



anthropological
studies on the
dravidian-
africans

dr.k.p.aravaanan

**Anthropological Studies On
The Dravido-Africans**



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DEDICATED
TO
MISS LILIAS HOMBURGER

*A Pioneer of the Dravidian-African
Comparative Studies who was born in
France a century ago (1880)*

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INTRODUCTION

This book is a collection of research papers presented by the author at national and international conferences on anthropological research during the period 1977-80. The topics discussed here deal with several aspects of the subject. However the ultimate aim is to identify the similarities between the natives of Africa and Asia through anthropological perspective.

Long before the inception of slave trade, black population is reported to have existed in India, Malaysian peninsula and Oceania, besides Africa. Many Dravidian linguistic communities and a majority of the tribal population of the Southern India, the great Andamanese, Onges, Jarawas and Sentinelese of the Andaman islands, the Semangs of Malaysia, the Aietas of Philippines and other Oceanic Negritos still retain their Negritos' features. Some scholars hold that the Dravidians are Australoids. But from the size of the hair on the head the Australoids in all other physical and cultural aspects very closely resemble the Negritos. The Australoids and Negritos might have come from the same stock.

Languages of Black Africans are similar to those of the Dravidian family. A comparative study of languages on these lines was started by French scholars in the early 20th century and is still being continued at the Annamalai University, Tamil Nadu, South India, and at the Institute of Fundamental Research of Black Africa (IFAN) University of Dakar, Senegal, Western Africa.

Besides linguistic similarities, there are notable cultural similarities too between these people. However, this author has laid stress only on the latter aspect.

The term "culture" has been used here not in the usual historical sense but with an anthropological connotation. Historians often use the word "culture" to denote unique developments in artistic and intellectual fields. To many scholars the phrase "Greek culture" applies only to the activities of learned Greeks, skilled in art and literature or even more narrowly, to the learned Greeks of the golden age of Greek intellectual developments.

The term "culture" used by the anthropologists may be applied:¹ to the way of life or "designs for living" which are common at any point of time to all mankind;

to the way of living peculiar to a group of societies between which there is a greater or lesser degree of interaction;

to the patterns of behaviour peculiar to a given society and

to the special ways of behaviour, characteristic of the segments of a large and completely organized society.

Finally 'culture' also includes civilization. No modern anthropologist regards civilization as qualitatively different from culture nor does he make a distinction between the civilized and the uncivilized.²

This writer has traced some distinct similarities between and from among the Dravidians and the black Africans.

They resemble each other in their traditional ceremony attached to the events of birth, death and marriage. They have a number of cults or worships in common, the Murukā or

1 Ralph L. Beals and Harry Hoijer, *An Introduction to Anthropology* Mc. Millan Company, New York. 1959 ... p. 229

2 *Ibid.*

Murungu worship, mother Goddess worship, ancestral worship, the serpent cult and the cult of sacred tree. They have legends like Lord Krishna and Kamsa rivalry etc. in common.

All the cultural aspects of the Dravidians are not entirely similar to the Black Africans. That is impossible too. But, what one could easily identify between these two are more similarities than dissimilarities. The traditional thoughts of the black Africans, it seems are more closer with the Dravidians, including the Egyptians than with any other cultural groups.

They have some common social systems viz: matriarchy and polygamy; they have some common crafts, pot making, metal works, mat making etc; they have some common games "pallanguzhi" or "Wūree".

No doubt, it is true that there exists physical, linguistic and cultural resemblances between the two. But how and when did it take place are the questions left unanswered yet. This study is only at its preliminary stage and definite conclusions leading to answers to these questions, will be possible only after a thorough and complete research and study about these people and it will take a long time before one could reach these results.

This writer, here, has attempted to give an answer to these questions on the basis of the study upon the following aspects.

His humble opinion is that the resemblances might have occurred due to contacts between the peoples of African and Asian continents at different periods in different stages.

- 1 Kumari Origin
- 2 Negritos presence in Southern India and Andaman Islands
- 3 Egypt's influence
- 4 Dravidians' commercial contacts with East Africans
- 5 The mediterraneans and Arab commercial contacts with Dravidians
- 6 Migrations in colonial period

1 Kumari Origin

The Dravidians and the black Africans might have originally belonged to one stalk of race. Later on they might have been separated from each other for a very long time. Because, there is a legend about a deluge reported to have occurred in this region of the globe and still spoken of by the Tamils, Telugus of Southern India, Andamanes of the Bay of Bengal and the people of Srilanka. This event is confirmed by some of the legends reported from Africa. In Africa, there is a legend about the fight between the God of land and the Goddess of sea. Some historical but natural events must have been the source of these legends. If these legends are proved to be true then it is submitted that once there must have been some kind of mass of land bridging both the African and the Dravidian continents in the Indian ocean. It might be through that land connection between the continents these interminglings would have occurred resulting in physical and cultural contacts between them.

After the deluge the legendary bridging land mass might have submerged into the sea. People in both the continents might have witnessed this incident. Destruction might have been calamitous. According to the Tamil legend, the two ancient capitals of the Pandya kingdom and the academy of the Tamils in those two capitals with a whole gamut of literature had been engulfed by the sea. They called this lost continent 'Kumari'. In the same way Madagascar an island country close to the east coast of the African continent is reported to have once been called 'Komor'. Even now, there is a country in the name of 'Komer' constituted by a group of islands the 'Komer' islands (in French Comores). The names of these two countries situated geographically at the alleged place of this legendary deluge, namely 'Komor' and 'Komer' respectively subscribe to and confirm the Tamil legend on the submerged continent of 'Kumari'.

According to the Tamil commentry 'forty four districts were reported to have existed in the 'lost Kumari'. Among them fourteen were desert - districts, i.e. seven front desert-districts (ஏழ் முன் பாலை) and seven back desert-districts (ஏழ் பின் பாலை),

If this view were correct, the other references of these fourteen desert - districts (ஏழு முன் பாலை, ஏழு பின் பாலை) might denote the African Sahara which appeared in 4000 B.C.

Besides these, two cities "Avunarpuram" and "Nilapuram" were also reported from these Tamil literary sources. According to them, these two places were situated in the "Kumari" continent. It is suggested that 'Avunarpuram' might be the name of the East Africa and Nilapuram might be the corrupted form of the city which was on the side of the African river Nile. Nubians, the ancient natives of the blue Nile were influenced by the Dravidians. The Kushites of this region worshipped the lion-headed god. This might be due to the influence of Indian black god "Narasimha".

Modern Geography confirms the legendary theory of "Lost Lemuria" (Kumari). Flora and fauna at the African East coast resemble those of the West coast of India. Therefore, it is submitted that the common home of the Dravidians and Africans might be the main reason for their similitude. But, this is subject to further research.

2 Negritos' Presence in Southern-India

According to some Tamil legends, Tamil country was ruled by Negro kings for nearly 500 years. Udukkannan, Murai-kannan, and Arividamali are the important rulers. Herodotus' note on the presence of blacks on the West coast of India, discovery of Negritos' skulls, presence of a tribal population with Negritos' features in this region go to strengthen this view.¹

3 Egyptians' Influence

In 4000 B.C. Egypt had attained the zenith of civilization. Indus civilization shares so many similarities with Egypt. Commercial and cultural contacts had existed between Egypt and India. Egypt had acted as a cultural gateway to Africa for the people of Asia and vice versa. In the Nile valley many

1 Wilfred D. Hambly, Source book for African Anthropology part I. p. 76

Asiatic traits have been absorbed, utilized, perhaps changed in form and then passed on.¹

That humped cattle came from India, and the domestic fowls were probably introduced from India. Did the Blacks or Dravidians found Egyptian civilization? Some agree and a few others disagree. Any how, the blacks must have had a hand in it. From Egypt, a few cultural traits have spread to the Southern part of Egypt and West coast of Indians. Metallurgy is one among them.

4 Dravidians' commercial contacts with East Africans

Vasco-da-Gama, a Portuguese navigator, has reached Kozhicodu on 18th May 1498 A.D. with the help of some South Indian pilots who resided at Mozambique. Even before him, the sea route between East Africa and South India was familiar to the navigators and merchants of both continents. The availability of gold in South East Africa is one of the important reasons for this commercial contacts.

5 The commercial contacts among the Mediterraneans, Arabs and Dravidians :

Scytax Caryanda, a Greek pilot was the first-known mariner who has crossed the Indian ocean after crossing the Red Sea in 510 B.C. 'Periplus of the Erythrean sea', the earliest extensive work on navigation in the world was written by a Greek of Alexandria in 60 A.D. It mentions the trading centres on the African coast and those of the South Indian coast as well. Like the Greeks, from ninth century A.D. onwards Arab travellers and geographers made so many tours. Ibn Batuta, a Moorish explorer (1300 A.D.) left his native place Tangier at the age of twenty two and continued to travel for the next thirty years. He travelled throughout India and Africa and documented his observation on the state of politics, religion, and society of Africa and India. The Javanese and Chinese sailors, regularly visit the South coast of Africa and carried iron and ivory to India. These travellers and sailors were not only carrying the goods from one place to another but also they were carrying so

¹ Refer my article : Notable Negroid Elements in Dravidian India, Journal of Famil Studies, IIFS, Madras Vol XVII, 1980

Introduction

many customs and habits from one place to the other places. For example, through them, "Wūree" a national game of Africa and Southern India had spread to the Arabian and other countries.

6 Immigrations in colonial period

From 15th century onwards Europeans started colonizing Africa, and Asia. Each and every colonist wanted to form the land. Man power was not enough for them. Local resistance also was there. Due to their necessities, colonial Governments brought men from China to Africa. But Chinese did not fulfil their goal. Then they brought South Indians from Dravidian India to Africa, Srilanka, Malaysia, West Indies and other places. Due to their influence, South Indian settlements spread over south Africa, Rhodesia, Mauritius and other East coast African countries. These south Indians intermingled with local African population. Through them, some cultural aspects were exchanged.

Therefore, if any resemblance is identified, one must study the origin, spread and period of that particular resemblance. In other words this comparative study is two-folded :

- To identify the similarities
- To study the similarities.

At first, the first one must be completed. Simultaneously or later, the second one must be taken. Many articles of this volume concentrate on the first and a few concentrate on the second.

Acknowledgement

This book is the result of my assiduous studies for the past three years. How one could work hard in a foreign country without proper encouragement? The enormous encouragement of the President of the Republic of Senegal, His Excellency Dr. Leopold Sedar Senghor is the spirit behind my work.

Though the articles have been presented in some conferences or seminars during the past three years all the papers have been revised carefully. There are omissions and additions. They have undergone a metamorphosis for the better. Mr.

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September 3 1980

K P Aravaanan

'MURUKĀ' WORSHIP IN TAMILNADU AND AFRICA

Hill Worship

It is the general conception that the mountains are the abodes of God, for, people believe that God is above all and stays in the sky beyond the mountains.

They venerate the mountains, for, they are very close to the sky, the abode of God.

Sacred Hills

It is a common feature to note, in South India, temples being constructed on the hills whether small or high. Hindus believe that the Kailāya Malai (a peak in the Himalayas) is the permanent abode of the Supreme God Siva. Jains also worship their Tirtankaras on the mountains. Bavapuri, Srnabelcōla and a few other places of Jain Worship are suitable examples for their hill worship. Thus, one can infer that it is a very common feature in India, more particularly among the Dravidians.

In country-side, one can see on some rare occasions one or two or a group of people attaining possession by God in a frenzied mood and speak/fore - tell/forewarn as God himself.

Country folks do really believe that the words so uttered are spoken by God himself. The act of possession by God lasts for a short time and the person who is the subject of ecstasy calms down after sometime and would fall down uttering "Govinda", "Govinda", "Govinda". People watching this event will utter

the same word in chorus and would call this stage as "sāmi malai - ɛrituccu". (God has gone to the mountains). This adds further weight to the general conception of the common people's belief about God's abode of mountains.

Similarly, Africans believe that spirits or their Gods stay on every high mountains. Many African villages and towns are seen nestled under the hills. People worship the hill spirit or God as their principal deity. Abookuta is a town in Nigeria. This town has been built under a hill rock. The name of the town is called after the name of the rock as the Palani hills and Thirupparan Kunram, Thiruthani in Tamil Nadu and Thirumalai Andhra Pradesh.

Gikuyus of Kenya

The Gikuyus of Kenya call their supreme being as Nāgā and believe it to have its abode on the mount Kenya, and offer prayers and sacrifices to it by raising their hands towards Mount Kenya.

Mende People

Mende people of black Africa worship and confess regularly to the mountains as their holy earth, the dwelling place of God. They climb up to the top of the hills and call "big hill-big hill". If they hear the sound "Whoo Whoo" echoed from the slope of the hills they become convinced that the echo is the reply from the God. They sacrifice sheep and goats to this God and cook them mixed with rice and red palm oil. Then, they place their offerings on a banana leaf¹ and would request the God saying, "Here is the water, wash your hands, eat the rice and drink the water."

Murukā Worship

Thus, the hill worship dealt with above as the abode of God, appears to be based on common belief existing between

1. *Banana Leaf*: The using of banana leaf is an uncommon practice in Africa except in a few areas. In those areas also, they use banana leaf only on ceremonial occasions. But among Dravidians the use of banana leaf is a common practice not only in ceremonies but also in their home that use for food serving. African experts consider, that the banana tree was introduced by Indians through their east African contact. Therefore, the ceremonial using of banana leaf also might be the influence of Indians.

the Dravidians and the Africans. Yet another point of similarity could be traced from the Tamils' worship of "Murukā" and Africans worship of "Murungu"

Mountains — the abode of Lord Murukā

The Tamils believe that Mountains are the abodes of the Tamil God Murukā. Palani, Palamuthir Cōlai, Thirupparan Kunram, Swāmi Malai, Thiruthani and Thirucentūr are spoken very much in relation to Lord Murukā. Of the six temples of Murukā, excepting Thirucentūr all the rest are situated on the hills. Some Scholars opine that Thirumalai (Thiruppathi) the present place of Lord Vishnu had once been the temple of Murukā. The modern literature calls these temples in the name of Lord Murukā as "Arupatai vītu" (அறுபடை வீடு) Nakkīrar a great poet of canka age had composed a long anthology of hymns in praise of the six temples of Lord Murukā, which is called "Thirumuru Kāruppatai." Tolkāppiam the fore most ancient Tamil grammar dated back to 1st century B.C. also speaks of 'Murukā in the words 'cēyōn' and adds that the mountains are the abodes of cēyōn'. Anthropologists maintain that the mountain tops were the foremost resident of the human race/primitive man. 'Tolkāppiam' gives primary place to the mountain, and connects it with cēyōn-Murukā (*cēyōn mēya maivarai ulakamum* - the mountainous regions of Murukā). Majority of the black Africans also believe that mountains are the sacred places for the supreme beings.

Gikuyus ceremony to God Murungu

Murungu the name of the black African God resembles the word 'Muruku'. Gikuyus God is Murungu and they perform a ceremony called 'Koraria Murungu' which, they believe, would keep the God awoken. This ceremony is held as an act of communion with the ancestral God, Murungu, whose protection is invoked to guide and protect their initiatives through 'iruva' (initiation) ceremony, at the same time, to give them the wisdom of their forefathers².

Murukā's connection with cock

About twenty five ethnics of Eastern Africa have their God's name either as Murungu or Mulungu. Nyika, Eastern Bandus also worship Murungu. They believe that human beings are the hens and chickens of Murungu. Some Dravidian legends speaking about Murukā relate human beings with cock. Cock is the flag of Murukā, the Tamils ancient God.

Murukā and Fire or Light

Gikuyus supreme God being Murungu is believed to live on four holy mountains. They think that these sacred mountains are the places of brightness. In all the prayers and sacrifices, they call their God as the possessor of brightness, "Mwene Nyaga". It is related with the Gikuyus name of mount Kenyā, namely "kere - Nyaga" which means that which possesses brightness or mountain of brightness.

Birth of Murukā

There is a notable similarity between the worship of Murungu and Dravidian worship of Murukā on the same conception of brightness or light. Ceyon and Cevvāl are a few other names of Murukā meaning one who is red or fire or light (brightness). According to a legend which connects Murukā with fire or light. He was born from six sparks emitted by Lord Siva from his third eye on the fore-head. The fire-God carried these sparks and put them into the pond "Saravanā" wherein he was brought up by six angels-the heavenly maidens (Kārttikai Makalir). During Kārttikai, a month in the Tamil calendar (corresponding month of November and December) a light festival called "Kārttikai Tīpam", is being celebrated every year in the Tamil country in praise of Lord Murukā. This festival is celebrated absolutely in adoration of the light and fire. During that time people lit innumerable small lights in and around their homes and temples of any God. Bonfire with Palmyra leaves is burnt. This practice of the Dravidian people would affirm the association of light and fire with Murukā worship.

Fire Worship

Many hold that the fire worship is one of the primitive types of worship. The worship of Murukā might have also been originated from the fire worship.

Places of Murungū Worship

The Murungu worship is common among a large number of ethnic groups in Africa and the East Africans constitute the major part of it. Nyanja, Yao, Kamba, Nyika, Gikiyu Sena and other twenty one ethnics regard it as their supreme being. Kamba and Nyika constitute the largest in East Africa. Murungu worship has spread all over the African continent more particularly in the Eastern Bantu zone, i.e. stretching from Uganda in the North through Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique, to north of the Zambia.

Murungu - Its Meaning

Murungu, Mlungu, Mluku, Mungu, and or Mugu are the words denoting God, in twenty five East African languages, covering an area from lower Zambezi to Lake Victoria and from lower Island to the river Loangwa. The correct and real connotation of the word 'Murungu' is yet to be traced. The key may be in the Dravidian land. Various African scholars attribute the following meanings to the word 'Murungu'. Rev. Fr. Torrend maintains that Mulungu is only a corruptive form of Phoenician 'Moloch'.

putting together rightly,
put in order,
be in order,
the great one, and
clan family.

Above all, the meanings attributed to 'Mulungu' have some connection with 'light' or 'brightness' and appear to be more appropriate and the people both of Africa and Dravidian continents associate Lord Murukā or Mulugu, respectively, with the element of 'light' or 'brightness'.

No Plural Form for the Word Murukā

There is no plural form for both the words 'Murukā' and 'Murungu'. Anyhow, the real meaning of the word 'Murungu' is yet to be explored further.*

3. This worship might have been originated from the word for clan or family. 'Velan' is another name of 'Murukā'. It denotes a clan also. A clan called 'VELANGUDI' is the name of a village in Tamil Nadu (Thanjavur District) African languages also have the same meaning i.e. clan.

Associating Murukā with Thunder and Lightning

Black Africans consider lightning and thunder as the voices of Murungu.

The *Sena* of Africa holds,

Mulugu asobuumba - Mulungu rains.
 Mulugu asoguma - Mulungu thunders.

and the *yao* of Africa says, Mulungu anema - mulungu is speaking when thunder begins before the heavy rain. In Dravidian land similar practice exists among the country people in Tamil Nadu wherein, if thunder starts they will shout at the sky saying "Arjunā, Arjunā" in some parts and "Murukā, Murukā" in some other parts.

Conclusion

The Murungu worship of Black Africa and the Murukā worship of Tamil Nadu resemble in the following respects.

1. Common name.
2. Abode on the hill.
3. Spoken in association with cock.
4. Spoken in association with fire or light.
5. Absence of plural form and
6. Held in association with thunder.

Common Origin of the Dravido-Africans

The study about the similarities traced between the Dravidians and Africans poses several questions. Are these similarities merely coincidental? Do they suggest a common background of the Dravidians and Africans that they come from the same stock? These are the primary questions which require deep study before accepting or rejecting the concept of their common stock on the basis of their similarities.

MOTHER GODDESS WORSHIP IN DRAVIDIAN INDIA AND AFRICA

Dravido — Africans Worship of Mother Goddess

The Dravidians and Africans have similar matriarchal social organization and they also show striking semblance in their worship of Mother Goddess. It is quite common to have the worship of Mother Goddess in all the matriarchal societies. The Mother Goddess worship is a predominant feature in the villages of the Dravidian land. The names of the Mother Goddess may be slightly varying, but the central theme of the worship is almost the same. Various names with same suffix "amman" are very common in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and the neighbourhood places. Amman, Ammā, Ammai, Amma, and Ambāl are common names for Mother Goddess in Dravidian India.

Even names of Mother Goddesses are common among Dravidians and Africans. The Sothro-Tswana-tribes of Africa have the God (mother) of their fathers named *morimo*. The Dogan people, who inhabit the part of Mali in the gulf of the Niger river, call their supreme being as "Ammā", which they believe to be a male God and all the features of worship resemble to that of the other Mother Goddess worship.

The Ambo people of South West Africa maintain that their God is the Mother Goddess. The Southern tribes of Nuba mountains, the Korongo, Kadugili, Katch and some of the Miri people believe that their God is the great mother.

Rain - Goddess

In Tamil Nadu, the Mother Goddess has always been associated with rain. It is believed that rain would come if she gets angry. Therefore, they named the mother Goddess as rain Goddess (Māriammā). The cult of rain-Goddess was prevalent even in the post-cankam period (2nd century A.D.). "Cilappathikāram", one of the great epics of Tamils enumerates the worship of Goddess for rain. Āndāl a famous Tamil Poetess of the 8th century A.D. sings that the worship of mother Goddess will fetch rain thrice a month.

"nānkal nam pāvaikkuc cārri nīrātīnāl
tīnkintri Nātellām thinkal mummāri peyyum".

Similarly in the town of Badan in Nigeria, a female spirit is worshipped and is believed to dwell on the hill, her breast exposed and her arms raised towards the Heaven. She is connected with fire. Her festival is used to be held when the land requires immense rain to quench its thirst. This information confirms that the rain Goddess worship is prevalent among the Dravidians and Africans.

Ijebu people also believe that the commander of the rain is the Goddess Alaro. In Tamil the term "Māri" is commonly used to denote and mean both the Goddess and rain, as the Gā of the gold coast use a common word *Nyonmo* for God, who is essentially a God of rain and therefore is considered the supreme of all other Gods in that land where rain is so important.¹ Among *Nuba* of Sudan same words are used for God of sky and rain. For this purpose the words *Nok* and *Rimwa* are used by them. Akam Nyam or Onyame of West Africa use the same word to denote both the supreme God and the rain God.

Power Goddess

Many Nubians would use a word meaning power or strength in this connection (Nyimang winy, Hill Nubian kwartu, koalib.² Noma etc.) but this term also denotes physical strength.

In Tamil Nadu the Mother Goddess is regarded as "Sakthi" the energy. Tamil literary tradition describes Mother Goddess as power/energy/vigour/might.

