



EDITORIAL

Remembering 'Gurudev'

The year 2013-14 is the year of pride for us. Way back in 1913, the greatest of all Indian poets, Rabindranath Tagore brought the much acclaimed Nobel Prize to our country for the first time. Thus, this year is the Centenary year of Rabindranath Tagore's Nobel award and his noted work Gitanjali. We, as Indians, take pride of this event as Tagore was the first Asian Nobel Laureate. Tagore, as one Bengali scholar noted, 'is a poet of revealing beauty and widening vision, a composer of exquisite charm and emotional intensity, a searching philosopher of intense intellectual vigour, a writer of genius and profundity, a great savant, and above all he is a rishi, a seer'. We offer this issue on the Altar of his remembrance.

When Rabi was born to the illustrious family of the Tagores, Bengal was going through a renaissance that started during the age of Hussein Shah. Deprived of paternal care and maternal affection, his childhood was chained to the grandeur silence of his home. In that silence, his soul started unfolding its beauty and power petal by petal. While his brothers were known as philosophers and eminent civil service officers, he chose a path that was less traveled by. And, that made the difference. That wandering gave India Rabindra Nath Tagore.

In all his works, Tagore reasserted his faith in humanism and universalism. He upheld the spirit of compassion. Tagore described his Bengali family as the product of 'a confluence of three cultures, Hindu, Mohammedan and British.'

In him, romanticism and mysticism blended brilliantly.

In him, prose became poetry.

He didn't recite poetry but sang it.

He became the little flute of a reed through which the absolute sang its song.

His poetry was the song of the Soul.

It was the song the Absolute.

It was the song of the Nature.

It was the song of the Seers that amazed the occident.

It was the song of the Empty Reed.

It was the song of the Great Bauls.

He spent days in stringing and unstringing his soul to sing the song that remained unsung. At last he transcended poetry as well. He gave us Gitanjali. It made him the Nobel laureate in 1913. And, it still exudes the fragrance of India across the world.

A big salute to the Seer Poet, Rabindra Nath Tagore.

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Marquez was in a sense the John the Baptist in literature. He baptized every reader of his with his magic wand dipped in magic realism.



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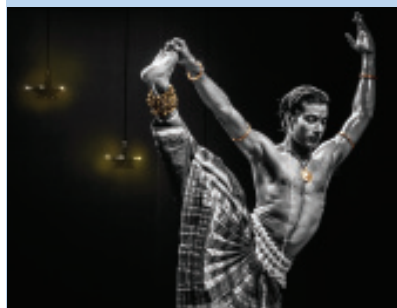
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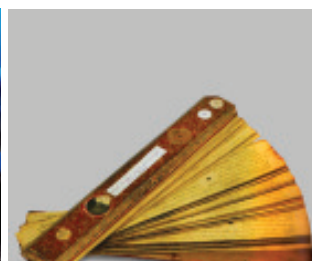
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Summer festival fever commences in Thrissur and Palakkad districts from February onwards and it concludes during the month of May after the annual Pooram festivals.



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VENKATESA SUPRABHATHAM

50@

*Kowsalya supraja Rama poorva sandhya pravarthathe
Uthishta narasardoola karthavyam daivamahnikam
Uthishtothishta Govinda uthishta garudadhvaja
Uthishta kamalakantha thrilokyam mangalam kuru*

In many parts of India, a day starts with MS Subbalakshmi's Venkatesa Suprabhatham, an energizing morning prayer at home, in temple's, and not only from Kedarnath in the north to Kanyakumari in the south, but in all the Hindu temples all over the world. The sounds of the Suprabhatham flowed in our homes from the neighbouring temples also. It is hard to find a home in south India where the hymns in praise of the lord are not recited. Venkatesa Suprabhatham turns 50. The record was released by the gramophone company in 1963 and a blessed fifty years have passed since it was rendered sonorously by MS Subbalakshmi, Kokilavani of north India and Suprabhatham of south India.

Venkatesa Suprabhatham is a Sanskrit Bakthi poem of the

'suprabha kavya' genre. It is a collection of hymns or verses recited in the bramha muhartam (early morning) to awaken the presiding diety from his yoga nidra. This waking up of the diety is called 'pallyunarthal.' The idea of 'pallyunarthal' or awakening of the diety traces its origin in the Tamil bakthi literature. Innumerable poems were composed in Tamil for this purpose. Many were composed by saints to propitiate Mahavishnu and Mahadeva. Among them the most popular being Thondarippodi Alvars Suprabhatham on Sri Ranganatha Swami. Manikkavacharyar also composed similar hymns to please Mahadeva.

The poets and saints who came from the lieneage of Ramanuja adopted this form into Sanskrit. Accordingly





in brahma muhoortham will be blessed to feel the day refreshing and positive.

The poem has been composed by Hasthyadrinathan, a bakthi poet who lived in Kancheepuram during the period 1361-1454. He was the disciple of the celebrated Vaishnava preceptor, Manavala Mamuni who composed Sri Ranganatha Suprabhatham. Some holds the view that it was written by Prativadi Bhayankara Anantacharya, a native of Kancheepuram in 1430.

Venkatesa suprabhatam consists of four parts; to awaken, praising, submission

many hymns in praise of the dieties were composed. This led to a fusion of Tamil and Sanskrit bakthi cult literature. The accompaniment of such bakthi tradition, while singing, makes the Suprabhatham superb. The most well known superb work in this regard is the Venkatesa Suprabhatham recited in front of the Sayanna Mandapa at Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple at Tirupathi. It is the first and foremost ritual performed in the morning. The worship of the lord during Suprabhatham is considered highly meritorious. It is

believed that Lord Vishnu will bestow prosperity in abundance to devotees who recite this prayer.

The poem consists of 70 Sanskrit slokas which was rendered by renowned carnatic vocalist, M.S.Subbalekshmi. She has rendered this track perfectly thus giving us a blissful sensation. Her sonorous voice becalms troubled minds, lighten heavy hearts and bring solace and upliftment. It is the best mantra for life. It refreshes our mind and it is a belief that those who sing Venkatesa Suprabhatham



