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A MONTHLY OF DRAVIDIAN LINGUISTICS ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

**45th ALL INDIA CONFERENCE OF
 DRAVIDIAN LINGUISTS &
 INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM**
on
**Case, Agreement and Postpositions
 in Delhi – A GRAND SUCCESS**

The 45th All India Conference of Dravidian Linguists & International Symposium on Case, Agreement and Postpositions was held at the University of Delhi from 23rd to 25th June 2017. It was organized by the Centre for Advanced Studies in Linguistics, University of Delhi in

collaboration with the Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore and the Dravidian Linguistics Association and International School of Dravidian Linguistics, Thiruvananthapuram.

The inaugural session of the conference commenced at 10.30 a.m. Prof. R.C. Sharma, Head, Centre for Advanced Studies in Linguistics, University of Delhi welcomed the participants. Prof. G.K. Panikkar, Hon. Director, International School of Dravidian Linguistics spoke on the activities of the Dravidian Linguistics Association, the International School of Dravidian Linguistics and the Dravidian Linguists' conferences.

Prof. Kapil Kapoor, Chancellor, Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwa Vidyalaya, Wardha inaugurated the conference and delivered a thought-provoking inaugural address touching upon the linguistic and cultural scenario in India. Prof. B. Ramakrishna Reddy, former Professor of Linguistics, Osmania

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University and Chairman of the International School of Dravidian Linguistics highlighted the need for promoting younger linguists and to give more attention to the tribal languages. In the absence of the DLA President, Prof. K. Retnamma, the Presidential Address was read by Prof. Naduvattom Gopalakrishnan, Secretary, Dravidian Linguistics Association. Dr. L. Ramamoorthy, Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore felicitated the 45th AICDL & International Symposium.

This was followed by the release of four publications of the International School of Dravidian Linguistics and the distribution of prizes and awards in various categories. At the end of the inaugural session, Prof. Naduvattom Gopalakrishnan thanked the dignitaries and the delegates of the conference.

46TH AICDL AT

JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY, KOLKATA

The 46th All India Conference of Dravidian Linguists will be hosted by the School of Languages & Linguistics, Jadavpur University, Kolkata in June 2018.

THE QUESTION OF SHORT *e* AND *o* VOWELS IN PROTO DRAVIDIAN LANGUAGE

P. Ramanathan's Comments on Prof. Kamatchi's Article in DLA News (Vol. 41 No. 4 April 2017)

A. Kamatchi argues that the "Proto-Dravidian vowel system did not have the short vowels *e* and *o*. Vowel length is phonemic in Dravidian languages. It should be so in Proto-Dravidian also and this applies not only to *a*, *i* and *u* but also to *e* and *o*.

Tolkāppiyam-Eḷuthatikāram

1. *Nunmarapu* sutra

16 *ekara ukarat tiyarkaiyum aṟṟe*

Describes only the shape of *e* and *o* in the then-prevailing Damili script (also called Tamil-Brahmi script, then used). The short *e* and short *o* would certainly have been phonemes on par with long *e* and long *o* in the pre-*Tolkāppiyam* period also. There would certainly have been such interpolations in *Tolkāppiyam* and this reference to the form of the script for *e* and *o* is no warrant for arguing that there was no short *e* and short *o* in Dravidian or Proto-Dravidian. Proto-Dravidian would certainly have had *e* and *o* short vowels also.

This issue has been gone into deeply and with great insight in A. Subbiah's "Is the Tamil alphabet system an adaptation" in *Journal of Tamil Studies* No. 3 June 1973, pp. 64-74 of IITS, Taramani, Chennai. Subbiah's paper shows in elaborate and convincing detail that the surmise of Dr. A. Kamatchi is untenable.

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INDEX OF RĀMACARITAM, Naduvattom Gopalakrishnan, 2017, HB, Demy 1/8, pp. 1224, Rs. 1400/- (US\$ 140/-). **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/-).

