. Prof. Grafton Elliot Smith says that sea-farers from the west from the third millennium, and especially in the period about 800 B. C., carried the heliolithic culture, mainly evolved in Egypt, but with elements gathered elsewhere, far and wide along the coasts of the Old World and the New, and mingled their blood with the aboriginal pre-Dravidian population, and the result was the Dravidians. According to James Hornell, the Proto-Dravidians were a Mediterranean people who brought into India from their original home certain boat-types found in Egypt and the Levant. These settled for some time in Mesopotamia, and then came to India, the Brahui language in Baluchistan marking their presence there at one time. They absorbed politically and linguistically the Negritoes and a Proto-Polynesian stock, whom they found in South India. The result of this fusion of the incomers with the older inhabitants is the Dravidians of the historical period. According to Prof. Perry, the carriers of Egyptian culture frequented Indian shores from 2600 B. C. onwards. According to Dr. Slater, an improvement in the methods of hunting was the cause of the Dravidian migration to India. He adds that the Dravi-





dians passed from some part of the Mediterranean basin through Mesopotamia and Baluchistan before entering India, and assigns this event to a period anterior to the dawn of Sumerian civilization. In his opinion Dravidian culture was evolved in India, and mainly under the stimulus of the Indian environment, though not without the operation of important external influences.

In this connection the remarks of Prof. Fleure deserve consideration. He says, 'We may picture survivors of early man in India influenced from the dawn of Neolithic time by immigrations of long heads, akin to those termed Mediterranean, Hamitic, and Semitic .....These immigrations may well have brought to India many improvements, lifting men above the merely hunting stage, and even giving the beginnings of agriculture.....It seems justifiable to use the hypothesis that the culture elements, which thus reached India probably not less than a thousand years before the coming of the Aryans, interwove themselves with the earlier achievements of the higher races among the populations already settled in India, and that the Dravidian culture is the result\*'. We shall prove elsewhere in this book

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\* Quoted by Dr. Slater in his 'Dravidian Element in Indian Culture' p. 40.





that this view of the Dravidian indebtedness to foreigners is grossly exaggerated.

The recent discoveries in the Punjab and Sindh have added a new horizon to Indian civilization. These are as remarkable as those of Henry Schliemann at Tiryns and Mycenae or those of Stein in the deserts of Turkestan. They open up a new historical vista, and revolutionise our ideas of the age and origin of Indian culture. A new standpoint has been at the same time obtained for surveying not only ancient Indian culture, but also the Babylonian and Sumerian cultures. This revelation has thus more than an archaeological interest. It concerns in short the history of world civilization.

Sir John Marshall\* has given an account of the discoveries recently made at Harappa in the Montgomery Dt. of the Punjab and at Mohenjo-daro in the Larkana Dt. of Sindh. At both these places there is a vast expanse of artificial mounds covering the remains of once flourishing cities. At Mohenjo-daro we have besides halls, passages, and chambers, a massive structure—apparently a shrine—with walls seven or eight feet thick, pierced by many conduits which might have served the purpose of carrying off the lustral water, when the

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\* 'First Light on a Long—Forgotten civilization' By Sir John Marshall—The Illustrated London News Sep. 1924.





shrine or image within it was washed. We have also an altar built of small glazed bricks, and provided with a drain of similar brick-work. At Harappa burnt brick was used for building purposes. We have in both the sites new varieties of pottery, both painted and plain, some fashioned by hand, and some turned on the wheel, terracottas, toys, bangles of blue glass, paste and shell, new types of coins or tokens, knives and cores of chert, dice and chessmen, a series of stone rings, and a number of engraved and inscribed seals. Iron does not occur at all except in the latest deposits, and metal objects are scarce. The stone seals are inscribed with legends in an unknown pictographic script, and the figures engraved on them and the style of the engraving are different from anything of the kind hitherto met with in Indian art. Some of them are of steatite, others of ivory, and others of stone and paste. The animals engraved on them are bulls and unicorns. As regards the pictographs, a few points may be noticed: that the marks attached to the pictographs indicate a high stage of development, that they bear no resemblance to any known Indian alphabet, and that they bear affinity to those of the Mycenaean age in the Mediterranean area. Examples of this pictographic writing are found





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both on seal dies and on certain oblong bars of copper which are perhaps coins. The curious ring stones that are found are said by Mr. Banerji to be connected with the Bhartaris or shrines of eternal fire. As regards the character of the burial customs, it may be remarked that the practice in the earliest period was to bury the body in a hunched position in a brick tomb, generally of square or oblong form. Later on, the custom obtained of burning the body and depositing the ashes in a small urn, which along with two or three others was placed inside a larger round jar accompanied by several miniature vessels containing food, raiment, and so on.

To what age and to what people do these antiquities belong? Sir John Marshall is of opinion that the period during which this culture flourished in the Indus valley must have extended over many centuries. He says 'It is possible, though unlikely, that this civilization of the Indus valley was an intrusive civilization emanating from further west. Painted pottery and other objects somewhat analogous to those from Mohenjo-daro and Harappa have been found in Baluchistan, and there are linguistic reasons for believing that it was by way of Baluchistan that the Dravidian races entered India.' Later on he says that it is more probable





that this civilization was developed in the Indus valley itself, and just as distinctive of that region, as the civilization of the Pharaohs was distinctive of the Nile. He goes on to state, 'In the case of the Indus it is probably true that successive migrations from outside had a useful effect.....in promoting the development of indigenous culture; but there is no reason to assume that the culture of this region was imported from other lands, or that its character was profoundly modified by outside influences.' Thus Sir John Marshall seems to put forward two different views on the subject. The civilization according to him must be Dravidian or indigenous. In his opinion the greater probability lies in favour of the view that it was an indigenous civilization. If so, who are the people that may be said to have developed this indigenous civilization? He cannot certainly refer to the Aryan races in this way. For, it is admitted on all hands that the Aryan occupation of India was an event which was posterior to the Dravidian occupation. Besides, the Aryans might not have entered India at the period indicated by these antiquities. Are they, then, the pre-Dravidian races of India? This is improbable, since the pre-Dravidian races could not have evolved such a fine culture.





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According to Mr. Banerji, this culture of the Indus valley is directly connected with the Aegean culture of the eastern Mediterranean on the ground that distinct affinities are traceable between the Minoan antiquities and those of Mohenjo-Daro, especially in regard to the painted ceramic wares and pictographic inscriptions. On the evidence indicating similarity of ritual and religious notions, of burial customs, of pottery, of ornaments, of similar art and cult objects, (*e.g.*,) double-spouted libation vessels, the cult of a snake deity indicated by images of snakes, the double-axe symbol in a Mohenjo-Daro copper token or coin, fine egg-shell pottery), Mr. Banerji concludes that the Indian culture has close connection with Crete and the Aegean region. Thus Indo-Cretan cultural homogeneity is sought to be established by this scholar. Sir John Marshall dissents from this view.

C. J. Gadd and Sidney Smith\* of the Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities Department, on examining the pottery, seals, stone objects, pieces of shell inlay, clay figurines, and the brick work of unearthed buildings, find a striking resemblance between the Sumerian antiquities of the period 3000-2800

\* The New Links between Indian and Babylonian Civilizations—The Illustrated London News Oct. 4, 1924.





B.C. and those of India. According to these authorities, the general trend of discovery in recent years tends to establish a close connection between the Indo-Aryans and Mesopotamians. They assert, "Somewhere between 1400 and 1200 B.C., some scribe wrote a tablet in a Mesopotamian language concerning horse training which employs words for the numerals that closely resemble the Sanskrit. About the same time, Indra, Varuna, and the twins were worshipped in Mesopotamia. Whether the fact that results from the new archaeological finds—namely that there were in India a people who had been in close contact with the Sumerians between 3000 and 2800 B.C.—should be connected with the existence of this Aryan race in Mesopotamia, or whether the earlier contact belongs to a separate and distinguishable race, we must await further discoveries to decide." Prof. A. H. Sayce,\* the famous Assyriologist, finds the inscribed 'seals' or plaques brought to light at Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro identical with the Proto-Elamite "*tablettes de comptabilite*" discovered by De Morgan at Susa, and notices striking resemblance in the form and size of the plaques, the 'unicorns', the pictographs, and numerals. The tablets

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\* 'The Remarkable Discoveries in India' Illustrated London News, Sep. 27, 1924.





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✓ belong to the third millennium B. C., and extend from the age of the Babylonian king Manistusu (B. C. 2600) to that of the third Dynasty of Ur. (B. C. 2300). Prof. Sayce therefore believes that there was intercourse between Susa and the north-west of India in the third millennium B. C. According to J. M. Kennedy,\* the racial connection between the Persian Gulf and the Indian peoples is traced not only through the commercial intercourse that must have existed from ancient times, but from the influence of Babylonian on Indian civilization that can be clearly traced. There was evidently a mutual exchange of ideas and things which, it is believed, was brought about through the non-Aryan tribes in western and Southern India who had been in close touch with the Ionians. The community of race, language, and religion as well as commercial interests between the races of the Persian Gulf and Western India is a subject deserving thorough research. Ragozin perceived a number of evidences jointly conclusive of an early connection having existed between the Dravidians of India and the Shumer<sup>11</sup>—Accads of the First Babylonian Empire—connections for the most part of maritime intercourse established and strengthened

\* 'Early commerce of Babylon with India' J. R. A. S. 1898.





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by subsequent discoveries in the fields of philology and craniology\* A connection between India and Babylon may be easily traced. According to the late lamented Vedic scholar, B. G. Tilak†, some Babylonian (Sumerian) names for serpents as malevolent spirits are found in the Atharvaveda. Dr. Hall says‡, 'The ethnic type of the Sumerians, so strongly marked in their statues and reliefs, was as different from those of the races which surrounded them as was their language from those of the Semites, Aryans, or others; they were decidedly Indian in type. The face-type of the average Indian of to-day is no doubt much the same as that of his Dravidian race-ancestors thousands of years ago. Among the modern Indians, as amongst the modern Greeks or Italians, the ancient pre-Aryan type of the land has survived, while that of the Aryan conqueror died out long ago. And it is to this Dravidian ethnic type of India that the ancient Sumerian bears most resemblance, so far as we can judge from his monuments. He was very like a Southern Hindu of the Deccan, (who still speaks Dravidian languages). And it

\* J. A. Saldanha—'Distribution of Races round the Persian Gulf'—*Tamilian Antiquary* No. 8.

† Bhandarkar Commemoration Vol, 1917.

‡ 'The Ancient History of the Near East' By H. R. Hall p. 173.





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is by no means improbable that the Sumerians were an Indian race which passed certainly by land, perhaps also by sea, through Persia to the valley of the Two Rivers. It was in the Indian home (perhaps the Indus valley) that we suppose for them that their culture developed. This seems a plausible theory of Sumerian origins.' Thus Dr. Hall suggests that the Sumerians might be a branch of the Indian Dravidians, perhaps of the Indus valley. In this connection, reference may be made to the very interesting observations of His Excellency Lord Goschen—observations which must rivet the attention of all thoughtful readers of this little volume. His Excellency declared, 'It is also a moot point which further researches may resolve, whether the Ancient Dravidian inhabitants of the Southern Indian Coasts were not akin to the Sumerians. In any case, it is a most remarkable circumstance that the old King Dasaratha is claimed by the Indians and the Assyrians alike. For the old Semite chronicles demonstrate that about the year 1350 B. C. anarchy arose amongst the Mitani after the death of King Dasaratha, (Dushratta as he is called in these writings), and that as a result of the anarchy a great immigration towards the East took place, and scientists have seen the connection between this migration and the great





advance of Rama down the Gangetic Valley to Ceylon. Further excavations and researches and a re-reading of the Hindu epics and the Vedas in the light of modern research may open up enchanting vistas of fascinating history, and disentangle from the legends of old the truth which is often more marvellous than many legends and epics.\*

According to W. Crooke, there are certain striking similarities between the Indian religion (not found among the Vedic Aryans) and those of Crete and Asia Minor. The worship of the great Mother-Goddess is an instance in point. According to Ananda Coomaraswamy, a number of decorative motifs and cult figures from the Aegean region are found in northern and southern India in a striking manner. Dr. Sunitikumar Chatterji shows that the word *Dramila* was used to represent the Tamil land in Proto-Dravidian or primitive Dravidian of the early centuries of the first Millennium B.C. The Lycians of Asia Minor, whose original home was Crete, in their funerary inscriptions call themselves *Trmmili*. *Trmmili* therefore was an old name which was used in Crete to denote a section of the Cretan people. Dr. Chatterji identifies this *Trmmili* with the

\* Lord Goschen's address in opening the III Session of the Oriental Conference at Madras, December 22, 1924.