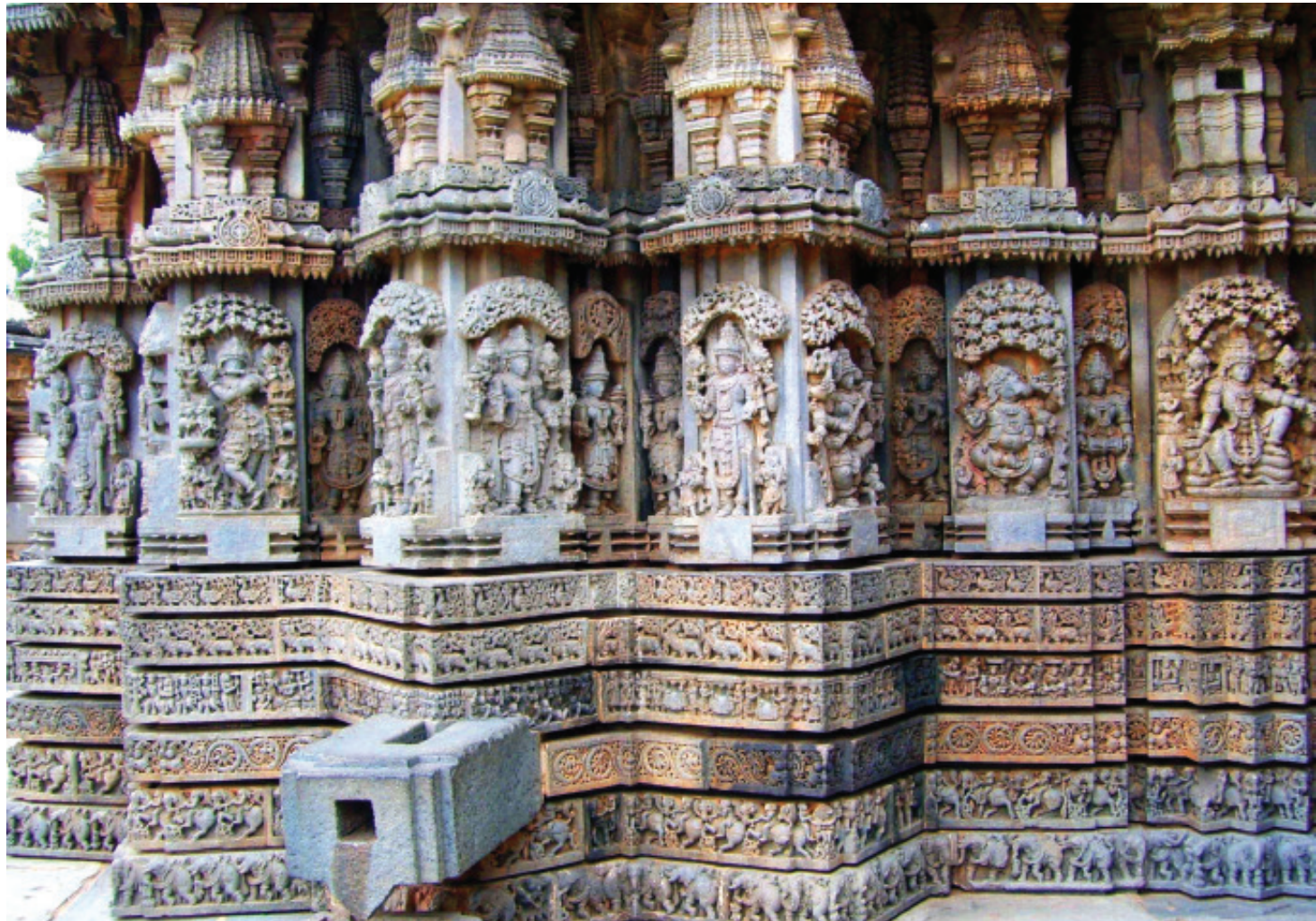
Muthuswami Dikshithar

In Sanskrit, Suprabhatham finds its first in Valmiki Ramayana. The first sloka of Venkatesa Suprabhatham 'kausallya suprabha rama poorva sandhya pravarthathe' is a reference to the early song sung by Maharshi Viswamithra to wake up Sri Rama and Laxmana before sunrise, while they were sleeping on the banks of river Sarayu after performing the yaga.

and mangalasanam. "Kausallya suprabha rama poorva sandhya pravarthathe" (a suprabhata morning prayer for waking up the lord from his yoga nidra) "kamala kucha chuchuka kunkumatho" (a venkateswara stotram praising and entreating the lord's protection. "Esanam jagathosya venkatapathe" (a venkatesolpathi sloka surrendering oneself at the lord's lotus feet) and "Srikantheya kalyananithayo" (a prayer for auspiciousness).

In 1962 Tirupati devaswam recorded Venkatesa





Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer

Suprabhatham sung by VV. Anantasayanam but it does not get much popularity. The Suprabhatham rendered by M.S. Subbalakshmi, just like a mother waking up the bhagavan was appreciated and honoured by the devotees. Still now her Suprabhatham is waking the mornings of the world.

In Sanskrit, Suprabhatham finds its first in Valmiki Ramayana. The first sloka of

Venkatesa Suprabhatham 'kausallya suprabha rama poorva sandhya pravarthathe' is a reference to the early song sung by Maharshi Viswamithra to wake up Sri Rama and Laxmana before sunrise, while they were sleeping on the banks of river Sarayu after performing the yaga. This sloka was directly taken from the Balakanda of Valmiki Ramayana (sarga 23 sloka 2).

'Bhavayami reghuramam' a part of Suprabhatham composed by Swathi Thirunal and 'Sri ranga pura viharā' created by Muthuswami Dikshithar was also rendered by Subbalakshmi. Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, a doyen of Carnatic music is of the opinion that the rendition was perfect and the recognition came for the songs only because it was recited by Subbalakshmi. An attempt was made by a leading gramophone company from South India to record Venkatesa Suprabhatham in the voice of M.L. Vasanthakumari. But she declined saying that it has already been sung and perfected by M.S. and that she cannot do more than that.

Venkatesa
Suprabhatham,
Bhavayami

Reghuramam, and Sri ranga pura viharā was released by a gramophone company as the first LP record in India. Its version in cassette is the largest selling and HMV's wonderful diction to divine. Indian thought identifies M.S. Subbalakshmi's music with bhakti tradition where art is only a vehicle in the spiritual quest. It is not human art but divine grace which manifests itself through Subbalakshmi's music. ■