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MA-KKO-THAI

Kottamambalathu *thunjia* Ma-kko-thai is a prince referred to in *Purananooru* (poem 245). In this poem, the prince laments on the untimely demise of his wife. The prince of Ma-kko-thai died at Kottambalam and hence the expression Kottambalathu *thunjia*. In the Sangam classics, there was a practice of identifying kings by the places of their death. Identifying kings by places of their death was followed in Kochi royal family also but they used the word *theepetta* instead of *thunjia*. The city of Ma-kko-thai may have been formed in the memory of Udayan Cheralathan, the great Chera emperor, whose glory was sung by the poet Muranciyur Mutinakarayar (*Purananooru* 2) and he is also the first of the ten Chera emperors of Pathirutrupattu of the Sangam collections. *Ma-* means great, *kko* refers to the king or the seat of the king and *uthai* refers to Uthiyan Cheralathan. In course of time, *Uthiyan* became sanskritized to Udayan. There are several place names in Kerala starting with the name of Udayan. Coins of the Sangam period (300 B.C. - 300 C.E.) with Ma-kko-thai inscription issued by kings have been unearthed. The city of Ma-kko-thai was also known by the names Makodayapuram,

Mahodayapuram and Makotayarpattanam and is at present a part of the historical coastal town of Kodungallur. The Saivite saint Sundara Murthi Nayanar, the contemporary and close friend of Cheraman Perumal Nayanar, describes "Makotai, hollowed by its Siva temple tirvanchi-k-kalam, is washed by the western sea rolling and breaking the coast. The temple itself is set in sylvan surroundings strewn with Valampuri Chanks, washed ashore by the surging surfs of the sea" [Cuntarar Thevaram (4:1-10)]. Vessels laden with gold and silver, precious gems and valuable merchandise sail gracefully along the coastline past Makotai (Cuntarar Thevaram 4:7) (Balasubramoniam, *A Study of the Literature of Chera Country up to 11th Century A.D.*, University of Madras, 1980, p. 3). The city was called the *Kulapuri* of the Cheras and the deity of Thiruvanchikulam Siva temple was praised as *Vanchulecuvaran* by the Saivite saint Cuntarar. Some of the places mentioned as part of ancient Mahodayapuram are Nalu-Tali, Gopuram, Perumkovilakom, Balakrideswara and Gotra Malleswara.

Mahodayapuram was the capital city of the new Chera line that emerged in the 9th century A.D. after the eclipse of the Sangam Cheras in the 3rd century A.D. The Sangam Cheras of the Athan branch ruled from Vanchimuthur (Kodumkollur) and the international sea port of Muzris in the Arabian sea, which carried on maritime trade with the Roman empire, was situated close to Vanchimuthur. Pliny speaks of Muzris as the capital city of the Chera country. A few years after Pliny, the author of Peryplus refers to Muzris as a "city at the height of prosperity" and "seat of the Government of the kingdom under the sway of Kerabathras" and located it two miles distant from the mouth of the river from where it is situated (Sreedhara Menon, A., *Gazetteers of India*, Trichur, Kerala, p. 88. The Roman geographers belonged to the early centuries of the Christian era). "Ceramam or Keralaputra or Keralaraja were the titles of the ancient kings of the Kerala dynasty and they continued to be employed in one period to denote the lord of Makota and these rulers belonged to

the same ancient line” (Narayanan, M.G.S., *Perumals of Kerala*, 1996, p. 74). These lines of kings were known in Kerala history as Perumals, Kulasekharas and Kulasekhara Perumals. The historian Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai placed 13 Perumals between 800 A.D. and 1102 A.D. and the historian M.G.S. Narayanan, on the basis of fresh evidence, arrived at the conclusion that 11 Perumals ruled Kerala from Mahodayapuram during the period from 800 A.D. to 1122 A.D. listing the various periods of their reign: (1) Rama Rajasekhara 800-844, (2) Stanu Ravi Kulasekhara 844-883, (3) Kotha Ravi Vijaya Raga 883-930, (4) Kotha Kotha Kerala Kesari 913-943, (5) Indu Kotha 943-962, (6) Bhaskara Ravi Manukuladitya 960-1041, (7) Ravi Kotha Rajasimha 1021-1036, (8,9,10) Raja Raja, Ravi Varma Rajaditya, Aditya Kotha Ranaditya 1036-1089, (11) Rama Kulasekhara (1089-1122). Rama Kulasekhara shifted his capital from Mahodayapuram to Kollam (Ten-vanchi) and after that, the empire of the Perumals disintegrated. The rules of succession in the dynasty of the Perumals are not clear. The Tamil Periya Puranam mentions that Cheraman Perumal, son of Sengol Porayan, took over as Perumal, as the reigning Perumal relinquished kingship and became a *Sanyasi* and he had to take over “as per the rules of succession” of the Chera royal family. Porayan is the title of the Sangam Cheras by virtue of being hereditary rulers of Nedumpurainadu, and a branch of the family, Irumporais, were ruling from Karur-Vanchi. The Jewish copper plates of Bhaskara Ravi Manukuladitya were witnessed by the royals of Venad, Venpolinadu, Nedumpurainadu (Talappally, Trichur and Palakkad), Valluvanadu and Eral-nadu. A collegium of the representatives of these royal houses may have been selecting the emperor, the Perumal. A junior prince, nominated as Koyiladhikari, represented the Perumal on certain occasions. Prince Vijayaraga, who succeeded Stanu Ravi, acted as Koyiladhikari and was present at Kollam when the Venad chief issued the charter to Tarissapally. The Perumals could not create a strong dynasty on the model of the Imperial Cholas and the country they ruled over was a federation of independent states.