1. Parrinder G. Religion in African city p. 12
Parrinder G. African Traditional religion p. 33.
2. African ideas of Gods p. 222

For the purpose of rain the mother Goddess or the power Goddess must be prayed in the month of 'Mārkali' (December) According to literary tradition and convention the regular prayer of Mother Goddess would give the rain regularly. The traditional belief goes still further to its extremity as the couplet of the great Tamil poet Thiruvalluvar says that if she who does not worship God, but who, on rising worships her husband, says "Let it rain" it will rain'. The epic story of Kannaki does also reveal the same belief. The injustice committed by the Great Pandya king Nedunchezhan to Kannaki was the main reason for the drought fell upon the Pandya kingdom which had lasted for twelve years. Raining had started only after the then ruler of Pandya Kingdom Verrivēl Cheḷiyān had offered oblations to pacify the anger of mother Goddess Kannaki through various sacrifices. These literary evidences in Tamil would show that rain is always related with virtuous woman and Goddesses. Similar legend exists among the Africans too. It is said :

A girl in one of the Mission schools at Zanzibar was a freed slave who had been brought from the Chipeta country west of Lake Nyasa.

At one time when water was in scarce, though food was plentiful some little girls went to play in the scrub outside their village, carrying with them their miniature cooking-pots and some provisions. Among them was a child whose parents were dead. She said to her companions. "I will show you something, but you must not tell anyone." They all promised to be silent. Then she stood and looked up at the sky, and presently clouds began together and in a short time there was a heavy shower, which filled their water-jars, so that they were able to cook their food; but it did not reach the village. When they went home, they took some of the cooked food with them, but refused to answer any questions as to how it had been obtained. Next day, they went out again, and the orphan girl procured rain as before; but this time one of the other children secretly brought a second water-jar, and when she had filled it, hid it in the bushes, while she used the other for cooking. That night she told her mother, under promise of secrecy, and showed her where she had

hidden the water-jar which they brought back to the house. As might have been expected, the story was soon spread all over the place, and at last reached the ears of the chief. He sent for the child to the council-place, loaded her with gold ornaments, and directed her, in the presence of the assembled people, to bring rain. (We may perhaps infer that there had been ineffectual attempts at persuasion. The "gold ornaments" are probably a touch introduced only after the story had reached the coast region). She asked all the bystanders to retire to a distance, but they refused. Then she looked up at the sky and sang; the clouds collected, and presently there was a great rain, with lightning and thunder and in the midst of it, the child was caught up to the sky and never seen again.

Rain-making is one among the several important religious features noticed in Africa. This important rain-making function is to be conducted through a rain queen only. She is considered as regulating the seasons and keeps the cyclic regularity; when she dies the seasons would fall out of coherence resulting in drought; her very emotions affect the rain: she cannot work well if she is dissatisfied, angry or sad. When rain is needed councillors would tell the queen that, "The people are crying, gifts are brought to her and dances may be held".

The above information of sacred girl and rain queen could be spoken parallel to the epic story in Tamil literary tradition, about Kannaki and other Goddesses.

Small Pox Deity

In Dravidian land people believe that the Goddess will punish them with small pox. The confession or regular prayer will eradicate the small pox. In villages if anybody is affected by small pox, the people will say "Ammā has come". (Mother has come.) Then they will begin giving offerings to her. In Africa also such custom prevails. In West Africa there are a lot of small pox Gods. The priest isolates the sufferers and treats them for the disease. Eve and Yoruba associate small pox with the cult of earth. The people of Benin also consider small pox as a punishment of God.

Words for mother and mother Goddess

In Dravidian languages *ammā*, *tāy*, *āy*, and few other words denote mother. Wolof, Serer and Jola, the languages of Senegal also have a word related with *āy* or *tāy* in Tamil.

The Egyptians worshipped a Goddess called *Maut*. The Ewe people also has a similar word for Goddess, namely *Mau*. The words, *amman* of Dogon people, (Mali) *Morimo* of Sotho Tswana tribe, Nyonom of the *Kā* (Gold coast), *Molimo* of Basuto 'Morimo' of Bechuana', *Nyam* or *Nyama* of Bambara (Western Sudan) resemble the Dravidian words *Māriammā* or *ammā* which denotes mother or Mother Goddess. However the African words referred above, do not refer feminine character but mean only the supreme being and rain as in Dravidian languages.

Tamil Brahui and African

The words "annai" "annāy" were used in classical Tamil Literature to mean mother. These words are still being used as *nani* in Brahui, a North Dravidian language of Baluchistan. It is used there to denote the mother Goddess. The Kushans of North India similarly use the word *Nānā* for mother Goddess which must have undoubtedly been of Tamil origin.

In the same way, the central and West African Togos call their supreme being *Nānā*. *Nānā* has temples and devotees and, is in fact a female creature. Her name has been used in proverbial contexts and salutations in the same way as of *Mau* of East African Togos. It is believed to have pro-creating and rewarding powers.

The Temple of mother Goddess

In Dravidian India each village has many temples erected for the mother Goddess and the temple will be called after the deity. The Meenakshi amman temple is situated in Madurai, the ancient capital of Pandiya Kingdom. The complexion of the deity Amman is black and hence being called *Kālī* (black woman or *Karuppāyi*, or *Karuttamma*). These Goddesses must have had some semblance of origin with *Minoan*—mother Goddess, atleast in her ethnionic aspect. An image of the Babylonian mother Goddess dated 2000 B.C. was discovered at Nippur and

another at an ancient Sumerian temple 'Ishtar' at 'Assur'. The Anatolian Goddess *ma* may perhaps be the same⁴. A Syrian mother Goddess on a mycenaian ivory was found at the part of *Ras-Al Shamrah*. It is dressed in Mycenaian fashion and kept on an alter with a lion on each side holding an ear of corn. The motif must be of oriental origin, particularly of Sumerian, but became popular throughout the Aegean Sea.⁵

Lion is the carrier of Kāli, the Indian mother Goddess, comparable to that of Syrians. Both the instances such as the worship of mother Goddess and its predominant existence in matriarchal systems are prevalent in Africa too. The matriarchal system, mother Goddess worship and common words used for it are the same in both the continents.

Mother Father God

People believe that God created mankind and other beings of the earth. Those of the matriarchal system consider God as Mother and others as Father. Many existing and extinct civilizations treat their God as masculine. Ancient Hebrews, Egyptians, Greeks and Romans believed so. There is no equal place to mother nor is there any superiority with Lord in Christianity. Islam prohibits the entry of Women in the altar of mosques.

Ammai-Appa and Mau Lisa

Some societies consider God to be neither masculine nor feminine. Some conceive this to be both mother and father. Indian religions have given equal, sometimes even superior status to women, Lord Siva shares half of his body with Goddess Uma, his consort and the mother Goddess. Therefore, devotee call this bimorphic feature of the God/Goddess, ammai-appans literary meaning father-mother, Uma Mahāswaran and Arthanāriswaran. There are a number of hymns in Tamil and in other Indian languages praising God with these names. Even Sculptures, paintings, carvings in the temples all over India depict Siva to have masculine features at the right half and feminine features with a breast at the left half respectively. Similar beliefs and customs are available from the Western Africa. The Ewe people, the inhabitants of the countries Benin and Togo believe

4. Rev. Fr. H. S. David, Tamil culture Vol.

5. Philip K. Hitti, History of Syria p. 89

their Goddess *Mau* (Mawu) to be always with *Lisā*, the lord. These people call their God as "Mau-Lisā" just the same way, the Tamils call their God as "Ammāi-Appā" (mother-father). *Ashanti* of Gold coast believe that God is a female, the great mother. Under another aspect the sun appears as a personification of the supreme God. There may, probably, be a duality of sex in this conception.⁶ The Queen mother of *Ashanti* is regarded as the daughter of the moon, the feminine aspect of the supreme being.

Ga, the tribe inhabiting the Western Coast of Ghana call their God 'atā' - 'nā'. According to them God combines both male and female in his nature.

Mau of Ewe and Ammā of Tamils

In all the Dravidian languages, the word 'ammā' would mean, mother. People of Southern India are the worshippers of mother Goddess and they call the deity 'ammā'

In the same way the West African tribes Ewe worship a mother Goddess and call her '*Mau*' which resembles the word 'ammā'

Amma and moon

A red-wooden statue with large breasts and a crescent in the left hand is kept in the Museum of *Abomey*, the capital of *Dohomey*.⁷

The wooden image of '*Mau*' with a crescent in the left hand resembles the Dravidian Goddess *Uma* having a crescent on her head⁸.

Anger of mother Goddess

Dravidians believe that the disease, drought and other evil consequences are the result of mother Goddess' angry. In the

6. Parrinder E. S. African Traditional Religion, p. 33, 43

7. Edwin, W. Smith African ideas of God p. 12

8. Tamil epic *Cīlapattikāram* describes in this way.

same way the Africans also believe that the anger of *mau* would affect them. *Ewe* people say that 'mau' has sent diseases, and also sends remedies.

Attributes of kindness to mother goddess

Tamil literary traditions praise Uma, the mother Goddess to be more gracious and kindful towards all the beings unlike Lord Siva, the God of destruction. Similarly, *Mau* of *Ewe* is gentle and forgiving in nature. Hence it is usual for them to say, when *Lisā* (male God) punishes, *mau* Goddess pardons.

Worship of Fire, Sun and Siva

Lord Siva is spoken generally with fire. Literature and legends call him the destroyer and a God of anger. So also in the conception of the *Ewes*, their male partner *Lisā* would punish the people. *Lisā* is also relatively spoken with the sun. Fire and the sun are closely connected with each other.

Conclusion

Thus, the points of similarity in the cult of mother Goddess worship between the Africans and Dravidians could be traced from the names used for the mother Goddess i.e. *Ammā*, (Dravidian) and *Mau* (African) and by the semblance in the names of 'Lord Siva' (Dravidian) and 'Lisā' (African). The separate identity of the Lord Siva or the Goddess Uma is prevalent in India, whereas in Western Africa very rarely does one find the above concept to exist through the worship of 'Mau-Lisā'. Therefore, the words denoting the supreme being the concept of mother Goddess and the semblance between the images of the deities evince the existing similarities between the Dravidians and the African cults.

SERPENT CULT IN DRAVIDIAN INDIA AND AFRICA

An intensive comparative study of the existing similarities between the Africans and Dravidians based on race, physique, language and culture has begun only recently. Study based on linguistic perspectives although was launched in the early 20th century, research on cultural lines is of very recent origin.

Anthropologists divide the human race into three broad categories. They are :

- 1 The Black Race — Negro — Negrito
- 2 The Yellow Race — Mangoloid
- 3 The White Race — Caucasoid (Aryans)

Of these three races Black race is traced in Africa (South of Sahara) the Southern India and Australia, with some variations. They exhibit striking similarities between them. They are black complexioned, black haired, and black-eyed with black eyelashes. The only difference noted is the shape of their nose and cheeks which may be rightly attributed to the racial mix and climatic conditions. There is linguistic similarity too between Dravidian and African languages which has been first pointed out by a French Scholar, Miss. Homburger. Intensive research on this particular aspect is in progress both in the Indian University (Annamalai University) and African University (IFAN, University of Dakar). Study about the cultural similarities is in its initial stages.

The primary factor among the cultural features is worship. Primitive man worshipped nature and other creatures which did him good as being established by the literature in Tamil. 'Animism', a type of worship needs a special mention in this regard. Africans nurtured this cult. The serpent cult seemed to have spread in the same line. Serpent cult, though, spread all over the world, a deep scrutiny reveals, several similarities affirming close relationship in the existing custom between the Dravidians and Africans. They are listed below.

Words meaning serpent

In Dravidian languages serpent is called, 'pāmpu' (Tamil and Malayalam) *pāb* (Kota) *pōb* (Toda) *hāvu* (Badaga) *pāvu* (Kannada) *pāmbi* (Kota) *Kāvu* (Tulu) *pāmu* (Telugu) *pām* (Kolami) *pām* (Naiki) *bām* (Parji) *bām* (Kadb) *pāva* (Prakrit) - A Dravidian Etymological Dictionary No: 3361). Nāgam, arā, aravu and aravam would also mean serpent in Tamil. Havu is the modified form of the word *pāmpu*. The word *nāgā* for serpent is widely used in Northern India and in some of the Indo-European countries but, its origin is traced in Dravidian land. Therefore, *Pāmpu* and *nāgā* may be treated as the Dravidian words denoting serpent. *Jān* in Wolof, *njāwa* in Pular, *fangol* in Serēr, *everla* in *Jōla* are some of the words used for serpent in the west African languages.

'fangol' in Serēr and 'pāmpu' in Tamil *njāwa* in Pular and *kāvu* in Tulu 'Jān' in Wolof and 'nāgam' in Dravidian languages are found to be phonetically with each other. The bambarra tribes in Africa consider it sinful to eat serpent flesh. They believe that serpents would cure all the diseases and thus adore them. These people who are otherwise called Toroule are probably being called "bambarra" due to their association with serpents, but this needs further evidence to be conclusive. Identical to the Tamil word *Nāgā*, the word *niel* is in usage in the Khoradar region of Africa. Egyptians held that the sun has been guarded by a serpent. The name of the sun God "Ra" and "uraeus" for serpent, sounds like the Tamil words 'arā' 'aravu' and 'aravam'.

Ngong Nyang tribes believe that they belong to a serpent race called *Aro* which sounds like "aravam" or "arā" in Tamil meaning 'Serpent'. Aramba tribe (Dinka) claims themselves to be the followers of Serpent. An African tribe named 'Aramba' and Gor, their serpent-God also resemble the words 'arā' and 'aravam.'

Cics, an African tribe claim to belong to 'Anong' a snake tribe. Anong sounds like the word *nāgā* in Tamil. *Ngong Nyang* sounds like *Raj Nāg'a* sanskritized - Tamil word.

Serpent worship and bless of children

The native Africans were worshipping serpents until Christianity and Islam made their entry. Many of their beliefs in serpent worship are similar to those of *Dravidian beliefs*.

- 1 Sterility will go by worshipping serpents
- 2 Draught will be got rid of and rain will result and
- 3 Diseases will be cured.

More Particularly, these three beliefs are absolutely identical in African and Dravidian culture. In Dravidian States, though several types of serpents exist, cobra (*Nāga Rājā*) is given much prominence and is being worshipped with utmost reverence. Parallel to this in Africa, python is worshipped. However, the Egyptians who evolved the ancient civilization in the north frontier worshipped only cobra. The Africans in the South of Sahara are found to have worshipped other serpents including cobra although prime importance was given to python.

It was believed that serpents will bless childless couple with children if continuously worshipped. Budu, the people of southern Uganda worship python for progeny. They perform some rituals for seven days at the temple of python and believe that their prayers would be answered with the gift of a child. The vow to the python deity will be satisfied as soon as the child is born. Otherwise, they believed that the child may be harmed and may even die.

Once upon a time, it is said that the king of Uganda had asked every chieftain of the state to perform rituals at python temples in order to be blessed with a child.

In West Africa too, women pray to the python-God to bless them with children and perform continuous prayers. As a token of gratitude as soon as the child is born they place many things before the temple as their offerings to python.

In South Nigeria, Ibo women believe that if a serpent comes towards a girl she will soon become pregnant. Some country folks in Tamil Nadu, believe that if a person dreams of a serpent either his wife or his close relative will soon become pregnant.

Bangala, an African tribe has another belief connected with serpent. They believe that if the serpent-Iwaladi, which has a red symbol lies down near a man, his wife will become pregnant. It is said that no girl should try to get up when a Iwaladi serpent passes her and she should spray a sort of powder after the serpent has crossed her. They believe that she will become pregnant if the powder is accepted.

During a particular season, pythons may be seen encircling certain trees and people here, attribute significance to it and hold it as an indication of women becoming pregnant.

Hausa women also believe that if serpent appears in their dreams they will bear a child. Bavili, who inhabit Lango coast call certain serpents as Bobo meaning the bearing ones and some others Sasa meaning procreating ones. Fan, another tribe of the same region, on attaining age, will mould the figures of serpents in the clay and will hold initiative celebrations. All the rituals performed on such occasions will personify the serpents as penis. Africans believe in the same way as the Dravidians believe that serpents will bless one with progeny. The practice of coming round the sacred trees to get progeny is reported also there in Africa. The sacred trees connected with serpent worship in Dravidian states and in Africa are pipal trees and palm trees, respectively.¹

The Africans believe that only serpent taught the act of intercourse to men. A story on these lines goes thus:

The Lord of heaven sent a venomless python with a man and a woman to the earth. The python created the home and river. Since the man and woman did not know how to have intercourse, the women did not bear a child for a long time. The serpent came forward to teach them how to intercourse. It ordered them to stand facing each other closely. It brought out some water in its mouth from the river and sprayed it on the bellies of the man and woman sounding, "Kus Kus". It then ordered them to lie closely in their home and bid them goodbye. Later on a child was born.²

In some places of Africa, serpent worship on the occasion of marriage has been made compulsory. This kind of custom is still prevailing at Nainarkoil of Chettinad (Tamil Nadu). The bride has to clean a hut for the python and will place milk etc., on a small bench and will sit on the ground. The python will move over to her, eat the offerings and will disappear in the bush.

In Dravidian land also, beliefs associating serpents with marriage and sex do exist. Ancient Tamil literature compares the woman's private organ to the hood of the serpent.^{2a} It seems that the Tamils were fascinated by the mating of serpents. That is why the phrase "Aravanaitthal" has been used to denote the act of embracing. It should have been used to mean "to embrace as ordered by serpents". From these practices one could trace the common element of serpent worship between the Dravidians and Africans.

According to the Old Testament, Satan was present in the form of a serpent in the garden of Eden. The African legend also says that man-woman relation was first taught by a serpent. Tamil, the ancient language in India, having enormous litera-

2. Parrinder E. G. African Mythology P. 50

2a அரவணை படம் புறையுள் பாவைநின் அககுற பரப்பு — Thandi
—alamkaram Commentary Porul ani - Pukazhuvamai.

ture use the phrase "Aravu (serpent) Anaithal (embrace) i. e., "Aravanaitthal". All these indicate that ancient man was attracted by the serpent coition. Only after seeing the serpent coition he should have learnt about intercourse. Prayers for marriage and for child as well as the worship of two serpents carved in an entwined form found in Tamil Nadu — would reaffirm such a conclusion.

Serpent worship and phallus

The Black Africans depicted serpents as Phallus of men and worshipped them with reverence, as phallus they understood, is essential for reproduction. Syrians also worshipped serpents as phallus. Bavillians of Lango coast distinguished serpents as 'Sasa' and believed them to represent males. The initiation ceremony of Fan of the same area also involves serpent figures made out of clay. A clay serpent was used to indicate that a boy has come of age and is capable of reproduction. South Nigerians also believe serpents to represent phallus.

Pangee Tribe has also considered serpents as male organs and gave prominence to it in their initiative ceremonies. In Ivory Coast of Africa similar belief existed.

Pangee Tribe also considered serpents as male organs.

Egyptian princes of the ancient civilization also seem to have carried such a belief with them. Ancient pictures found there show three gods. On the right is Reshep, in the middle is the Syrian goddess Qadesh, standing nude behind a lion and holding a serpent in her left hand and having next to her the male god Ammon with an erect phallus. In another portrait, Horus is found standing on his crocodiles holding two serpents and a scorpion in each hand.

These pictures were of very ancient time, dated centuries far before the Christ was born would confirm that serpent was used for the phallus worship.

In India, particularly in the Dravidian states, the Lingā worship is considered as phallus worship by the anthropologists. Gilbert Slatter, who did research on these lines has established similar idea.³ The shape of Lingā also confirms that. Even to-day, one can see that Lingā sculpture is kept under the hood of five-headed serpent. The association of Lord Siva (whose other form is Lingā) with snakes, also indicates the parallel ideas existing in Africa and Dravidian land on phallus worship.

Serpent worship and Female organ (Pudendum Muliebre):

Another legend, popular among the Africans Pygmies is as follows :

Three persons were created on the earth. Two of them were males and the other was a female. The males consisted of a negro and a pygmy. One day Negro sorrowfully told the pygmy :

“I do not know how to live with my sister. The wound between her legs never heals. In spite of continued treatment, blood could not be stopped from dripping.

Pygmy who had already obtained the knowledge regarding woman from the God, laughed at this. He volunteered to cure the woman's ‘wound’. Separating the woman from the negro he made love with the girl. The intercourse resulted in reproduction of children.

This legend reveals that woman's organ was considered as an incurable wound. Luyia tribe of Kenya believed that woman's organ was a wound (ulcer) in earlier times. Words used among the Dravidians to denote “Woman's Organ” appears to sound like a “wound”. (A Dravidians Etymological Dictionary No. 3509).

3. Gilbert Slatter, *Dravidian Elements in Indian Culture*, London 1924, Bern.

Sexual Relationship and the moon :

Another story spoken among the African Pygmies tries to explain the origin of man in some other way.⁴

Once upon a time the first woman was living with her first man Lightning. They did not know how to have sexual intercourse. One day the Moon met the Lightning and was talking with him. He asked Lightning how he was living with his first woman. Lightning replied that he did not know how to have sexual intercourse. The Moon asked him to marry the girl and live with her. But Lightning rejected it since he did not know how to have sexual intercourse. The Moon caused menses to the first woman (Even now some African tribes are calculating their months with the help of the monthly menses of the woman). Then only Lightning had sexual intercourse with that woman and they begot children. These children were brown and black in colour.

The stories which link moon with the sexual intercourse do also exist in Dravidian continent. For instance, Nedunalvā dai a great Cankam literature in Tamil describes how the Queen Pāndimā Dēvi, the consort of the great king Netunchelian, was suffering from the mental torture induced by the amorous pictures of the Moon seen in the loving company of his consort, painted on the ceiling above her cot while her husband was away in the battle field. It could be inferred from this that the moon has the potentiality to induce sexual impulse leading to sexual intercourse. Indian mythology illustrates the desire of the moon to have intimacy with women in a number of stories. There is a Tamil proverb which says that "Chandiran (moon) and Indiran were destroyed by Women". 'Indiran kettatum peṇṇālē, Chandiran kettatum peṇṇālē.' It is reasonable to compare this with the Moon described in the Pygmy stories of Africa, which induces the Lightning to have sexual intercourse with the first woman.