✓ Dravidian Dramila, and says that this is one more point to prove that the original Dravidians were a ramification of the old Aegean race. The languages of the Sumerians and Elamites have certain resemblances in phonetics and structure with themselves and with Dravidian and Lycian. Dr. Chatterji therefore suggests that Cretan, Lycian, Sumerian, Elamite, and Dravidian languages might be mutually related, and that the Aegean islands, Asia Minor, and Mesopotamia might have originally formed one cultural area. To sum up, in the opinion of the various authorities here cited, the Dravidians seem to have been originally a Mediterranean people. It will be easily conceded that the people, who evolved the Punjab and Sindh culture, should have been a non-Aryan, presumably, the ancient Dravidian, people, since at the period assigned to this culture, the Aryans could not have entered India. Mr. Banerji is also inclined to this view.

We also find striking resemblance between the finds of Harappa and Mohenjodaro and those of Adichanallur and other pre-historic sites in South India. We shall examine some of these South Indian pre-historic sites. Three-and-a-half miles to the north-east of Chittoor, we have the ancient sepulchres





called Panduvaram Dewal\* in a secluded valley hemmed in by rocks. There are three large tombs in tolerable preservation and surrounded by the remains of many others. The most perfect of the three lies to the north-east of the group crowning the summit of a high boss of bare rock. It consists of an enormous nearly square slab of granite laid flat on the bottom. This forms the floor. Four similar slabs, placed vertically on it on their edges, constituted the sides. Another, still larger, placed horizontally on their top, forms an overhanging roof. The tombs are usually surrounded by one or two circles of stones placed upright on their edges. The stones at the head and foot of the tombs are higher usually than the rest. Through one of the side slabs is cut a circular aperture large enough to admit a moderate-sized man's body. The sarcophagi containing the bodies are placed on the floor-slab, and are covered to the depth of three or four feet with earth. Besides, these sepulchres on the hill, there are also the sepulchres on the base. At about a foot below the surface, we come to the top of the terracotta sarcophagus, and it was a coffin-shaped trough rounded at the extremities, and deeply rimmed at the edges. It was filled with hard earth

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\* Old Series Vol. 13, J. R. A.S., Ancient Sepulchres of Pandu Varam Dewal in S. India—Captain Newbold.





and human bones. There were fragments of a skull, pieces of pottery, a small elegantly shaped vase of fine black clay filled with ashes and earth, spear-heads and swords of an antique fashion, and masses of crumbling rust under the sarcophagi. The absence of the remains of a city in the vicinity may indicate the high antiquity of these cyclopean sepulchres. The pottery unearthed is of a fine description. The builders of these monuments were acquainted with the art of smelting and working iron.

Mr. Alexander Rea made excavations at Adichanallur\*, 15 miles south-east from Tinnevely. The burial-ground here covers an area of 114 acres, and is the most extensive and important yet discovered in South India. The funeral urns were deposited either singly or in pairs in pits excavated in the solid rock or in the gravelly soil. In most cases only a selection of bones appears to have been interred, and as there are no evidences of cremation, it seems probable that only portions of the body were placed in each urn, a theory which is supported by the small size of many of the latter and the narrowness of their mouths. The burial urns and other articles of pottery resemble the finds of other South

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\*'Catalogue of the pre-historic Antiquities from Adichanallur and Perumbair' by Alexander Rea—J. R. Henderson's Preface.





Indian localities. The smaller articles are mainly domestic utensils together with stands of various kinds on which vessels were placed. The most interesting of the finds are the objects in metal which exist in great variety. A considerable amount of skill has been exercised in their manufacture. The majority are of iron, but a fair number occur in bronze. The only objects discovered in any of the precious metals are oval frontlets of gold leaf which were probably tied round the forehead in the case of some of the dead, possibly those of rank. The iron articles include swords, daggers, spear-heads, arrow-heads, and other weapons used in warfare or hunting, agricultural implements, and tridents. No implements or weapons have been found in bronze; all objects in this metal being either vessels of curious and varied shapes, or personal ornaments such as rings, bangles, and bracelets. The bronze articles are executed with higher skill than those in iron, and they afford the best evidence of the art of the people who fashioned them. This particularly applies to the numerous representations of buffaloes with wide-curved horns arranged on complicated metal frame works, some of which formed supports for spherical vessels, while others were elaborately decorated lids. The animals can





be easily identified. Cow and other animals, distinctive of Aryan mythology, are not represented. Besides, there were unearthed large numbers of pottery vessels, stone implements, and collections of bones.

The comparative rarity of bronze objects and their use for personal ornaments show that this metal must have been scarce, highly valued, and used only by the higher class of people. Thus the people in those days were skilful in moulding pottery, in casting or working metals, in weaving, and in working stone and wood. The ornamentation of the pottery consists only of embossed dots and incised lines in triangular or simple geometrical designs. According to Foote, there has been a true evolution in the potter's craft which attained a stage of very real beauty. The bronzes exhibit a high degree of skill in workmanship and manipulation of the metal, while the same may be said of the iron implements. \* The people knew how to forge iron into shapes for daily use both in agriculture and warfare. Dr. Caldwell thinks that the Tamil word for an urn is Tali (*தலி*). He thinks that the sepulchral urns are relics possibly of a higher antiquity than the Christian era. At

\* Pre-historic Burial Sites in South India, R. Sewell—J. R. A. S. 1902.





the time when these urns were used, cremation must have been unknown, and burial the universal practice. This practice continued even in the historical period, as will be seen by a careful study of *Purapporulvenbamalai*.

\* Numerous megalithic monuments are found in Coimbatore. These are all sepulchral consisting of Kistvaens or tumuli containing cists or chambers originally underground, but now exposed. The ground near the village of Nallampatti rises into one of the wide rolling barren maidans characteristic of South India, on which a great cairn cemetery is situated. Many hundreds of cairns are spread over a considerable tract. The larger cairns are surrounded with circles of upright stones. In the centre of the tomb was placed the highest of all the tombs. Pottery surpassing in design and texture that of the present day was found in large quantities. It is ornamented with straight or wavy streaks of two or three light tints. One form of the cairns is a tall narrow urn standing on three or four legs often three feet high. The urns contain fragments of burnt human bones. Single-footed cups often occur. Iron was the only metal found in this burial place. Other objects met with in this

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\* Megalithic monuments of the Coimbatore Dt. by J. M. Walhouse—1875 J. R. A. S.





cemetery were a necklace of small shells, and crores of wrist bangles. We have a group of cairns situated on land two miles to the north of the village of Sirumugai and eight miles from Mettupalayam. The urns excavated here were about 4 feet in high and about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet in diameter at their greatest width. The excavator found the remains of human skulls and bones, corroded iron implements, pottery, domestic vessels, a few beads, a few stone flakes, drinking cups, and rice bowls. The pottery of the cups and bowls is of excellent quality, red in colour, but mostly covered with a false black glaze. The four-legged urns of the type found here have also been found in ancient graves at Perumbair and Pallavaram in the Chingleput district, at Adichanallur in the Tinnevely district, and in certain rock-cut tombs discovered on the west-coast. In the opinion of Mr. Longhurst, the presence of iron and stone implements in one and the same burial urn may show that these tombs go back to the early iron age, when large numbers of people continued to use stone implements long after iron was known†. The excellent workmanship shown in the beads, and the

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† A Report on the Excavation of certain cairns in the Coimbatore — District by Longhurst—Annual Archæological report, Madras 1913—1914.





high quality of the domestic vessels, together with the numerous remains of iron weapons or implements, clearly show that the people, who made these quaint tombs for their dead, were a highly civilized race of an advanced type.

A large mound near Chingleput is surrounded by a number of megalithic graves, and believed to have been inhabited by a bearded race of 'Pandayar'. The very name of Pandu houses, by which the tombs are familiarly known in every district, points to primitive pre-Brahmanical times and beliefs; all that is referred to about the Pandavas being directly opposed to Brahmanical rites and ideas, and savouring rather of aboriginal practices.\* At Perumbair, † in the Chingleput district, the ancient burial sites of the people are indicated on the surface by circles of rough stone boulders, and in the centre of each circle at the depth of from two to seven feet was found either a pyriform urn or an earthenware cist. The contents of these graves were pottery, stone objects, a few iron implements, and some chank shell ornaments. The pottery is of a coarser fabric than that of Adichanallur. The

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\*Megalithic monuments of the Coimbatore Dt. by M. J. Walhouse J. R. A. S. 1875.

† Preface of J. R. Henderson-Catalogue of the Prehistoric Antiquities from Adichanallur and Perumbair.





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dolmens on the Coromandel Coast near Kollur, four miles from Tirukoilur, are noteworthy. The Araikandanallur\* pagoda near Tirukoilur is a striking object built on a rock, and is remarkable on account of the existence of five singular cells cut in the solid rock, where local traditions say the five Pandavas lived during their exile. In one of the structures were found some fragments of bones and some scraps of iron. There is ground for presuming that these structures were used as burial places.

These megalithic monuments in general resemble those of Adichanallur. It may be presumed that these monuments were built by the Dravidian races of South India. Dr. Chatterji believes that the Old Stone Age weapons found in different parts of India belonged to the Negritos, the oldest Indian people in his opinion, and that the New Stone Age implements were the work of the ancestors of the Kols. In his opinion the culture type, presented by the finds in the Adichanallur tombs, where articles of bronze and iron were obtained, and the burial customs therein indicated, resemble those of Crete, Cyprus, Anatolia, and Babylonia. He recognises the closer affinities of Adichanallur tombs with those of Crete and

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\* See Indian Antiquary Vol. 5.





Cyprus in the crouching position of the dead-body, in the Sarcophagi, and in the golden masks and ornaments.) But what is more important to our immediate purpose is to note the fact that the tombs of Adichanallur and those of Perumbair, Coimbatore, and other places in South India, which we have just now examined, bear resemblance to one another in some respects, though not in all, and that the megalithic monuments of all these places are situated in South India, a part of the country which is predominantly Dravidian. ✓ M. Lapicque arrived at the conclusion that the remains at Adichanallur belonged to a Proto—Dravidian race. ✓ Some of the large earthenware urns excavated by Mr. A. Rea at the prehistoric burial site at Adichanallur contained human skulls in a perfect condition. \* These skulls have been found, on being measured, to agree with the typical Tamil skull. It is therefore contended that the bronze and iron age culture of Adichanallur is that of the early Dravidians. It may also be further maintained that the culture, represented by the other megalithic monuments of South India noticed above, is also that of the ancient Dravidians. The Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa culture

\* Dr. Sunitikumar Chatterji, *The Modern Review*, Dec., 1924.





agrees with that of Adichanallur in burying the dead in a crouching position in terracotta coffins, and in placing food, drink, wearing apparel, and weapons ready for their service, when they reached another world. Cremation \* was commonly practised by the Aryans in India. Hence the burial customs indicated in the Harappa and Mohenjo—Daro monuments show that their builders should have been un-Aryan, possibly Dravidian. According to Prof. Rapson, the original speakers of the Dravidian languages were invaders. The survival of a Dravidian language in Baluchistan must indicate that the Dravidians came into India through Baluchistan in pre-historic times. Whether they are ultimately to be traced to a Central Asian or to a Western Asian origin cannot at present be decided with absolute certainty ; but the latter hypothesis receives very strong support from the undoubted similarity of the Sumerian and Dravidian ethnic types†. To sum up, we have endeavoured to show that, according to many able and erudite scholars cited above, the recent discoveries in the Punjab and Sindh have shown that the Dravidian civilization of India bears striking

\* See Modern Review, 1925, p. 357 No. 3.

† Cambridge History of India Chapter II, Vol. I.





resemblance to the culture developed in the Mediterranean area. This leads to the inference, in the opinion of these scholars, that the original home of the ancient Dravidians should have been the Mediterranean region.

Thus far we have sketched the theories propounded by the scholars of the East and the west about the original home of the ancient Dravidians being somewhere else than in India. We shall now discuss what might be called the indigenous theory. According to this theory the Dravidians should have lived in South India from the earliest times. This is almost a faith with the Tamils, a typical Dravidian people. We shall strike the mine of ancient Tamil literature to see if its contents shed any light on this indigenous theory. We shall later on demonstrate beyond the possibility of a doubt the high antiquity of Tamil literature. We shall here simply note that the *Tolkappiyam* and some poems of the *Purananuru* are all very ancient and anterior to the Christian era.

In the oldest extant Tamil classics there are no traditions pointing to a home outside the Tamilakam. The oldest Tamil works are full of word-pictures of the blazing sun that burns<sup>(1)</sup>, the stalwart trees that

(1) Puram 6-43.





