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A MONTHLY OF DRAVIDIAN LINGUISTICS ASSOCIATION OF INDIA



**ISDL CONDOLES THE
DEATH OF
Dr. A.P.J. ABDUL KALAM**

The research fellows and the staff of the International School of Dravidian Linguistics and the Dravidian Linguistics Association assembled in the CD room of ISDL at Menamkulam and condoled the sudden demise of **Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam**, former President of India, on 27th July 2015. On this occasion, the members paid homage to him and remembered his invaluable contributions to India as a scientist, humanist, administrator and academician.

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43RD AICDL - A GRAND ACADEMIC EVENT

(Continued from the last issue)

The delegates of the conference assembled in the auditorium which was well decorated to receive the eminent personalities. The inaugural session commenced at 10 a.m. invoking the blessings of God. Prof. S. Raja, Director, CAS in Linguistics, offered a warm welcome to all the dignitaries present there. The chief guest of the session, Prof. S. Manian, Vice Chancellor, Annamalai University inaugurated the 43rd All India Conference of Dravidian Linguists. Delivering the speech, he appraised the academic works of CAS in Linguistics which contributed a lot to the development of linguistics by publishing many books and articles in Indian and international journals. He also highlighted the academic pursuits and administrative acumen of the scholars of the International School of Dravidian Linguistics.

All the distinguished professors on the dais, S. Manian, H.M. Maheswaraiah, K. Karunakaran, G.K. Panikkar, L. Ramamurthy, N. Rajasekharan Nair, Thiruvalluvan and S. Raja were duly honoured.

The much awaited and the most glorious event of the session was the book-release. A souvenir comprising the abstracts of the papers for the 43rd AICDL was released by the Vice-Chancellor, Annamalai University by giving it to Prof. K. Karunakaran, former Vice-Chancellor, Tamil University. The release of *V.I. Subramoniam Commemoration Volume I (Studies on Dravidian)* and *Volume II (Studies on Indian Languages and Cultures)* by giving copies to VIS's daughter Jaya and to his grandson Aashish, respectively, thrilled the hearts of the linguists gathered there. The books *Studies on Bangla from a Broader Perspective*, *Studies on Bangla and Dravidian*, *Phonetics and its Application to Different Areas* and *Bangla Basic Vocabulary* were also released.

Another praiseworthy event in the inaugural session was honouring eminent scholars who secured prestigious titles, awards and positions. Sri. Irvatham Mahadevan, Prof. Ramakrishna Reddy, Prof. Puthusseri Ramachandran and Dr. R. Krishnamurthy were honoured *in absentia*. Profs. S.V. Shanmugam and H.M. Maheswaraiah were duly felicitated and honoured.

SAVE NOW RUPEES *ONE THOUSAND* BY BECOMING A LIFE-MEMBER OF DRAVIDIAN LINGUISTICS ASSOCIATION. LIFE-MEMBERSHIP FEE IS ONLY Rs. 2,000/- (US\$ 250/-) AT PRESENT, BUT FROM 1ST JANUARY 2016, IT WILL BE Rs. 3,000/- (US\$ 450/-). SO PLEASE HURRY UP!

Prof. G.K. Panikkar, Hon. Director, ISDL after offering *pranam*-s to late Prof. V.I. Subramoniam, the founder of Dravidian Linguistics Association, International School of Dravidian Linguistics and *International Journal of Dravidian Linguistics*, elaborated on the development of DLA and its contributions to Dravidian studies. He recalled his close association with Annamalai University which was also the *alma mater* of Prof. VIS and he pointed out that the 43rd AICDL was unique in several respects, as many eminent personalities were honoured for their creditable achievements, and the long-cherished dream of the release of the *Commemoration Volumes*, in the presence of VIS's family members, became a reality. He concluded the speech requesting the academic personae to become life-members of DLA and to buy its publications for their libraries.

Delivering the special address, Prof. H.M. Maheswaraiah, Vice-Chancellor of Central University, Karnataka highlighted the contributions of Centre of Advanced Study in Linguistics - Annamalai University and the International School of Dravidian Linguistics to Dravidian studies. He also remembered the academic pursuits of great linguists like Profs. V.I. Subramoniam, T.P. Meenakshisundaram, Bh. Krishnamurti and Agesthalingam. He concluded his speech with the hope that ISDL would be developed into a deemed university. Prof. Pabitra Sarkar's Presidential Address was, then, read *in absentia*.

Another noteworthy event of the programme was the distribution of awards to meritorious scholars.