4. African Mythology - Chapt. The Mystery of birth p. 51.

Serpent cult and the Rainbow

In Africa and central India there is a custom of worshipping the rainbow as a serpent. They believed that water snakes are guarding the water and this belief is the basis for their worshipping the rainbow which indicates the coming of rain. The Africans expressed their belief in the worship of rainbow as a serpent. In their portrayal a serpent clutches its own tail by its mouth. There is a story about this rainbow serpent in Senegal and Zambia. The story goes like this :

The prosperity of Senegal and Gambia depended on their worship of the serpent.

They must sacrifice a beautiful girl to their serpent god. Every year they would catch a beautiful girl and push her into the river in which the serpent lived. The serpent would come out of its abode and ate her off. Those people believed that their country would prosper and rain would come if this ritual was performed. Once, when a beautiful girl was brought to be sacrificed her lover came in front and he rescued his beloved and killed the serpent too.

In South Nigeria, there prevails yet another story among the people of Esa.

The ancestors of the people of Esa were assuring their tribe through media that there would be plenty of rain in that year. But the rainbow serpent which appeared in the sky, prevented the rain. Those people thought that a huge python had appeared and it was searching for a home. In Africa, people worshipped the rainbow as a serpent-God called Oshumare. People thought that the serpent which came from the underworld has appeared as rainbow to prevent the downpour.

Bavali people of Lango sea-coast believed that the serpents were the guardians of streams. They worshipped the red-coloured 'xamo' serpent as rain serpent. If these serpents were killed by the people, rain would not pour. There were plenty of stories and beliefs about this rainbow serpent in Africa. In India, especially in the states of central India there were many beliefs considering

rainbow as a serpent. They believe that the rainbow is the smoke that comes out from the mouth of the serpent which has come out of the underworld. Baiga tribe believes that the rainbow comes out from the serpent-hill which is its abode on the earth. They explain that the rainbow-serpent shoots out of the earth in search of another serpent-hill in the sky and after finding it out comes down to earth and this causes the appearance of the rainbow. The tribal people who live on the Maria mountains also regard the rainbow as a serpent and that it comes out from the serpent hill on the east.⁵

Since most of the serpents live in streams and rivers the people believed that they were guarding the water. The rain brings water to the earth. The rainbow is associated with the rain. The curve of the rainbow and the different colours of it must have created an image of huge serpent in the minds of the people. It is only because of that reason, it seems the people have conceived rainbow as a serpent. The beliefs that the huge serpent Kālinkan, which was killed by Lord Krishnā to protect the lake in which it lived and the story of Lord Krishnā killing the serpent which caused trouble to the people that prevails among the people of Senegambia closely resemble each other.

Worship of serpent and rain

The Africans believed that rain would come if they worship the serpent that was related with the rainbow. Even the black Australians worshipped the rainbow-serpent. They believed that this rainbow serpent protected all the streams of Australia. The

5. Verrier Elwin - *Mythe of Middle India*, Oxford University Press, Madras 1949, p. 102.

Here we must also refer to the connection which is believed to exist between the anti-hill and the rainbow. "The rain bow, "Varahamihira says", is formed by varicoloured Solar rays that, pressed by the wind, appear in the shape of a bow in a cloudy sky. Some masters say that the rainbow arises out of the exhalations of the serpents of Ananta's family."

The famous Indian Astrologer, offers two different explanations: the one pseudo-physical and the other mythological. He places them side by side, without rejecting either of the two.

Kālidāsa too, in his *Mēghadūta* (Stanza 15) speaks of the 'bow of Indra' which issues forth from the top of the ant hill. Vallabhadēva, in commenting on this Stanza, quotes an ancient tradition. (āgama)

Australian tribal people, when they want rain, would paint the picture of a serpent on a pole and plant it facing the sky. They believed that they would get rain if they do this. In north America, the Hopi Red Indians of Arizona would perform 'rain-dance' to get rain. Even the Kuiche Indian who live in Guatemala perform this kind of dance. This rain-dance was performed to send the serpent as a messenger to the God of Rain.

The worship of serpent is related with the rain among the tribal people of Africa, Australia, America and India.

In Dravidian states, the worship of serpent did not have direct contact with the worship of rain. However, the worship of Māriamman was related with the down pour of rain. If it did not rain, the people of that village would perform a special prayer. They believed that it would rain if they performed this festival. The word 'Māri' means rain and they called the Goddess of their village as 'Māriamman' because of their belief in that Goddess of rain. The belief that it would not rain if they did not have the grace of the Goddess is described in the literature of 3rd century A.D. Due to the rage of the Goddess Kannagi there was no rain in the Pāndiyan kingdom. So, they performed a festival sacrificing a goat and they got rain. This incident is narrated by the Saint Poet Ilankō, (3.A.D.) in *Silappathikāram*. Even the great poet Ilanko praises and worships rain as "Praying the great rain! Praying the great rain! (Māmazhai Pōrrudhum, Māmazhai Pōrrudhum) in 'Mangala Vāṭṭhu Pādal'. In it he speaks about the greatness of rain and the Goddess of Māri. Thirukuraḷ, which dates back to 2nd century A.D. extols the importance of rain in a separate chapter 'Vān Cirappu'. Pāvai songs which the people of Tamil Nadu, sing, would also show the reverential belief associating the Goddess with rain. Serpent is one of the signs of the Goddess of rain-Māriamman. There are sculptures of Kālī which portraits the goddess with serpents winding her arms.

It is believed that the goddess Karumāriamman of Thiruvērkaḍu near Madras appeared as a black snake. Even today the

main deity of Karumāriamman is inlaid as sitting beneath the five-headed serpent. The goddess is brought out in a serpent chariot in procession. The name 'Karumāriamman' can be analysed into Karu + Nāgam + Māri and it has become Karumāriamman which shows the relationship between the goddess and the serpent.

In Tamil Nadu it was believed that the appearance of serpent in dreams is the goddess herself.

The people of Nāgercoil in Kanyakumari district, the southern most part of the Indian peninsula worship the five-headed snake as 'Nākaramman' (the serpent mother).

In Chingleput district of Tamil Nadu, the deity serpent is called 'Ammaachiyār'. This word is a combination of three different words: Amman + Aachi + Ār. 'Ammachi' is another form of 'Amman' (mother). In Malayalam 'Ammachi' means 'Amman'. In Kanyakumari district there are names with suffixes such as 'Ammal', 'ammai' and there are proper names such as 'Ammachi'.

In small villages, people will not disturb the ant hills if found nearby the temple of 'Māri amman' as they believe that they are the hide outs of the serpents. They tend to worship those serpent hills by offering milk and egg. In Puthur a small village in Trichy district of Tamil Nadu, serpent hills of Mariamman temple are worshipped. In Thiruvērkadu, there is a serpent-hill nearby the 'Karumāriamman' temple and scores of devotees visit and receive the blessings of the serpent, the other form of the principal deity, a mother goddess.

The association of the serpent worship with the worship of Māriamman can widely be seen in Kerala too. The worship of Māriamman in Tamil Nadu is celebrated in the form of a worship of the goddess 'Bakavati' in Kerala. In Kotumkalur (Kerala) there is a temple to a small pox deity nearby the temple of goddess 'Bakavati'. There is a serpent hill in this temple which is the principal object of all the worship's here,

The people of Andhra believe that 'Nagavali', the wife of a sage 'Maharishi' had reborn as Māriamman.

These information would show the association of the Māriamman worship with that of the serpent worship. There is a striking similarity between the worship of serpent among the Africans and the worship of Māriamman, the Goddess which is associated with the serpent among the Tamilians (Dravidian) for rain.

Serpent and the origin of river

People who talked about the serpent in relation to the rain, associated the serpent with brooks and rivers too. The people of south Nigeria related the origin of the Kuuva river with the serpent. The story which is popular among those people is given below:

In Kuuva river the water was subsiding. Only a little water was running in that river. In the opposite side of the water channel, two serpents were swimming side by side. After a long distance they reached the mouth of that river. A big water falls was there. The serpents knurled each other with their tails. They proceeded towards the water-falls opposite to it. When they were proceeding forward they raised a loud noise like "Brr-oo-oo". Their noise was louder than the noise of the waterfalls. They swam to the other end of the waterfalls. At first they stopped the water flowing. Then they allowed the water to flow. They swam along the course of water channel and made the water flow in the Kuuva river.

The above story reveals the African belief that the serpent was the origin of the river water. In India also the origin of river is related with the serpent. Indian people believe that there is a nether world in the basements of rivers, pools and lakes. Sivagnāna Munivar, describing the depth of the river in Kullathur in his "Amuthāmbikai Pillaith Tamil" says that the

river was so deep as to reach the serpent world. Many poets have described the deep basements of the rivers as the residence of the world of serpents.⁶ If any serpent raises its hood in anger Tamilians say, that the serpent is angry or Ciirram. Like that if any river breaches the banks, Tamils would say that the river got angry or Ciirram. The Tamil word 'Ciirram' (anger) is a common usage for serpent and river. Therefore this word itself speaks of the close relationship between these two.

The image of the God Civā, with the serpent and the Ganges over his head reminds us of the relationship between the origin of the Ganges and the serpent.

All these reveal the connection of the serpents with the river. These can be compared with the connection of the serpent with the origin of African rivers.

Worship of serpent and Remedy for Diseases:

African people worshipped serpents as their ancestors.^{6a} They believed that the king and their relatives would be reborn as serpents. The ancestors must be probably remembered by the people. Obsequies must be duly performed. If they did not do these things they would suffer. Though the Tamils do not worship the serpent as their ancestors did they believe in performing obsequies.

People trusted in the ancestor's capacity to cause disease. They believed that these diseases were curable if they worship their ancestors. When they were attacked by any disease they thought that, that could be cured by worshipping serpents. So the power to cure the diseases as they believed, was yet another reason for the spread of serpent worship in Africa. Native Africans believe that the disease of the children is curable if the serpent, reels itself over the children for a short while. To cure their diseases the people would pray serpents through the serpent sorcerers or the priests of the serpent temple.

6. Amaury Telbat—Life in Southern Nigeria. pp. 305, 306.

6a. The Onges, a Negrito tribe of Little Andaman (India) island also has the same belief.

There is a belief among the Dravidians that if a cobra crawls over a person without biting him, that person would become rich. In Tamil Nadu too, people believed that serpent worship would cure the diseases. Especially, if they worship the king cobra in Nāgercoil even leprosy could be cured. It is believed that the king of Kalakkātu was cured in the same way worshipping this king cobra. The people of Kanyakumari believe that even blindness could be cured by worshipping the King Cobra. Thurston reports of this belief of the Tamils in his ethnographic notes.*

People have the practice of smearing their forehead with the mud of the serpent-hill inside the temple. They believe that it would cure all their diseases. There is a separate temple for the serpent hill near by the Karumāriamman temple at Tiruvērkatu. People offer money, saffron powder, salt and pepper and circumambulate the serpent-hill and would smear the sacred mud of the hill on their forehead.

People believed that the serpent worship at Tirucenkōtu would cure rheumatism. A folk song of that region gives this information.

“When I worshipped the deity, my disease was not cured but when I worshipped the serpent, it was cured”.

Therefore the belief that the worship of serpent would cure a disease, was prevalent in Tamil Nadu. Though this belief differed at the level of ancestor's cult, both the Africans and the Tamils have a similar belief on the curing effect by serpent worship.

Temples of serpent

Rarely does one find a separate temple for serpent worship in Tamil Nadu. However, in olden days all the temples were found under the sacred trees. There were many serpent-hills under the pipal trees. People went to these trees and worshipped. Since all the temples were once, situated under the trees one could safely infer that the worship of serpent was performed in

separate temple. In Nāgercoil there was a separate temple for serpent. Though the temple was very big, the roof of the sanctum sanctorum was made up of plaited coconut leaves.

In West Africa, there are separate temples for serpent near the sea-shore and on the banks of the river. Particularly, Benin of West Africa is famous for serpent temples. In Abomey there is a temple for serpent. The entrance gate of that temple is decorated beautifully. Inside the temple there are many serpents running hither and thither. There is a huge serpent whose head or tail cannot be found out easily. People worship them. There are priests and priestesses in that temple.

Most of the temples in Tamil Nadu have a trained elephant. Like that, the African serpent temples have trained serpents. The serpents of the temple come to the streets. On seeing these serpents, people procrastinate before them.

The serpent temples are not found in the whole of African continent except in Benin, South Nigeria and South of Lake Victoria Nyanza. This kind of living serpent cult is available at Mannār Sālai in Kerala of South India.

African people did not worship the serpent as a great God but only as a demi-God of minor importance. The Serer of Senegal consider serpent as mediator mediates the God and people. Even in Tamil Nadu, the serpent worship is performed only with minor importance and by a simple ceremony.

Serpent worship and the fertility

The prosperity of a country depends upon the worship of the serpent. Especially the African people will pray to the water-snake, before going for fishing. A priest performs this ceremony. This priest will go to a river in the forest. He will offer sugar - cane, millet, plantains and cassara to the serpent. Then they worship the serpent and they will pray for a great success in their fishing.* There is a belief among them that if they worship the serpent, land will become fertile.

8 Edwin. W Smith African Ideas of God, among Ngombe tribe, Northern Belgian Congo. pp.177 178.

Common belief of the Dravidians is that the serpent worship will make their lands fertile and protect their cattles.⁹ One must remember that in India the worship of serpent is performed in the months of June, July, August and September. 'Nāgapanchami' festival is celebrated in these months only. In Tamil Nadu, June-July is the proper season for sowing the seeds. There is a proverb to the effect that one must sow the seeds in the month of Aati. (June and July).

"You must sow in the month of Aati" (Aati Pattam Tēti Vidhai) There will be plenty of water in the rivers flowing in Tamil Nadu during this period. The wet and dry cultivation of agricultural lands will begin during this period. The serpent worship performed particularly during this period of the year tempts one to link the serpent worship with the fertility of the agricultural lands.

Even today in Tamil Nadu, one could witness country folks offering the first yield of their crops and vegetables to the deity. They will also offer of the cow obtained immediately after it has given birth to a calf.

These practices of Tamils would show the similarity noticed between the Dravidians and Africans on the serpent worship.

The cultivators will perform pūjās at the "Sani mūlai", the position of the planet Saturn (North East Corner) before they start ploughing. They will offer flowers, fruits, joss stick and fried grains and lit campher and worship the Sani [saturn]. The main purpose of this worship is to get a good harvest. It is worthy to examine the significance of performing pūjās at that particular corner, the "Sani Mūlai". Astromically that corner is considered to be the home of the planet saturn who is worshipped by the Indians with awe and full of reverence. Sani (saturn) is considered as determining the fate of beings according to Hindu mythology and serpent is believed to be a form of sani (saturn).

Serpent and Brotherhood :

In Africa, people treat the serpents as their brother and stories connected with this custom still prevalent among them.

9. Anthropology in India-Chapter: Serpentology p. 197.

Rev. Fr. Tanghe has given an account of experiences gained during his visit to North Congo to spread Christianity:

In 1912 Rev. Fr. Tanghe built a hut for him in Ngbandi village. After building the hut he was sleeping on his cot at night. On hearing some noise he woke up. He lit a candle and looked all around. He saw a long serpent under his cot. At once he got ready to fetch his gun. But the serpent disappeared before his arrival.

The next day also he heard some loud noise and woke up. He lit the lamp and saw a long serpent. It was eating a kitten of his pet-cat. The mother-cat was struggling to save her kittens. But the serpent had stung the cat. The cat fell down and fainted. Rev. Father shot the serpent with his gun. But it was not hit. The serpent raised its head and tried to peck the Father. Then it left the room slowly. Father fired for four times but the serpent disappeared. The cook of the Father, who was an African, woke up amidst this commotion. He came running with his long gun. He found out the serpent and killed it. After killing the serpent he wept. Father, without knowing the reason, was blinking. He feared whether he had sprained his nerves in fear. He tried to console the cook. At that time, some natives came that way. They told him not to put any questions to the cook. They said to the Father that the cook also a serpent.

Father could not understand anything. When the cook stopped his cry after some time, Father asked the reason for his cry. Then the cook said: "I am one of the twins. So I am a serpent. I have killed my brother who was in the shape of a serpent. That is why I cried. If I had cried the dead serpent's brother would cause some 'disease to me."

The next day his twin sister came there. Both of them did atonement for having killed their brother-serpent. They smeared their arms and shoulders with some red powder made out of a particular tree. They sprinkled the remaining powder on the dead body of the serpent. Only after doing this serpent atonement they became calm.

The illustration mentioned above gives us the information that all the twin borns are brothers to the serpent. Even an individual child is regarded as a brother to the serpent. The following pastoral story which exists in Senegal reveals this:

A mother had two children. One was a boy and another was a serpent child. They were born and brought up as twins. The serpent child wanted to go to the forest. His parents and his brother prevented him from doing so.

As the child grew up, the parents wanted him to marry someone. They searched for a suitable bride and found out. They decided to marry that girl to him

The serpent-son tried to run away to the forest. His brother found out a solution to prevent this. He put the serpent brother in a room. He gave food and other requirements to him without fail.

In these circumstances he got married. The wife did not know anything about his serpent brother. Her husband did not tell her anything. Her husband gave food to his serpent brother at lunch times and attended to his brother's needs. His wife saw the locked room. She saw her husband going to that room everyday. She grew suspicious. She suspected that her husband had kept some girl in that room and every day he went there to have some pleasant hours with that girl. Her husband did tell nothing to her. He went to that room secretly. All these things strengthened her suspicion.

One day she wanted to do one thing in her husband's absence. She was very eager to open the room and see who was there. Unable to control her desire she opened the room and went inside. No sooner did she open the room than the serpent-son ran out of the room to the forest. She was afraid of it and was trembling till her husband's arrival.

Her husband returned home. She informed him of the happening. He explained to her that the serpent was his brother and explained the reason for keeping him inside a locked room.

What to do next? He went to the forest in search of his brother. He searched for his brother everywhere, but in vain. At last he saw his brother at the foot of a mountain. He gladly went near his brother. He requested his brother to return home. But he refused. His brother asked for the reason. He said:

“I have been born as a serpent. These forests and mountains are the fittest places to me and not your home. So, let me live here itself. If you really love me, please do one thing for my sake. Do not beat or allow anyone, to beat any serpent”.

His brother decided to fulfil his request: From that day he would not beat any serpent. Moreover he would not allow others also to beat it. This custom had spread among the African people.

From these stories, one is able to infer how the African people treat the serpent as their brother. This custom prevails among the Red Indians too.

The history of Lord Vishnu in the Indian mythology shows similar such beliefs that existed in India. In Mahābhārathā, the serpent Aṣṭisēshā on whom Vishṇu reclines, is regarded as the elder brother of Balarāmā.

Similar conception about the serpent man had found its entry into Tamil Nadu too. There is a report about an instance, that a man living in Chingleput district of Tamil Nadu, is said to have been born with a serpent:

Kanniappan is the name of that youth. He is the second son of his mother. Before his birth, his mother gave birth to a serpent which is now not alive. Kanniappan is born after that from the mother's womb. He had been with the serpent in his mother's womb. As a mark of that, he always walks with his hands braided like two serpents.

Serpent worship and ancestors worship

Africans are unique in their serpent worship and their conceptions associate their ancestral worship with it. Masai

Wakikuyu, Nandi, Kavirondo, Suk and other North-East African people worshipped serpents on the belief that they are their ancestors. There is no such belief, in Tamil Nadu, associating serpent worship with the ancestors. In Africa, it was believed that it was not only their ancestors but also their King and village head-men would be reborn as serpents. Thus the belief relating to the rebirth of the King or the village headman, as serpents and worshipping of serpents that live near by their village are the prevailing customs of this black Africans.

In Tamil Nadu there is a custom of erecting a memorial stone over the grave of a fallen warrior. These memorial stones are found in Karnātakā also. King Prithivi II died in the war fought at Thirupurampiam, near Kumbakōnam in 8th century A.D. A memorial stone was erected over his grave. Even today it is worshipped by the people.

Africans maintain that it is not only their ancestors but also those who are wicked would become serpents in their next birth and would harm the people. The Old Testament tells us that Satan appeared before Eve in the guise of a serpent. In India it is believed that the harmful God Sani (Saturn) would come in the form of a serpent. In the story of Nāḷa Damayanthi, we are told, that the God Saturn came in the guise of a serpent 'Kārkōtakā' by name. People of Tamil Nadu will scold the wicked ones by calling them /Komparimakkan/ that is a kind of serpent capable of climbing the trees.

Transmigration

Transmigration of souls is a widespread belief among the Dravidians.

East Africans believe that people would get into the body of serpent whenever they want. Krapf, who had conducted a research about this belief has stated that this belief of East Africans must have come from India.¹⁰

¹⁰ Quoted by W.D. Hambly. Serpent worship in Africa. p. 52.

Sacrifice of Living Animals to Serpent

At the time of python worship the African people would sacrifice a white cock or a goat. African people believed that the soul of the python is in the Ndem lake near Awaa. Every year, these people would sacrifice a cock and a goat in such a way that the heads should fall into the river. The heads cut off should float in the water. If it floats as expected, they would take it as a good omen, otherwise they feel it as a bad omen and would repeat the killing of goat and cock till the head of these animals float in the water. After that they would take the flesh and cook it in the nearby forest and eat it. They must eat all the flesh without leaving behind a single bit of it. They should not take it home. Because they believed that if they cook it at home they would die before the stars and the moon arrive.

The people of Daura have adopted serpent as their totem. Every year they sacrificed a black bull or a ram and would offer the blood to the serpent. They would eat the flesh of the sacrificial animal there itself. They considered it offensive to take the flesh home.¹¹

In Tiruccenkōtu, similar custom is observed in serpent worship. The people who come here to entreat the serpent God would offer food to the deity. They would prepare 'Pongal' and would also sacrifice a cock. They eat the flesh of the sacrificial animal (cock) there itself as it is believed to be offensive to take the flesh home. It is quite interesting to find parallel customs in existence in both the black Africa and Dravidian India. The commentators of Tamil Grammar cite the word 'Nāgarbali' as an example of the interchange of casual signs. They explain how this 'Nāgarbali' can become a possessive case i.e., 'Nāgaradhu Bali' and dative case i.e., 'Nāgarukku Bali'. From this example and explanations one can say that the Tamils have been worshipping and offering sacrifice to the serpent God for centuries. Commentators Ilampūraṇar (12th century A.D.), Mayilaināthar, and Sēnāvarayar (both 14th century A.D.) have made references to the word 'Nāgarbali' meaning sacrifice to serpent, in their works.

11. Hambly p. 27

Worship of Serpent that comes home

Small serpents will stray around the African dwelling houses surrounded by the forest. People would not kill these serpents since they are, in their conception, their ancestors and thus venerable creatures. They would offer milk mixed with sugar. They would prepare 'Kush Kush' and offer the same, along with milk and sugar, to the serpent. This practice is prevalent in Africa, more particularly in Senegal.