Mahodayapuram continued to be an important city as Perumpadappu Mooppil (Maharaja of Kochi), in his capacity as Gangadhara Kovil Adhikari, made the place as the capital of the territory ruled by him. The great floods of Periyar in 1341 A.D. ravaged the entire area of Kodumkollur and the royal seat of Perumpadappu Mooppil (Kochi) was shifted from Mahodayapuram to Kochi. The Portuguese built a fort in Kottappuram in Mahodayapuram in 1523 C.E. and this played a significant role in many wars between the Zamorins, the rulers of Kochi, and the Dutch and Mysore sultans in later years.

The first of this line of kings, known as the Cheramans, was Rama Rajasekhara (800-844) whose inscriptions have been found in Vazhapally (Vazhapally Sasanam) and at Areekode in Malappuram (*The Hindu* dated 11-2-2017). His name is included as Cheraman Perumal in the list of 63 Saivite saints in the 12th century Tamil Periyapuram of Sekkilar who was the minister under Kulothunga Chola. The fresco panels of Raja Rajeswaram temple, Thanjavur (1010 A.D.) depicted the visit of the kingly saint to Tillai (Chidambaram) when he travelled at the behest of Saint Sundarar. Cheraman Perumal Nayanar is the author of the Tamil poems, *Ati-ula*, *Ponvan-nattantadi* and *Munmani Kovai*. The view that Cheraman Perumal or any other Perumal embraced Islam and left for Arabia after dividing the country among several kings is not correct as the empire of the Perumals stood as one unit up to 1122 C.E. and the event of the Perumal meeting the Prophet was not recorded in Hadith literature in which the Prophet’s life and activities were recorded meticulously. Cheraman Perumal is associated with Tiruvanchikulam Siva temple.

The second in the line of kings is Stanu Ravi Kulasekhara, identified with the Vaishnavite saint Kulasekhara Alwar. He calls himself as the ruler of Kolli, the master of Kudal, the king of Koli and also the overlord of Kongu. The Pallies (Vannier) of Tamil Nadu consider themselves as the descendants of the soldiers of Kulasekhara Alwar. In the Varadaraja Perumal temple of

Kancheepuram, a shrine is dedicated to Malayala Nachiyar, the daughter of Kulasekhara Alwar. The Tamil name is Ko-Tanu-Iravi. Tanu represents Tanumalayan, the presiding deity of Suchindram temple, and Suchindram (Kanyakumari district) may have been part of the Ay kingdom or Venad in those days. The Alwar is supposed to have passed away in Mannarkovil in Tirunelveli district. Manarkovil was renamed as Rajendra Chola Vinnagaram during the reign of Rajendra Chola and a temple was built there by Cheraman Rajasimha Devar. The *stapathi* of the temple was one Vasudevan Kesavan of Mullappally in Malaimandalam (Kerala). The Alwar is the author of Perumal Tirumoli which forms part of the Tamil *Nalayira Divya Prabandham*. The only temple in Kerala about which Kulasekhara Alwar has sung is Thiruvittuvacode near Pattambi. Tradition associates Kulasekhara Alwar with the construction of the Krishna temple at Trukkulasekharapuram near Thiruvanchikulam. The king maintained an astronomical observatory and Sankaranarayana, the court astronomer and the author of *Laghuhaskariya Vyakya* (870 C.E.) observed that the *bheri* (drum) of *Senamukha* announced the time. Senamukha is a cantonment city which contains the royal residence, secret places and is inhabited by all classes of people. Senamukha is thus the most important place in Mahodayapuram. The beautiful body of Cheran Chenkuttuvan is praised as *Chenamukham* by Ilamkovadigal in *Chilappathikaram*, the occasion being the triumphant return from north Indian expedition of the Chera king, Chenkuttuvan, when a caparisoned elephant went around and announced the return of the king, to the accompaniment of the beating of the drums (*para kottal*) which produced a loud noise (Viswanathan Nair Nenmara, *Chilappathikaram*, Mal 1975, p. 546).

[To be continued]

K. Ravindran

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