Prof. K. Karunakaran, former Vice-Chancellor, Tamil University reiterated Prof. VIS's wonderful heroism in developing Dravidian languages and cultures. He recalled his personal relations with Prof. VIS. He concluded his special address emphasizing that a change is needed in the field of research and it should be made beneficial to future generations. In order to achieve this, learners' needs and societal needs are to be considered.

Addressing the scholars, Prof. L. Ramamurthy, Head, LDCL, Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore spoke of the marvellous contributions of ISDL

and CAS in Linguistics - Annamalai University to Dravidian studies and pointed out that Field Linguistics is a neglected area which is to be revived. He also opined that the 43rd AICDL was unique in many ways and all linguists have to note that the period 2015-2016 is the bicentenary of the demise of Francis Whyte Ellis, the great scholar who grouped Dravidian languages into a separate family.

Prof. N. Rajasekharan Nair, Dean, Hindustan University, Chennai in his felicitation speech recounted the dedicated and tireless academic pursuits of Prof. VIS, the great visionary whose footsteps we have to follow meticulously for developing Dravidian languages.

In his felicitation address, Prof. Thiruvalluvan, Dean, Faculty of Indian Languages, Annamalai University praised the works of DLA and ISDL. He talked about the developmental activities initiated by CAS in Linguistics - Annamalai University and the mega project for tribal study taken up with the support of UGC. The inaugural session came to an end with a formal vote of thanks by R. Saranya.

[To be continued]

S. Raja & K.N. Geethakumari

r->t IN LATIN AND MALAYALAM: IMPLICATIONS FOR HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS

(Continued from June 2015 issue)

The Nostratic hypothesis, proposed more than a hundred years ago, posits a language macro family which includes Indo-European as well as Dravidian languages (Ruhlen, Merritt 1991). The connection between Indo-European and Dravidian from this perspective is being considered with renewed interest at present (Levitt, SL 2013). Unfortunately, the letter *t* has not been subjected to any study; since all Sanskrit and most of the Dravidian languages lack this phoneme, it effectively ensures that words with *t* are not studied. Further studies along the lines presented here may help

Latest Publications: V.I. SUBRAMONIAM COMMEMORATION VOLUMES I & II, G.K. Panikkar, B. Ramakrishna Reddy, K. Rangan & B.B. Rajapurohit (Eds.), 2015, HB, Crown ¼: Vol. I: *Studies on Dravidian*, pp. xx + 515. Rs. 1,280/- (US\$ 110/-); Vol. II: *Studies on Indian Languages and Cultures*, pp. xx + 458. Rs. 1,150/- (US\$ 105/-).

AN ISDL PUBLICATION HIGHLY APPRECIATED

Prof. Y. Sudershan Rao, Chairperson, ICHR, New Delhi has commended the ISDL publication *VANCHIKANDAM* authored by K. Ravindran as follows:

“It is very well written and I thank you for your contribution to the History of South India.”

to throw more light on the Nostratic hypothesis. Long-term intense contact that can induct Level 4-5 changes should be accompanied by non-linguistic evidence of contact also. That 20% of the population of Kerala are Christians, and about 25% Muslims (the result of Arab contact) are important evidences of this, and moreover suggests the amenability of the population to succumb to social and cultural pressure. It can be safely assumed that Tamils were conservative, and Keralites innovative with regard to both linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of contact; this is evident with regard to Sanskrit too.

In conclusion, all the levels of linguistic contact with Latin appear to be present in Malayalam, suggesting the need for further comparative linguistic research. Malayalam could effectively be a melting point of not two, but three languages from two major language families - Dravidian and Indo-European. It may not be wrong to assume that the *r->t* changes along with the presence of [t], loanwords and other grammatical changes in Malayalam are evidences of ancient intense sociolinguistic contact between Keralites and Europeans.

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V.N. Bhattathiri

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*The Volume can be obtained from:
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V.I. Subramoniam Memorial ISDL Complex,
St. Xavier's College P.O., Thiruvananthapuram -
695 586.*

KANṆAKI WORSHIP IN KERALA

(Continued from June 2015 issue)

She is not Durga who cut the head of the demon Mahiṣa; not Cāmuṇḍī, the youngest among seven mother Goddesses; not Bhadrakālī who made Lord Śiva to dance; not Mahākālī who dwelled in the deep forest; not Kālī who broke the chest of the demon Dāruka. `A lady who lost her husband, more

agitated than the Goddess mentioned, is waiting at the palace gate for seeing you with an anklet in raised hand'. This description clearly shows the existence of different mother deities which are alien to the Dēvi cult prevalent in the Sangam age. In *Cilappatikāram* itself, there are other references to the Dēvi cult. One instance is the prediction of Śālīni, the priestess of the Maṛava community, when she met Kaṇṇaki at the Korṛavai temple.