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shade<sup>(1)</sup>, the ferocious beasts that roam<sup>(2)</sup>, the bright plumed birds that fill<sup>(3)</sup>, in the torrid South Indian peninsula. When there are words for dews and mist, there are none for snow or ice. The oldest Tamil classics always welcome coolness everywhere, and avoid everything that smacks of heat. There is nothing in Tamil to answer to the cold regions of the Asiatic table-lands, to the ice-bound polar plains, or to the vine growing, fig shadowed Chaldean regions. Animals like the elephant or the tiger<sup>(4)</sup>, birds like the peacock or the parrot<sup>(5)</sup>, grains<sup>(6)</sup> like thinai (தின்னை, *Italicum panicum*) and Varahu (வரஹு, *Paspalum frumentaceum*), and trees<sup>(7)</sup> like Vengai (kino-tree) are characteristic of the Tamil hills and plains, and not indigenous to any country outside India<sup>(8)</sup>. Greece, Syria, and Babylon were ringing with the fame of Tamilakam in ancient times, and came to her for her teaks, and sandals, her pearls and muslins, and her peacocks and pepper. The

(1) Kali 39-41, Ainkurunuru 189, 219.

(2) Puram 152, Kali 38-43.

(3) Kali 37-108; Puram 13-50.

(4) Puram 151-152, Kali 40-42.

(5) Kali 37-108, Ainkurunuru 260.

(6) Kali 37-39 Puram, 197.

(7) Puram 3, Kali 117.

(8) *Vide* Tamil Classics and Tamilakam By S. Bharathi S. Dipika, Vol. 14, No. 1.





earliest Tamil works describe the physical features of the semi-pastoral Tamil people and their life in Tamil India so accurately and lovingly that their love for and intimate acquaintance with Tamilakam is apparent in every verse. The Tamil land is invariably divided by all the early poets into its five most natural divisions (ஐந்திணை). The special features and peculiar genius of Tamil literature, which accurately photographed the characteristics of the Tamils, arrested the attention of the Aryans with the result that the latter seriously commenced studying all about the Tamils and their culture even in the early centuries of the Christian era. That Kapilar, a member of the Third Academy at Madura, composed a whole poem entitled *Kurinjippattu* (குறிஞ்சிப்பாட்டு) to impart to the Aryan Prince Brahaththan all about the life of the Tamils and the fauna and flora of the Tamil country is well-known. The Tamils always believed that from the outset they were the aboriginal inhabitants of the great territories bounded by the two seas on the east and west, and by the Venkata hills on the north, and the submerged rivers, Pahruli and Kumari on the South\*. The word Tamil occurs in all the ancient Tamil classics as the common or generic name for the people and

\* See Tolkappiyam; Arangerrukathai, line 37, Sil; Puram 6.





their language in India. The word is as old as the Tamil language, and hence there is no need to derive it from foreign words like Dravida.

The antiquity of the Tamil civilization is undoubted. Patanjali's Mahabhashya, Katyayana's Vartika, Asoka's inscriptions, the writings of Megasthenes, the Ceylon chronicles like Mahavamso and Dipawamso, all these lead one to the conclusion that the Pandyan kingdom should have attained a great civilization in the centuries anterior to the Christian era. The first Aryan stranger, who travelled south across the trackless jungles, was dazzled with the splendour of the Royal Pandyan Court, 'and he was not too proud to seek shelter in the hospitable Tamil land that smiled to a sunny clime'. Dr. Macleane says that the Dravidians are a very primeval race, and that they are indigenous to India, and specially indigenous to South India. The antiquity of the Tamil civilization and the references in the earliest extant Tamil classics make it probable that the original home of the Dravidians is Tamilakam itself.

We know that the adventurous Tamils founded trading settlements in Chavakam (Java), and in Kadaram (Burma). It may be that some gallant sailor founded





settlements on the coasts washed by the waves of the Mediterranean and Arabian Seas. It is quite possible that Dravidian traders might have carried their culture from South India to the Mediterranean area. And yet Dr. Chatterji says, 'The Dravidians look like being a Mediterranean people coming out of Crete and passing through Asia Minor and Mesopotamia, where they were in close touch with the Sumerians and the Elamites and possibly these latter were related to them and the Cretans. Then they came.....into Sindh, whence they spread into the interior of India'. Why should this have been so? Could not an exactly reverse process have taken place? It may not be hazardous to remark that we shall have to revise our notions with regard to the assessment of the full influence of the Dravidians on the evolution of Asiatic and of European cultures. Sir John Marshall himself admits that five thousand years ago the peoples of Sindh and the Punjab were living in well-built cities, and were in possession of a relatively mature civilization with a high standard of art and craftsmanship and a developed system of writing. He also puts forward a very important suggestion—supremely important from the point of view of cultural origins—that, if the Sumerians are to be regarded as an intrusive





element in Mesopotamia, then India may prove eventually to be the cradle of Sumerian civilization, which in its turn formed the bedrock on which the magnificent superstructure of Babylonian, and Assyrian, and West Asiatic culture generally rested.

✓ We shall here try to show that this view need not be regarded as entirely fanciful. Let us again quote Dr. Hall. He says, 'It is by no means impossible that the Sumerians were an Indian race which passed to the valley of the Two Rivers. It was in the Indian home (perhaps—the Indus valley) that we suppose for them that their culture developed. Then their writing may have been invented, and progressed from a purely pictorial to a simplified and abbreviated form, which afterwards in Babylonia took on its peculiar 'Cuneiform' appearance owing to its being written with a square-ended stylus on soft clay. On the way they left the seeds of their culture in Elam.'

In the opinion of Mr. P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar, neolithic culture began in India about 20,000 years ago, and was widespread in all Indian river-valleys. Elementary Tamil words are all monosyllables, such as can very well be represented by the pictographic script described by Sir John Marshall in his letter to the 'Hindu' announcing the now famous Harappa and





Mohenjo-Daro discoveries. Mr. P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar believes that this ancient neolithic culture went beyond the confines of India, possibly by sea, and settled in Ancient Assyria as the Sumerian culture, (whence the civilization of Chaldea sprang). The well-known resemblance of facial features between the present day Tamils and the ancient Sumerians is therefore not a mere accident \*

✓ That our view of South India being the probable home of civilization is not entirely a baseless fabric of a dream receives support from Dr. Chatterji who says, 'It would be established,' provided Hall's theory of Sumerian origins be true, 'that civilization first arose in India, and was associated probably with the primitive Dravidians. Then it was taken to Mesopotamia to become the source of the Babylonian and other ancient cultures which form the basis of modern civilization.' A Scientist† writes that the locality of the origin of the earliest race from recent researches appears to have been on lands submerged beneath the Indian Ocean. According to Sir Walter Raleigh ‡ India was the first planted and peopled country after the flood. It

\* Vedic culture—Its Antiquity Oct. 27, 1924, 'The Hindu,'—P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar.

† 'Science of Man', Australia, December 1900.

‡ 'History of the World' p. 99.\*





has been already stated that South India was contiguous to the submerged continent. According to Sir John Evans\*, Southern India was probably the cradle of the human race. Investigations in relation to race show it to be possible that Southern India was once the passage ground by which the ancient progenitors of Northern and Mediterranean races proceeded to the parts of the globe which they now inhabit. Human remains and traces have been found on the east-coast of an age which is indeterminate, but quite beyond the ordinary calculations of history.....The people who have for many ages occupied this portion of the peninsula are a great people influencing the world, not much perhaps by moral and intellectual attributes, but to a great extent by superior physical qualities.† Hence we shall not be far wrong if we infer that South India gave a refuge to the survivors of the deluge, that the culture developed in Lemuria was carried to South India after its submergence, and that South India was probably the cradle of the post-diluvian human race. As the centre of gravity of the Dravidian peoples, as determined by the density of their

\* Presidential Address of the British Association, 1897—*Science of Man* Aug. 1901.

† Dr. C. Maclean's *Manual of Administration of the Madras Presidency*.





population, lies somewhere about Mysore, South India must be considered as the home of those peoples, whence they might have spread to the north \*.

✓ In our inquiry regarding the probable primeval home of the ancient Dravidians, we notice two definite schools of thought emerging out of the interminable discussions and endless controversies. It seems to us that the arguments advanced on behalf of the indigenous theory are unanswerable. But at the same time it must be remembered that the profundity of scholarship and learning displayed by the advocates of the opposite view, (*viz.*) that the Dravidians came to India from loutside, is remarkable. To brush aside the weighty opinions offered by this school which counts among its adherents some of the most distinguished scholars of our time will not be doing justice to this all-important subject. Nevertheless, it is perhaps not too bold to assert that future discoveries and dispassionate researches may ultimately lead to the universal acceptance of the view that the Dravidians were living in South India from the remotest antiquity. ✓

\* Govindacharya Swamin's article p. 238. Ind. Ant. 1912.





## CHAPTER III

### DRAVIDIAN GLORIES

#### 1. Introduction.

Historians of India, not resting content with celebrating the triumphs of the Aryan stock and culture and virtues in the movement of Indian history, make all other movements converge towards the Aryan movement as towards a centre, and claim the final hegemony for the Indo-Aryan race. An endeavour will here be made to show that this creed of Aryanism in Indian history is not wholly tenable. This object can best be attained by describing in brief outline the glories of the ancient Dravidians who played a not unimportant part in shaping and moulding the history of South India in far-away ancient times. Our object in offering this humble contribution is to set before the reader a truer conception of the place of the Dravidians in South Indian history, their distinctive culture, their solid and lasting contributions to the development of Indian thought and life, and the profound and far-reaching influence they exercised upon some of the great nations of antiquity.





Though we are conscious that the attitude here taken is diametrically opposed to the long-cherished theories and deep-rooted convictions of savants, we nevertheless venture to put forth our views for what they may be worth, in the hope that at least the first step may be taken in the overthrow of Aryan bigotry and pride and in the recognition of the rich heritage with which the Dravidian forebears enriched, strengthened, and improved the culture of Aryan India. That the Dravidian race possessed a genius and an individuality of its own, that it made great contributions to the development of the Indo-Aryan race in different spheres of human activity, and that it was out of the harmonious commingling of the cultures of the Dravidian and the Indo-Aryan that the Hindu civilization of the present day has been evolved, these truths, it is hoped, will soon pass out of the stages of ridicule and of indifference, and in the fulness of time receive adequate recognition at the hands of scholars.

## **2. Dravidian Languages.**

Reviewing Dr. Slater's 'Dravidian Element in Indian Culture', the 'Times Literary Supplement' asserted ".....The Diffusionists have as yet scarcely approached the problem from its linguistic side, and good Sanskritists do not yet





appear to recognise a Dravidian element in their texts. Dr. Slater does indeed suggest the need of examining the words common to Sanskrit and the Dravidian languages in order to ascertain by comparison with the Indo-European vocabulary to what extent Sanskrit is indebted to Tamil and its sister-tongues. Such an inquiry might undoubtedly prove most valuable, and throw a flood of light on cultural beginnings. Another necessary task is the examination of Sanskrit literature in the light of Diffusionist ideas. Indeed, it would be pleasantly ironical, if the philologists proved as mistaken over the origins of Indian culture, as they were over the paternity of the Indian population. Time was when they claimed the peoples of Northern India as predominantly Aryan in blood. They may hereafter be obliged to throw overboard other lumber, besides their old notion that language was a satisfactory indication of race.' This is just exactly the view we have undertaken to establish in the following pages.

In a paper read before the Third Session of the Oriental Conference held at Madras, Mr. R. Swaminatha Iyer declared, 'The class of words known as 'pronouns' belong to the most fundamental elements of a language. I propose to bring together in this paper a body of facts





which seem to show unmistakably that the Demonstrative, the Relative, Interrogative, and the Reflexive pronouns of the Dravidian languages are of Aryan origin, that their personal pronouns have some Aryan affinities, and that most of the gender and number signs in these pronouns are also of Aryan origin. These facts are totally opposed to the assumption made by western scholars that the Dravidian languages had attained their development long before the arrival of the Aryans in India and to the current Dravidian theory of which that assumption is, as it were, the sheet anchor....Bishop Caldwell maintained that the Dravidians....were Turanian immigrants, that the Dravidian languages had become fully developed long before the arrival of the Aryans in India, that these languages had no structural relationship with Sanskrit, that their affinities were mainly Turanian, occasionally Semitic, and that, where the affinities were Aryan, these did not come into existence on Indian soil, but belonged to the pre-Aryan period of the pre-historic past, when the Indo-Europeans and Turanians were living as one undivided race.'