In Tamil Nadu, on seeing a living serpent, the pious people would lit camphor at once and may even offer milk, fruits and egg. At the same time they may also lit a lamp (using gingilee_o oil and cotton thread) and start chanting either "Murukā" — "Murukā" — "Murukā" or "Nāgā" — "Nāgā". It is in practice even today.

These practices would show this similarities existing between the Africans and Dravidians in their serpent worship.

Beating or killing a Serpent is a crime

Both the black Africans and the Dravidians consider it offensive to kill the serpents for, the former consider them as their ancestors and the latter as their venerable deity having divine powers. Thus, both the races refrain from beating the serpents. In both the continents it is not all kinds of serpents that receive reverence of the people. In Africa, for instance, it is the python and some other selective varieties that are being worshipped and appreciated by the people. They will kill other kinds of serpents which they do not worship. A West African proverb says:

"One does not throw a stick
after the serpent has gone."

This would impliedly mean the existing habit of killing other serpents in Africa. So also, the following proverbs prevalent among the Tamils would show that they too have no inhibition to kill serpents.

"Though the serpent is small,
strike it with a long stick"

“Strike the serpent without causing pain to it or without breaking the stick.”

However, these proverbs hailing from both the continents need not be construed to mean that people kill serpents indiscriminately. Because they are strongly of the notion that they should not beat, inflict injuries or kill those types of serpents which they worship with devotion. An instance proving that striking a serpent amounted to crime has been recorded in a diary of a European who undertook an exploratory tour in Senegal in the year 1751. It says:

“In April 22 (1751) I was in Sor town. I was sitting on a mat in the court yard of the commissioner’s house. The head of the village and his family were by my side; At that time one serpent came near me after going here and there. I was afraid. I killed the serpent with a stick. Suddenly the other people who were by my side stood up making noise in fear.

“They thought that I have committed a murder. All of them ran away from that place. The news was spread throughout that town. I tied the dead serpent in my handkerchief and kept it in my bag. The town people wanted to take revenge on me, for killing a serpent. But the head of the town calmed them down with great difficulty.¹²

This incident shows the piety of the African people that they will not kill the serpent, instead, worship it. One can see serpents moving about in their huts. Those serpents will eat the domestic fowl. Even then, the people would not care to kill them and the serpents also, surprisingly enough, would not bite them.

The Tamils too will not strike or kill the serpents that are worthy of worship like the Africans.

12. A voyage to Senegal. London W. Johnston in Ludgatest 1759,

Killing Serpent Punishable Crime

It would not amount to exaggeration if it is stated that the Africans regarded killing of a serpent a greater sin. The ancient custom was that they killed even those who had killed a python accidentally. Even the death sentence was executed in a cruel way. They would burn the man alive. When the murderer of a serpent is taken to the place where he is to be burnt alive, he will be beaten to death with sticks and spears. Even if the murderer happens to be the son of the head of the village he will not be spared from punishment. In course of time the punishment was given in a different way.

The murderer should mourn for the whole year. A rule was formed that he should not shave his head. If anyone kills a black serpent or a python, his family and his village, they thought, would suffer from terrible diseases. It was ordered that, even the person who killed a serpent for his safety would be punished. For weeks together he must be on the water-channel. His family must not offer any sacrifice till the execution of his punishment.

The Europeans, who come to Africa to spread their religion or to do business were not exempted from this rule. In 1856 Government of Nigeria passed a law that the Europeans should not cause harm to the serpents without knowing their customs of worship.

“In the Niger Delta and its hinterland pythons were very frequently considered to be under the protection of (or mystically associated with) the tutelary deities of particular communities. For example Article XII of the Treaty with kings and chiefs of Brass Nov. 1856 stated that ‘Long detentions having here to fore occurred in trade and much angry feeling having been excited in the natives from the destructions by white men, in their ignorance of the superstitions and customs of the country, of certain species of boa-constrictor that visits the cask-houses, and which is a ‘jew-jew’ or sacred to the Brass men, it is hereby forbidden to all British subjects to harm or destroy any such snake; but they are required upon

finding the reptile on their premises to give notice to the chief's man in Twaw, who is to come and remove it away ¹³

There exists a belief in all the Dravidian states more particularly in Tamil Nadu that the killing of the most venerable serpent, cobra, is a sin and that the sinner and his family would have to suffer unless he and his family perform a prescribed expiation ceremony, without fail, to the killed serpent. Thus, both the Africans and Dravidians had and still maintain the same conception about the consequences of striking or killing a serpent as a sin.

Burying The Slain Serpent And Ceremonies Following It

If anyone has killed a serpent for his safety or by accident it is said that he shall not simply leave the body there itself. The killer should purify himself by sleeping over the water-channel in day times for several weeks. His family should not celebrate any festival. They must not kill any animal for food or for any other purpose. They must make a bier and dig a pit nearby the grave of the dead, head of the village will pour milk in that pit and bury it there. They must perform obsequies to the serpent as they do for other human death.

In all the Dravidian states the dead cobra is buried in a pit. Milk, yellow cloth and money will be put in that pit. In Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu the person who killed the serpent will dip into the river with some coins on his head and thus purify himself. It should be noted here, that the Africans too will dip into the river and purify their sin. Some other people will do remedy through the priest. Both the Africans and the Dravidians seem to perform identical ceremonies to the killed serpent.

Sorcery For Serpent Bite:

The African continent is surrounded by huge mountains and thick forests. In between many grand rivers, wild beasts and crocodiles obstructed the way to the country. Since the people live in forests and mountains they always build their

houses on trees or on plains at higher attitudes to escape from the wild animals like elephants and lions. But they could not escape from serpents. The serpents live in small holes too. So they were bitten often by the serpents. Many died of that. To escape from the danger of venomous serpents they resorted to witchcraft.

If a serpent bites someone, at once, the people of the village will announce the news by the beats of a drum. This sound will be heard by the nearest village people. At once, the serpent sorcerer of that village will start chanting. That village people will sound their drums. The people of next village will hear that sound. Then the sorcerer of that village also will start his witchcraft and in the same way the process will continue.

They believed that the poison which has gone inside the body will flow down step by step and finally the person would recover. What we must gather from this are:

- 1 Practice of sorcery for serpent bites.
- 2 Message through drums.
- 3 The change of meanings according to the sounds of drums.

The sound will differ according to the news. There are different sounds to announce the serpent bite, the arrival of lion or elephant, a festival or a funeral. This set up is found in South India too.

- 4 Conveying message of snake bite through drum-beat is not found in the Dravidian India.

It could be said that this was a primitive mode of communications in ancient Africa where there was no other means of communication.

- 5 In Tamil Nadu, if any one rings up through the telephone to the person concerned about the serpent bite he will start chanting, and it is firmly believed that poison will come down if they did sorcery.

Different Ethnic Groups Having Serpent As their Totem:

Different ethnic groups and groups of people in Africa adopted serpent as their totem. Serpent worship could be classified into two among both the Africans and the Dravidian People.

1. Worship of serpent by every body.
2. Worship of serpent by those who have serpent as their totem.

Serpent As Their Totem:

It is the custom of serpent race to have serpent as their totem. Egyptian kings will have the symbol of a hooded cobra in their crown. The sculptures and paintings belonging to ancient Egypt would show the ancient kings having the figure of serpent in their crown. Anthropologists have pointed out that there are many races having serpent as their totem in African countries which border on the southern side of Egypt. For example a tribe called Niel has got serpent as its totem. These Niel people live near Khoradar. Danka people have the poisonous serpent-Anong, as their totem. Ngong Nyang have Aro serpent as their totem. These people regard the serpent as their God-father. Gol-a-mariak- a tribe has Niel serpent as their totem. There is a story saying, once upon a time a serpent came to a hut of Mariak and gave birth to many young ones and it pleaded the householder not to cause any harm to them. It is stated that it also requested the Mariak people to have palm leaves on their heads as a sign of grief if anyone afflicted its young ones. Ramba people are people of serpent race. They consider Gor serpent as their holy deity. It seems that they had kept the Gor serpent in a pot, full of water. After some days the serpent died. They sacrificed a bull for that sin. Anako was the place where they sacrificed the bull. Even today there is a serpent statue. The diseased people would go to the serpent temple in Anako and sacrifice some animal and make a plea to cure their disease. Cic people have the poisonous serpent, Anong as their totem.¹⁴ Thus there are many tribes who have serpent as their totems in Africa.

14. Seligman C. G. and Brenda Z. Seligman. *The Ethnology of Africa-Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan*. The Humanities Press 1950. p. 143.

As in Africa, in India too there were races who had serpent as their totem. People of Nāgaland, the North Eastern State of India call themselves Nāgās. (They possess Mangolian features losing the characteristics of Dravidians in the present days). The place where the Nāgās lived is the Northern border of India, near Assam. Even today it is called Nāgāland or Nāganilam (Land of serpent). Historically, it is maintained that before the advent of Āryans into the Indus, Dravidians were living throughout India and they called themselves Nāgās or Munda. After the invasion of Āryans, these Dravidian Nāgās took refuge in some places and moved towards South India.

The 'Kāndava Thagana Charukkam' in Mahābhārathā is another depiction of the battle fought between the Āryans and the Nāgās. The story of Mahābhārathā is that Arjunā with the help of Krishṇā killed them by burning them alive in Kāndavā grove. When the Kāndavā grove was burnt by Arjunā, the Nāgās made a heavy down-pour of shower over the grove. To prevent their escape from that grove Arjunā built an arrow-dome over the grove. Other histories of Nāgās affirm this incident of Mahābhārathā. The religious notes of Nāgās about their capability to stop the rain or to make it rain and the notes of Buddhist preceptors give us the information that the Nāgās had the power of controlling rain as per the event cited above in Mahābhārathā. Some serpent like Asuvaśānan, escaped from the Kāndavā grove to take revenge on Arjunā and these serpents went to Karṇā and took refuge in the hands of Karṇā as an arrow and Krishṇa knew that this arrow would kill Arjunā and therefore he made Kundhi to get a promise from Karṇā that he would use that arrow only once and at the time of war Charioteer Krishṇa saved Arjunā from that particular arrow by pressing the wheels of the chariot deep in the earth. All these incidents of Mahābhārathā would tell the enmity between Arjunā and the Nāgās. The worship of serpent that prevails in Kerala assures that these are not epical imaginations but historical events. People of Serpent race live, in the village of Mannārsāla, in Kerala. They call themselves the descendents

of serpents. These people say about their origin that their ancestors had come to Kerala since Arjunā and Krishna burnt the Kāndavā grove in North India, (Punjab). The fact that there are many serpent groves and that the bow of the Chēra is another form of serpent and that the country of Chēra means country of Nāgās and that there is a separate temple for serpent in Nāgercoil and that the variation of Nāgā is the name of a caste Nāyar confirms the notion of this people.

South India is the present home of the Dravidians. The worship of serpent that has spread throughout South India shows that there are people of serpent race. Besides, Tamils, Hunters, Warrior, 'Oliar' and Fishermen in Tamil Nadu also would call themselves 'Nāgar'.

Some among the Dravidians have serpents as their totem as noticed in Africa. Particularly the Nāyar people of Kerala who regarded themselves as Nāgar would knot their hair in such a way as to give an appearance of snake above their forehead. This reminds us of the crown of Egyptian kings which had a symbol of hooded cobra.

Belief related to precious Serpent stone

Pamum people are the inhabitants of the French Cameroon in Africa. They believe that the python has a sparkling fire with it and during midnight it would emit that fire in its cave and would go out in search of food and return to its cave with the help of that light. If any one, sees the sparkling stone of python, he would cover it with a black cloth and run away from that place otherwise it would kill him. If the stone is so covered with the black cloth the serpent would lose its way back to its cave and would be left in a state of distress. At that time the person who covered the precious sparkling stone would take a bit of timber from the place where the python had lived and come off. It is believed that the wishes of people who obtained the timber, would be fulfilled without fail.

Besides this there are many other stories regarding this precious gem. Same as in Africa, Dravidians had a belief about the gem of the serpent. They held that the serpent had got a bright sparkling gem and it is very rare to get and that if some one got that gem he would get all the riches. Names like Nāgarathinam, Nāgamaṇi, Thirumāmaṇi and Nāgamāṇikkam relate the precious serpent stone called Nāgarathinam.

Thus the belief about the gem of the serpent prevailed in both the African and the Dravidian states.

The belief that serpent holds the world :

The Greeks believe that Atlas holds the world. The Africans believe that the serpent holds the world from sinking into the sea.

When the world was created serpents were holding the world with their tails coiled up. They helped the human beings to live in the world. If they slacked their hold the world would sink into the sea. Three thousand and five hundred serpents under the earth, and on the earth are holding this world. Another old story tells that the serpent has built four pillars to hold the heaven. Each serpent holds a pillar to hold the upper world. Pillars are of red, white and black colours. Serpents are protecting the pillars day and night.

Yet another story tells us that the serpent first created the God of creation and then they are carrying him everywhere.

Earthquake is caused when the serpents which hold the world move here and there.

God had ordered the monkeys of the sea to give food to the serpents which hold the world. If they erred the serpents would begin to eat their own tails. At that time the world would begin to move. The houses and people on it would move and drown in the sea.¹⁵ An ancient painting of South Africa shows the man on the back of the serpents.

15 Parrinder E G. African Mythology-Chapter on Serpent of eternity pp. 22. 23.

Similarly in Tamil Nadu it is believed that the serpent holds the world. There are beliefs that the thousand-headed serpent Āṭisēshā holds the world and that Lord Vishnu is carried by a serpent which is another form of Balarāman. Anyone who carries something must be under the substance. According to this notion it seems, that the serpents of streams, which are under the earth, hold this world.

The belief that the Serpent would get wings

In Egypt it was believed that wings would appear if the serpent grows old. In Egypt the picture of serpents flying with wings have been painted on the tombs. Paintings of winged serpents are painted in South Africa too. They could not trace the antiquity of these paintings. But there is no doubt about the antiquity of these paintings. In Tamil Nadu there exists a belief that the serpents would get wings when they reach very old age. Even in paintings and sculptures there are the figures of flying serpents.

Serpents and the under World

Since most of the serpents live in the earth or hole or river, people believed that they live in the under world. According to them the world is divided into the under world, the Earth, and the upper world. The under world is regarded as the world of serpents. In ancient paintings of Egypt there are scenes which show the sinner being punished in the underworld and the way to the world of punishment being showed by the serpent. In Indian and Dravidian literatures too, there are hints regarding the under world as the residence of serpents and it is called the world of serpents.

Ant-Hill Being the serpent Hill

It is scientifically wrong to consider that the ant-hill is the residence of serpent. It is true that the serpent goes near the ant-hill to eat white ants and other worms. When people saw the serpent near an ant-hill they mistook it for its residence and called it, the serpent-hill. Biological facts reveal that the

serpent would not go into an ant-hill and when it goes inside a hole it would put its head outside and would thrust its tail first and drag its body and that it could not turn its body inside a hole. The term "Alaimaripāppu" shows that the Tamils knew this fact in those ancient days itself. 'Alai' means burrow; 'Mari' means 'folding' and 'Pāppu' means 'serpent'.

Serpent worshippers worship ant-hills as the residence of serpents. It is common to both the Africans and the Dravidians. The Africans thought about the white ants as the 'Messenger of python'. If an African sees a serpent near the ant-hill of white ants at once he would put palm leaves around the serpent and worship it. It has been elucidated, under the heading 'Serpent-Worship in Tamil Nadu', that the serpent hill is worshipped in every village of Tamil Nadu.¹⁶ Though the worship of serpent hill is not to be found in a wider scale in Africa as it is in Dravidian states, the above information shows that atleast to some extent there is the custom of worshipping the serpent hill.

Serpent worship would cure blindness

In some places of Africa there is a belief that the blindness would be cured if they worship the serpents. People believe that python is the God of wisdom and it would give good benediction and would give any boon they pray for. African tales tell us that when the first man and woman were created in the world they were blind and that the python gave eyesight to them.

In the Dravidian states there is a belief that the serpent worship would cure the defect in eyesight. People believe that if they worship the 'Nāgarāja' of Nāgercoil, blindness would be cured.

Serpent as God of war

Many incidents show that the worship of python in Africa is connected with war. Whydah country people near Benin would worship the serpent at the time of war.

16 Aravaanan-The Serpent Cult in black Africa and Dravidian India (Tamil) pp, 62-97

On one occasion when the Whydah people happened to fight with Dahomey people, they worshipped their serpent god. Python attacked the enemies with the soldiers. It defeated the enemies by knurling them with its tail and swallowing them.

People of Niger delta, particularly, the people of Benin district worshipped their war-god Ogidiy, in the shape of a serpent. They believed that the serpents would protect them in the war.

In the Dravidian states the serpent did not have direct connection with war. However they call the goddess Korravai (Durgā) or Goddess Amman as the god of war. They would worship Goddess Korravai at the time of war. Serpent is one of the symbols of Goddess Korravai or Goddess Mariamman. So the belief of Africans that if they worship the serpent they would win the battle and the belief of the Dravidians that if they worship the goddess Durgā who has serpent as an ornament they would get victory can be compared with each other.

Belief in serpent maidens

In Africa many moral girls were married to the python. They were all very beautiful. When the priestesses of the temple get possessed they would run to the country. They would bring girls in the age group of twelve to eighteen and make them the wives of the serpent god. Most pious parents would offer their beautiful daughters to Serpent God. These Africans believed that if their daughters became the wives of the serpent God their family would flourish. The python God would appear in the shape of beautiful girls. These girls would have got alluring powers. The priest would admit these girls into the serpent temple and make priestesses.

These beliefs of the black Africans agree with the beliefs of the Dravidian people that there are serpent-maidens. Most beautiful serpent women would appear before youths and enchant them. They would kill the victims of their enchantment. These serpent women would kill those youths who defy them. Such beliefs are to be found in Tamil Nadu and Andhra even today. These serpent-women would induce sexual feelings of handsome youths.

KRISHNA CULT IN INDIA AND ANCIENT AFRICA

The Cultural and Commercial contacts between Dravidian India and Africa existed long before the arrival of Vasco-Da-Gama (15th Century A. D.) in India. Before Vasco-da-Gama, the sea route between East Africa and South India was familiar to the navigators and merchants of both the continents. Scytax Caryanda, a Greek pilot was the first known mariner who has crossed the Indian Ocean. He sailed on the Indian ocean after crossing the Red sea in 510 B. C. He touched the mouth of the Indus and returned. Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, the earliest treatise on navigation in the world was written probably by a Greek of Alexandria in 60 A. D. It mentions the trading centers on the African coast and those of the South-Indian coast as well. In about 7500 words, it enumerates about the imports and exports between Damirica (The Tamil Country), Rome, Africa and other countries. Roman gold coins were discovered (A. D. 54-68) in Arikamedu (Puthucheery, South India). A hoard of 46 gold coins belonging to Roman kings dated back to B. C. 29 was found in Dharwar district of Karnataka. Both confirm the above Periplus statement. The name of the first sailor Scytax Caryanda, is mentioned in the Periplus though the same was written 200 years after him. In 327-26 B. C. Nearchus, famous pilot of Alexander sailed to the Indus and returned.

Indian merchants were very fond of African ivory, iron and gold. Elmas' udi wrote in 10th century that Sofala was the land

of gold. He mentions ivory as principal item of export from the land of Zanj the Negroes of East Africa".¹ This ivory was taken to India and China by way of Yemen in Southern Arabia and "were this not the case, there would be an abundance of ivory in the muslim countries". For Edrisi, two centuries later, iron was the most valuable export of the East African Coast.² The iron of Sofala, he thought, was much superior to that of India both in quantity and quality; and the Indians were accustomed to make from it the best swords in the world. Along the east coast, at the same time city states like Kilwa have become important in the expanding network of the Indian Ocean trade. Writing in the midtwelfth century, Edrisi hears that Javanese sailors regularly visit the south Eastern coast of Africa and carry its iron to India. The west coast of India was invariably or mainly in contact with the East Coast of Africa. What was the reason? The world's valuable metal-gold, was available only in the South East Coast of Africa. Other areas of Africa were not having enough gold for the export. According to ancient travel-writers, gold was the main item of export from Africa to India. Large quantities of gold must have gone to India from the ports of South East Africa during a period of five to six centuries.

Even today, the African continent accounts for the major quantity in the production of gold. In ancient times, people of Europe and the Islamic world thought that Africa was the richest gold bearing area in the globe. A number of stories also relating to African gold were popular among them. One such was that gold grew on trees. Because of that, a number of European and Islamic merchants travelled all the way to Africa in search of gold. Antonio Malfante a commercial traveller was sent by the Europeans to Africa to explore the sources of gold. He mentions that *Indian Traders* travelled with interpreters in these regions. According to him these Indians were Christians who adored the cross.³

1 Basil Davidson - Black Mother. P. 166.

2 Al-Indrisi, Kitah Nuzhat at Mustag fikhtirq at Afaq. trans S. Maqbul Ahmed quoted by B. Davidson. Can we write African History? p. 13.

3 Madhu Panikkar, K. The serpent and the crescent P. 121

Basil Davidson, an expert in African study observes:

“A probably Bantu speaking polity in Katanga is producing copper on no mean scale and trading in it as well with-in another hundred years the chiefs of another metal using polity in present Zambia are being buried with gold ornaments imported from South of the Zambezi. And then with the middle of the tenth century, we have mas’udi’ celebrated description of the kingdom of the Warlini somewhere around the lower Zambezi basin while the gold trade with the Indian ocean traders has undoubtedly begun.”⁴

Archeological, anthropological and linguistic studies also confirm the contacts and views mentioned above. Gervase, a British pioneer of east coast of Africa discovered a South Indian settlement in the islet of Sanje ye-kati, near the some what larger islet of Kilwa in 1950. He found the undergrowth of the ruins of a settlement of “Small oblong house of carefully dressed masonry, grouped round a citadel whose walls still rise to sixteen feet.” It is the earliest of the coastal trading settlements so far traced : and its iron using culture may well have been pre-Islamic by several Centuries Southern Arabian, or perhaps *Southern Indian*.

In the same year 1950, Mathew, excavated another Coral islet called Songo Mhara of Southern Tanganyika (Now called as Thanzania). In this place, he discovered among the beads there one pierced cornelians from India. In South of Rhodesia, archaeologists found that there are abundant stone ruins, objects in gold and other metals, pottery from the East-coast, procelain from China and beads from India. Indian beads became valuable in this respect, as early as by the 8th century A.D.