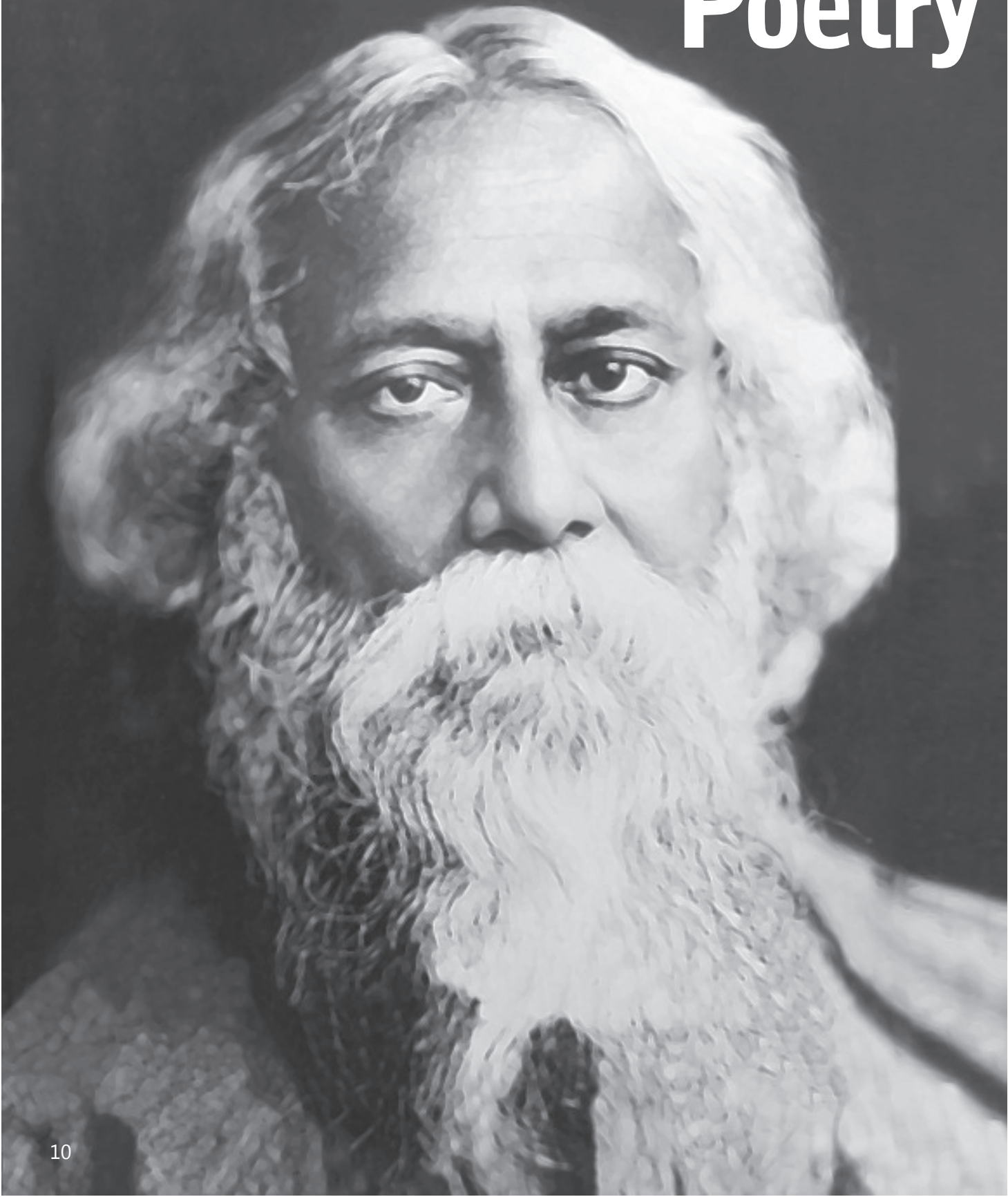




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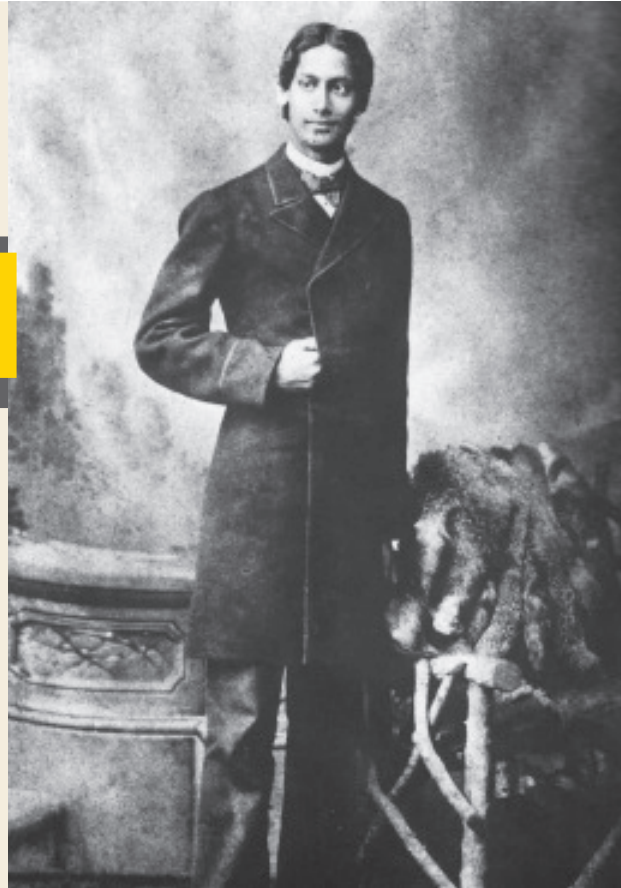
SRIKUMAR CHATTOPADHYAY