Mr. Swaminatha Iyer has arrived at conclusions, which in his opinion knock the bottom out of this Dravidian theory. He asserts that





most of the suffixes, employed in the Dravidian languages for the purpose of indicating the tenses and modes of verb-forms, are of Indo-Aryan origin. The personal terminations of Dravidian finite verbs and the pronouns, of which these terminations are early forms, are also most of them of Aryan origin. The basic portion of the Dravidian vocabularies consists largely of words of Indo-Aryan origin. The Dravidian languages are in all their present essential features a creation of Aryan and Aryanised immigrants from the north. The existence in Tamil of words and forms, which are met with in the Vedas and the Avestic language, but have disappeared from the post-Vedic Indo-Aryan tongues, would show that these immigrants must have separated from the main body of the Indo-Aryans in the North-West in pre-historic times—in the Pro-Vedic or even pre-vedic period. The Dravidian civilization of the South is merely the civilization of these Aryan and Aryanised immigrants. As regards the alleged influences of the Dravidian languages on Indo-Aryan phonology, grammar, and Syntax, the fact is that what are called Dravidian characteristics in Indo-Aryan phonology and inflectional system are really Indo-Aryan characteristics in Dravidian. Such in brief is a summary of the





conclusions arrived at by Mr. R. Swaminatha Iyer on this much-vexed question of the origin of Dravidian languages.

Mr. R. Swaminatha Iyer says, 'In analysing the Dravidian forms *avan*, *aval*, *avar*, and *avai*, it is usual to take the consonant *v* as a euphonic letter joining the initial letter *a* with the first vowel of the terminations *an*, *al*, *ar* etc. That this consonant is not euphonic but radical appears from the circumstance.....that the Tamil words *av-yānai*, 'that elephant' and *i-v-an* 'this man' cannot be explained on the basis of the euphonic theory. But according to Pandit Savariroyan \* *v* is simply an euphonic particle inserted as for example in the word *çeydavan* to prevent the hiatus between the contiguous vowel and the initial vowel in the termination (*çeyda*+*v*+*an*). We see in Tamil that every finite verb in its primitive stage is an appellative noun composed of two words—a relative participle and a pronoun. It is true that *an*, *al*, *ar*, *du*, and *a* are now used as terminal suffixes; but they were originally pronouns themselves meaning he, she, they (persons), it, they (things), because *a* (*v*)-*an*, *a* (*v*)-*al*, *a* (*v*)-*ar*, *a*-*d*-*u*, *a* (*v*) *a* (now *a*-*vai*) literally mean not, he, she, it etc., but that-man, that-woman, those-persons, that-thing and

\* Vide *S. Dipika* p. 190, Vol. III.



those-things. Again Mr. Swaminatha Iyer says, 'There is also a demonstrative an which appears in Tamil verbal forms, irundanan, irundanal, where the terminations anan, anal correspond to avan, aval etc.' But according to Pandit Savariroyan, n has a distinct office to perform in combination, (*viz*) that of producing euphony. In the word *çeyda(n) an* (செய்தனன்), between the primitive word *çeyda* and termination *an*, the nexus is inserted to prevent the hiatus. Therefore, there is no need to regard *anan* as a termination. There are other considerations which make it difficult to accept Mr. Swaminatha Iyer's conclusions. Besides, philology is a slippery and dangerous ground on which we have to tread with eyes and ears open. The science of philology deals with a greater amount of guess work than any other department of scientific investigation. In philological matters, there can be no absolute proof. Hence we have to proceed with considerable amount of caution in establishing theories based on philological considerations alone. While we hail with pleasure the contributions of a competent philologist to questions so large and so important in the eyes of students of Dravidian antiquities, we yet have to record our conviction that the theory of Mr. R. Swaminatha Iyer that the





Dravidian languages are a creation of Aryan and Aryanised immigrants from the north, and that the Dravidian civilization of the South is merely the civilization of these Aryan and Aryanised immigrants, will not find ready and general agreement.

Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, and Canarese (*i.e.*) the Dravidian languages are all fundamentally different from Sanskrit, the language of the Aryans. These languages, while they have a common origin and a close affinity to each other, are different from Sanskrit and its derivatives. The northern pandits classify the vernacular dialects of India into two sets of five, the five Gauras and the five Dravidas consisting of the Maràtha, Gurjara, Telinga, Karnataka, and Dravida. Of the latter, the first two belong to the northern group; while the last three are not, as the northern pandits suppose, derived from Sanskrit like the northern dialects, but, as regards their original and fundamental portion, are quite independent of Sanskrit. The difference between the northern and southern dialects lies in this, that, though the northern ones contain a small proportion of non-Sanskrit words, they are mainly composed of words derived from Sanskrit, while the Tamil, Telugu, and other southern languages, though they contain a certain





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proportion of Sanskrit words, are, as regards the great bulk of their vocabulary, genius, and spirit, distinct from Sanskrit, the classical speech of the Aryas. \* No person, who is well versed in comparative philology, and who has compared the primitive and essential words and the grammatical structure of the Dravidian languages with those of Sanskrit, can imagine for a moment, that the former have been derived from the latter by any process of development or corruption. † Sanskrit may contribute to the polish of the South Indian languages, but is not necessary for their existence. The non-Sanskrit portion of the Dravidian languages exceeds the Sanskrit portion. Pronouns and numerals of the Dravidian languages, their mode of inflecting verbs and nouns, the syntactic arrangement of their words—all things which constitute the essential structure of a language are essentially different from those of Sanskrit. The base of Tamil, the most highly cultivated as regards its original structure of all the Dravidian languages, has an independent origin. ‡ § In

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\* *Vide* Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, Part II; Caldwell's *Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages*, p. 42.

† *A Grammar of the Teloo-goo Language* by A. D. Campbell, p. 2.

‡ *Wilson's Catalogue of the Mackenzie Collection*, p. 19.

§ Remarks of Babington and F. W. Ellis quoted in *Wilson's Mss.*, p. 18.





its more primitive words, such as the names of natural objects, the verbs expressive of physical action or passion, and the numerals, it is unconnected with Sanskrit. The Tamil language retains an alphabet which tradition affirms to have heretofore consisted of but sixteen letters, and which has several letters of peculiar powers. Tamil is not dependent on Sanskrit for the full expression of thought. The ancient or classical dialect of this language, the Sen Tamil, is almost entirely free from Sanskrit words and idioms. The finest works in Tamil, such as the *Kural*, are original in design and execution, and also almost independent of Sanskrit. According to Dr. Burnell, the science of grammar (*vyakarna*) was cultivated in the south from a very early period, not as derived from Sanskrit, but as communicated from a divine source, in other words, as being of indigenous origin. Prof. Julien Vinson says, "Tamil and Sanskrit in spite of some analogies of words have no connection whatever. Their grammatical systems so widely differ that they certainly proceed from quite different origins. They are only to one another what a cocoa tree would be to a carrot plant."\*

The Tamil language has an originality and a singularity of its own. The distinction

\* *The Siddhanta Dipika*, Vol. 5, p. 31.



between Vadamoli (வடமொழி) and Tenmoli (தென்மொழி) could have arisen only when there were two languages standing side by side, one in the north and the other in the south, both coming in contact with each other. The following peculiarities among others lend countenance to the position that Tamil must be a language independent of any other:— In Tamil, grammar, gender, and number are treated under one head Pal (பால்), peculiar to the Tamil language. The indications of tense, present, past, and future by the doubling of the root by affixes and inter-letter (இடைநிலை) for each tense are other peculiarities not found elsewhere. Gender in Sanskrit is upon words. Gender upon meaning of words is peculiar to Tamil, and not found in Sanskrit. For example, in Sanskrit Karam (கரம்), which means hand, is of masculine gender. Daram (தரம்), which means wife, is also masculine; while Kalathiram (கலத்திரம்), which also means wife, is of neuter gender. It should be said to its credit that, viewed from its own stand-point, the Tamil language is freedom itself, when compared with the gender shackles of Sanskrit, German, French, and so on. More than one-half of the Tolkappiyam deals with Poruladhikaram, which is a branch of grammar peculiar to the





Tamil language. The Tamil Prosody, especially Venba, possesses rules which are peculiarly its own, and such rules are not to be found in the prosody of any other language. The metre found in Purananuru (புறநானூறு) is peculiar only to Tamil. Even though the word sandam is of Sanskrit origin, its connotation in Tamil is not the same as that in Sanskrit. Tamil is an independent language, and does not belong to the Aryan group of languages. Its grammar was crystallised long anterior to the Christian era. The Tamils had their own music which was very early systematised. Hence the introduction of the Sanskrit music or sandam in Tamil means not its translation or repetition, but a gradual assimilation. Therefore, in Tamil sandam, we find a preponderance of indigenous elements. Words representing measurements and weights such as ஆழாக்கு, நாழி, முந்திரி, and அரைக்காணி are purely Tamil words. According to Dr. Slater,\* the characteristics of the Tamil language are its subtlety, its sense of logic, and its richness in honorifics. These and other peculiarities will go to show that Tamil is an original and independent language.

The Tamil language was no doubt influenced by its contact with Sanskrit, so far as

\* Dravidian element in Indian culture pp. 31—34.

1. ALAKU = 1/4 g. gold

2. NAALI = f. seed

3. MUNDIRI = Grape or  
Cinnamon

4. ARAIKANI





its vocabulary is concerned. The Sanskrit element in the vocabularies of the Dravidian languages is so great that it has often been urged with much show of reason by orthodox pandits that the Dravidian languages can claim no originality independent of Sanskrit, and that, in other words, Sanskrit is the mother of the South Indian languages. This is only the popular view shared by illiterate people along with the orthodox pandits, whose learning knows neither analysis nor comparison. Grammarians of the Dravidian languages have clearly pointed out that the languages they deal with are different from Sanskrit\*. The fact that the Dravidian languages have borrowed Sanskrit words—or rather, to speak more correctly, that Aryan colonists have introduced Sanskrit words into the Dravidian vocabulary—can no more prove their Sanskrit origin, than that English is derived from Latin and Greek, because it has borrowed largely from the classics†. Just as Sanskrit words have found a place in Tamil, so Tamil and other Dravidian words have found a place in Sanskrit. Borrowing has been common to both. It is thus clear that the Dravidian languages belong to a stock

\* The Sanskritic element in the vocabularies of the Dravidian languages.—S. Anavaratavinayakam Pillai, p. 1, Introduction.

† J. Lazarus-S. Dipika Vol. 6 p. 128.





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distinct from Sanskrit. Some scholars maintain that the vedic language or Aryan primitive was in a dialectical and uncultured stage, when it was first met with on the banks of the Indus, and that the post-Sanskrit or the Aryan derivative was developed in India a long time after its introduction. The Aryans on their arrival at the north-west frontier found the Dravidians in flourishing communities. It can be asserted that the subsequent development of the uncultured vedic tongue, which resulted in Sanskrit, was owing to the influence of the highly civilized Dravidian, when the former came into contact with the latter. Prof. Rapson \* bears testimony to the fact that the aboriginal languages in the south of India were associated with a high degree of culture, and hence it is not surprising to note the presence of the Dravidian element in Sanskrit. It can be easily maintained that much, that is not found in Latin and Greek but peculiar to Sanskrit alone, is due to the contact of the Aryans with the Dravidians. At the period of the Aryan invasions the Dravidian languages prevailed also in the north. This inference is derived from the change which Indo-European underwent after its introduction into India, and which can only be explained as the result of some older

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\* P. 50, Cambridge History of India Vol. 1.





disturbing element. The oldest form of Indo-Aryan, the language of the Rig-Veda, is distinguished from the oldest form of Iranian, the language of the Avesta, chiefly by the presence of a second series of dental letters, the so-called cerebrals. These play an increasingly important part in the development of Indo-Aryan in all its subsequent phases. These cerebral sounds now abound throughout the Sanskrit vocabulary, and yet they are foreign to Indo-European languages generally, and they are characteristic only of Dravidian. Mr. Anavaratavinayakam Pillai also maintains that the cerebral stops so characteristic of Dravidian are found in the earliest Sanskrit\*. It may be concluded then that the earlier forms of speech, by which Indo-European was modified in the various stages of its progress from the North-West, were predominantly Dravidian.†

Mr. P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar holds that Sanskrit was profoundly affected, when it spread among the peoples of Ancient India, that it shed some of its vowels, Indo-Germanic *a*, *e*, *o*, all being levelled down to one uniform *a*, that it developed new consonants (*e.g.*) the sibilants *s*, *s'*, *sh* hopelessly confused in the pronouncia-

\* Dravidic Studies No. III, p. 56.

† p. 49 Cambridge History of India Vol. 1.