*ivaḷo, koṅkaccelvi kuṭamalaiyāṭṭi
tenṇamiḷppāvai ceyta tavakkoḷunto-
rumāmaṇiyāyulakirkōṅkiya
tirumāmaṇiyenatteyvamuraippa*

(Vēṭṭuvavari 47-50)³

“Lord! this damsel is the treasure of the Konguland, the queen of the western hills, the idol of the South Tamil land, the fruit of penance, the jewel beyond compare in the whole world”.²

Śālīni's words denote the divinity of Kaṇṇaki even before she became the Goddess of chastity. In continuation of her duty as a priestess of a Dēvi temple, Śālīni, in a frantic mood, acted as Mahiṣāsūramardhini, Kumāri, Gauri, Śūlini, Nīli, Viṣṇusōdari (sister of Lord Viṣṇu), Nātha, Śrī, Khaḍgadhāriṇi (she who holds sword) and Durga and sang songs. When Goddess Madhurāvati appeared before the agitated Kaṇṇaki, she saw in her the culmination of Goddess Lakṣmi, Sarasvatī and Durga which is another instance to assume the popularity of Dēvi worship. These references also indicate that the Aryanisation of Dravidian mother Goddess worship started during a period prior to the composition of *Cilappatikāram*.

It is very clear that at the time of the composition of *Cilappatikāram*, Kaṇṇaki was worshipped as a Goddess in Kerala and in some parts of Tamil Nadu. That is why the poet Iḷaṅko Aṭikaḷ often equates Kaṇṇaki with Aryan and Dravidian Goddesses like Lakṣmi, Durga and Korṛavai. The consecration of Kaṇṇaki's idol in Vanchi by Ceṅkuṭṭavan gave more popularity to the Kaṇṇaki episode in the West Coast than in the East Coast of ancient Tamilakam. Actually, there is no temple dedicated to Kaṇṇaki in Tamil Nadu. She is not considered as a chief Goddess there. However, in

Kerala, the Kaṇṇaki cult penetrated into the age-old Bhagavathi concepts and *Cilampu* (the anklet of Kaṇṇaki) became an insignia of Dēvi worship.

Goddesses like Cāmuṇḍi, Kāḷi, Bhadrakāḷi and Durga are worshipped by adorning *Cilampu* and “swords” and chanting Kaṇṇaki-Kōvilan songs. Songs are generally called *Tōṛrampāṭṭu* which are in praise of Kaṇṇaki, Kōvalan, Kāḷi and the war of Kāḷi with the demon Dārūka. Most of the deities installed in Dēvi temples which follow non-Aryan rituals trace their origin either from Kodungalloor Bhagavathi or from the heroine of *Cilappatikāram*. Vanchi, where Ceṅkuṭṭavan installed the idol of Pattinikkaṭavuḷ, is believed to be somewhere at Kodungalloor. There is no evidence to believe that the present Kodungalloor Bhadrakāḷi temple was the ancient seat of Pattinikkaṭavuḷ i.e., Kaṇṇaki. Kodungalloor Bhadrakāḷi temple is Kurumbakkāvu for the locals and *veḷiccappāṭu-s* thronged during the Bharāṇi festival, usually held in March-April (*veḷiccappāṭu* - a man or woman possessed by Kāḷi). Kurumba, an alternant form of *kuruppa*, is a Dravidian word meaning 'small pox'. Thus, *kurumbakkāvu* means 'grove of the Goddess of small pox'. It is here the *veḷiccappāṭu-s*, chiefly from Palakkad district and remote north Malabar areas, come with anklet in one hand and sword in the other, during the Bharāṇi festival. They sang obscene songs and made wounds in their heads with swords in a fantastic mood and executed Bali's sacrifice by cutting the neck of cocks. For them, Kodungalloor Bhagavathi is Cāmuṇḍi, Korṛavai, Amma, Kaṇṇaki and Durga. The common belief is that Kodungalloor is the original abode - *Śrīmūlasthanam* - of all mother Goddesses of Kerala. Kodungalloor Bhagavathi is the mother of all Goddesses of Malanādu as per legendary histories known by the name *Kēraḷōipatti*.