TAGORE Poetry

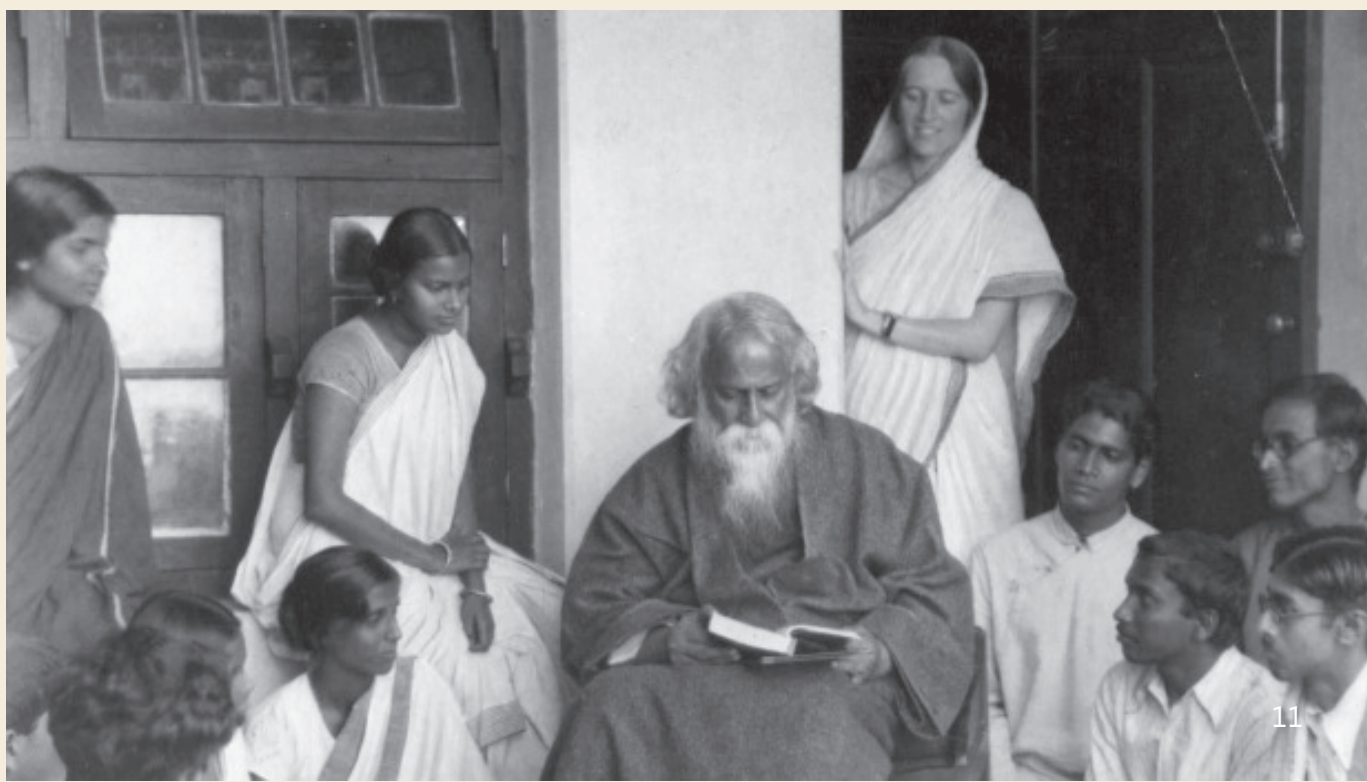


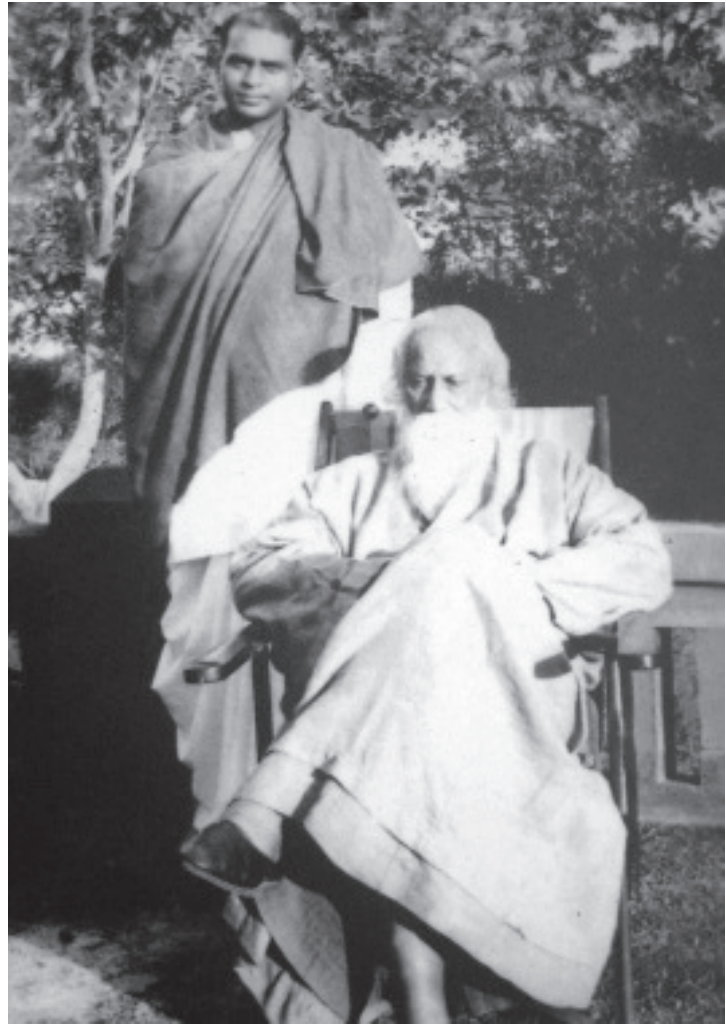
Personified

It was 1913 November, that Rabindranath Tagore received Nobel prize for Gitanjali, (song offerings). The year 2013-14 is celebrated as the Centenary year of Tagore's Nobel award and Gitanjali. We, as Indian, take pride of this event as Tagore was the first Asian Nobel Laureate. Rabindranath Tagore as one Bengali scholar noted, 'is a poet of revealing beauty and widening vision, a composer of exquisite charm and emotional intensity, a searching philosopher of intense intellectual vigour, a writer of genius and profundity, a great savant, and above all he is a rishi, a seer.'



Days begin by playing Rabindrasangeet (Tagore song) for most of the Bengali families across the World. It is like chanting of hymns to start daily activities. Rabindranath Tagore with his towering presence in the field of literature, not just in Bengal but in India and Bangladesh continue to inspire generations even today. His works are widely read and songs rendered. He is revered as a sage or a prophet. So overwhelming is Rabindranath Tagore's presence





in all walks of Bengali life and so obsessed we are with his iconic image that his contribution as 'a philosopher of intense intellectual vigour' remained a subject matter of scholarly persuasion among few intellectuals and the larger society remained mostly oblivious of this fact, as Prof. Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, former Vice Chancellor of Visva-Bharati noted 'Tagore as a prophetic icon outgrew in the imagination of his contemporaries the other Tagore.... The intellectual or the Other Tagore as an observer was more balanced in judgment than prophets need to be.' My attempt here is to briefly recount some points about Tagore as an intellectual philosopher providing insight to the evolution of human civilization and guiding us through trying times.

From religion of poet to religion of man

Tagore was an evolving

personality. He was in a continuous search of himself. In 1912, when he was just fifty years old, he wrote *Atmaparichay* (Introducing myself), in which he sought to explain his personal faith and evolution of his action and article of faith. He enlarged his views on faith in another article *Amar Dharma* (My Religion). In subsequent years, he had published three volumes of essays and addresses, viz., *Sadhana* (1913), *Personality* (1917) and *Creative Unity* (1922). In these articles, he spelt out his fundamental tenets in respect of art and aesthetics, of life and religion. He termed his personal religion as 'the religion of poet', which, in essence, was his own experience, feelings and emotions as a poet.

In 'the Religion of an Artist' he proclaimed, 'I believe that the vision of paradise is to be seen in the sunlight and the green of the earth, the beauty of the human face and the wealth of human life,

even in objects that are seemingly insignificant and unprepossessing. Everywhere in this earth the spirit of paradise is awake and sending forth its voice. It reaches our inner ear without our knowing. It tunes our harp of life which sends our aspiration in music beyond the finite, not only in prayers and hopes, but also in temples which are flames of fire in stone, in pictures which are dreams made everlasting, in the dance which is ecstatic meditation in the still centre of movement.'

In 1931, Tagore brought out the 'The Religion of Man' published by Unwin, London. This volume was primarily a collection of edited and revised version of a series of lectures that Tagore delivered at the Manchester College, Oxford University at the invitation of the Hibbert Trust in 1930. Following this publication came out Manusher Dharma in 1933, which was a collection of his lectures delivered in Bengali at the



By organic unity he envisaged functional linkage between human and the universe. Through all these works, Tagore reasserted his faith in humanism and universalism and upheld the spirit of universal humanism. Tagore described his Bengali family as the product of 'a confluence of three cultures, Hindu, Mohammedan and British.