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tion of Sanskrit in various parts of India, and that its grammar was slowly but surely modified\*. Prof. Rhys Davids maintained that Ancient High Indian, (*i.e.*,) the Vedic language, was largely subject to Dravidian influence, both in phonetics and in vocabulary. The Dravidian dialects affected profoundly the sounds, the structure, the idiom, and the vocabulary of Sanskrit. The differences between the vedic language and its hypothetic parent, Indo-Germanic, are due to the influence of the Dravidian dialects of India. In the course of its development in India on account of the constant influence of the Dravidian tongues, Sanskrit lost the subjunctive mood, many infinitive forms, and several noun-declensions, forgot its richly varied system of real verb tenses, and adopted turns of expression peculiar to the Dravidian idiom. Mr. M. Collins has shown the existence of a Dravidic substratum in the languages of North India. The Dravidian element makes its influence felt in the sounds employed not only in the Sanskrit vernaculars, but to a certain extent in Sanskrit itself. † Dr. Gundert has pointed out the not inconsiderable number of Dravidian roots adopted into Sanskrit, a fact persistently ignored

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\* Vide *Age of the Mantras* by Mr. P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar.

† W. Elliot's *Coins of Southern India*, p. 2.





by the northern pandits. It was proved years ago by Dr. Taylor that a Tamiloid language, now represented by its most cultivated branch in the South, constituted the original staple of all the languages of India. The existence of a Tamilian substratum in all the modern dialects of India and of the profound influence, which the classical Tamil has exercised on the formation and development of both the vedic and the classical Sanskrit, is gradually coming to be recognised by students of Indian philology.\* Prof. Rhys Davids in his *Buddhist India* commenting on the evolution of the Aryan languages of India maintains that the vedic Sanskrit is largely mixed up with the primitive Dravidian†. Dr. Maclean holds that there is little doubt that the Dravidian languages are comparatively older in point of time than Sanskrit.‡ We may here note the profoundly interesting theory propounded by Mr. P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar after an examination of the Punjab and Sindh antiquities. He suggests that a complete picture of the neolithic culture of India can be constructed from a study of pure Tamil words, that elementary Tamil words are

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\* *Origin of the word Arya*—Tamby Pillai, *Tamilian Antiquary*, Vol. II, No. 2.

† *Buddhist India*, p. 156.

‡ *The Manual of the Administration of the Madras Presidency* pp. 42 and 112-3.





all monosyllabic, such as can very well be represented by the pictographic script referred to by Sir John Marshall, that languages spoken in India in old times (say 20,000 years ago) were all dialects of proto-Tamil, and that the language spoken in the heart of the Lower Godavary Valley is the modern representation of Proto-Tamil. Mr. P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar believes that the so-called Sanskritic or Gaurian languages of Northern India are only the ancient dialects of Proto-Tamil profoundly affected by Sanskrit. It is evident from the foregoing account that the Dravidian-speaking races were different from the Aryas, that they were sufficiently advanced to develop languages of their own, and civilized and numerous enough to absorb completely the numerically inferior Aryan foreigners, and enrich their speech with words relating to their professions which were in a high state of perfection among themselves.

### 3. Dravidian Literature.

Dravidian genius was conspicuous not merely in the sphere of language, but also in that of literature. Of all the races of India, the only people, who had a poetical literature independent of Sanskrit, are the Tamils, a typical Dravidian people. \* The metres and

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\* The Tamilian Antiquary, No. 5, p. 7.



rules of versification of Tamil poetry are different from those of Sanskrit. Tamil has preserved to this day its ancient metres of Ahaval, Venba, Kalippa, and Vanjippa. The Arya, Vaitaty, Anushtub, Gayatri, and other ordinary Sanskrit metres have not their corresponding equivalents in Tamil. The ancient Tamil versification, purely Dravidian, and its genius distinct from that of Sanskrit, and the possession of numerous, varied, and polished forms of verse independent of Sanskrit models lead one to conclude that the Tamil language had a literature of its own before its contact with Sanskrit. Without a poetic literature, metres and rules of versification are meaningless.

The grammatical treatise of Agastya (Circa 8th cent B. C.) the pioneer of Aryan colonisation in the South, was very elaborate, and divided into three distinct departments (*viz.*) Iyal (இயல்), Isai (இசை), Natakam (நாடகம்). At the time when the Tolkappiyam was composed, there were already in existence many grammatical treatises such as Agatthiam (அகத்தியம்), Mapuranam (மா புராணம்), Bhutapuranam (புது புராணம்), Isainunukam (இசை நுணுக்கம்), Kalar-iyavirai (களரியர் விரை), Kuruku (குருகு), and Narai (நாரை). Adiyarkunallar, the commentator of the Silappathikaram, who lived about the latter half of the twelfth century, says that these





works had become extinct long before his time, and that most of the works, that were their immediate successors, had also become extinct, except a few quotations from them preserved in some old commentaries that existed in his time. Tamil should have been already well cultivated, when Agastya undertook the composition of his grammar. Besides, evidences furnished by the language itself show that there was a distinctive Tamilian literature even before the time of Agastya.

The grammar, Tolkappiyam, is a masterpiece, and could have been composed only, when the language had reached its pristine maturity. References in the Tolkappiyam (Cir 4th cent B. C.) show that there existed a certain amount of literature in Tamil before its composition. For we see that most of the rules are concluded in the work by such phrases as 'they say', 'the learned thus say', 'the grammarians say so.\*' The opening sutram of Cheyyuliyal in Tolkappiyam concludes with these lines :

“நல்லிசைப் புலவர் செய்யுளுறுப்பென  
வல்லிதற் கூறி வகுத்துரைத்தனரே ”

These predicate the existence of numerous Tamil works furnishing Tolkappiyar with

\* Vide Sutrās 23, 40, 47, Vol. 1, Part 1, Tolkappiyam Porulathikaram.



materials for the several parts of his grammar.

It is undoubted that some at least of the lyrics of the Purananuru are far earlier than the so-called Third Sangam works. It is an ancient custom with the early Tamil bards in their poems to wish their kings more days of health, wealth, and happiness than the sands in the beds of the chief rivers that flowed through their capital towns, to wit:—

- (1) “சிறக்க நின்னுயுண்\*  
மிக் குவரு மின்னீர்க் காவிரி  
எக்கரிட்ட மணலினும் பலவே.”
- (2) “மண்ணுள் வேந்தே நின்வாழ் நாட்கள்†  
தண்ணூர் பொருளை மணலினும் சிறக்க.”
- (3) “எங்கோவாழிய, குடுமிதங்கோச்‡  
செந்நீர்ப் பசும்பொன் வயிரியர்க் கித்த  
முந்நீர் விழனி னெடியோய்  
நந்நீர்ப் பஹுளி மணலினும் பலவே.”

The first stanza is addressed by a contemporary poet to a Chola King. The second stanza is addressed to a Chera King by a contemporary poet of his court, while the third stanza is addressed to a Pandya King by a poet of his court. The rivers, with which the names

\* Puram 43.

† Sil XXVIII 126—28.

‡ Puram 91.





of the Chera and Chola Kings are associated in these songs, were known in the Third Sangam Age ; but the river Pahruli, with which the Pandya King is associated, has given place to the Vaigai in the Third Sangam works. It is gratuitous to assume that the Pandya poet alone should have referred to a non-existent river, while the poets of the Chera and Chola kingdoms should have alluded to their respective living rivers. The irresistible inference therefore is that the third stanza quoted above should have been composed by a poet who had lived prior to the submergence of the Pahruli river. Whatever might have been the date of this latter incident, there is no denying the fact that it should have occurred long before the Christian era. Hence we can safely conclude that this third stanza quoted above must have been composed at an epoch anterior to the Christian era. This is one more testimony to the undoubted antiquity of the Tamil literature.\* That the Tamils even in these early days possessed an extensive literature will strike every one who goes through any extant old commentary of any one of the Tamil classical works. The learning and the knowledge displayed by the commentator, and the highly polished and classical fragments of quotations

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\* S. Dipika pp. 21-22, Vol. 14, No. 1.





and names of old standard works on grammar, theology, metaphysics, and ethics mentioned therein, all go to impress strongly upon our minds, when compared with the meagre portion that is left to us, the existence of a vast store of literature displaying considerable erudition in ancient times, which unfortunately owing to some phenomenon or other has all been lost.

A word may here be said about the three Sangams, which were, according the traditional account, bodies of learned men. The *Talaichangam* (The First Sangam) was held in Southern Madura. It consisted of 549 members including Siva, Subramanya, Agastya, and Murinjyur Mudinakarayar. 16149 authors came to the notice of this body. The crest-gems of the First Sangam literature were Perumparipadal, Mudukuruku, Mudunarai, and Kalariyavirai. This Sangam was patronised by 89 Pandya kings. The authoritative grammar of this epoch is Agatthiyam, the grammar of Agastya. The *Idaichangam* (Second Sangam) consisted of 59 members, a few of whom were Agastyar, Tolkappiyar, Vellur Kappiyanar, and Tuvarkoman. 3700 authors came to the notice of this academy. The authoritative grammars were Agatthiyam and Tolkappiyam. Some of the works of this period were Mapu-





ranam, Isainunukkam, Perum-Kalittogai, Kuruhu, and Vendali. 59 Pandyas patronised this Sangam. Kapatapuram was the seat of this academy which lasted for 3780 years. The *Kadaichangam* (Third Sangam) consisted of 49 members, a few of whom were Perum-kunrurkilar, Nallanduvanar, and Nakkirar. 449 authors flourished during the epoch of the Third Sangam. A few works of this age were Narrinai, Purananuru, and Kurunthokai. 49 kings patronised this academy, which sat at modern Madura, and lasted for a period of 1850 years.

The period of time ascribed to these sangams is fabulously long. The number of authors said to have flourished during the epoch of the first two sangams is grossly exaggerated and highly improbable. The literary influence of these sangams was tyrannically paramount. Any work published by anybody, to be made a part of Tamil literature, required the sanction of these sangams, 'the sovereign organs of the highest literary authority', and there was no appeal against their judgment in matters of intellectual tone and taste. Many works must have sunk into oblivion, because they were not accorded the *imprimatur* of the Sangam. Even Valluvar had much difficulty in convincing the Sangam





pandits of the merit of his Kural. These pandits doubted whether Kural could be called poetry at all, and finally applied the last test, (*viz.*) whether the Sangam's magical board could give any room for Kural. And lo! the board contracted, and gave room only for the Kural, and the 49 poets who were majestically occupying the board hitherto were magically thrown down into the golden-lotus-tank, and with great difficulty they swam to the bank. This is the mythology of the Third Sangam. 'The muse, that was wrongfully confined by them, and was being squeezed beneath their seat, flew with all her vigour throughout the length and breadth of the Tamil world'\*. The tradition concerning the sangams is another proof positive of the high antiquity of the Tamil literature.

† The literature of the Tamils is unique in the East. It is the outcome of the genius of the people themselves. It is a mirror which reflects the civilization and institutions of the ancient Dravidians. The *Tolkappiyam* itself is the most ancient composition extant in Tamil

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\* A lecture delivered at the Annual meeting of the Tamilian Archaeological Society in May 1910 at Pachaiyappa's Hall—E. N. Thanikachala Mudaliar, B.A.

† *On the Study of Vernaculars* by Dr. G. U. Pope, J. R. A. S., Vol. 17, p. 165.





literature, said to have been written by Tolkappiyar, otherwise known as Tirana-dumagni. Among the sources which throw light upon the condition, political and social, of the Tamil people in ancient times, the *Tolkappiyam* will easily hold an important place. It is regrettable that considerable neglect should have fallen upon the great mass of early Dravidian, especially Tamil, literature. Overborne by Aryan legend, relegated to the limbo of oblivion by Indian scholars who attached greater importance to Sanskrit, the language of the Aryan settlers of India, and its merits being kept too much in the shade owing to the preference of European scholars for the study of Sanskrit, it has not had a chance of obtaining the notice it so richly deserves. To raise this book in public estimation and to show the greatness of this genuine product of the ancient Tamilakam would be a task worthy of the ripest scholar. It is no wonder that this antique work should have through the ages excited the interest and curiosity of the Tamil people. Its subject-matter is the history of the Tamil race itself, the life of the ancient Tamil country. *Tolkappiyam* would furnish a mine of classical and ethnological lore. And though it is not possible, in the light of researches that have been carried so far, to agree





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with Mr. Manicka Naicker, when he says\* that a critical study of the *Tolkappiyam* will enable us to discover the philosophy incorporated in the Tamil language, which embraces in full the main principles of all the six schools of Hindu philosophy, it is at least easy to maintain, with him, that much of Tamil literature and many stages of grammars should have existed before the *Tolkappiyam* to justify the existence of this perfect grammar.