Indian textiles also were imported from India to Africa. It has been identified in the North Cemetery at Meroe. A kind of water reservoir found in Meroe too must have come from India for it is unknown to Egypt. Both the Dravidians and Africans have similar physical appearance and cultural identities. Even blood group indicates one map of blood group distributions. Both have the sickle cell of trait of blood.⁵

4 Basil Davidson, Can we write African History ? P. 12

5 Aravaanan, Notable Negroid Elements in Dravidian India, Blood group - Journal of Tamil Studies. K.I.T.S. Vol. XVII 1980, Madras

The cowries are used in West Africa as *Prashna*. These cowries came from the west coast of Southern India. i.e. Kerala. West African jewellery has been influenced by South Indian Jewellery. According to Flora Shaw, the African Language Fulani came from India.

The above, introduction confirms the contacts among the Dravidians and Africans. This paper presents a hitherto unnoticed but important one in the Dravido-African studies.

The Kushites were the most important people in the ancient history of Africa. They were native Africans who settled on the banks of the Nile to the South Egypt Egyptians called them as Nubians. The relationships between the Kushites and Egyptians were not friendly. But Kushites were equally good combatants like the Egyptians. In the ninth century B. C. they themselves founded a state of their own establishing Napata as their capital. In 751 B.C, Kushites invaded Egypt and brought it under their control. After hundreded years the Assyrian army invaded and defeated both i.e, Egyptians and Kushites. After that Kushites moved their capital southwards from Napata to Meroe. In Meroe, they founded an iron age civilization.

Up to the middle of the 20th century, the notable civilization of Meroe was unknown. Thirty years back Reiner, Griffith, Garstang and a few others carried on excavations at Meroe. In 1958 Dr Jean Vercoutter, a distinguished French Egyptologist, continued the excavations at Meroe. The ancient iron civilization of African has been thus established. British archaeologists called Meroe, "The Birmingham of Ancient Africa". Basil Davidson, a well known scholar named it "An Athens in Africa". From an Indian point of view Meroe was 'a Brindavan of Krishna.' What is the reason to call it so?

In Meroe, archaeologist have found two engravings. These represented their lion-gods. It seems to be of Indian origin. It resembles the Indian God Nara Simha Mūrti. The age of these lion god's engravings is attributed to the first century B. C. to the end of the first century A.D.

In India, the story of the ten births of Vishnu (Dasavtāra) might be of a later period. But, the concept of lion-headed man god must have been still older. It has been merged with Hiranyakasipu's story. This story is even available in the oldest Indian literary tradition. The story is that :

Hiranyakasipu was a very powerful demon king. Thanks to the power he had received from Brahma and he succeeded in dethroning Indra and exiling the gods from heaven. He proclaimed himself king of the Universe, and forbade worship of anyone but himself.

However his son Prahlada dedicated himself to the worship of Vishnu, who initiated him into the secrets of his heart. Hiranyakasipu, irritated by the sight of his son devoting himself to the cult of a mortal enemy, inflicted on the child a series of cruel tortures in order to wear him away from his worship of Vishnu. But his fervour simply increased, and he began to preach the religion of Vishnu to men and demons.

Hiranyakasipu ordered the death of this unmanageable missionary. But the sword, poison, fire, wild elephants, and magic incantations failed to harm Prahlada and he was protected by his god.

Hiranyakasipu once more called his son to him. Prahlada with immense gentleness tried again to convince his father of Vishnu's greatness and omnipresence, but the demon angrily exclaimed :

"If Vishnu is everywhere, how does it happen that my eyes don't see him?" He pointed one of the pillars in his audience chamber, saying : "Is he here for instance?"

"Even invisible he is present in all things" replied Prahlada softly. Whereupon Hiranyakasipu uttered a blasphemy and kicked the pillar, which fell on the floor. Immediately Vishnu emerged from the pillar in the shape of a *lion-headed man* (in his incarnation as Narasimha) fell upon the demon, and tore him to shreds.⁶

The worship of Narasimhamūrti was prevalent even before the Christian era. The legend of Hiranyakasipu, is also an old one.

In Sanskrit, Vyāsar's Mahābhārata, (4th century B.C.) mentions this legend in its 38th chapter. Bhīsmā narrates the above story to Yuthistrā when he conducted a 'raja sūya' sacrifice. Vyāsar's Bhārata gives a thousand names of Vishnu. Among those, 'Narasimha' is the 21st name. (Ref. Anusācana parvam). An Upanishad called after Narasimha is attached with Atharva Veda. Bhagavatham narrates this legend in detail. Vishṇu purāṇam also follows it. A Seventh Century poet Mākavi refers this legend in his work namely 'Sisubālavathā'.

In Tamil, a Cankam anthology called Paripātal of 2nd century A.D., mentions about this 'lion-headed-man' God.

செயிர்தீர் செங்கண் செல்வ ! நிற்புகழ்ப்
 புகைந்த நெஞ்சின், புலர்ந்த சாந்தின்
 பிருங்க லாதன் பலபல பிணிபட — அலந்துழி
 மலர்ந்த நோய்கூர் கூம்பிய நடுக்கத்து
 அலர்ந்த புகழோன், தாதை ஆகலின் — இகழ்வோன்
 இகழா நெஞ்சினன் ஆக, நீ இகழா
 நன்றா நடட்ட அவன் நல்மார்பு முயங்கி,
 ஒன்றா நடட்டவன் உறுவரை மார்பின்
 படிமதம் சாம்ப ஒதுங்கி,
 இன்னல் இன்னரொடு இடிமுரசு இயம்ப
 வெடிபடா ஒ' தூண் தடியொடு
 தடி தடி பலபட வகிர்வாய்ந்த உகிரினை
 (பரிபாடல் : 4 ஆம் பாட்டு)

The above song in Paripātal gives this legend as follows :

Eranyan, enraged on hearing his own son praising with devotion, the Lord Thirumāl (Vishnu), treated him cruelly and terrified him. Prahalādan tolerated all these evil treatments, for, the one who gave these hardships was his own father. But He, (Vishnu) being the saviour of the devotees appeared

(incarnated as Narasimha with lion headed human god), before Eranyan from within a pillar, by breaking it open and tore open the flesh of Eranyan with sharp nails and killed him.

Cilappathikāram a Tamil epic (2nd century A.D.) notes this incident as '*Matankalāy mārattāy*' (chapt. 17) (you-lion headed man-god killed your enemy).

Cīvaka Cintāmani, a ninth century epic, mentions the name of Hiranyakasipu (1813). Devotional songs of Vaishnavism (from 5th century onwards) mentions this Narasimha's legend in numerous places. Kallatam of 11th century, a Saivaite literature, also refers this story. Then a famous poet Kampan (9th century A.D.) narrates this legend in his epic Ramayana in about 175 songs as '*Eranya Vatai patalam*', (A chapter on Eranya's death). After Kampan, a separate small epic called '*Eranya vatai parani*' was written in 12th century A.D. In Telugu also Ranganātha Ramāyanā mentions of this legend. According to it, Eranya was born in the world again as Rāvaṇā and Narasimha as Rāmā.

In Badami (Karnataka) the capital of Chalukyas, a fine belief of Narasimha is still seen in the verandah of the Vishnu Cave. It is dated exactly 578 A.D. At about the same time, the name Narasimha was common in Tamilnadu. A Pallava king bore the name Narasimha (630-668 A.D.). The death of Hiranyakasipu is featured in a fine sculpture at Ellora.

Even before the Christian era, the worship of lion-headed man was in vogue and prevalent all over India. Merchants came to India from Africa, or Indian merchants who were settled in Africa brought the lion-god worship which appeared in Meroe. The founders of Meroe, were also in the forefront in the maritime trade of the Indian oceans. In the sixth century B.C. Kushites shifted their capital from Napata to Meroe. Meroe is nearer to the Indian ocean and India than Napata. This is also one of the reasons for their shifting ' "That the

Kushites had commercial contact with India which is not in doubt. The commercial contacts lead to the cultural contacts also. The worship of the lion god is one among the productions of their contacts with India.

Yet another African tradition also strengthens this view. In India both in the north and south, the legend of Krishna is common. The birth story of Krishna is according to Indian mythology is as follows :

Krishna was born in Mathura. His mother was Devaki, a sister of king Kamsa who killed all her children as soon as they were born, as it had been predicted that he (Kamsa) would be killed by one of them, particularly the eighth son. Krishna owed his life to a ruse of his parents, who exchanged him for the daughter of a poor cowherd, in order to hide him from his uncle's anger. Krishna therefore spent his youth among keepers of herds, in the company of his brother Balarama.

Soon after his birth Krishna was already, with full of vigour, and sometimes exhibited extraordinary strength by his mighty deeds. He overthrew a cart and rooted down two trees together.

Kamsa tried his level best to kill his sister's son through various ways. But he failed. Some years later, Krishna became a warrior and killed his uncle, Kamsa and ruled the country.

Similar or more or less the same legend parallel to Indian Krishna's legend is seen in the African Continent. The legend's name is Soni-Ali-Ber. It is very popular among the story tellers in Africa. African oral tradition keeps this legend in this way:

Soni Ali Ber, was the emperor of Songai (Gao). Wandou, a close associate of the emperor came to see His Majesty when Soni Ali Ber informed him, that on the previous night he had the vision of death. The emperor asked Wandou to give the significance of the dream. The royal mascot then talked to the juju and the matter was sent to the big soothsayer. According to the soothsayer the emperor would be killed and the son of Kassei (Please compare with Devaki), the sister he loved so much, would succeed him.

The Cabinet then held a meeting, as a sequel, to which it was made clear that all the young boys of Kassei should be killed. Balama, Justice minister, was in charge for the execution. The orders of Soni was to be executed during the next ten years.

All of a sudden, the servant of Kassei brought forth a girl and Kassei, at the same time, had a boy. The maid servant of Kassei thought of saving the life of the son of Kassei. As such she proposed to her mistress that they exchanged their children. When the son of Bargou grew up, he wanted to be enlightend of his real mother and father.

A spirit assured him that he would protect him accordingly. The behaviour of the "Son of Bargou" raised suspicion in Soni-Ali-Ber.

Balama received an order that he should no longer be with the young man, but the plan failed.

Soni-Ali-Ber was killed by the son of Bargou when a feast was going on and Askia Mohamed assumed the power. He succeeded his uncle and founded the order of Islam.

The Legend of Krishna, and that of Soni Ali Ber resemble each other as under :

- 1 Both Kamsa and Soni were rulers.
- 2 Both had dreams.
- 3 Both called the soothsayers.
- 4 Soothsayers' interpretations of the dreams were alike.
- 5 Both put their sisters in prison.
- 6 Both killed their sister's children.
- 7 The children of both were born in prison.
- 8 The children were male in both the case.
- 9 Male children were replaced by female children.
- 10 The sisters concerned were helped by their servant maids.

- 11 Both Kamsa and Soni tried to kill their sister's children in different ways.
- 12 Both the kings failed in their attempts.
- 13 The children in both the cases became warriors.
- 14 The children killed their uncles.
- 15 The children succeeded their maternal uncles after assassinating them.
- 16 The children in both the cases later on became the leaders of the religions.

Krishna appeared as an incarnation of Vishnu in the Indian mythology and the other one espoused the cause of Islam.

The Krishna legend is the oldest. The earliest reference to Krishna is in Chandogya upanishad (6th century B.C.). In this context, he is mentioned as Krishna Devakiputra, a disciple of Ghora Rishi of Angirasa tribe. Keith says that there was a tradition about Krishna as a rishi from the time of the Rigvedic hymns. The other reference to Krishna is in the Mahābhārata (4th century B.C.) Krishna is a pivotal character in the epic of Mahābhārata and the great war which took place at Kurukshetra about 1000 B.C. Krishna was undoubtedly a Kshatriya warrior of the Yadava clan. The Tamil epic Cilappathikāram (2nd century A.D.) mentions Krishna as Māyavan (The dark one) who plays his flute and dances with milkmaids. His elder brother is Paladēva (Balarāma). Krishna's sweetheart is Pinnai. It further mentions about the Kuravai dance, Mayavan playing on the flute dancing with Pinnai on the banks of the river Jamuna. The Greek ambassador at the court of Chandragupta Maurya mentions Krishna as Herakles. Herakles was worshipped by the Sūrasēnas, who established the great Yadava tribe, and who inhabited the banks of the Jamuna having Mathura as their capital.

The reference of the Greek traveller, will enable the scholar to assess easily the origin and spread of Krishna legend. Greece, Egypt and other South European and North African countries

are all mediterranean. All these were involved in Indian ocean trade. Therefore, Kushites the adjacent race of the mediterranean region would also have had a role in spreading it. The Krishna and Narasimha legend must have either been imported by Kushites' merchants from India, or the merchants of India who travelled and latter settled in Africa. Both appear possible and acceptable.

There are many parallels in the birth legend of Krishna and Jesus Christ. The legend of the birth of a saviour and an incarnation of God, which before the nativity of *Christ*, seems ultimately to have reached the mediterranean area. The flight of Joseph and Mary with the exodus of Nanda and family with Krishna and Balarāmā from Gokulam to Vrindavan. Herod is the semitic counterpart of Kamsa. Kamsa ordered the slaughter of the children of Yadavas. Similarly, Herod did the massacre of the innocent children of Bethelhem in the hope of destroying the child Jesus.

"Spelling his name Chrishna or Cristna, (Christ) the skeptices listed at length the events of his life. What made these events so disturbing is shown in Maurices' grateful acceptance of the apologist theory promulgated by Sir william Jone's "on the Gods of Greece, Italy and India. To return to the more particular consideration of those parts of the life of Creeshna which are above alluded to by Sir William Jone's which have been paralleled with some of the leading events in the life of Christ, and are in fact, considered by Prim as interpolations from the spurious Gospels; mean more particularly his miraculous birth at midnight; the Chorus of Davatas that saluted him with hymns, the divine infant, as soon as born; his being cradled among shepherds, to whom were first made known those stuperdous fiats that stamped his character with divinity; his being carried away by night and concealed in a region remote from the scene of his birth, from Seal of the tyrant Kamsa, whose destroyer it was predicted he would prove, and who, therefore, ordered all the male children born at that period to be slain; his battle in his infancy with the dire envenomed serpent Cālinga and crushing his head with his foot; his miracles in succeeding

life; his raising the dead; his descending to Hades, and his return to Vaicunta the proper paradise of Vishnu; all these circumstances of similarity would certainly make one to surprise; and upon any other hypothesis than that offered by Sir. William Jones, would, at first sight, seem very difficult to be solved.

Other difficulties include the name of Crishna, and the general outline of his story, confessedly anterior to the birth of the Christ and probably as old as Homer."⁸

Dravidian Origin

Another important point must be noted here. Krishna was Kamsa's own sister's son. Soothsayer told Kamsa that his sister's son would kill him and succeed him. After the death of Kamsa, Krishna succeeded to rule the country. This shows the adoption of matriarchal system. The matriarchal tradition is the special feature of Dravidians or non-Aryans. This system is still in vogue in the Southern part of Tamilnad, Kerala and South Karnataka of Dravidian India. Many ethnic groups of Africa still follow this mother oriented system.

"In the fairly recent past and in some places still to-day, a person belongs to the family of his mother. The family regime was *matriarchat*. Today still among the Serer of Sine (Senegal), a child's first name is followed by the name of his mother. To the people of the village where I was born, I am still Sédar Nyilane i.e. (son of) Nyilane. This fashion of naming must once have been general and the use of the patronymic brought in later. However this may be among most African people one belongs to one's mother's clan."⁹

Similar custom is still available in Kerala and Southern part of Tamilnad with a slight variation. Here, the female children alone adopted their mother's names as their initials. The matriarchal system is still alive in the name of 'marumakkal vazhi' (sisters son oriented family system). Krishna also belonged

8 B. Franklin - The wake of the gods - 1963 P. 174, 175

9 Senghor L.S. Senghor prose and Poetry P. 45

to this Dravidian system.¹⁰ He was always described in Indian literature especially in Tamil literature as a 'black God' (Kārmśka Vannan). In his book *Dravidian Elements in Indian Culture*, Gilbert Slater establishes that God Krishna was a Dravidian god. A story was given by Magasthenes, a Greek traveller to India supporting this view. According to him, Pandaia ruled the Pandya country, the southern part of India. She was the daughter of Krishna (Herakles). The kingdom was organised into 365 villages; one village had to bring the royal tribute to the treasury every day and if necessary assist the queen in collecting it from defaulters. This view of Magasthenes is confirmed by the epic *Cilappathikāram* also. According to that, in a particular day a certain cowherd family in a suburb of Madura took its turn to supply ghee to the royal Pandya's palace.¹¹

Therefore, the origin of Krishna legend is started from Dravidian region and spread out the whole of India. Like the other merger (Kārttikāyā cult merged with Muruga cult) the Dravidian Māyavan (Black God) had also merged with Vishnu cult. The sailors took the Krishna legend to the Mediterranean and to the interior African countries as well. The Kushites of Meroe were also influenced by this Krishna cult.

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10 Il faut prendre garde que dans certaines sociétés primitives le chef a pour successeur et héritier le fils de sa sœur; et aussi que le chef a pour successeur et héritier le fils de sa sœur et aussi que le chef doit souvent être sacrifié par son successeur - La mort de Kamsa est un bon exemple, et montre le que la légende d'Oedipe serait devenue dans une société matriarcale — Kosambi D.D. *Culture et civilisation de l'Inde ancienne* p. 151.

11 *Cilappathikāram*, Āeycciyar kuravai.

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MATRIARCHAL SYSTEM AMONG THE DRAVIDIANS AND THE AFRICANS

Followers of Matriarchy :

Matriarchy and patriarchy are the two main streams of social organization. At first there was promiscuity everywhere. After a long time, matrilineal and matriarchal systems appeared. Then patrilineal and patriarchal systems followed. The matriarchal system is the oldest. Inheritance in the female line with regard to relationship as well as property is called matriarchy. The Dravidians, the Egyptians, the Africans, the Greeks, the Hebrews and the Persians followed matriarchal system. In the 5th century B C. Tamilnadu has a woman ruler. Queen Cleopatra ruled the ancient Egypt. But to day, the matriarchal system is disintegrating. The influence of patriarchy is the main cause for this. But this oldest system is being followed still in some parts of the Dravidian India, and Africa. These two places may be the original homes of this mother-oriented system of kinship.

Origin of Matriarchy :

Thousands and thousands of years ago, people were wandering here and there. At that time they were food gatherers only. After so many years and after the discovery of stone instruments they became hunters. Men were the main hunters. Since then a numbers of stages had passed on. The old men continued to be engaged in hunting. Women were unable to follow the physical activities of men involving great hardship and labour. Therefore, they started to do some agricultural work. They

found the land-work much fruitful. Women became agriculturists than men. Even now, women are the only workers on the land in a number of ethnic groups in Africa. Men protect the soil and the property. In some areas, men are only cattle breeders. The Kamba is one among the largest ethnics in East Africa, seen inhabiting from eastern slope of the East African High lands between the upper coast of the River Tana and Uganda railway. They are agriculturists. Their women carried out the cultivation while the boys and men herded the cattle, sheep and goats. In most places in Senegal (a west African country) the cultivation is carried on almost exclusively by women folk.

These examples confirm the association of cultivation with women. The association with soil, made the women, the owners of the cultivated land. Mother was followed by her daughters to cultivate the land. Through this way, daughter became the owner of mother's land and property. It was at this stage that the matriarchal system should have been originated.

Matriarchy Among Dravidians :

An anthology of love poems in Classical Tamil (Before Christ) depicts that maidens have gone to their garden of millet while the youths have gone for hunting with bows and arrows.¹ These ancient Tamil descriptions might be the reminiscence of the age old custom of women engaged in cultivation. Besides this, a number of other evidences will prove that the Dravidians had matriarchal system.

This system was so prevalent in different parts of Kerala and the area surrounding it such as the Southern part of Tamilnad and Karnataka of southern India. Among the Tamils of Nanjilnad and the Nayar of Kerala, this system is popularly known as *marumakkal thāyam*. In Karnataka, this system is known as *aliyacantāna*. Through this system, property descends over the sister or her children, it does not go to him or his infants. In short, the nephew inherits the property.

1. Akanānāru, Ainkurunāru Kuruntokai etc. and other love poem in Tamil.

This system is still alive among some Dravidian tribes. Among the Thandapulayās, the nephew is the main mourner, and he observes pollution for sixteen days. Inheritance is traced through the female line. Similarly, Muthuvans of Kerala, Mannans and Uralis of Tamilnadu observe the same practice. The Wynadan Chettis (Nilgiris, Coorg) the Kurichiyas (Kurumbanad Kottayam and Calicut Taluks of Kerala), Kadars of Wyanad have adopted matriliney. The Mullakurumbas, who live near Kurichiyas, have four *Kulams* which are inherited through the mother.

Even in North India, a few tribes observe this Dravidian matriarchal system, Garos and Khasis of Assam are typical examples for this. The Bhihikas of the Punjab, the Newars and the Arattas too have this. This will show that in ancient times, the entire Indian sub-continent was inhabited by the Dravidians, before the invasion of the Aryans.

Matriarchy Among Africans :

In Africa south of Sahara, a number of ethnic groups observe the matriarchy. The following are some of the matriarchal tribes that exist now in Africa. Felup, a Coastal tribe from Gambiy of the Bissangos islands, Kan speaking people from Ashanti, a number of tribes from the south east Nigeria, Pagan, Nomad and pastoral people of eastern Africa, the Tuareg, also known as the Kel Tagulmust from northern Nigeria, Ambo Cloms (a western Bantu tribe) and Yao inhabited around the mountains between lake Nyasa and the coast of Mozambique.²

The Ngombe who have matriarchal social organization and call 'Akongo, Amongo a *bamana*,' Akongo of the mothers To prepare long journey, a man Called Akongo as "Akongo of the mother and sisters". This is an example from a matriarchal clan.³

2. Aravaanan. Matriarchal naming among Dravidian (Seerar) and Africans (Sereer) mimeo, P.1.

3. African ideas of God. P. 164.

Ambo is another tribe who have matrilineal organization. These people consider the mother, as God rather than the father. When we come to the Southern peoples of the Nuba mountains we come across the Korongo, Kadugli, Katch and some of the Miri people who have matrilineal descent.*

Asaba, an Ibo speaking people of the Benin province, Nigeria have a special kind of matriliney. When a man dies, his first son inherits all his property and performs the funeral ceremonies. In the absence of any male issue, the estate passes on to the next kin but *never to his wife or any daughter. On the other hand on the death of a woman what ever she had, passes on to her daughter.*⁵

Matrilineal Naming :

The matriarchal system is a world wide phenomenon. But in India this system was adopted only by non-Aryans or Dravidians. In ancient days this system was predominant in the entire region of Deccan. Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador to the court of Chandragupta Maurya, mentions a lady ruler of the Pandaia (Pāndiā) country of South India. The present temple called 'Meenakshi' at Madurai of Tamilnad provides evidence of this historical incident mentioned by Megasthenes.