University of Calcutta. A summarized version of this lecture was delivered in the Andhra University in 1933 and this was published in 1937 under the title of 'Man'. In various other essays and writings particularly in his tribute to Raja Rammohan Roy, Tagore dealt with this theme of religion of man.

From religion of poet to religion of man, it was a journey beginning with Tagore's personal experience as a poet and culminating into the fundamental meaning of the existence of human as human in this world. To him, the God was not a cosmic god, but the embodiment of man's inner nature, Who was to be sensed, perceived and experienced through unity and harmony, through love and sacrifice. Human has to expand his/her inner self in love, piety, charity, sacrifice and service of humanity. Religion of man, according to Tagore, is to serve human being and find harmony

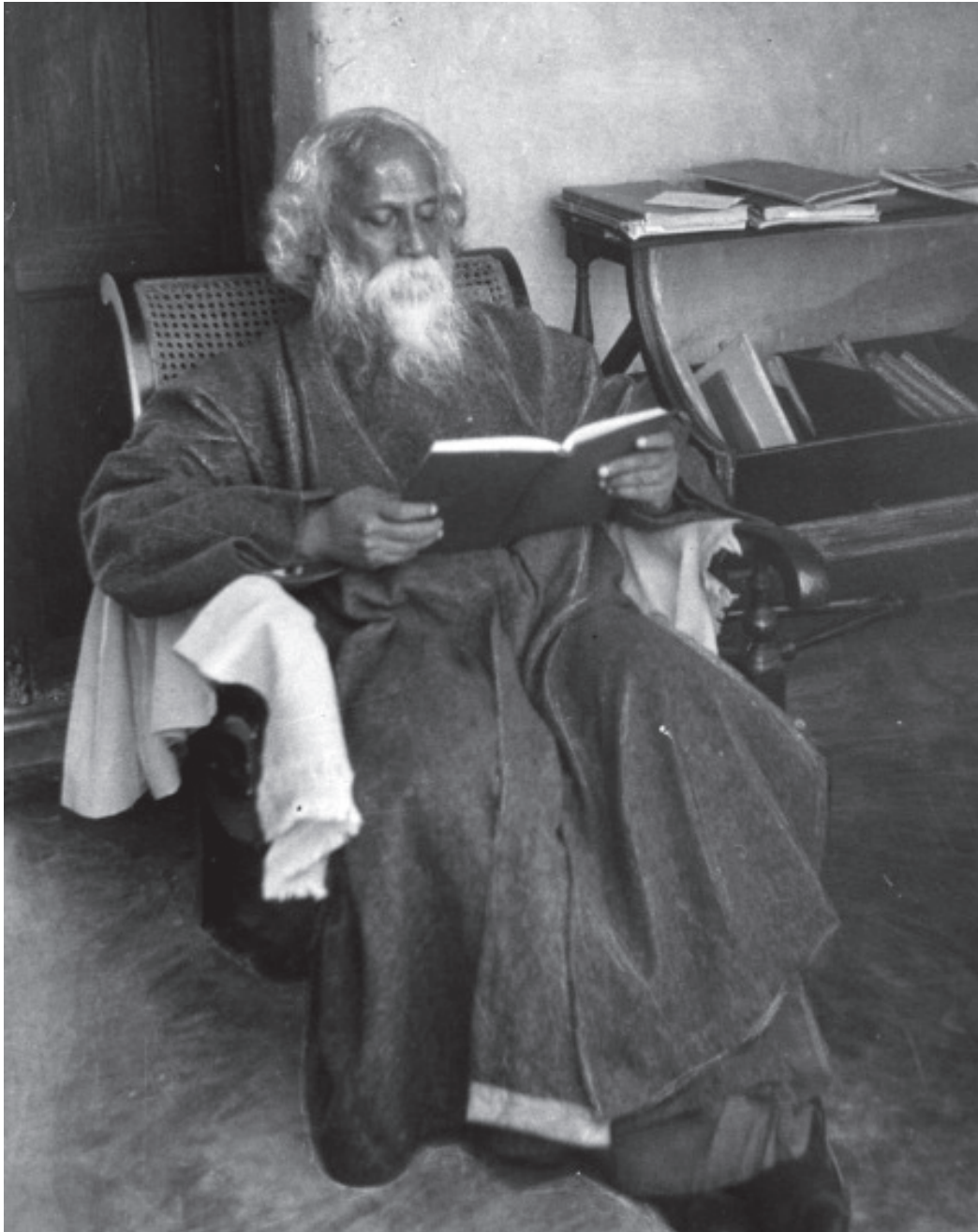
with inner and outer self. He stressed on consciousness 'in which infinite become defined in humanity' and there is 'a profound organic unity with the universe comprehended by human mind'.

By organic unity he envisaged functional linkage between human and the universe. Through all these works, Tagore reasserted his faith in humanism and universalism and upheld the spirit of universal humanism. Tagore described his Bengali family as the product of 'a confluence of three cultures, Hindu, Mohammedan and British. He grew up in a family atmosphere in which a deep knowledge of Sanskrit, and ancient Hindu texts was combined with an understanding of Islamic traditions as well as Persian literature. He drew his inspiration from the highest form of knowledge espoused in the Vedas and the Upanishads, and the teachings of Buddha, the Zarathustra, the Vaishnava lyrics

and the folk knowledge including the Bauls and Sahajiyi. His idea of God and the universe is anthropocentric and this was amply clear in his conversation with Albert Einstein, the greatest Scientist in the modern world published in New York Times in 1930, when Tagore remarked 'Truth is realized through man'.

Crisis in Civilisation

Concern about human civilization was part of Tagore's personal outlook on life. Tagore felt highly disturbed about the happenings in the World and in India. World wars, aggression, colonial oppression, loss of freedom and human dignity and sufferings of millions in the hand of fellow human being, economic exploitation, all these had disillusioned him and he started reexamining the meaning of civilization. In 1939, he wrote to Leonard Elmhirst, the English philanthropist and social reformer about his anxiety over 'the future of millions who with



this country. He considered it a mockery of civilization, for which it should not claim any respect. It may be noted in this context that Mahatma Gandhi, when asked in England what he thought about the Western Civilization, replied 'It would be a good idea'.

Tagore considered civilization as living when most of its movements were related to an inner ideal and not to an external compulsion. He was cautioning against gathering of unending material wealth and expressed his concern over money occupying the central position in the name of progress of civilization. For, he believed 'the wealth which is not welfare grows with a rapid vigour, but it carries within itself the seed of death'.

Tagore and modern India

Tagore envisaged the modern India to evolve based on the humanist values of Indian tradition and of contemporary Europe, integration of culture and ideology

all their innate culture and their peaceful traditions are being simultaneously subjected to hunger, disease, exploitations foreign and indigenous, and the seething discontent of communalism'.