Take for instance another work, the *Silappathikaram*. It is unique in the literature of the world; for we have no instance of a similar work in any other literature by a royal author who had given up the pomp and pageantry of royalty and taken holy orders, and yet composed an epic dealing with many temporal institutions, pleasures, lives, habits, and ideals of various castes and professions in commemorating the life of a virtuous woman. It would be difficult to find a similar instance in the whole range of the world's literature of a royal author dealing, from the vantage ground of impartiality, with the life and times of his brother, who was the ruler of the land, and those of his contemporaries. The moral fervour and the æsthetic perfection of the work are unsurpassed and unsurpassable.

\* *The Tamil Alphabet—Its Mystic Aspect*, p. 73.





'The tragic muse was strangely foreign to the Sanskrit ear, but curiously enough Tamil genius has broken new ground in that bourgeois tragic composition, the *Silappathikaram*, which sets at defiance all known laws of the Sanskrit text-books. Here you have the poignancy of the tragic feeling and an effect identical in essence with that of the early Greek tragedies. This is a stupendous literary fact, the importance of which it will be difficult to over-estimate. Throughout the period of the old secular literature, the inspiration is purely indigenous, with just a suggestion of the Sanskrit theorist and no more'\*. According to a writer in the *Siddhanta Dipika*, the originality of the stories in the *Silappathikaram* and *Manimekalai* cannot be gainsaid. They have a distinct *locale*, and the writers were pure Tamilians. For chasteness of expression, elevation of thought, simple beauty of imagery, extreme pathos, grandeur of conception and treatment, occasional flights of imagination, and homely and practical criticisms of men and life, these works stand unrivalled, and serve to convince the impartial critic of their worth and greatness.

The heroic poem of the *Pathirrupathu*

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\* 'Indebtedness of Tamil to Sanskrit' 24th Jan. 1925, the 'Hindu',—K. V. Ramachndran, B.A.





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(பதிற்றுப்பத்து), and the beautiful odes of the Ahananuru (அகநானூறு), Purananuru (புறநானூறு), Kalithokai (கலித்தொகை), and the Pathupattu (பத்துப்பாட்டு), help to maintain the Dravidian fame on the lyric side. The commentary of Nakkirar shows that the Dravidians did not lag behind in the descriptive side either. The Kural is another masterpiece in Tamil literature, one of the noblest and purest expressions of human thought\*. The immortal author of this work, a product indubitably of the pre-Third Sangam culture, which ought to have stocked his mind, and which should be itself rich and copious, addresses himself irrespective of caste, creed, or race, of border, breed, or birth to the whole humankind, formulates sovereign morality and absolute reason, proclaims in their eternal abstractedness virtue and truth, describes the highest laws of domestic and social life, and analyses in a graceful and masterly fashion the subtlest emotions of the human heart†. The Kural owes its popularity in Tamilakam as much to the beauty of its versification as to its morality. Surely its breadth of view and its speaking to the heart of man will make it a

\* *Vide* M. Ariel's letter to Burnouf published in the *Journal Asiatique*, 1848.

† The *Tamilian Antiquary* No. 8.





favourite with the world at large. And in the possession of these qualities Valluvar resembles that other great eclectic weaver, the medieval reformer, Kabir, who spoke neither to any one particular sect, nor to any one form of religion even, but to the whole of mankind. It is therefore not surprising to find that the Kural has so sunk into the hearts of the Tamil people, and so captivated their fancy, that, though composed eighteen centuries ago, the Tamils have preserved it intact to this day. \*

#### 4. The Dravidian Music.

In the days of the First, Second, and the Third Academies, Esai Nunukkam, Indira Kalyam, Muthu Narai, Muthu Kuruku, Pancha Marapu, and Bharatha Senapathiyam were the celebrated books on music. Though these books are lost to the world, a few gems are preserved in the Silappathikaram. In this work the great poet and yogi, Ilangovadigal, has expounded for the edification and delectation of posterity the wonderful musical convention of earlier days. It occurs where the maids dance, and sing to their patron God, Kannan, to avert the effect of

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\* Ind. Ant. Vol. XV, p. 243 R. C. Temple's Article.





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evil omens seen in the house, where the heroine Kannaki has taken refuge. Therein certain secrets of music are revealed.

Creating 12 houses in a circle, calling them by the names of the 12 signs of the zodiac, if the 7 swaras are developed as per Moorchai of music in the seven scale, we must find out a kartha ragam. The devotee maids of Kannabiran, says Ilangovadigal, made in a circle 12 places, and called them by the names of the 12 rasis. The seven maids called themselves the 7 alphabets of music. The girl Shadjama is in Tulam, Rishaba in Dhanus, the girl Ga is in Kumbha, the girl Ma is in Meena, Pa in Idabha, Dha in Kataka, and Ni in Simha. They sing. The girl Rishabha of the original basic swara changes into Shadjama, and sings. Thus the other girls change, sing, and praise Narayana. We know the starting raga is Harikamboji. The commentators of the Silappathikaram on the basis of authoritative verses of music books have defined as follows:—A raga formed out of beginning Shadjama is called Chempalai; if Rishabha becomes Shadjama, it is called Chevvalippalai; if Ma becomes Shadjama, it is called Kotippalai; and if Dha becomes Shadjama, it is called Merchempalai. This transformation is both in accord with reason and





experience. This account illustrates the Tamilian genius for music\*.

## 5. The Evolution of Dravidian Religious Beliefs.

The ancient Dravidians reached a high stage of development not merely in the field of the fine arts, but also in the domain of religion. If there is a thing, in which a race expresses itself most completely and in its innermost qualities, that thing is its religion. Hence a sketch of the religious conceptions of the Dravidian races will be of incalculable value in estimating their greatness and their contributions to the growth and development of Indian civilization. The progress of the Tamil civilization from its primitive rude restlessness and wild aggressive valour to its ordered sense of humanity and exalted moral and religious aims of a later epoch is undoubtedly the result of the operation of diverse momentous influences, the chief ones of which have naturally been religious in origin and character. In the early stages of civilization nothing acts so powerfully as religion in stimulating and sustaining progress in human communities. The literature of the Tamils constitutes

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\* K. M. Ponnuswami Pillai's article on Indian Music,—  
Jan. 1924 The 'Hindu'





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one of our important sources for a sketch of their religious history. Prof. Max Muller\* in his monumental work, 'The Six Systems of Philosophy,' wrote :—'In the South of India, there exists a philosophical literature which, though it may show clear traces of Sanskrit influence, contains also original indigenous elements of great beauty and of great importance for historical purposes.' According to Dr. Pope Tamil possesses rare and original elements in ethics. Therefore a study of the Tamil literature will enable us to draw a sketch of the main lines of development of the religion of the Tamils. According to the late Prof. Seshagiri Sastriar, while the early part of the Hindu religion is based upon the Vedas, Smritis, and the Agamas, its latter part owes its origin to the customs, manners, and religions of Southern India, and is founded on the Tamil literature.

The above statements confirm us in our opinion that the religion of the South should have had an independent existence in the beginning, though subject to Aryan influences in later times. It is even possible to demonstrate that the Dravidians in certain respects remain unaffected by Aryan religious influences, and have even produced an appreci-

\* 'The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy'—pp. XX-XXI.





able effect upon the Aryas themselves. The brahmanical systems of thought and practice founded on the Vedas have never gained universal acceptance. Their supremacy was challenged by Jainism and Buddhism even in the country watered by the Ganges and the Jumna, the region which was their own stronghold, and their appeal was everywhere made almost exclusively to the higher castes who could have formed only a microscopic minority of the population. The vast bulk of the people were either confessedly or at heart worshippers of the more primitive forms of faith\*.

There was a period lost in hoary antiquity, when the indigenous Dravidian religion, with its peculiar forms of sacrifices, prophesies, and frenzied dances dimly visible still in *veriyattu*, *velan adal*, and other ceremonies of mountain races, was alone in vogue. It is said that the Dravidians were worshipping devils, and that they were tree-worshippers and serpent worshippers. Their religion is said to have consisted largely of magical superstition and demonolatry.

But, deep down in this primitive system buried beneath a mass of rites, there would have been the instinctive craving of the human heart for communion with God. This

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\* *Vide Ancient India* by Rapson, pp. 34-35.





instinctive feeling after God was no doubt degraded by unworthy ideas of the spiritual world, and distorted by fear and superstition. Nevertheless, we can discern in it not merely a belief in a spirit world, but a desire to come into personal communion with spiritual beings. In the simple desire for communion with a deity of some sort there is the germ and root of true religious feeling which craves for expression. It is no wonder therefore that even in this pre-historic period there took place considerable development in the religious ideas and beliefs of the Tamil people. The warlike Tamils owing to the tropical climate became soon enervated, and attained mental calm and powers of deep thinking. They soon developed a religion suited to their ancient civilization.

Those Vedic Gods, the etymology of whose names is not patent, and who have no analogues in other Indo-Germanic dialects, must have been originally Dravidian deities. The Aryan God, Varuna, was probably the God of the Dravidian tribes, being on the borders of the sea, to whom the Aryan Rishis accorded a place in their pantheon. The Aryan Rudra is another God of the Dravidian tribes. He is essentially a mountain deity, and could be evolved by the wild mountaineers, say, of the Vindhyan regions, and not by dwellers on the plains.





His name Rudra meaning the 'Red one' seems to be a translation of the Dravidian name Siva. Korravai, the victorious matron, was the object of worship among the oldest peoples of the South, and is the great demoness whose worship is performed under many names in the devil temples of every southern village. The hill-god of the South, the son of Korravai, is Murugan, the fragrant one. The Aryan God, Tvashta, was perhaps the Dravidian God of artificers. The God of the Dravidian agricultural tribes was merged in the personality of the Vedic Indra. The Vedic God, Krishna, corresponds to the God of the Dravidian pastoral tribes. Saivism, (*i.e.*) the worship of Siva or Skanda, was prevalent among the mountain tribes long before the advent of the Aryas into the South. According to Dr. Slater, Kali, Siva, and Vishnu are Dravidian deities, though their worship now forms the innermost essence of Indian culture.

"Indian religion", says Sir Charles Elliot, "is commonly regarded as the offspring of an Aryan religion brought into India by invaders from the north, and modified by contact with Dravidian civilization. The materials at our disposal hardly permit us to take any other point of view; for the literature of the Vedic Aryans is





relatively ancient and full, and we have no information about the old Dravidians comparable with it. But, were our knowledge less one-sided, we might see that it would be more correct to describe the Indian religion as Dravidian religion stimulated and modified by the ideas of foreign invaders. For the greatest deities of Hinduism, such as Siva, Krishna, Rama, and Durga, and some of its most essential doctrines such as metempsychosis and divine incarnations are either totally unknown to the Veda or obscurely adumbrated in it. The chief characteristics of the native Indian religion are not the characteristics of religion in Persia, Greece, or other Aryan lands.’\*

While in the pre-historic period the Dravidians worshipped a number of deities like Korravai, Muruga, Varuna, and so on, at the same time they had belief in the existence of one Supreme Being. Scholars like Dr. Pope believe that in the pre-historic period the native Dravidian religion was a kind of Saivism. Wheeler says, ‘Siva was a mystic deity of Turanian origin, and was represented as half-intoxicated with drugs, and associated with ideas of death and reproduction.’

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\* Hinduism and Buddhism—An Historical Sketch by Sir Charles Elliot, Book I page XV.





Ragozin\* holds that the worship of Siva was originally Dravidian. Fergusson in his *Tree and Serpent worship* maintains that Saivism is certainly a local, not an Aryan, form of faith, and belongs rather to the South than to the North of India. Dr. Stevenson holds that Siva was the Tamilian God, and was worshipped in two forms, one as a spiritual object of meditation, and the other as a material symbol or linga to represent the invisible to the visible eyes. Adoring God with flower and incense was an ancient practice prevalent among the Tamils. Flower represents the heart, and incense the melting of it. It is said of Ravana, a Southerner, that he was a staunch votary of linga, and carried always with him a golden linga, which he worshipped with incense and flowers. Ravana and Vali were great devotees of Siva. The Siva Linga according to Swami Vivekanandha is no phallic symbol, and according to Dr. Ananda Kumaraswamy is the least anthropomorphic of symbols. Of all the forms that are to be met with in our temples from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, the form of linga is the most universal and frequent, and is the most ancient form of worship. The linga form of worship is the one most met with in the pages

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\* 'Vedic India' p. 328.





of the Mahabharata. Vyasa declares, after the defeat of Ashwathama by Arjuna, that the real cause of Arjuna's superiority lay in his worshipping the linga form of Siva, whereas Ashwathama worshipped only a Personal Form of the God. Besides, the Vedas and the Upanishads frequently allude to the prevalence of this form of worship.\* In various neolithic settlements in Southern India have been found several lingams. This is ample evidence, according to Mr. P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar, of the fact that the worship of Siva in the form of a linga existed in the stone age, which certainly preceded the Vedic age.