The story of *Cilappatikāram* was familiar in Kerala from the remote past itself. This is clear from its greater influence on the folk literature and art of Kerala than that of Tamil Nadu. Traditional and ritualistic art songs like *Tīyāṭṭupāṭṭu*, *Vaṭakku-purattupāṭṭu*, *Cīrumbapāṭṭu*, *Kaṇṇakittōṛram*, *Maṇi-marikattōṛram*, *Nallammattōṛram*, *Cūtararīṇu* and different *Tōṛrampāṭṭu-s* deal with the stories of

Recent Publications: **The Contribution of Melpūttur Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭatiri to Sanskrit Literature with Special Reference to Vyākaraṇa**, P. Visalakshy, 2013, Crown ¼, pp. 428, Rs. 900/- (US\$ 81/-). **A Contrastive Analysis of the Phonological Systems of Bengali and Malayalam**, Dhruvajyoti Das, 2014, pp. xii + 140, Rs. 220/- (US\$ 20/-). **Studies on Bangla from a Broader Perspective**, G.K. Panikkar, Syamala Sasidharan & Sourav Chakraborty (Eds.), 2015, pp. 216, Rs. 230/- (US\$ 23/-).

**V.I. SUBRAMONIAM COMMEMORATION
VOLUME II:
Studies on Indian Languages and Cultures**

The volume is a rich collection of articles from leading linguists covering the key areas of language and culture. It is a meticulously designed work encompassing recent findings and developments in Indian linguistics and allied disciplines.

Kaṇṇaki and Kōvalan with slight changes. *Mannānkūttu* of the Mannān community of Idukki district is basically a kind of dance with songs and speeches based on Kaṇṇaki-Kōvalan story depicted in *Cilappatikāram*. Mutuvān Kūttu of Mutuvān community also follows *Cilappatikāram*. Kāṇikkār of Thiruvananthapuram district also had songs on Kaṇṇaki-Kōvilan story.

There was a custom in Palakkad district, particularly in erstwhile Valluvanadu region: when epidemics like small pox and cholera spread, the ritualistic singers were invited to sing *Kaṇṇakittōṛram*. Here, the devotees believe that Kaṇṇaki is the mother Goddess who gives and eradicates the epidemic diseases. Hence, the common folk affectionately consider the epidemic diseases as *ammaviḷayāṭṭu* ('play of the mother').

The main theme of the songs sung for the invocation of Goddess Kāḷi is the *Cilappatikāram* episode. The *Muṭikkūttu* mentioned in *Cilappatikāram* is the proto form of the *muṭiyēṛru* enacted in the Kāḷi temples of southern Kerala.

Footnotes

- 2. Iḷango Aḍigaḷ. *Silappadikāram*. S. Krishnamoorthy (Trans.). MP Birla Foundation. Calcutta. 1996. P. 132.

3. *Ibid.* p. 87.

ജവജോ കൊങ്കച്ചെൽവി കുടമരലെയട്ടി
തെറ്റമിഴ്ചാമൈ ചെയ്ത തവക്കൊഴുത്ത്
ഒരു മാമണിയായുലകിർ കോങ്കിയ
തിരുമാമണിയെന്തെയമ്പുറ്റുരൈച്ച.

(വേട്ടുവവരി. 47-50)

[To be continued]

Naduvattom Gopalakrishnan

OBITUARY

We are really shocked to hear the news from Prof. Masato Kobayashi, Department of Linguistics, University of Tokyo, Japan regarding the demise of **Sri. Bablu Tirkey**, Assistant Professor of Kurux at Doranda College and a life-member of the Dravidian Linguistics Association, on 1st August 2015 at the young age of 34.

Born in Bendora of Gumla district in Jharkhand, Mr. Tirkey developed a keen interest in his native language - Kurux, traditional Oraon culture and the position of Kurux within the Dravidian family. With his natural gift of linguistic sensitivity, he was in the process of comparing Kurux with closely related Malto for his Ph.D. He played a leading role in the Malto Folklore Collection project jointly conducted by Ranchi University and University of Tokyo, compiled by Prof. Masato Kobayashi as *Texts and Grammar of Malto* (2012, Vizianagaram: Kotoba). In recent years, he took up the task of updating Grignard's monumental *Oraon-English Dictionary* and he was travelling all over the Kurux-speaking area to collect new words and record folklore. His academic and literary works will be made available at <http://www.gengo.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/~masatok/bablu.html> and his grammar and dictionary work will be continued by Prof. Kobayashi.

Sri. Bablu Tirkey will be remembered as an outstanding teacher and a promising scholar. May his soul rest in peace. The members of the Dravidian Linguistics Association extend their sincerest condolences to his family.