On his eightieth birthday, in 1941, he spoke on 'Crisis in Civilisation'. He directly treated civilization issues in another article- 'Civilization and Progress' although in his several writings there were references to civilization. The issue of human civilization, its purpose and evolution is a subject matter of deep intellectual discourse from the very beginning of human

history. Civilization is also a contested term. There are perceptual differences between Occidental and Oriental view points. About the western civilization, he quoted a Chinese author, who wrote 'The terrible tragic aspect of the situation in China is that, while the Chinese nation is called upon to throw away its own civilization and adopt the civilization of modern Europe, there is not one single educated man in the whole Empire who has the remotest idea what this modern civilization really is.'

Tagore with his inquisitive mind began to explore the meaning/definition of

civilization as the word had European origin. He was stressing on human perfection as a trait of civilization and considered the Sanskrit word Dharma to be the nearest synonym of civilization'. Tagore's article on Crisis in Civilization was narrowly construed as his opposition to Western Civilization. Tagore was not dismissive of Western Civilization. He strongly opposed suppressing British administration and western imperialistic hegemony and was pained to note that dignity of human relations, upheld by the Western Civilization had no place in the British administration of

Unity, ideological integration, synthesis, and freedom from narrowness were the basic tenets as he pronounced 'where the mind is without fear, where the head is held high...' in Geetanjali.



and nationalism and internationalism and free from aggressiveness, race hatred and sectarian approach to social, political and economic issues. His vision of Indian civilization was to progress through nurturing the basic human qualities like love and charity, not being mechanical but emotional with organic linkage with the universe and striving to be understanding and accommodative, just and truthful. Unity, ideological integration, synthesis, and freedom from narrowness were the basic tenets as he pronounced 'where the mind is without fear, where the head is held high...' in Gitanjali.

Asian unity was one of Tagore's cherished goals. He had definite views about the Asian countries and our common cultural heritage. He wrote 'In my visits to China and Japan and to Siam, Java and Bali, I felt profoundly moved to find how the communion of our cultures had persisted even up to our own days. Our people have maintained an Asiatic tradition of cultural exchange: we have not fought with each other in the name of hungry nationalism as the Western countries have been doing in Europe. Japanese aggression, therefore seems to me essentially a case of borrowed

pugnacity....'. Nehru's view on common Asian cultural heritage espoused in the Discovery of India echoed the similar sentiments. Tagore looked to Chinese civilization with great interest and considered important for Asian Unity. That Tagore and Nehru shared the same view about China and Asia was evident from the fact that Tagore invited Nehru to inaugurate The China Bhavan in Shantiniketan.

The liberal ideology of Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru provided the foundation of the modern Indian nation state.

Tagore and Gandhi, whom Romain Rolland described as 'Two great river-like souls, overflowing with divine spirit' and Jawaharlal Nehru revered as 'typical of India, both in the long line of India's great men' were two leading Indian thinkers providing spiritual and political leadership not to India alone but to the larger world.

Today in twenty first century in a globalised world when we look around and see that the society is unethically fractured along social, political and economic fault lines, the human dignity is compromised and human relations are materialistically measured revisiting Tagore's writing assume significance. Although not all promises were fulfilled since independence, India has progressed in Science and Technology and democracy is well entrenched into India psyche, which Tagore would have appreciated. At the same time he would not have approved the staggering illiteracy, poverty, narrowness in the name of cultural nationalism and exclusionary approach to set India's cultural heritage.

There is an inherent danger as Zizek Slavoj (2008), in his book Violence, noted 'the ultimate source of barbarism is culture itself' and 'identity politics breed communal tension'. Tagore's voice is still relevant to steer us through these trying times as manifested in his writing: 'When organized national selfishness, racial antipathy and commercial self-seeking begin to display their ugly deformities in all its nakedness, then comes the time for man to know that his salvation is not in political organizations and extended trade relations, not in any mechanical rearrangement of social system but in a deeper transformation of life, in the liberation of consciousness in love, in the realization of God in man.' ■

The writer is former president, Trivandrum Bengali Association



Brothers Grimm, Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, collected a lot of tales and published them. Their fairy tales have been translated into more than hundred languages from German. Knowledge in old German was an added advantage for them which helped them to unravel the metaphorical sense of the stories and give them proper rendering in modern

German. Fairy tales are usually about fantasy and magic. "Cinderella", Little Red-Riding-Hood", "Rumpelstiltskin" etc. got personable form when they were rediscovered and published by Brothers Grimm.

Jacob Grimm (1785-1863) and Wilhelm Grimm (1786-1854) worked together though Wilhelm improved the stories and inserted dialogues. They bartered for stories from poor

people who were willing to trade a tale or two for an old pair of pants, for example. In country areas the oral tradition of telling stories at leisure continued and these stories were collected and made a staple for rewriting in good language.

Old Mary told them the tales of "Snow White", "Little Red-Riding-Hood" and "The Sleeping Beauty". Brothers Grimm remembers Dorothea Wild,

Gretchen, Lisette and Old Marie as persons who reproduced splendid fairy tales or as dabblers in telling old stories.

The first volume of fairy tales published by Brothers Grimm was titled "Nursery and Household Tales" (1812) Several other household stories, dainty and accepted by people, appeared in black and white after modifying the oral ones into attractive written style. One of

Both fairy tales and folklore have something in common. Both are oral histories and popular beliefs dear to the heart of the people. They are also social narratives.



Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm



Fairy Tales and Folkli



such a story tellers whom Jacob and Wilhelm approached was Frau Katherina Dorothia Viehmann who was a cynosure of the eyes of the rustic people. A poor woman of great talent she was. People offered her a bowl of soup or a cup of coffee when she stirred their minds with exciting stories. Jacob and Wilhelm welcomed her whose old tales, more than twenty in number, though wacky in style were

fascinating to the modern minds.

Between 1812 and 1857 they had published 200 stories. They also collected Scandinavian mythologies besides German. Later Danish and Norse mythology found a place which they trawled, improved and made attractive. Though German national identity reflected in their works, their quest for oral tradition of other countries too was valuable. Bits and pieces of local culture and lore were picked up and reproduced in written form. Regional difference and changes in versions were meticulously looked into and the more interesting ones were selected for publication.

A lifelong devotion turned out to be useful to the present generation. Some stories were modified several times, and the language of the story was polished. Many stories tell the triumph of good over evil and innocence over oppression.

Traditional narratives and songs

Fairy tales, customs and legends appeal everyone. They are the oral history and popular beliefs transmitted from generation to generation. Rituals too become behavioural folklore. Many customs we follow during the wedding, child birth, and funeral, and it is futile to trace out the logic behind that. Religious elements are there, mythical elements too—and we follow all these things in our daily life. Ballads and epic poetry were preserved in oral tradition.

It was the English antiquarian William Thoms who used the word 'folklore' for the first time in a letter published in the London journal "The Athenaeum" in 1846. Oral tradition, culture, and behavior are interlinked when we speak of folklore. There are religious and mythical elements too. The funeral of Hector is described in The Iliad as follows.