Dr. V. V. Ramana Sastri † holds that there is nothing to show from the extant Tamil literature that Siva as the name of the Supreme was ever employed in it before the 7th century A. D. But there are grounds to believe that Siva was a name that the Tamils had learnt to use for the deity even in the earliest period. Agastya is said to have learnt Tamil, the language of the South, from Siva. From this it may be inferred that Siva was a Dravidian deity. ‡ Dr. Gilbert Slater

\* Sivagnana Botham, p. 117—J. M. Nallasawmi Pillai.

† An article on Agamic Saivism in the Hindu, Feb. 13, 1924.

‡ 'The Dravidian Element in Indian Culture.' by Dr. Gilbert Slater See page 103.





says that the fact, that the Rig Veda refers to phallic worship with disapproval, seems to point to the establishment of the worship of Siva among the Dravidians before the Vedic period. To the Tamil every hill-top is sacred to the gods. Siva, the lord of the Dravidians, was a Malai-Arasan (Mountain Chief) according to Dr. Oppert. Siva came to be known in later times as Dakshinamurthy, (*i.e.*) the God of the South. The Agamas, which are said to be of Tamilian origin, and which form the basis of the Saiva Siddhanta philosophy, 'the choicest product of the Dravidian intellect', are said to have been proclaimed at Mahendra, one of the peaks in the Western Ghats, South of the Pothiya hills, lying between Tinnevely and Travancore. Manickavachakar addresses God Siva as 'மந்திரமாமலை மகேந்திரவெற்பன்' (*i.e.*) the lord of the Mahendra Hill—the mountain of mystic utterance, and as 'தென் பாண்டி நாட்டான்' (*i.e.*) dweller in the Southern Pandya land. Siva is said to have been one of the members of the First Madura Academy. The original indigenous Tamil word for God is Kadavul, which means that which is beyond the reach of the mind or the final conclusion arrived at by the mind. If side by side with a belief in the existence of one Supreme Being was also found the worship of demons and





serpents, there is nothing incompatible between the two. For we know how in the present day the grossest fetishism exists side by side with the most abstruse systems of philosophy in India.

According to Mr. P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar, "the original religious cult of India was a fireless one, (*i. e.*) the animals sacrificed to the Gods were not thrown in fire." 'The rise of the Vedic fire-cult could not put an end to the pre-existing fireless worship of Gods'. The Vedic references to the disputes between Aryans who were fire-worshippers and Dasyus are enough evidence of the wide prevalence of fireless cults in Ancient India\*. We learn from the Vedic literature that the Aryan worship of natural phenomena and their sacrifices appeared to the Dravidian mind to be sacrilegious. The deities of the Aryans were treated with contempt, and the sacrifices were checked, whenever and wherever they were found to be performed by the Aryas.

The Tamilians at this early period might have had a philosophy of their own. Prof. A. B. Keith says that there is nothing in the Rigvedic literature to suggest that the idea of metempsychosis had presented itself to the

\* *Vide* a note on Vedic Culture, in the 'Hindu' Sep. 17, 1924.





Aryan mind.\* Prof. Macdonald says, 'The doctrine of Transmigration is entirely absent from the Vedas and the early Brahmanas. It seems probable that the Indian Aryas borrowed the idea in a rudimentary form from the aborigines', (*i.e.*) most probably from the Dravidians.

The first foreign influence brought to bear upon the Dravidian religion was that of the Vedic religion. What takes place, when two different cults and civilizations not wholly irreconcilable are brought face to face with each other, took place in South India, when the Northern Aryan with his vigorous and attractive religion and philosophy attempted to impose his system on the Southern Dravidian, who had an indigenous religion and philosophy of his own. The Vedic religion with its usual spirit of toleration and compromise would have adopted and modified the practices then found current in the country. The Dravidian heroes, gods, and minor deities were then identified with the Vedic deities of the Brahmins, and a fusion should have taken place between the two religions. Of course it must be borne in mind that for a long time the foreign influence upon the Dravidian religion was anything but strong ;

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\* Cambridge History of India Vol. I, p. 108.





but it accumulated as time elapsed, and 'some traces of this foreign influence may be observed in such fragments of the pre-Tolkappiyam works, as now and then turn up in old commentaries.' One nation does not lose credit by exporting its superfluous products and importing other useful ones. One religion loses no merit by borrowing from another. A progressive nation cannot but absorb and assimilate foreign thoughts and foreign ideas. The infusion of fresh blood adds energy and vigour, and richness and depth. Currents of water flow with greater life and glow than stagnant pools. Therefore it is no discredit to the Tamils that they should have borrowed certain of the finer religious elements of the Indo-Aryans.

\*Regarding the conception of Siva and its growth from Vedic times among the Aryan peoples, scholars tell us that Rudra was nowhere called Siva in the Rigveda, and that he merely represented the storm god, with his thunder, lightning, and the rains, rushing down from the snow-capped hills. According to Dr. Pope the original idea of Siva is found in the Vedas, but the name is simply a euphemism meaning propitious or

\* *Vide* an article on 'The Svetasvatara Upanishad' by J. M. Nallaswami Pillai in the Madras Review, 1900.



gracious. The Rev. F. Goodwill<sup>(1)</sup> gives his support to this view regarding the conception of Siva. Dr. Stevenson<sup>(2)</sup> was the first to point out that Siva is not named at all in the ancient hymns of the Vedas. Although Rudra could be identified with Agni, Agni and Rudra could not be identified with Siva; for Daksha is said not to have invited Siva to his sacrifice, though all the eleven Rudras were present with him. It is said that Rudra is a terrible deity, and one of the many deities referred to in the vedic hymns. <sup>(3)</sup> 'In the post-vedic period it was sublimated into Siva as one of the Trinity. But the Tamils, who recognise Rudra as one of the Trinity, have always held by Siva as the highest. Hundreds of lines can be quoted from the Tamil scriptures in support of it. We have in the Tiruvachakam such passages as 'King of the Three' (மூவர்கோனும் நின்ற முதல்வன்)<sup>(4)</sup>, and 'Thou Source of All! Guide to the senses five; and to the Three; to me, too, in life's way!' (முழுமுதலே! யைம்புலனுக்கும், மூவர்க்கும் என்றனக்கும், வழிமுதலே)<sup>(5)</sup>.

Saivism, the native Dravidian religion of the South, fell under northern influences, and

(1) A paper read at the Bangalore Missionary Conference Nov. 1902.

(2) See Siddhanta Dipika, Vol. IV, p. 108.

(3) V. Subbiah's note in the Hindu, Jan. 12, 1924.

(4) and (5) Pope's Tiruvachakam See pages 57, 215.





those who introduced the vedic religion into the Dravidadesa found a place in their own system for this Saivism. The vedic God of storms, Rudra, was singled out by the Dravidians as especially their God, and his words attributed to, and designations adopted for, their old God, Siva. The attributes and rites of this deity were gradually brought into conformity by a process of compromise with those of some Aryan deity or deities such as Rudra. \* 'This was due to the necessity, under which the Aryan colonists of India lay, of compromising with the people among whom they settled. The Dravidian religious conceptions reacted on Aryan modes of thought. The attributes of the Dravidian deity, Siva, were found to be most in conformity with those of the Vedic God, Rudra, the wielder of the thunderbolt and father of the storm gods. The conception thus grew of a half-Dravidian, half-Aryan, deity, Rudra, who became the supreme deity, Siva, of the great mass of the Dravidians'. When the non-Aryan Gods found a place in the Aryan pantheon, the inclusion was symbolised by the Trinity, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva — Brahma standing for the ancient tradition, exclusive externalism; Vishnu for

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\* Encyclopaedia of Religion and ethics—Prof. R. W. Frazer on 'The Southern Dravidians'.





the transition when the original Vedic Sun-God became humanised, and emerged from the rigid enclosure of scriptural texts into the world of the living human heart; and Siva for the period when the non-Aryans found their entrance into the social organisation of the Aryan. We know that Rudra among the Aryans slowly grew into the Siva of the Hindu Triad. It is easy to trace, how in the person of Rudra is slowly built up the conception of the various Vedic deities, Indra and Agni, Varuna and Vayu, Surya and Soma, Vishnu and Brahma, and of the Dravidian Siva. By the time the Vedas were arranged in Rig, Yajur, Saman, and Atharvan, Rudra's position as the God of Gods had become assured. By the time of the earliest Upanishads, the worship of Rudra-Siva supplanted the worship of the Vedic deities.

A word may be said about the different aspects of Siva. As the idea of Rudra was fully evolved, in Him were also centralised the various aspects of Nature as good and bad, and awful and beneficent. 'The Brahmans' according to Lord Sri Krishna, 'know two bodies of this God, one awful and one auspicious. From his being lord and great, He is called Mahesvara. Since He consumes, since He is fiery, fierce, an eater of flesh, He is called Rudra. As





He preserves the vast universe, He is called Mahadeva. Since He constantly prospers all men in all their acts seeking their welfare (Siva), He is therefore called Siva.\* And in this we see Him not only as the destroyer, but as the reproducer and preserver, and as such the conception of Siva transcends the conception of Rudra as one of the Trinity. Wheeler says, 'The ancient Rudra-Siva is alternately fierce and beneficent ; according to the philosophy, He is the cause of the creation and dissolution of the universe', and His early name Pasupathi is a reminiscence of the ancient practice of offering human beings like cattle in sacrifice to the fierce deity. In spite of Siva's entry amongst the Aryan Gods, his Aryan and non-Aryan aspects remained different. 'In the former, He is the lord of ascetics, who, having conquered desire, is rapt in the bliss of Nirvana, as bare of raiment as of worldly ties. In the latter He is terrible, clad in raw bleeding elephant hide, intoxicated by the hemp decoction. In the former he is the replica of the Buddha, and as such has captured many a Buddhist shrine ; in the latter, He is the overlord of demons, spirits, and other dreadful beings, who haunt the places of the dead, and as such has appropriated to himself

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\* *Vide* Anusasana Parva, Mahabharata.





the worshippers of the phallus and of snakes, trees, and other totems. In the former He is worshipped in the quietude of meditation ; in the latter in frenzied orgies of self-torture.' Though this picture of the non-Aryan aspect of Siva is portrayed in somewhat exaggerated and lurid colours, and though some of the finer aspects of the Dravidian Saivism are ignored, nevertheless the fact of the existence of two aspects of Siva, Aryan and non-Aryan, receives pointed emphasis in this statement of Dr. Tagore in the *Viswa Bharati Quarterly*.

Besides Siva, other deities of the South were absorbed into the Aryan pantheon. \*The worship of Skanda affords an instance of the fusion of the northern and southern religions. Skanda or Kumara is one of the sons of Siva. Being supposed to have been brought up by the six mothers, the Krittikas (Pleiades), he is known as Shanmatura and Karttikeya. The puranas state that he was born of the fiery energy of Siva in a forest of grass, and became the commander of the army of the Gods in their battle against the giant Taraka, and that he rent asunder by his arrows the mountain Krauncha. Skanda is

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\* South Indian Images of Gods and Goddesses—H. Krishna Sas tri.





known by the name of Subramanya in the Tantras. There exists a close connection between the worship of Subramanya and that of the serpent. The common name Subba or Subbaroya found among the Telugu, Canarese, and Tamil people is explained to be both a contraction of Subramanya and a synonym for serpent. The sixth day of a lunar month (Shashti) is held as peculiarly sacred to Subramanya as to the serpent-God. His riding on a peacock, his marriage with the forest maid Valliyamman, and the fact that his most famous temples are on hill tops show that he is connected with the ancient tree-and-serpent worship and the sylvan deities. In South India the worship of Skandakumara under the names Velayudha and Muruga is most popular. According to the TAMILIAN traditions, Muruga, the Tamil God of war, was the son of the terrible Korravai, the victorious matron. He was also regarded as the child of Kadukilal (the ancient lady = பழை யோள்). Korravai and Kadukilal were incorporated into the Aryan mythology as the Goddess Uma, and Korravai's son, Muruga, was absorbed into the Aryan system as Subramanya, the son of Uma. He is *par excellence* the God of youth, of energy, and of virility. The God has been included in Aryan theogony





from early ages. In the Tolkappiyam, Muruga is described as Seyon (சேயான்), (*i.e.*) the son of Siva. He may therefore be regarded as the outcome of the fusion of the ancient Aryan and Dravidian cults. Thus Brahmanism in the South did not supersede any cherished national divinities, but only embodied them in a new order. For its own self-preservation, it had to admit all kinds of local deities into the Hindu pantheon. But, in spite of all that was achieved, it was quite impossible even for the Aryan genius to bring into harmony with itself, and assimilate each and every one of the practices, beliefs, and myths of innumerable non-Aryan tribes. More and more of what was non-Aryan came to be not merely tolerated, but welcomed, as the non-Aryan element became increasingly predominant in the race mixture.