Mother-oriented system gave equal rights to both sexes in Dravidian land. The woman (mother or sister) is the nucleus of a family. The worship of Bagavathi amman and Meenakshi amman (mother goddesses of Tamilnad) is the main feature of Dravidian's religious life. In Africa also, giving equal importance to women has been the custom.⁶

The liberty, the Tuareg accorded to their women, had even shocked the great traveller Ibn Batūta.⁷

4 African ideas of God. P. 215.

5 Marriage customs in Asaba division - The journal of the Nigerian field society. Oct. 1948, P. 80, 81. But this information has been refused by a local informant.

6 Africans also are the worshippers of the mother Goddess' Refer: Book "Sentamiz, Senggal, Senghor," P. 10.

7 C.G. Seligman. Races of Africa P.95.

A traveller who visited there recently sums up the position of women by quoting the Tuareg proverb :

*Men and women towards each other are for the eyes and for the heart and not only for the bed.**

A peculiar custom prevalent among Dravidians, particularly the Keraltes and the Tamils of South Travancore (Kanyakumari) is also found in west African countries. The naming of female children is a special feature in Kerala and in southern part of Tamilnad. For male children, they use the father's initial or first name before the name. For example, if "Māran" is the father's name and Kulasēkaran is the son's name, they call him Māran Kulasēkaran or in the shortened form M. Kulasēkaran.

If the child is a female one, they do not use the father's name as her first name or initial. For instance, if Māran is the name of the father, Bagavathi being the mother's name the daughter Thāyammāl would then be called Bagavathi Thāyammāl or B. Thāyammāl.

And also, this kind of naming shows the importance of the mother's side. The same custom with a slight variation is found in Senegal (a west African country) and in some other areas.⁸ In this region, Senegalese use their mother's name for both the female and male children. In this connection, the poet-president Dr. L. S. Senghor's writing is more appropriate :

"In the fairly recent past and in some places still today, a person belongs to the family of his mother. The family regime was matriarchal. To-day, still among the Sereer of Sine (Senegal), a child's first name is followed by the name of his mother,"^{9,10}

Another important feature is that this kind of naming in Africa, is more common among the Sereer. This particular

8. Ibid. P.95.

9. Races of Africa. P 20.

10. Senghor prose & poetry. p.45

ethnic group inhabits the western part of Africa. In Dravidian India also, this kind of naming is prominent only among Keralites (West coast people of Dravidian India). These Keralites were called "Sērar" in ancient times.¹¹ Inscriptions and classical Tamil literature call them "Seraer" The line of difference between these two words is very thin.

The Decline of Matriarchal System :

Beginning of Decline :

Though the matriarchal social organisation is prominent among the Dravidians and the Africans, it has now been gradually declining. In the place of matriarchal system, the system of patriarchy came. In southern part of Tamilnadu the above system was legally rooted out by some movement headed by Dāsikavināyagam Pillay in the beginning of 20th century. For this purpose, poet Dāsikavināyagam Pillay of Cape Comerin wrote a separate small epic named *Marumakkal vali mānmiyam*.

The Hindu succession act, which came into effect on 17th June 1956, has given a 'death blow' to the matrilineal system. The Aryan system of patriarchy replaced the systems of matriarchy in India.

African Tale on Conversion from Matriarchy to Patriarchy

Similarly the influences of 'Arabo-Berber' and Europe have continuously reduced the mother's role in African communities. An interesting story respecting the change of matriarchy into patriarchy is prominent among Gikuyu people of Mount Kenya.

The nine principal clans of Gikuyu tribe were founded after the names of nine daughters.

It is said that while holding superior position in the community, the women became dominating and ruthless fighters. They also practised polyandry. And, through sexual jealousy, many men were put to death for committing

11. Puranānūru and Pathirruppatthu of Cankam Tamil anthology. (before 2nd century B.C) called the people of Kerala "Seraer".

adultery or other minor offences. Besides the capital punishment, the men were subjected to all kinds of humiliation and injustice.

Men were indignant at the way in which the women treated them, and in their indignation they planned to revolt against the ruthless women's administration of justice. But, as the women were physically stronger than the men of that time and also better fighters it was decided that the best time for a successful revolt would be during the time when the majority of women, especially their leaders, were in pregnancy.

The decision was hailed by the men who were very anxious to overthrow the rule of the opposite sex. At once the men held a secret meeting in which they arranged a suitable date to execute their plan. On the day appointed to carry out the initial stage of the revolt, the men started to act enthusiastically. They embarked on a campaign to induce the women leaders and a majority of their brave followers to have sexual intercourse with them. The women were unfortunately deceived by the flattery of the men, and blindly agreed to their inducements without knowing the wicked plan the men had made to overthrow the women's rule.

The men, after completing the first act, quietly waited for the result. After six moons had elapsed the men then saw clearly that their plan had materialised. At once they organised into groups and finally carried out the revolt without much resistance. For the brave women were almost paralysed by the condition in which they were placed. The men triumphed, took over the leadership in the community and became the heads of their families instead of the women. Immediately steps were taken to abolish the system of polyandry and establish the system of polygamy.

The men also decided to change the original name of the tribe as well as the names of clans which were given under the matriarchal system, to new ones under the patriarchal system.^{1 2}

6

MARRIAGE (Matrimony)

Definition:

The institutionalized form of sex relation is called marriage. Marriage ensures two kinds of satisfaction to the human beings viz. a biological satisfaction through sex relation, and a psychological satisfaction through children which in turn leads to the social relationship.

A Spouse for Heart not for Bed Alone:

Particularly among the Dravidians and the Africans marriage is considered a sacred bondage. Men and women are towards each other for the eyes and for the heart and not only for the bed.

Absence Of Prostitution:

Prostitution was completely absent in primitive days. The Africans came to know about this evil practice only after the arrival of the Europeans. The Europeans introduced prostitution as a consequence of the lack of white women in the beginning of European settlements in the colonies and also as a corollary to monogamy. All matured women in Africa must be married in their teens i.e. 15, 20. It is significant to note here that there are no words for prostitution, unmarried and old maids in African languages.¹

1.and that in order to avoid prostitution (no word exists in the Gikuyu language) all women must be married in their teens i.e. 15, 20 Thus there is no term in Gikuyu language for unmarried or old maids

Similarly Tamil, the classical and the oldest language of the Dravidian group has no separate word for prostitution or unmarried or old maids. At present there is a word *parattai* in Tamil which denotes prostitute. But this word has originated from the Sanskrit word *parasthri*. Another word for prostitute **dhāsi** (literally means female slave) is also of Sanskrit origin. When the soldiers go abroad for war lasting for so many months or at times even years together they would have had contacts with some foreign ladies to satiate their physical urge. After the end of war, the soldiers who had won, would have brought home their foreign women as a symbol of their victory. Later on, this group of foreign ladies would have become prostitutes. Prostitution would have been introduced in this Dravidian continent by such events or by the arrival of the Aryans. Polygamy² and timely marriages might have been the other reasons for the total absence of prostitution. Ancient Tamil literature speaks about the age of marriage being fixed at 12 for females and 16 for males. Besides, Dravido-Africans, even most of the tribes of other primitive tribes of the world have adopted strict principles for their sexual relation.

Prostitute Or Concubine

The Tamil literature of Cankam period mentions about this with the word *paratthai*. Even Madhavi, a character of *Cilappathikāram* or Manimēkalai, the heroine of the epic *Manimēkalai* is described as *parattai*. Saint Thiruvalluvar dedicates a separate chapter (Ch. No. 92) in his famous treatise *Thirukkural* to discuss 'wanton women'. Particularly Tamil Cankan poems use this word, which means only concubine or second wife³. In modern times people call them *Vaippatti*.⁴ It means secondary wife who gets married to and dedicates her whole life, only to a particular male. Therefore the institution of prostitution might have entered into the Dravidian land only

2. Requires study Because prostitution is lacking probably and certainly by this polygamic attitude

3. Refer to Chinese "Pisipsi"-marriage

4. Vaippatti - Vaippu. ஆகை, விருப்பம்

after the Aryan invasion. The description of prostitute in the epic *Manimēkalai*, might have originated only after this. For that matter, even the works of Thiruvalluvar and Ilankōvatikal also would have been written after the intrusion of the Aryan concepts.

Arranged Marriage:

Barring a few tribes, others follow the system of arranged marriage. Most of the marriages are arranged through the mutual agreements between parents of both the bride and the bridegroom. There is a little difference between the Dravidian and the African customs in the procedural formalities of the matrimony. The consent of parents is a must in both except in a few groups within them.

Bride-Price:

When an alliance is made by the bridegroom or his family either he or they should pay the bride price in terms of cattles or in the kind of money to the parents of the bride. This is a prominent custom among the hill tribes as well as the plain dwellers of South India. They call it *mulaikkūli*, which means that payment for the mother for her having raised the bride by her mother's breast feeding. The mother delivers the child with great pain, feeds the child through her breast and nurses her till the daughter attains puberty, a stage showing physical readiness for marriage. For these services of the mother, she is given *mulaikkūli*.

Groom's Price:

At present, the system has been changed in a few communities e.g. in most of the Brahmin (the present representative remnants of the Aryans) communities, Nāyars of Kerala and Vellalārs of Nānjilnādu (Tamilnadu). In these communities the family of the bride must pay to the parents of the bridegroom. Dowry system might have arisen due to some custom of the Nambudri Brahmins existed in Kerala,

Aryan Nambudri's Custom:

Aryan Nambudries have adopted a peculiar custom that only the eldest members of the family should marry within their caste, whereas the junior male members should find their female partners from the non-Aryan communities. The junior male members of Aryan Nambudri might have introduced this dowry system. Usually, junior members of Nambudri brahmin families might select their spouses from the families of Nāyar or other non-Aryan castes. Nāyar women want to marry Nambudris because they believe that the Nambudris are superior to them. Even today, according to one scholar, the women of the royal families of the Cochin and Zamorin dynasties and the ladies of the chiefs of Malabar and Cochin who practise matriarchy can have only Nambudri husbands⁵ Because of high competition and the willingness of the junior Nambudris the Aryan Nambudris would have introduced the dowry system under which the bride has to pay a sum to the bride-groom. The specific symptom of *marumakkal t̄ayam* might also have arisen to safeguard and strengthen the hands of Nambudri Brahmins. Kanyakumary district (Cape Comerin) was under the reign of the King of South Travancore (Kerala) for so many centuries. Due to that, the Tamil Vellalārs have also come under the influence of the dowry system.

The practice of tendering bride groom's price is not prominent among other Dravidians.⁶ The Malavētans, the Malaikuravans, the Thantapulayas, the Malapulayas, and many other tribes of southern India have the custom of paying something to the bride which would go to the mother, the maternal uncle and the aunt.

A similar custom prevails among the Ibos of Nigeria, the Banukus of Zaire, the Dahomiens of Benin and a number of other ethnics of Africa. In a few tribes, inability to pay the bride's price would lead the bride groom to work under his father-in-law for some time and after fulfilling the dues the

5. The tribal people of India p. 37.

6. In modern times, groom who is in a good position demands more money or things from the parents of bride.

bride will be given to the bride groom. This type of marriage is called 'marriage by service'. Such marriages are common among the Dravidian tribes and the Africans.

Approach To Alliance:

Among the tribal communities and plain dwellers in Dravidian India, the parents of the bride would never go to the groom's house to seek alliance. Instead the relatives of the bride groom will go to the bride's house.

The parents of the bride would give soft drinks, or such other things and betel leaves and areca nut to the bridegrooms' party. The conversation would center around the marriage proposals. The bride's parents would ask them to have lunch with them. If the groom's parents are willing to take meals it will be assumed that they accept the terms and condition of the marriage. The marriage will take place after some days or months. The Dravidians describe this system as follows, 'bride is like a flower; groom is like a bee. Flower never goes to the bee; but the bee must come to the flower. The Tamils call puberty as "flowering" (pūppu) and marriage as 'smelling' *manam* or *manatthal*).

The black Africans also have a similar system. The bride is selected by the groom's family. Enquiries are made about her character; if it is satisfactory to them, the groom's uncle would visit her family; if the bride's parents agree to an engagement, they assemble the family together and if there is no objection, a day will be fixed for '*nsala*', the salutation. The father of the groom, the uncle and the brothers will come with a lot of palm wine and meat to the assembled family of the bride. The girl would be asked whether she is willing to be engaged to the bridegroom and she would show her consent by sipping a cup of palm-wine, subsequent to this other formalities will follow.

Bride-A Flower:

Among the Bondo, (North west of River Machkund, Orissa) the father of the bride, will say, when he hands over his daughter to the groom, "So far we protected this flower (bride). Now, we hand over this flower to your hands. Kindly keep it and protect it."

A similar symbolism enters into the African life and culture. When a man comes to a bride's father and says "I have come to beg a Calabash", it means that his nephew wants to marry his daughter.

Maternal Uncle's Major Role:

Both the Dravidians and the Africans would never send their sons directly to the parents of the bride but the maternal uncle plays a major role in his nephew's marriage.

New Mats for New Couple:

Particularly at the time of marriage, the parents of the bride will buy some new articles for their daughter. Among them "a fine new mat" gets primary place. Usually, newly married couples would be given only new mats. The origin of this custom is unknown. But this custom is common to the Dravidians as well as the Africans.

Marriage bath:

The bride and the groom must be clean for marriage. Therefore, before the marriage ceremony they must take bath in the early morning and wear new dresses. This is a common custom in Tamilnadu irrespective of castes and tribes. But, in Kanyakumari district, the southern end of Tamilnadu, the Vellalas of Nānjilnādu have a peculiar custom. Besides the early morning bath, the newly married couple must take bath together after the marriage also, i.e. in that night. In this ceremony the bride pours water on the bridegroom and the bridegroom in turn would pour water on the bride. This ceremony is adopted by the Keralites too⁷ A verse in Āntal's (8 century A.D.) poems in Tamil refers to this custom, saying, "mancaṇam āṭak kaṇakkapṭen" By this piece of literary evidence it is affirmed that the ceremony of marriage bath has been in practice even in the 8th century A.D.

7 This custom prevails in Nattukōttai chettiār community also, in which yellow-coloured water is poured on the bride and the groom, by their relatives including children,

Similar bath but with a little difference is noticed among the Africans. The bride is adorned, dressed and is taken in procession by her relatives to her husband's house. There, she is given a ritual bath as a sign of entry into a newly wedded life.

Love-kissing in Public :

Love-kissing in public especially between the opposite sexes, is totally absent among the Dravidians and the Africans. The Dravidian languages have a word for kiss called *muttam* (DED 4063). But Tamil literature uses this word in the context of mother and children. According to this the mother gives kisses to her children and vice-versa. Ancient Tamil literature describes the lips of the lady-love to be so sweet. Thirukkural (2 century A. D.) says,

The saliva which oozes from the white teeth
of this soft-spoken damsel is like a
mixture of milk and honey. (C. 1121),

Through this description one can infer that the habit of kissing existed in Tamilnadu. Not even a single description about public kissing could be traced from the vast literature of love poems in Tamil.

Like that, love-kissing in public is an uncommon feature among the Africans, though they now have it due to the European influence.

Puberty and After :

A number of Dravidian communities inhabited on the plains adopt that a girl should not even speak to a boy after she has attained puberty.⁸ Even Tamils' love-poems of Cankam age would speak much about the rigorous restrictions on the matured girls from going out of their homes. Sometimes, the girls are compelled to remain alone in their houses. This is called "*il-cherippu*" (house-stay).

8. But this system is not common among lower communities, tribes and Brahmins and at present this system is slowly disappearing in towns and cities, but in villages, it still exists,

The Africans have this custom. For instance, in Zulu land, this custom is still being practised.

Premarital Pregnancy :

Premarital pregnancy is considered as a social disgrace in the Dravidian and the African societies. Bapidi girl (Africa) should remain a virgin till her marriage, and in some cases, the female folk of the bridegroom's party conduct virginity tests on the bride on the day of marriage or first night.

Fondling :

Ancient love songs in Tamil describe a kind of clandestine union between lovers (unmarried couples). It does not mean a sexual intercourse. It may be called fondling. Such fondling may be equate slightly with *Ngweko* of Gikuyu. (Kenya)⁹ and some Bantu people.

Marriage by Capture:

In ancient times, young men captured women as their life partners from their houses. This custom is generally allowed on a particular festive time. This custom is practised by the Mala- yalis of North arkatu, the Nāgā tribes, the Ho of Orissa, the Bhils, the Gond, a central India Draividian tribe, the Khari and the Birhor. Inability to pay high bride-price might, perhaps be the reason for this capture. But in recent time this actual 'capture' has slowly changed into a 'mock' capture.

Gond, a Dravidian tribe which inhabits in Karnataka, Orissa, Rajasthan practises this mock-capture. The parents of the girl themselves will request the family of the groom to capture their daughter. When the bride is carried away, the bride's group makes a sham fight with the groom's party. At that time, the bride is expected to weep and lament. Marriage will follow the mock-fight. The Ho tribe also has this system prominently.¹⁰

9. Jomo Kenyatta, Facing Mount Kenya. pp. 157-160.

10. Vivaha in Hindi means, carrying away.

Like this, Shilluk a Nilotic Negroid ethnic group of Africa, practises that groom must give some bride price. It is usually in the kind of ten cows. Besides, the suitor makes frequent presents of food to his future parents-in law. After some time, he goes and claims his partner. At that time, a mock-fight will be conducted between the kin of the bride and the friends of the suitor. A Dinka bride will be carried off by groom's group through a hole in the back wall of her hut, while a pre-arranged sham fight is progressing.

Gikuyu of Mount Kenya also has this custom. Jomo Kenyatta, the author of 'Facing Mount Kenya' and first President of Kenya.¹¹ describes :

“In response to the boy's request, the family meets in council; the day is fixed for the wedding and kept secret from the girl thus adding a dramatic touch to the proceedings. On the wedding day the boy's female relatives set out to watch the girl's movements. She might be in a garden wedding or in a forest collecting firewood, etc. When they have obtained the necessary information as to where she is working they search for her. On finding her, they return with her, carrying her at shoulder-high. This is a moment of real theatrical acting. The girl struggles and refuses to go with them, protesting loudly and even seeming to shed tears, while the women giggle joyously and cheer her with songs and dances. The cries and cheers can be heard for miles around, and the Gikuyu people will know that the son of so-and-so has taken the daughter of so-and-so in marriage while foreigners may imagine that the girl has been forcibly seized, it is probable that any person who is not well acquainted with the Gikuyu customs may easily mistake this high ritual drama for a near reality.

In some cases, where families are larger a sham fight is staged between the women of both sides. This provides a great entertainment for the women folk and is followed by

11. Jomo Kenyatta himself belongs to Gikuyu.

a grand feast at the bridegroom's homestead. The girl's cries, which are uttered *theatrically* in a singing manner, include such phrases as. "I do not want to get married; I will kill myself if you take me away from my parents. Oh! How foolish I was to leave my home alone and put myself into the hands of merciless people! Where are my relatives? Can't they come and release me and prevent my being taken to a man whom I do not love?" and so on. This goes on until the girl reaches the boy's home and they greet her. Then they sing praising songs for their new bride. On her way home the bride is cheered by passers-by, who utter blessings for the bride and bridegroom and for their future homestead.¹²

Ancestor - Worship during marriage

Paying rich honours to the ancestor is a common custom for both — particularly at the time of marriage, the couple is asked to pray to their ancestors. Among the Muria tribe of Madya Pradesh, the relatives of the boy would go to the house of the girl and tell them that they have come to pluck the flower (bride) from their home. The parents of the bride would understand what the words of the relatives of the boy would really mean. Then the marriage will be settled. During the marriage they have a little sham fight. After the marriage the couple should be ready for a special prayer in memory of the husband's ancestors. Similarly the Africans perform certain ceremonies for their ancestors, at the time of marriage. The bride must visit the graves of her husband's ancestors.

Hand in Hand

Arranged marriages are very common among the Dravidians and the Africans, although the other types are also known to them. The father of a girl gives away his daughter in marriage to a man. That is to say in marriage, bride's hand is joined with the bridegroom's hand and the priest spells so many

12. Jomo Kenyatta-Facing the Mount Kenya. pp. 171-171.

mantras. In Tamil, Āntāl the divine poetess, calls this marriage as “*Kaithalam patral*” (catching the groom’s hand). In Sanskrit, it is noted as *Pānikrahanā*.

The African people of Ijebu have this system. Marriage alliance between two families would be negotiated mutually by friends. On a particular day already fixed for this purpose both the families and their relatives would assemble at the bride’s home. To unite the couple, the father holding the hand of the groom and the bride respectively, would say to the groom,

“This woman will be your wife”.

(*Winobi ewionrayare*)

and to the bride,

“This man will be your husband”

(*Wirokunewi Onrokore*)

Afterwards the father of the bridegroom would cut a coconut and give each half to the bride and the bridegroom. In Dravidian India coconut will be broken into two in all the ceremonies including marriage.

Marriage by Service

Bride-price is very common and not unusual among various tribes and other communities in India. In some groups, the amount of dowry to bride is very high. And the boys cannot afford to give it. That is why marriage by service has originated. It is an alternative type of marriage by purchase when the groom is too poor to pay the dowry to bride.

In such cases, the bridegroom will be ready to give his labour instead of money or other kind of material. He may work as a servant in his father-in-law’s house till the bride-price is paid off by means of his services. The Mannans and the Paliyans follow this system. This method is predominant among the Gonds and the Baigas. Gonds name him *Lamnana* and the Baiga *Lamsena* of *Gabaria*. Birhors father-in-law helps his prospective son-in-law in a novel way. He pays the bride-price

in advance as a loan to his son-in-law. Till the time the loan is repaid, the son-in-law should stay in the father-in-law's house and should do some work. In this way, Gurkhas of Nepal work as labourers. After the completion of a specified period, Khasa daughters will be married to them by the parents of the former.

In this way, the Malaiyalis of North Arcot serves for a year, Paniyans of Malabar for six months, Kadir for two years i.e. one year for selection of a wife and another year for bride-price; Gadabas of Vicakapatnam have to work for six months for this purpose.