"But when the dawn of the tenth day brought light to the world, they carried out the gallant Hector with tears on their cheeks, laid his body on top of the pyre and set fire to the wood... they began by quenching the fire with sparkling wine in all parts of the pyre that the flames had reached. Then Hector's brothers and comrades-in-arms collected his white bones....They took bones, wrapped them in soft purple cloths and put them in a golden chest. This chest they quickly lowered into a hollow grave, which they covered with a layer of large stones closely set together... When they had piled up the mound, they went back into Troy."

The custom of the Greeks after the death of a hero is narrated here. It resembles the Hindu ritual of cremating the dead body followed by rituals.

Panchatantra of Indian origin is a fable literature. It reflects ancient Indian heritage. Will Durant wrote as follows: "India is probably responsible for most of the fables that have passed like an international currency across the frontiers of the world." (India and World Literature: Edited by Abhay Maurya: P 89) Birds and animals speak in Panchatantra like the animals in Aesop's Fables. The moral



ore



is the essential feature meant to sublimate the reader. Greek fables are ascribed to Aesop which was supposed to be written in the first or second century AD. Perhaps the exchanging of ideas between the Indians and the Greeks might have already begun by the time Panchatantra was written.

Folklore exposes the identity of a particular period as the



The nature of social life followed by men at a particular period is reflected in the folklore. Life style, method of communication and mutual relationships of individuals belonging to different strata and different levels are part of folk literature which undergoes changes from generation to generation.

artistic and literal paradigm of the period and the life of them are interlinked. The dress, food habits, social life and other behavioral patterns reflect the stories and songs of that period. Folk dress of the lay man and the feudal lord differ, and to a certain extent caste too plays a role in the life-style. The reaction of the miffed land lord and his mawkish behavior are the theme of many folk songs. Caste, the land lord and the feudal lord shape the system of life. Mutually related incidents of the period reflect in art and literature. Each Folklore is the story of such incidents. Caste becomes related to the labour. Vaisya caste in Kerala assumed the name 'Vanick' and 'Chettiyar.' They swapped commodities for mutual benefits.

Songs eulogize a hero who saved the society from disaster. Gods in the epics reappear

accompanied by folk songs in the form of Theyyam in Malabar. Heros as well as gods appear while the artist or dancer masks their faces and bodies. Fertility is closely related to the miracles of gods during the agrarian period. Along with amusement, there is an element of faith in the folklore dances being enacted on special occasions.

Something in the fairy tales converge into the folk stories. A weapon with miraculous power can be seen in epics as well as fairy tales. In the epic this weapon is divine, probably a gift from a saint or a magician. The way it is made use of is inevitably different. We enjoy the poetic language of the different branches of folk arts without bothering the illogical aspects. Unexpected events and miracles occur in the stories which give us pleasure and recreation. Injustice existed in

the society and the Parallelism between regional myths at the folk level had been scrutinized by the connoisseurs in the field.

Folk myths, like proverbs, have a universal nature with slight variations. Birds and animals actively participate and become integral part of the lore. Often a great message or a worth emulating sentiment is imparted for the common good which might be the ultimate aim of the author. That means there is a cultural potential behind the folk mythology despite regional differences. Rural tradition used to be the back bone of cultural heritage, especially in regions which were considered the cradle of civilization.

The nature of social life followed by men at a particular period is reflected in the folklore. Life style, method of communication and mutual relationships of individuals belonging to different strata and different levels are part of folk literature which undergoes changes from generation to generation. Congregation of people with a common purpose, despite the variation in their social position too is the theme of folklore. Alen Dundes in his "Analytic Essays on Folklore" and "Interpreting Folklore" (1980) has authoritatively established the common nature of folklore.

His studies on urban folklore too are worth studying. It was an approach towards social science. More importance rests on society, not on separate individuals.

Folk heredity acquires significance historically as well as anthropologically. Popular antiquities precedes the study of folklore in the sense such studies are cultural anthropologies, or at least a part of it. Oral transmission of the inter-generational communication needs minute and meticulous analysis which include the slangs, the myths, superstitions, way of life, mutual behavior of the lords and slaves, work culture etc. We can trace out the root of each society. Anthropologists deal with the nature of humans as a class, it has physical significance and when it is about their cultural aspects and growth, it becomes the study of cultural anthropology.

Folk lore stresses on the gregarious aspects and individual differences within the society. It is not the study of a class known as homo sapiens, it is an analysis of the group-nature of a particular society. Propp's "Morphology of Folklore" (1968) extensively deals with the folk tale that existed in Russia. The external state of a group, the mental faculties of them in general, mutual relationships persisted,

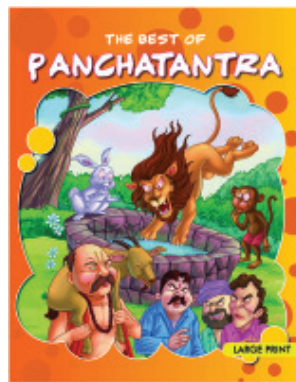


and the folk arts existed were parts of study. Food habits, the way they dressed, how they reacted to problems etc have relevance in folklore.

Whatever exists about the past as part of our heritage gets a place in the study of folklore. Savagery, barbarism, and civilization are the stages of human development with scope for discussion to include within the boundaries of folk lore. On one side is the tribe's history and on the other side it is the artistic form of rustic life. Both urban

and rural past give us opportunities to understand folklore in different stages of history and generation levels.

Carnivals are organized basing on a system that existed, and in that process minute changes occur according to the whims of the organizers. Slow changes occur in rituals too, either due to inevitability or due to the interest of the people who do it. For example plastic materials are being used at present to make the headgear and ornaments of Theyyam or



Alen Dundes says that each society holds different views regarding the mutual relationship between man and Nature. A toddy tapper's view of life and death may be different from that of a fisherman. Tales being repeated from generation to generation change with the advent of time. Such changes are automatic, depending on the story tellers of each period. The beginning of a ritual, the place of origination and the form of it have to be studied. Each branch of folk art has to be scrutinized with care, assessing the social background. There are internal and external factors that require meticulous study. Collection and classification are the other tasks to be undertaken. More than simply formulating some theories, case studies have to be made to get proper understanding about the growth and the changes. Folklores exist as they have something to perform in the society. They remain in the subconscious minds of the people. Each story teller becomes the author and those who listen become the beneficiary. The question of passivity does not exist in this case.

Folklore and Anthropology

Kathakali realizing the convenience and accessibility. Harvest festivals, weddings and other celebrations have changes suitable to the conveniences of the present generation. Even the tune and modulation of rustic songs have changed though strong objections are raised by old people. Some experts stress on the 'originality'

A Hindu bride accepts her bridegroom by offering a floral garland at the time of wedding, followed by the returning of another garland. In epics a princess choosing her bridegroom from among the invited princes of other countries had been cited. The remnant of such a ritual in commemoration of 'Swayamvara' can be seen in the wedding ceremonies. Folklore essentially has some basic characteristics which continue with the passage of time with slight changes.