We pass on to the next stage in the religious development of South India, for which the Tolkappiyam constitutes our main source of information. This work, which may be assigned to the fourth century B. C., refers to the presiding deities of the various divisions of the Tamil country such as Indra, Vishnu, Muruga, and Kali. It also refers to *Valli*, *Kodinilai*, and *Kanthali*\*. *Valli* stands for the moon, *Kodini-*

\* Tolkappiyam, Poruladhikaram, Sutra 88.





*lai* represents the sun, while *Kanthali* signifies *Kadavul*, (i.e.) that power which exists without support, and which transcends all the *Tattvas*, (ஒரு பற்றுக் கோடின்றி அருவாகித் தானே நிற்குந் தத்துவங்கடந்த பொருள்). The *Tattvas*, according to the late lamented scholar, J. M. Nallaswami Pillai, form, as it were, different coats or vestures, of different textures at different times and at different stages, to the soul undergoing evolution with intent to rid itself of its coil (Anava) in strict accordance with the Law of Karma, and the Supreme Being, being devoid of these vestures, is usually addressed as 'Tattvatita,' 'beyond the *Tattvas*.' In fact, the very term *Kadavul* connotes a transcendental (Kada, கட) God, who is at the same time immanent in the universe (vul, உள்). Tolkappiyar speaks of God as formless, joyful, and omnipresent. The Dravidians had thus a clear conception of the nature of God. In the realm of philosophy the Tamils occupy a no mean place among the Indian races. The Meyppattiyal (மெய்ப்பாட்டியல்), a chapter in the Tolkappiyam, is a scientific psychology, and the Ahapporul in the Tolkappiyam is said to have an undercurrent of sublime truth, which, when interpreted, marks the different stages through which the human soul passes, ere it attains final absorption into the Supreme Being. If





this theory be true, we require no stronger proof for regarding the non-dualistic philosophy as the essential doctrine of the Tamilian religion, and the path of love as that pointed out by the Tamilian saints. Purapporul also makes a passing reference to principles of asceticism and means of salvation'.\* During the age of the Tolkappiyam, the Southern Dravidians adopted a few of the social institutions, myths, and ceremonies of the Aryan settlers ; but in the opinion of the late lamented Prof. Sundaram Pillai, it was even then only an adaptation and no copy.

In the next century (*i.e.*,) the third century B. C., Buddhism was introduced into South India by Asoka. The early history of Buddhism in the Tamil country is obscure, though there are frequent references to Buddhism in early Tamil literature. It is reasonable to suppose that Asoka's Buddhist missionaries to Ceylon passed through the Tamil country, and even attempted to propagate the Buddhist creed there in spite of the statement in the Mahavamsa that they flew in the air, and arrived in Ceylon. Buddhism exercised an important influence on the development of the Tamilian religion. The

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\* S. Anavaratavinayakam Pillai's article, p. 71, Vol. IV, The Siddhanta Dipika.





appeal to the free-will of mankind, by which each individual was summoned to take into his own hands his fate in his next existence and even to free himself altogether from the pains of existence itself, and which was addressed to every one without exception of rank, caste, or even sex, did not fail to awaken and stimulate the powers of all classes of the Tamil society. At about the same epoch as that of the introduction of Buddhism, Jainism was introduced into South India. The work of propagating the Jain faith into Peninsular India was undertaken by the disciples of Bhadrabahu, a contemporary of Chandragupta Maurya. One of these disciples known as Visakhmuni came to the Pandya and the Chola kingdoms, and preached the Jaina moral code to the Tamils of these kingdoms.

### 6. Dravidian Architecture.

South India cannot show buildings of unquestionable antiquity. Nevertheless, South India might have possessed them in the hoary past, and their disappearance might have been due to the perishable nature of the materials used and the destructive power of a hot, damp climate and superabundant insect life. According to Dr. Slater\*, the

\*Dravidian Element in Indian Culture—Dr. Slater pp. 66—6





earliest extant temples of the South show their indebtedness to a more ancient architectural art and tradition. They display the utmost elaboration of ornament. 'This must have been worked up slowly through centuries by workers in more manageable materials, so that the earliest builders of temples and palaces of stone, instead of first experimenting in simple forms and gradually adding ornament to ornament, attempted from the beginning a height of elaboration never reached elsewhere in material of the same character'. The result as in the Madura Temple is vastly impressive. There is nothing in North India, says Dr. Slater, equal to the sumptuous greatness and elaboration of the magnificent South Indian temples.

Certainly, it may be easily conceded that the remains of Dravidian architecture existing in the South at the present day are more voluminous, more extensive, more elaborate, and more impressive than those of the Aryans in the North. The magnificent Stupa of Amravati and the marvellous rock-cut temples at Mahabalipur may have been produced in later ages under Brahmanical or Buddhist influence, but they are a natural development of strictly indigenous art. According to Sir John Marshall, the Aryans were much indebted to the pre-Aryan inhabitants of India in the domain





of art. It is in the South of India, in the Amravati sculptures, that we find the richest, most rhythmical, and most imaginative designs. It is here again we find the wonderful decorative charm which pervades Indian art. India is indebted for her natural and inborn love of ornamental design to the Dravidian or pre-Aryan people. In the opinion of this celebrated archaeologist, the Indo-Aryans were destitute of natural artistry, and they did not know how to articulate their ideas with the chisel or the brush. But once their race had been blended with the Dravidian, the mixed stock, which resulted from the union, found itself possessed of the means of putting its thoughts into visible concrete form.\* It must be admitted that the ancient Aryans were indebted to the Dravidians for their knowledge of architecture. Numerous hymns in the Rig Veda show that the walled cities which excited the cupidity and envy of the Aryans were mostly owned by the aboriginal Asuras ; and there is not quite as much said of lordly edifices constructed by the Aryans themselves. At a later age, Vyasa in the Mahabharata acknowledges that the great palace of Yudhishthira was built by a Danava, Maya by name,

\* ' Sir George Birdwood Memorial Lecture on ' Influence of Race on Early Indian Art '—Sir John Marshall.





## DRavidian CULTURE & Dr. TAGORE

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who had been overcome by Arjuna in battle, and an admission like this in a work apparently intended to extol the greatness of the Aryans to the skies is of considerable importance.

In this connection the remarks of Dr. Rabindranath Tagore may be found interesting. He says, 'Let no one imagine that the non-Aryan contributions had no value of their own. As a matter of fact, the old Dravidian culture was by no means to be despised, and the result of its combination with the Aryan, which formed the Hindu civilization, acquired both richness and depth under the influence of its Dravidian component. Dravidians might not be introspective or metaphysical, but they were artists, and they could sing, design, and construct. The transcendental thought of the Aryan, by its marriage with the emotional and creative art of the Dravidian, gave birth to an offspring, which was neither fully Aryan nor Dravidian, but Hindu\*.

Fergusson offers very weighty observations on this much-vexed question of Dravidian architecture. The Aryan races in his opinion are not builders. They had too firm a conviction of the immortality of the soul and

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\* A vision of India—Viswa Bharathi Quarterly No. 1.





consequently of the existence of a future state ever to care much for a brick or stone immortality in this world ; and no material art ever satisfied the cravings of their higher intellectual powers. Fergusson adds, 'The Turanians on the contrary never rose to a distinct idea of an external God or of a future state, but supplied the place of the latter by metempsychosis and final annihilation, while their intellectual status never enabled them to create such a literature as would satisfy that hankering after immortality which is inherent in the human breast'. According to this distinguished authority, all the literature of India belongs to the Aryans, and all the buildings to the Turanians or those speaking Dravidian or cognate tongues\*. Thus Dravidian architecture is of indigenous origin, and has had its own course of evolution†. Southern art‡ in the opinion of Dr. Bhandarkar is different from the northern. The conclusion is irresistible that, in spite of the absence of Dravidian architecture of anything approaching Vedic antiquity, the facts relating to it tend to point to a greater antiquity for Dravidian than for Aryan civilization.

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\* Fergusson—'Tree and Serpent Worship'.

† *Vide* 'Dravidian Architecture'—Jouveau Dubreuil.

‡ 'Early History of the Deccan', p. 5—R. G. Bhandarkar.





## 7. Independent Evolution of Early Dravidian Culture.

The influence of the Dravidians on the culture of India has been ignored, because the literature which records the development of the Hindu religion in India was the work of a hostile priesthood, whose only object was to magnify its own pretensions, and decry everything Dravidian. But the truth is that the Dravidians had already developed a civilization of their own, long before the Aryan civilization was transplanted into their midst. The division of society among the Tamils shows that they had emerged out of savagery at a remote period, and had enjoyed an orderly, peaceful, and settled form of government for centuries. Their civilization was more ancient than that of the Aryas; for among the latter the fighting men were next in rank to the priests, whereas among the Tamils, the farmers were next to the religious men, and the military class was below that of herdsmen and artisans.

The Dravidians had been in possession of India, long before the Aryans entered it. They established mighty kingdoms in the North and South, and supplanted everywhere the uncivilized tribes with whom they came into collision, and whom they retained as slaves to till and





fight for them. They reached a high degree of civilization by their own unaided efforts and independently of the Aryans\*, and in some respects as regards refinement and culture, they were more advanced than the shepherd Aryans. Dr. Slater contends, 'The Aryans then must be regarded as relatively barbaric invaders provided by their horses with an immense advantage for rapid and concerted movement and so for military and political mastery of peoples, who, as in the case of the Sumerians and Dravidians, lacked this equipment for victory and power in spite of their superiority in those elements of culture which make for wealth and civilization.' Dr. Slater concludes that we should esteem Dravidian culture above the Aryan civilization at the time of the Aryan irruption into India, since the latter was associated with war, while the former was associated with peaceful industry.† It can very well be maintained that it would be quite a mistake to look upon all the tribes that preceded the Aryans in India as far below the Aryans in culture. The Dravidians were probably the equals of the Aryans in social organisation. And the Aryans probably adopted much from them, especially in matters relating to land tenure, village

\* Hindu Law at Madras, J.R.A.S., 1881, p. 219.

† Dr. Slater—'Dravidian element in Indian Culture.'





# INSTINCT DRAVIDIAN CIVILIZATION

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community government, taxation, and so on. \*

The reason, why the Aryan irruption was so different in Southern India from what it was in the North, appears to be that, when the Aryans penetrated to the South, there existed already well-organised communities and kingdoms. The Aryans, though they communicated something of their own civilization to the Dravidians, were not able to incorporate them thoroughly into their own society and to root out their languages and peculiar civilization. On the other hand, they learned the languages of those races, and adopted a portion of their civilization†. As Kennedy says, ‡ the Aryans did much work, because they were a very mixed race. The whole history of India has consisted in the gradual and progressive blending of the dissimilar elements, the Aryan genius contributing the guiding spirit as well as the form of this mixed civilization, while the aboriginal element has contributed its contents. The Southern Dravidians were never disturbed by any extensive immigration in after times, and hence they retained their distinctive

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\* Introduction to the Ambattha Sutta, p. 96, Sacred Books of the Buddhists.

† 'Early History of the Deccan', p. 5—R. G. Bhandarkar.

‡ J. R. A. S., 1913, p. 706.





characteristics. There can be no doubt that the Aryan civilization was very greatly influenced by the Dravidians\*. These considerations can lead to the only conclusion that the Dravidian civilization has had an independent development of its own. With regard to the ancient civilization of the Tamil nation, there is more or less a consensus of opinion among oriental scholars including Prof. J. Vinson.

The Vedas present a picture of the social and political condition of the Dasyus, the Dravidian foes of the Aryans. There can be no question that the Dasas referred to in the Vedic hymns as the aboriginal foes of the Aryas were the Dravidians. The main distinction between the Aryan and the Dasa was clearly that of colour. The Aryans hated the Dasas who did not recognise the Aryan gods. It would be impossible to exaggerate the loathing and contempt, with which the Aryas regarded those, whom they were robbing of land and liberty. 'Destroying the Dasyus, Indra protected the Aryan colour,' gratefully proclaims one poet†. The Dasas are constantly reproached for their disbelief and their failure to sacrifice. The Dasyus had a civilization not inferior to

\* 'Ancient India', p. 29—Rapson.

† Ragozin's Vedic India, p. 285.