Such custom is also reported from Africa. Among the Babemba, girls are married usually before maturity. The groom gives a symbolic presentation to his father-in-law. Then he proceeds to the village of father-in-law and works there. He continues his labour for seven years. Meanwhile, he may become the father of one or more children. Only after the fulfilment of bride-price, one can take his wife to his own house.¹³

Probationary marriage

Parents permit a young man to stay in the girl's house for weeks together. After that, if the boy or girl likes, they can marry each other; otherwise, they would separate but the young man must pay cash compensation to the parents of the girl. Such type of indefinite relation has been recorded among the Kotas of Nilgiri district. In this way a girl can discard half a dozen suitors. Kuki of Assam also practises this system.

Similarly, the Basukus Kwango district of Zaire has this type of spouse selection. They allow the couple to cohabit without any objection for about six months. Even after that the man is at liberty to repudiate the girl if he is not satisfied with her.¹⁴

13. A Source book for African Anthropology, p. 412

14. African journal Vol. XVII No. 6 Oct. 1947, p.p. 288, 9.

New house for new couple

At present generally the traditional Dravidian adopts a joint family system. Sons and their wives live in the same house jointly even after their marriages, with son's parents. Daughters alone go away on getting married and join their husbands and in-laws under the same roof. But this system is an ancient one. Kovalan, and Kannaki, the hero and the heroine of Cilappathikaram (Tamil epic 3rd century A.D.) were given a separate house after their marriage. At present, the business community of Tamilnad, Nattukkottai Chettimar, adopts the very same system.¹⁵ Even Dravidian tribes have followed this, though they stayed around the parents' house as a cluster of individual family unit.

Tottiyans or Kambalas of Madurai and Thirunelveli (Tamilnadu) have a similar system. Before their marriage they should build new hut for the new couple.

Similar custom also exists among the Africans, Ovimbundu (Angola & Zambia) bride chooses one married woman and six unmarried girls to accompany her to the house that has been built by her husband on his father's land, as nearer as possible to his parent's home. Gikuyu (Kenya) bride also gets such a new hut.

Staying separately in the new hut does not mean that the couple dislikes or has enmity with parents or clans. It is a custom to make them equal to their parents' social status and to shape them into independent and responsible members of the community.

15. The system is known as 'separation'

FEW NOTES ON THE DRAVIDO-AFRICANS AND THE SUMERIANS

Scholars in Dravidian studies identified notable resemblances among the Dravidians and the Sumerians. These resemblances must be extended to the black Africans too. The keen comparative study gives clues one after another. The results will strengthen the theory of the common origin of the Dravidio-Africans and their spreading.

In his inaugural address at the University of "Mutants", the poet-President of the Republic of Senegal, Leopold Sedar Senghor has pointed out that the languages of the Dravidio-African and Sumerian are agglutinative.¹

Besides, the people of Elam adjacent to the Sumerians were non-Semitic and their language also agglutinative. The name Elam might be derived from Tamil word *Iilam* which denotes Ceylon in Tamil literature and epigraphy. A section of people, are named in Kerala of South India, as *Iilavaas* who were believed to be the descents of *Iilam*, the modern Tamil-populated area of Srilanka. A legend on King *Eeleelaa* was so prevalent among the Tamils of Tamilnad and Srilanka. A scholar

1. His Excellency L. S. Senghor's address of the University of Mutants, Dakar, Senegal, October 20, 21, 1978

links Elamite and Dravidian through the linguistic similarities.²

At the bend of Euphrates a language named Kharian (Hurian) was spoken in Mitani. In Tamil, Kharian means black people. The language Kharian has so many linguistic affinities with Dravidian tongues.³ The Mittani rulers were in continuous war with Egypt in 15th century B. C. and married their princesses.

Words for Mother and Mother Goddess :

The Dravidians call the mother and mother-Goddess as *ammaa*. Children call their mother as *maa*. The Sumerian also has a word for mother that is *amma*.^{2a} The Zulu of Africa too has a similar word for mother. The Anatolians, an adjacent people of Sumerians name their mother Goddess as *maa*. *Mami* or *Mamitu* was one among the name of Goddess in Babylonia. The Egyptian had a goddess which was named as *maut*. Similarly, *maau* is the mother Goddess among Ewe of Benin and Togo. The Ashanti of West Africa considered *Nyame*, as female, the great mother god who gives life to all and is symbolized by the moon like Mau of Ewe. The goddess *Nyame* is considered as the female half of lord like Indian *Umā*, the female half of Lord *Sivā*. All these words are almost similar phonetically and semantically.

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2. D. W. Mc Alpin has been able to show conclusively that Elamite, a major language of ancient West Asia is cognate with all of Dravidian. Both Elamite and Dravidian have a general verbal structure of: Verb stem + tense marker + personal ending. Both have only two basic positive tenses which can be labelled past and not-past although this is gross simplification of the actual semantics.

Dawid. W. Mc. 'Alpin Towards proto-Elamo Dravidian Language. Vol. 50, No. 1, March 1974 and 'Old Tamil Elamite and the Proto-Dravidian Non-Past.'

Proceedings of the All India Tamil Teachers Conference, Pondicherry, 1974 P.P. 693-694.

3. Dikshitar. V. R. R. Origin and spread of the Tamils 1971 P. 13,
3a *The Sumerians and the Tamil Muslims have common words for father and grand father i.e. attaa and appaa in Tamil and addaa and abbaa in Sumerian respectively.*

Annai and *annaay* are the ancient Tamil usages to denote mother and mother-Goddess. But folk usage for mother or mother Goddess is *ammaa*. The Brahui speaking people of Baluchistan are using this word *annai* with a slight variations.* They use it as *naani* the neighbouring people Kushan also worship mother Goddess under the name of *naanaa*.

According to the Tamil tradition, the mother-Goddess gives power, rain, fertility and others. King and soldiers worship her for war-victory. Girls pray to her for the award of good-grooms.

Similarly, the Sumerians treat their mother-Goddess for love and war. They name her as *in-anna* (cf. *anna* in Tamil).

Like the Dravidians and the Sumerians, the people of central Benin (Dahomey) and Togo of West Africa, name their mother-Goddess as *naanza*. *Naanaa* has temples, priests and devotees. Her name occurs in proverbs, salutations etc. People believe that *naanaa* is a creatress and the giver of powers like the Dravidian mother Goddess.

Worship of Mother Goddess

The importance of mother, the mother descended family system and the worship of mother Goddess are the common features of the Sumerian and the Dravidic-African.

Sumerian, Babylonian and Assyrian name their mother-Goddess as Istar. Egyptian had Isis. The Dravidian mother-Goddess *ammaa* has another name Iiswari (Sanskrit). In Tamil mother is called as *iinraal*. The great Tamil saint Thiruvalluvar (2nd century A D.) calls mother *Iinraal* (Thirukkural : 656). The words for mother or mother-Goddess in Babylonian, Assyrian (Istar), Egyptian (Isis), Indian (Iiswari) and Tamil (iinraal) are all closely related.

Goddess will Cause Good Health or Ill Health :

The Sumerian Goddess Inanna is responsible for providing a good spouse, healthy children and a pleasurable life for a man. This Sumerian belief is common to the Dravidic Africans also.

*Brahui - A Dravidian Language.

Particularly in Mesopotamia, human health depends on the goddess Nin-Karrak and on the Goddess Gula. The Goddess Gula will inflict illness and restore health. The Dravidians believe the Goddess (Amman) would give smallpox and other diseases. The prayer and some ceremonies to the goddess restore their health. The same kind of belief is prevalent among the Africans too.

Nuptials Among God and Goddess :

Every year the divine marriage will be celebrated in all the Sivā temples regularly in Tamilnad. At that time, actual formalities of a marriage should be followed. Lord Sivā will be considered as groom Goddess Umā as bride and Lord Vishnu as bride's brother who hands over his sister Umā to Lord Sivā. It is called in Tamilnadu as (Thirukkalyānam). The marriage of Meenākshi (Another name for Umā) with Somasundaram (Lord-Sivā) is a famous festival (Meenākshi Kalyānam) in the temple of Madura, the ancient capital of King Pāndiyā, which was mentioned by the Greek ambassador Megasthenes.

In Northern Malabar of South India, the business community celebrates a grand marriage festival to its goddess *Bagavathi* with Lord Sivā.

According to Sumer and Akkad, the God Ningirisu (Ninusta) married the Goddess Bau. On every new year's day, the solemn nuptials of Ningirisu and Bau were celebrated.

The Goddess was ushered into the bridal chamber in the midst of Cortège of worshippers who bore wedding gifts.

The Sumerians conduct divine marriage every year to their Goddess Inaanna (cf. in annai in Tamil) with the Moon God of Ur.*

Like the South India and Sumer in Africa also, the Goddess *Mau* of Ewe (Benin and Togo) (cf. amma or Umā in Tamil) will be considered as the bride of the Lord Lisā (cf. Sivā

4. Nilakantāsastrī K. A. A history of South India. P 63

in India) Here, Goddess *Mau* was represented by moon and God *Lisā* by sun. Similarly the Dravidians compare the female principle with moon and male principle with sun, because the moon is cool and the sun is hot. Cilappatikāram, an epic in Tamil (C 2 A. D) describes Goddess who always has moon with her. The striking similarity of the Tamils and the Africans must be noted here.

The Ewe people of West Africa, call their super being *Mau-Lisā*, which means mother-father. This is almost or always synonymous concept to *ammai-appan* in Tamil. Not only the concept, but also the mother goddess's name gets the premier place.

Muruka Worship

The Tamils of South India, worship God Muruka. They believe that the mountains are the abodes of Lord Muruka. They call them the six sacred residents of Lord Muruka (Aru-patai vītu). Literary tradition says that Muruka is the god of Mountain *

In the like manner the Sumerians, the Babylonians and the Assyrians consider their gods to have wives and families. The inhabited palaces were situated either in regions above the sky or on the great mountain of East.

The Sumerian God Enlil was called 'the lord of all regions. The Babylonians took Enlil, and assimilated with their God Mardu. Then they name it as Bel, which means lord.

He normally lived on the great Mountain of the East. He was associated with the goddess Ninkhursag, 'Lady of the great Mountain' as like Valli, Muruka's spouse who was a resident of hilly tracks.

5 Cēyōṇ is interpreted to denote the child of Lord Sīvā. But such reference did not occur in ancient Cankam literature. Some say it means a god who is red in colour. He is considered the oldest god of ancient Tamils. If he is the oldest, then his colour would not be red, but would be something else. Because Dravidian Tamils own colour is not red but black. Therefore the two interpretation mentioned above for Cēyōṇ is not appropriate. In my opinion the word for God Cēyōṇ means a god who is far away from the human being or human abode. Cēymai = Far away. Therefore, people considered, the high hill top will be the sacred abode for lord Muruga. Many other ancient people also believed that their god is so far away from them.

Marduk (Enlil)*'s temple is at Esagil, Babylonia. Each year, on a fixed day, the statue of the god Marduk was carried solemnly through the immense crowd out of the Esagil and out of the city to a place in the country called the Akitu, which was a sort of temple.

Here it remained for days together. Prayers and formulas were chanted by the priests. A mock-battle was programmed between the God Marduk and the evil. The evil must be killed by the God Marduk. Finally a divine marriage with the goddess will be celebrated. Similar ceremony is performed at Uruk in honour of lord Anu and Ishtar and at Ur in honour of Nannar.

A similar God's Sham-fight is reported from Thiruchenthur of Tamilnadu. Here lord Muruka's battle with Sūrā is celebrated annually in the days of *Kanda Sasti*. Similar mock-battle is conducted in some other temples also.

The God Murugu or Mulungu is considered to be a god of Mountain in East Africa. Nearly twenty-five tribes of East Africa worship Murungu (cf. Muruka, in Tamil), The Gikuyu of Kenya considered their God Murungu, as living on four sacred mountains. The people of Nyasaland believed that Murungu is everywhere and can do all things.⁶

The Dravidian name Muruka, the Sumerian word Marduk or Marru and the African word Mulungu are almost phonetically similar.^{6a}

Besides, Muruka, Marduk or Mulungu, the mother goddess's abode is also mountain, for the Dravidian, the Sumerian and the African. An Indian legend says, the mother-goddess Umā, is the daughter of mountain. Therefore, she is named as *pārvathi* or *Malaimakal*, *Parvatham* (Sanskrit) and

6. Parrinder. E. G. African Traditional Religion, P. 35.

6a. For detailed study: Refer: Aravaanan. K.P. The African worship of *Murungu* and the Tamils worship of *Muruka*. International Anthropological Congress. Post-Plenary Session, University of Madras, 19-21st December 1978. This article appears in this Volume pp. 9-14

Malai (Tamil) means mountain. According to Hindu legend, the Mount Kailāyā is the abode of goddess Umā. The Sumerians called their mother goddess *the lady of the mountain*. Similarly, Nigerians of Ibadan believe that their goddess stays on the top of the hill at Ibadan.

Religious Prostitution

In Tamilnadu, some young ladies had voluntarily dedicated their service to the temples. Later they were considered the wives of the main deity. Inscriptions and literature in Tamil pointed out them as *dēvadiyār* (female votaries). Later days, this group of female votaries were converted into regular prostitution. Still this community is alive here and there. But the old custom of prostitution has almost disappeared.

In Sumeria, female votaries sacrificed their entire life and service to the temple of Goddess Inanna. This practice of dedicating girls has been in Phoenician Colony of Sicca on the North African Coast, at Heliopolis in Syria, and in Armenia (Russia), Lydia (West Asia minor) and Cornth (Greek).

Female votaries marriage with God was prevalent in Mesopotamia, like Tamilnadu, this practice has led to sacred prostitution. Mesopotomian performed marriage among Sun God Shamash with female votaries of Marduk and they had human children.

Religious prostitution existed in the cult of Mylitta of Babylonia and Aphrodite of Bybles, a city of Phoenicia (modern Jobeil)

In Africa, similar custom was practised particularly in the temples of Serpent (python). The devoted girls were working in the temples of Sicca, a Phoenician Colony of North Africa. Besides, the religious prostitution was allowed in the temples of serpent of Whydah, Dahomey (Benin). A Number of girls devoted their entire life to the python temples. These girls were considered as wives of pythons. But they were women concubines of the temple priests. Ellis mentions about two

thousand wives of the python temples. They were secretly married to the priests with unknown rites of initiation.⁷ In ceremonial days, the devotees were freely allowed to cohabit with these serpent ladies. Like Mesopotamians, if they become pregnant, they say god possesses them, and it is he who makes them pregnant.

King and God

King was considered equivalent to God. In Tamil, the word *Iraivan* denotes both god and king. Another Tamil word *Āptavan* for God means a ruler-one who ruled. The temple of God and the palace of king are both denoted by a single word *kōvil* in Tamil.

The Sumerian had a similar faith. In Sumeria, church and state were so nearly synonymous.

The Egyptians almost always consider this king as equivalent to god, or the son of God. Egyptian king was described as 'He of the Great house', Pēr-Aha, which we pronounce as Pharaoh. Now, this *Aha* occurs as palace sign, in both Egyptian and Minoan hieroglyphics. Pēr-Aham means *great home* in Tamil. The Egyptian word Pharaoh also has this meaning and almost the same sound.⁸

"Hence, there is an unmistakable affinity between the Egyptian title and the two Dravidian words of which it is presumably composed."^{8a}

Like the Dravidians, the Sumerians, and the Egyptians, the black Africans too had a similar faith on king. The concept of divine king is a common belief among the Africans.

⁷. Quoted by Wilfred D. Hambly, *Serpent worship in Africa*. 1931. p.11

⁸. H.D. David. *Some contact and Affinities between the Egypto-Minoan and the Indo-(Dravido) Sumerian culture—Tamil Culture.*

§a H.D. David's article: *Ibid*

The comparative study on the Dravido-Africans and the Sumerians has not started in an organized manner. If it will be done, numerous results on human origin and its civilization will bear fruit.

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LEMURIA: THE ORIGINAL HOME OF THE DRAVIDO-AFRICANS

Linguistic and cultural comparative studies confirm the similarities of the Dravidians and Africans. From 1933 onwards a few reputed scholars tried to discover the reasons for behind the similarities¹ mentioned above. A few experts opine that Africans came from India, while others suppose Dravidians came from the area of mediterranean. The discussion again confirm the similarities to a higher degree. Though the constructive theories have not been fully developed, the close relationship of Dravidians and Africans is beyond doubt.

At present, the detailed study of the lost Lemuria submerged in the Indian ocean would solve the Dravido-African problem. Some vague but vibrant legends in ancient Tamil literature and Telugu folklore about an "overseas motherland" were indicative of a wave-like migration of cultural groups of the ancient Indus Valley civilisation to the southern India. Such references occurred in the classical Tamil literature i.e. Puranānūru (Before Christ), Kuruntokai (B.C), Cilappatikāram (Second Century A.D.) Kalitokai (Second century A.D) and the commentaries of Irayanār Kalaviyal and Cilappatikāram, in detail.²

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1. Tuttle (1933), Lilius Homburger (1950), Leopold Seder Senghor (1974)
 2. The English version of these literary evidences is appended at the end of this article,

Another prominent Dravidian language called Telugu has also recorded a legend of the Adivēlamās arrival by sea.³ Gūna Vēlamās, a Telugu speaking caste of Andhra Pradesh has a legend for their origin. According to that, generations ago, when all the members of the caste were in danger of being swept off the face of the earth by some of their enemies, the Pallis came to the rescue with their boats.^{3a}

But historians of South India treated the above as mere legends; they have forgotten the fact that every legend contains a degree of historical truth. The legend of Kumari also was based on certain events which actually occurred in the history of the ancient Dravidian land.

The following facts will strengthen the Kumari legend as true. Like the references in Tamil and Telugu on lost Lemuria, in Africa also some other folk evidences have been discovered. In the case of Africa, some folk-tales are told about sea goddesses and sea-gods. According to them, sea is imagined as goddess and land as god. Fishermen of coastal areas of Tamilnadu and Kerala of South India also call the sea as mother, consistent with Africans, the sea-goddess and land-god fought with each other. In the end, the angry sea-goddess swallowed up the vast land.

In Madagascar, some legends about a castle beneath the sea-water have been recorded among the Malagasy who live in the environs of Diego Suarez, a harbour and town near the northern end of Madagascar.⁴ At a distance of 21.5 miles towards South from the Gandhiji Memorial Hall beneath the sea there is a vast vacant area with a depth of 7 pākams (The coastal people mean a pākam to the length between the extended, hands including the chest). But the depth

3. Dr. Nikita Gurov, a Soviet Indologist's lecture in April, 20, 1978, at Madras-Hindu, dated 21st April, 1978

3a Taurstoa-Castes and tribes of Southern India, Vol. VII p. 339

4. Alexander Kondratov-The riddles of three oceans p. 174.

of the other sides is 20 pākams. They regard that the land might be the foundation of the oldest buildings. During low-tides of the sea, fishermen say that they used to see a big door inside the sea, at a long distance. (Thiru. Beer Mohamed, the then M.L.A. of Periyapalayam also pointed out this instance before the Assembly of Tamil Nadu, India in 1970).

The island of Madagascar is very near to Africa. This island is also known as "Kommar". The people of Madagascar are called the people of "Komri". The sea between Madagascar and South Africa and Mozambique is named "Comores". An island is called "Grande Comor", a group of islands is called "Comoro islands" and an independent country is named "The Republic of Comores". The words Komor, and Comor are the changeable forms of the word "Kumari". This change is a common one in Dravidian languages, particularly in Tamil. The following examples will prove that:

kuzhanthai-kozhanthai = child

kutai-kotai = umbrella

kutal-kotal = intestine

Therefore, these names are really the echo of the Tamil name "Kumari". Unless there had been an interconnection between these nations, these words could not have passed over there.

And also, according to the biologists, the flora and fauna of Madagascar are similar in many respects to those of Dravidian India.

Millions of years ago, a great continent existed which was called Gondwana land. It comprised South America, Africa, India, Australia and Atlantica. Before 150 but within 180 million years, Gondwana land broke into pieces. At that time Ceylon rifted from Dravidian India. During that period there were no human beings anywhere. And there were some lands which do not exist in geographical structure, where the lemur—a kind of monkey-like animal lived. Therefore the land was called Lemuria. Later this Lemuria also was broken up due to submer-

sion of sea. After this, a long land-bridge was formed which linked Africa with South India. At that time, human beings arose, became civilised and settled on the land-bridge. It was called Kumari. In Tamil, Kumari means youth-the state of being young, or ever lasting youthfulness. All the other areas except Kumari, became the prey to the ferocious ocean. But a few thousand years back, this Kumari or land-bridge was also submerged in the sea in the presence of the ancient peoples (Dravido-Africans). Some people moved to the north (Dravidian India); some others moved to the south-west (Madagascar/Africa) and some others lay scattered in south east islands of Asia and Australia. The commentary of Cilappathikaram mentioned a city named Madurai which was engulfed by the sea. Then the king Mudatthirumāran who escaped from the sea-engulfing moved to the north and installed the third academy at Madurai, north to the lost land⁵. For the remembrance of his lost city Madurai, king Mudattirumāran named his new city as Madurai. Even today there is a city called Madura(i) in the islands of East Indies. The other one is still in existence in the southern part of Tamilnadu.

All the three groups of people who were affected by the sea never forgot this sea-engulfing disaster. Those who moved to the north (Tamils and Telugus) recorded this in their literature. They called their southern corner of India "Kumari". Those who moved to the south-west also kept this in their legends indirectly and preserved the old names as "Komor" in Africa. The quotation of Mr. E. Thurston in his monumental work, "Castes and Tribes of Southern India" is more appropriate in this place. His quotation is as follows :

"On the evidence of the very close affinities between the plants and animals in Africa and India at a very remote period, Mr. R.D. Oldham concludes that there was once a continuous stretch of dry land connecting South Africa and India. "In some deposits" he writes (Manual of the geology of India 2nd edition, 1893)" found resting upon the Karoo beds on the coast

5. Adiyārkkū nallār's commentary of Cilappathikaram 8:1-2, 11:18-20

of Natal, 22 out of 35 species of Mollusca, and Echinodermata collected and specifically identified, are identical with forms found in the cretaceous beds of southern India the majority being Trichinopoly species. From the cretaceous rocks of Madagascar six species of cretaceous fossils were examined by Mr. R. B. Newton in 1899, of which three are also found in the Ariyalur group (Southern India). The south African beds are clearly shallow water deposits like those of India. The great similarity of forms certainly suggests continuity of coast line between the two regions and thus supports the view that the land connection between South Africa and India, already shown to have existed in both the lower and upper Gondwana periods, was continued into cretaceous times."⁶

Considering these two groups of people, from various angles, regarding their common origin from Kumari, physical appearance, spoken languages and their cultural features they resemble each other. Thus both the Dravidian people of South India, and the black people of the African continent have the same common background. According to the anthropologists the black people were the first full-fledged human beings who originated from the lost Lemurian-land bridge. Their original home was Kumari.⁷

-
6. E. Thurston-Castes and tribes of Southern India, Introduction p. xxiv, 2nd edition, Cosmo publications, Delhi, 6
 7. This Kumari may be Tabrobane which is described by Megasthenes, Strabo, Pliny and others. On the other hand modern scholars think that the above Tabrobane was the ancient Ceylon. But the description of Pliny and Megasthenes on Tabrobane are completely different from the presumption on Ceylon alone. For example, according to Megasthenes and Pliny Tabrobane's length from north to south is 7000 (875 miles) stadia and its width is 5000 stadia (625 miles). (1 stadia = 1 Furlong (approximately)). But Ceylon's length and width are 271.5 miles and 137.5 miles respectively and is smaller in size than Tabrobane. According to one sikrito (quoted by Strabo) the ship travel between Tabrobane and South India took 20 days. But at present by boat it takes only a few hours from Dhanushkoodi. Not only their distances but also other descriptions differ. Therefore I presume that this Tabrobane may be a part of the lost Lemuria.

APPENDIX

FIELD STUDY IN CAPE COMORIN ON LOST LEMURIA

Pasture Lands

People from the coastal area of the cape of Kanyakumari say that, South to Kanyakumari there was an adjacent land used for grazing cattles. They also assure that the Vivekanantha rock was adjoining with the cape of Kanyakumari.

Folklore

A story is told to prove the existence of the sea-eaten by land. While an old lady was gathering cow-dung on the pasture land, she found an idol of Goddess Kumari Amman. She at once informed the matter to the villagers and they jointly brought the idol to the village and worshiped her by constructing a temple. Even today the Devasom Board of the temple honours the generations of the old lady who found the idol. Though they have converted to the Christianity of Roman Catholicism they used to prepare thread for hoisting the flag of the temple and get awards for the thread.

Rock or Building?

At a distance of 4 k.m. towards South from the Gandhiji Memorial Hall beneath the sea, there is a vast vacant area with a depth of 7 paakams (To the coastal people a paakam is the length of the two extended hands including the chest). But the depth of the other side is 20 paakams. They regard that the land might be the foundation of the oldest buildings.

Saravana Rock

There is a rock by name Saravana Rock adjacent to the sea in Muttam of Kanyakumari. The villagers of Muttam describe that in those days there was a temple on the rock.

River Kumari and River Pakhruli

Kumari Nadu was situated south to the present Nanjil Nadu. There were many rivers especially river Kumari and river Pakhruli running through these two places. There are signs to show that they reached the sea. They started from a village called Manal Thittai situated at the western side. The river Kumari with some turnings ran through and ended near the side of a village by name Idinthakarai. The river Pakhruli ran through the western ocean to a long distance. Fishermen who are thorough with the features of the sea, alone know these facts. An old Christian from the sea-shore assures that there are no sea-fishes in those places.

Pure Water-springs

Next to Manalthittai on the sea-shore between the dashing tides I found some springs with pure water. I tasted the sweetness of the water by digging the sand. This is an evidence to prove the running of the two rivers. West to the Gandhiji Memorial Hall at a distance of 3 furlongs in the middle of the rocks while digging a place covered by white sand I found the oozing of fine water. There is a village namely Kovalam situated west to the cape of Kanyakumari. On the eastern side of the village there is an old well in which the villagers take their drinking water.

Coming to know that there is a spring in the Vivekanantha Rock, I, with my students, reached there by a boat (.967). I looked at the water spring on the right of a dais which is considered as the foot-steps of the great monk Vivekanantha. I tasted and felt the water to be pure. By raising a wall over it, they have covered the spring. Some authorities of the memorial rock explained that it was not a spring but stagnant of the rain water.

Similar springs may also be noted in some other places. Though there is a well at Tharankampadi it is not so like the evidences gathered at Kanyakumari.

Door inside the Ocean

During low-tides of the sea, fishermen say that they used to see a big door inside the sea, at a long distance. (Thiru. Beer Mohamed the then M.L.A. of Periyapalayam also pointed out this instance before the Assembly of Tamil Nadu; India in 1970.)

Is it Idinthakarai? (Demolished) or Izhanthakarai? (Lost)

The coastal areas of Kanyakumari are often demolished for a long time by sea-erosion. There is a village affected by such sea-erosion with a name Idinthakarai where the river Kumari ended. There are many other nameless places being affected by the very same mischievous act of the Ocean.

2

Tamil Literary Evidences for Lost Lemuria

- 1 பஹுளி ஆற்றுடன் பன்மலை அடுக்கத்துக்
குமரிக் கோடும் கொடுங்கடல் கொள்ள

— சிலப்பதிகாரம் 11:20-21

The cruel ocean engulfed the river Pakruli and a row of hills including the mountain Kumari.

— Cilappatikāram — A Tamil epic (Second Century A.D.) Chapter II 20-21

- 2 மலிதிரை ஊர்ந்து மண்கடல் வவ்வவின்
மெலிவின்றி மேற்சென்று மேவார் நாடு இடம்படப்
புலியொடு வில்நீக்கிப் புகழ்பெற்றித்த கிளர்கொண்டை
வலியினான் வணக்கிய வாடாச்சீர்த் தென்னவன்

— கலித்தொகை 104

In order to compensate the area lost to the giant waves of the sea, King Pāndia without tiresomeness moved to the other countries and won them. Removing the emblems of tiger (Chola's) and bow (Chera's) he, in their places inscribed his reputed emblem fish (Pāndia's) and valiantly made his enemies bow him.

— (Kalittokai 104 (Second Century A.D.)

3. நெடியோன்

நன் னீர்ப் பஃறுளி மணலினும் பலவே — புறநானூறு 9
—Puranānūru 9 (Before Christ)

The King Nediyan must live in the world for long years than the immense sand of the river Pakhruli. — Puranānūru. 9 (before christ).

4. ஆர்கலி மிதித்த நீர்திகழ் சிலம்பிற்

கூர் அசைந்து —குறுந்தொகை 52

The roaring noise of the Ocean was likely to quake the summit of the mountain.

Kuruntokai, 52 (Before Christ)

5. கடல் கொள்வதன் முன்பு

பிறநாடும் உண்மையின், தெற்கும் எல்லை கூறப்பட்டது
—இளம்பூரணர்

Prior to the sea-engulfing, South to Cape-Kumari there were some countries. Therefore Panampāranar in his preface to Tolkāppiam describes also the Southern boundary.

—Ilampūranār (12th Century A.D.) A commentator of Tolkāppiam

3

History of the Submerged Tamil Academies

Of the three Sangams (academies of Tamil) Adiyārku Nallār gives a description of the first two academies. In his commentary on "Veenir kāthai" he explains as follows: the portion of Tamil Nadu is situated between the river Pakhruli and the river Kumari. He means Nediyoan Kuntram as mountain Venkadā. Being "thodiyool" a feminine proper noun, it is presumed to mean Kumari, a name of a river in the south. Because of the following reason he, instead of mentioning "Nediyan Kuntramum thodiyool nathium" has mentioned "thodiyol Pavvamum" (sea). Before the first deluge there were 4449 bards of the First Academy, including Akathiyānar, Irayānar, Kumāavel, Murānjyūr Mūdināharāyar and Nithiyin-kizhavan etc., who composed 4440 treatises comprising Paripādal, Muthunārai, Muthukuruku and Kalariyavirai etc.

Among the 89 Pandia-Kings starting from Kāychinavazhuthi and ending with Kadunkoon, 7 staged and exhibited their literary talent. Of them a Pandia-King namely Nilantharu Thiruvir Pandian staged the remarkable Tolkāppiam. During his reign, river Pakhruli was his northern frontier to his southern portion. The distance between the rivers Pakhruli and Kumari was 700 Kāvadaś.* The 49 fertile countries like Eezhthengam, Eezh Madurai, Eezh munnalai, Eezh pinpālai, Eezhkuntram, Eezhkunakarai and Eezh kurumpanai etc, Kumari and Kolla, the two hill-covered countries, forests, rivers and cities upto the river Kumari and mountain Kumari all comprised within the area between these two rivers Pakhruli and Kumari fell pray to the wild Ocean. Hence it is learnt that he has mentioned "Pavvam" to mean the sea.

The lines mentioned above, the Erayanār commentary expounded by Nakkīranār the son of Kanakkayanār, the Ilampūranar's commentry to the preface on Tolkappiam and other sources stand as proof to this incident.

—Irayanār Commentary 8th century A.D.

There were three Sangams namely Ist academy, 2nd academy and 3rd academy installed by Pandia-Kings for Tamil research. Akathiyānār, Thiripuramerittha Viri sadaikkadavul, Kuntreerintā Murugavel, Muranjiyūr Mudināharāyar and Nithiyinkizhavan were the versatile poets among the 549 of the Ist academy. Including them there were 4449 bards who composed verses like Paripādal, Muthunārai, Muthukurukn and Kalariyavirai etc. The Ist Sangam was in existence for 440 years. 89 Kings beginning from Kāychinavazhuthi and ending with Kadunkoon conducted, the Ist academy. Among them 7 Pandia-Kings staged and exhibited their talents. The sea-eaten Madurai was the place for their research on Tamil; they followed Akathiyam as their grammar.

The following 51 notable poets like Akathiyānār, Tolkāp-piyanār, Irunthaiyūr Kurunkōzhi Mōci, Vellūr Kāppian, Siru Pāndarangan, Thirayanmāran, Thuvarai Kōmān and Kīranthai etc., were in the 2nd academy. Totally 3700 poets were immersed

*Kaavadam = 6.7 Km.

including the foregoing poets in creating poems. Kali Kuirku, Vendāzhi, Viyazha mālai and Akaval were their distinguished treatises. They adopted Akathiyam, Tolkāppiyam Māpurānam Isai nunukkam and Pūthapurānam as their grammars. The 2nd academy lasted for 3700 years. 59 Kings commencing from Venthēr Chezhiyan upto Mudatthirumāran established the 2nd Sangham. Of them 5 staged and exhibited their poems. They conducted Tamil research in a place called Kapādapuram. The then Pāndia country might have been swallowed up by the cruel ocean.....

King Mudatthirumarran who escaped from sea-engulfing, moved to the north and established the 3rd academy at Madurai north to the lost land.

—Adiyaarkkunallaar (12th century A.D) Chilappathikaaram,
8:1-2, 11:18-20

'PALLANKUZH' (BOARD GAME) IN TAMILNADU (INDIA) AND AFRICA

Similarities

Nature of the board

Mostly the size and structure of the board are the same. The Senegalese have the board with twelve pits and the Tamils have fourteen. But, fourteen pits game is also found in certain African states.

Nature of the playing seed

Both people use molucca-beans, *Erythrina indica* and cowrie as their playing seeds.

Direction

Their direction of the game is anti-clockwise.

Number of players

Generally number of players is two.

Game for married couple

In both regions, the newly married couple are advised to play a type of game like this.

Game and chief

In ancient times in both areas this game had connection with king or chief.

Winning of four seeds

The winning of four seeds is a kind of gaining. This type of winning is noted from Tamilnadu of southern India and Mali, Benin and Senegal of black Africa.

Seeds for eating

During the play, a metaphoric term, eating is used. Such a usage is common among the Tamils and Africans.

Capturing seed from opponent side

In certain games, when a player wins, he takes seeds from the pit concerned and also from the pit, facing that particular pit. This type of capturing is investigated from Togo-Cameroon and Kanyakumari district of Tamilnadu.

Stopping and continuation of the game

Like the Tamils, the Dogons of West Africa have five seed game, pearl-picking method and they do not stop their game when they put the last seed. They continue by taking seeds from the next pit and continue till the reaching of a vacant pit like the Tamils.

Ending of the game

Like Tamilnadu, in Africa, certain kinds of games continue until the full defeat of the loser. The Wolofs, Sereers, and Toukulars of Senegal have this system like the Tamils.

Retaining vacant pit

A player may become a winner or loser. The loser is unable to fill up all his pits. In such a case, the loser should leave certain pits which he could not fill up. If the loser earns enough seeds from the preceding games, he can fill these vacant pits. The Senegalese and Tamils adopt this system.

Dissimilarities

A few dissimilarities are discovered. But they are fewer and less stronger than the similarities. Most of them are answerable.

African origin

This board game is played in the south and north Americas. But names and rules of the board game in these regions are entirely the same as the African native names, and also this game is more popular among the blacks than the whites. Therefore, it is certain that this game was introduced by the blacks to the areas like the New World when the slave trade was in progress.

The Arabs have learnt this game from Africa when they contacted them by commercial, religious and political purposes.

This game is a popular one in Southeast Asian countries. The game and rules of the Southeast Asians are closer to the Tamils than the Africans. But, the Africans might have introduced this game even to South India or the Dravidians of southern India they might have learnt this game from their African brethren by their cultural and commercial contacts. Thus this game might have originated from Africa and spread to Dravidian India where it might have met some local changes and then carried by the Tamils to the Southeast Asian countries.

Arguments for the African origin of this game

Numerous varieties of the game are being played by the Africans from south to north and from east to west. Such varieties and popularity have not been discovered in any other place.

African national game

For so many centuries, the Africans have been considering his game as their national game.

Earliest recorded evidence

Earliest written document on this game is not available from any place except Africa. The Tamils have some literary evidences. But they need further clarification and confirmation.

The commentators of the ancient Tamil Literature usually interpret the word '*naay*' as a coin used in gambling. But it cannot be construed to be so in all the places. For instance the following lines cannot be explained in terms of gambling.

நரைமூ தாளர் நாய் இடக் குழிந்த
வல்லின் நல்லகம் நிறையப் பல்பொறிக்
கானம் வாரணம் ஈனும்

— புறநானூறு 52 : 14-16

Hence there is ample room to conclude that a reference to this game is available in Sankam Tamil literature which was written before Christ. According to this 'the grey-headed old men played so many times with the help of seeds (nāy) on the pits of a board which was carved on the side of a rock. Because of their continuous usage, the pits became big in which forest hens laid eggs.'

The ancient Egyptians had some game similar to this. But it is not proved beyond doubt. However, the African tradition has been keeping this game for many centuries, though they did not have any written document. But they have a definite written document of the seventeenth century A.D. According to that, around 1600 A.D., King Shamba of the Bushongo people of the Congo region, replaced gambling by the introduction of the board game in his country. A sculpture of his period shows the king Shamba sitting calmly in front of a board. This is the first historical and architectural evidence of the board game in Africa. Till one finds an earlier documentary evidence before this period, one has to conclude that the board game might have originated from Africa.

The Tamil name 'paandi' and the Baandus of Africa

The Tamil name *paandi* might be a corrupted form of the African name Baandu, one among the oldest ethnics in Africa who occupies today approximately one-third of the African continent from central to southern and western to eastern parts of the continent. The Baantus are the lovers of this board game irrespective of age and sex. Miss. Homburger, a French scholar in African languages shows affinities between the languages of Dravidians and Baantus. According to the Tamil legend on lost Lemuria, the Paandiya country, and ancient kingdom of Tamilnadu has extended her southern limit upto the coast of eastern Africa. The African Baantus might have introduced their game to the Tamils. That is why, this game in Tamilnadu has named after them as *Baandu aattam*. which means a game of Baantus. Later days, this term might have changed into *paandi aattam*.

TABLE I

Board game : Resemblances between the Africans and Tamils

No.	Resembled aspects	Africa (Senegal)	Tamilnadu
1	Board	Wooden in general	Wooden in general
2	Size of the board	Rectangular	Rectangular
3	Pits	In two rows	in two rows
4	Seed house	two seed houses	two seed houses
5	Number of pits	12 in general and 14 in certain games	14 for all games
6	Shape of the pit	round	round
7	Nature of seed	molucca-beans, Erythrina indica, cowry	Like the previous and the seed of tamarind tree
8	Number of seed	4, 5 or 6 for each pit	4, or 5
9	Direction	anti-clockwise	anti-clockwise
10	Taboos	more	not more
11	Players	certain games only for women and children	women and children

12	Number of players	two	two in general
13	Game for marriage	certain game for them	kalyaana paandi
14	Relation with king	they have	they have
15	Gaining of 4 seeds	they have	they call it 'Pearl picking'
16	Seed for eating	a metaphoric naming and asking	They name a game as 'eating paandi'
17	Gaining from opponent's row	Cap-vertians have	They name the game as 'thadavum paandi'
18	Stop and continuance	They have both	Continuance
19	Ending the game	Till the winning of all seeds from the opponent	Like the previous
20	Retaining vacant pit	The loser retains vacant pit till his winning	Like the previous
21	Names	Toukular names <i>bundu</i> and <i>dokkidi</i>	Tamil names <i>pondhu</i> and <i>dakkam</i>

TABLE 2

NAMES OF THE BOARD GAME

(From various languages of the world)

No.	Regions	Names of the people	Names of the Board-Game
1	Africa (west)	Malinkees	Maager
"	"	Africans (black)	Kaposieg, kapokungo
"	" (Bank of Volta River)	Dogons	ee, wayla, Pin, koro Iin, peerece,
"	(East)	Africans (black)	woulo
"	"	Berbeer alkarhat	Šuubaa
2	Algeria	Numidians	aweelec
3	Angola	Ovimbundu	makala
4	Benin	Dahomeans	Ocela
5	Borneo	Adi	adi, aji, adito (ajeto) (for), maaji,
6	Brazil	Efik	yavo dje (whites play) Enindje (play with 4 and 12 pits)
"	" near islands	Efik	Dakun
7	Cameroon	Efik	Adjji, aji wawi Nsa

8	Congo		Magda
	"	Fang	Kal
	"		mangola, maagola
	" (Bank of river)	Loango	choro, Soro
9	Egypt	Egyptian (camiro)	Isafu.
	"		maakala
10	Ethiopia	Didinga	Perēsouni, Perēsuni
	"	Abyssinians	mankal, cont, graabata
11	France	Blacks-Immigrants	Tabou
12	Guinee	Guinian.	Woridama, woli, wooree,
	"		woori, walu, walya
13	Haiti - North		manger, maaga
	"		Wari
	"		kay
14	India - Tamilnadu	Tamils	Pallaankuzhi
	"	Tamils of kanya kumari (Dist)	Paandi, Pallaankuzhi
	" Karnataka	Kanarese and Tulus	Chennamana
	" Andhra Pradesh	Telugus	Voomala Kunta
15	Ivory-Coast	guenee	kpoo
			aweelee
			Joogklak, coote dakan

16	Java	dakun, pakaan dakon, (interier)
17	Kenya	bao, mbo pu
18	Liberia	Woridama, woli, wouree Wooree, woori, walu, walya
19	Malaysia	Pallaankuzhi Papan, Papan Jongkak (papan = wood- den board, jongkak-pit, Cokkak Maraaj
20	Maldives	
21	Mali	Walu, walya Gbegelee
22	Maroc	Sig berle
	"	
23	Mauritania	maan daaree Manddiaree (... to 20 pits) only for women and girls
24	Nigeria	Isce Dara Okwæe
	"	
	"	

Tamils

Malaysians

Malacca people

Dogons

Gruerzées

Ain Bou Arja

Salah, bouberoukou

Trarza

Moors of Boutijimit

Edo

Housa

Ibo

25	Nigeria " Nubia " Niam-niam " "	Yorubas Nubians Niam-niam Dongo	Sayo, Ayo Aweelee, maji, maji maagala abanga, abaaga toi
26	Philippines		Cookajin
27	Rhodesia		Isafa
28	Senegal " " " " "	Mal Manthinkee Peul Sereer Toukular Wolof	Woribo Woribo, wouree Woridama Mouri Wooree, wouli Wooree, wure, wouri
29	Sierra Leone	Temne	Koo Manka
30	Sudan	Sudanaise	Woridama, wolice, wouree, wooree wuri, walu, walya, woribo
31	Sumatra	Botaka	
32	Srilanka	Tamils Singalese	Pallankuzhi Saaka.

33	Syria	Syrians (Arab)	maakala, Suubaa, div
	"		Bimadjunni 14 pits and seven seeds:
			B'roseya (children's play)
			B'hakim (Rational play 14 pits)
			Ob'akila (Intelligent play with 14 pits)
34	Tanzania	Kilimanjaro	Mbo
35	Togo	Baoule (Baule)	awelee
36	United States of America	Blacks	waari
	"	"	wuuri
	"	"	Suubaa
37	Uganda	Black Africans	Mweso
38	Viet-nam	Vietnamese	10 pits + 2 seeds' houses on the sand'
39	West Indies	Blacks	Kpokanja, wawi
40	Zaire (Belgian Congo)	Lingala	Izolo

* This article is an abstract of a detailed paper which has been submitted with the collaboration of my wife Dr. Thayammal Aravaanan to the International Tamil conference which will be held in January, 1981 at Madurai, India.

3 OSEP 1980

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ERRATA

Page	Line	Error	Correction
10	9	Thirumalai	Thirumalai,
12	7	Tamils	Tamils'
24	22	Phonetically	phonetically related
39	35	custom	custom is
40	25	cook	cook was
40	31	had cried	had not cried
73	17	among	among
74	F. N. 5	relused	refuted
76	16	named	namely
76	25	Kenya	Mount Kenya
77	6	adminstration	administration
78	Last Line	Kenyatta Facing	J. Kenyatta, Facing
79	29	second	secondary
84	F. N. 8	it till exists	it still exists
85	13	equate	equated
106-107	34	stagnant of the rain water	stagnant rain water
109	25, 26	were	were
109	25, 26	come posed	composed
109	26	Muthukurukn	Muthukuruku
113	27	his	this
118	3	Belgium	Belgium

THE SERPENT CULT IN AFRICA AND DRAVIDIAN INDIA

Dr. Aravaanan has after several years of detailed research presented an interesting account of ancient and contemporary serpent worship throughout the world. The section on India is more detailed than the rest as in the chapter which compares the serpent cult among the Dravidians and Africans. The author's familiarity with both the continents derives from his Tamilnadu origin followed by some time spent at the University of Dakar in Senegal

There are several interesting similarities in the serpent cult of the Africans and Dravidians. For example African groups believe as do present day Dravidians that snake worship cured sterility and disease. The worship of the cobra was practised by the ancient Egyptians as well.

It is educative to see the profound influence snakes have had on man from Dr. Aravaanan's book.

THE MAIL MADRAS
27th JANUARY 1979