The four branches of anthropology are Cultural Anthropology (Social Anthropology), Ethnology (Ethnography), Physical Anthropology, and Prehistory



Anthropology (Archeology). William R Bascom asserts that neither physical anthropology nor prehistory or archeology have any; direct relationship to folklore. "Linguistics is somewhat more closely related, both because the style of verbal expression of a tale or proverb is influenced by vocabulary and grammatical structures, and because linguists have found folktales and myths convenient devices for collecting linguistics in Kerala has traditional implications. Heroes of a particular period reappear through the performance of Theyyam artists with masks, head-gear, ornaments and a specially designed attire. The transformation of a hero into a God, or the reenactment of epic heroes with modifications, or even god's reappearance concealing their identity can become a performing art in different 'Kavus' of North

body of the artist have a rhythm and tone. Devotees offer money, and for some 'Theyyams' they offer cocks and clothes. This may be the expression of gratitude for fulfilling the favors of the devotees.

Theyyam dance speaks in the language of God and act as God himself. There are male gods and female gods. The unity and solidarity of a section of people, often united on the basis of castes, formulate different 'Kavus'. Irrevocable is the faith of people on 'Theyyam', and no social reformer could so far teach the people about the superstitious part of their beliefs. Young and old, irrespective of their gender, offer prayer and accept blessings. The texture of social unity is strongly woven in the name of 'Theyyam'. Though the artist who perform this belongs to a lower caste, he gets an uplifted status once he adorns godly attire.

Farming, fishing, hunting, fighting and ritualistic practices reflect in Theyyam dance which give it an anthropological significance. That is why social anthropology and the folklore have to unite to make the study authentic.

Both fairy tales and folklore have something in common. Both are oral histories and popular beliefs dear to the heart of the people. They are also social narratives. Behavioral folklore is linked with rituals. Perhaps fairy tales enjoy more freedom than folklores. Oral tradition, culture and behavior have something in common between these two forms of art. Pancatantra and Aesop Fables have different functions, they teach us something.

Folklores appear in Christian, Hindu, Jewish or Buddhist contexts. Artefact, oral tradition, culture and behavior which include rituals are attached to folklore. In fairy tales, we get a wider horizon where imaginations run riot and birds, animals and human beings embody different roles with corrective roles. ■

Thiruvananthapuram and Sri Padmanabhaswamy temple is known from periods immemorial. The importance of the place is due to the presiding Deity of the temple worshipped by the ruling Vaishnava kings. There are many a legend, facts of history and stories about the Padmanabhaswamy Temple and Thiruvananthapuram. It is interesting to know about these facts which are in the state of oblivion. Thiruvananthapuram was known as Syananthoorapuram. Out of eighteen Puranas, there are reference about Syananthoorapuram in Varaha Purana, Brahma Purana, Bramanda Purana, Padma Purana, Skanda Purana and Matsya Purana, including Srimad Bhagavatham. It is stated that Lord Balaram visited this place while he was travelling through the southern province.

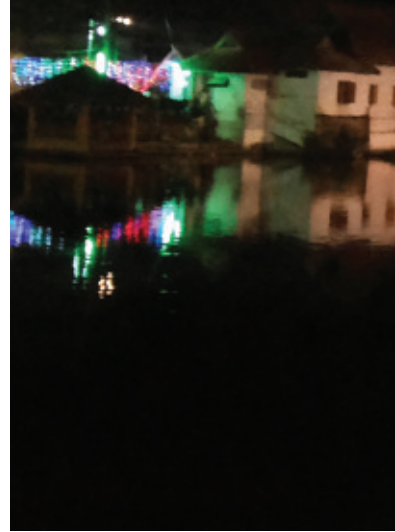


Theyyam dance speaks in the language of God and act as God himself. There are male gods and female gods. The unity and solidarity of a section of people, often united on the basis of castes, formulate different 'Kavus'.

texts, with the result that some of the most carefully recorded and translated American Indian tales have been published by linguists.", writes William R Bascom. We learn about the customs, the traditions and the institutions of living people and label them as cultural anthropology.

The folk dances, "Theyyam"

Malabar. Often the vocabulary of the songs rendered by 'Theyyams' help to formulate a linguistic identity of different periods. The linguistic texts and the myths can be translated into the cultural anthropology which gives ample scope for the study of the social conditions of an era. Dance, music, drum-beating, and the drawing on the face and on the



Antiquity of Thiruvananthapuram

In Garga Samhita, it stated that Goloka Vrindavana, the original abode of Krishna is made up of thousands of lotus like petals, and out of these eight petals which are in the center are more important. The Universe is the replica of the aforesaid thousands of petals of Goloka Vrindavana. Out of these petals, eight petals are known as Dhamas which are as important as the eight petals of Goloka Vrindavana. Syananthoorapuram is one among eight Dhamas.

In the eight Dhamas, Srīman Narayanan has different pastimes and all these Dhamas are not annihilated during the time of total annihilation of universe. The pastimes of Srīman Narayanan in the Dhama are as following:

1. Bhadrinath - performing tapas.

2. Mayapur - spreading bhakthi.

3. Jaganathpuri - accepting offering of Prasad (all the twenty four loves.)

4. Dwaraka - ruling

5. Mathura - Bala leela.

6. Sree Rangan - blessing the devotees.

7. Rameswaram - worshipping Lord Shiva.

8. Thiruvananthapuram - sleeping.

At the times of total annihilation, above eight dhamas become invisible. They are not destroyed. They reappear again during the next creation. Syananthoorapuram or Thiruvananthapuram is one among the dhamas where Srīman Narayana sleeps. It is said that out of 108 famous Vishnu temples called Thirupanthis, Padmanabha

Swamy temple is one among them. According to historians, Ayi kings ruled this area 300 years before Christ. The great Vishnava king, Kulasekhara Alvar, descendent of Ayi kings ruled this area. The deities of Sri Rama, Lakshmana and Seetha worshipped by Kulasekhara Alvar are still kept in the Padmanabha Swamy Temple. Daily poojas are performed to these deities. Kulasekhara Alvar wrote the famous "Mukunda Mala" poem in beautiful language; an important Vaishnava literature. He was so devoted that he arranged for the discourses of Bhagavadam, Raamyana and other religious literature daily at the temple. His ministers wanted to divert his attention from spiritual matters to administration. Instead, he surrendered the kingdom to

Padmanabha, accepted Sanyasa and went to Sree Rangam and lived the rest of his life there.

It may be noted that Sri Marthanda Varma also surrenders the Kingdom to Sree Padmanabha some 500 years since. It is a unique fact that British government also accepted Padmanabha Swami as the ruling head of the state. Soldiers from the defence of the ruling king were posted as sentries in the temple.

This place was visited by Chanitanya Maha Prabhu and Saints Adi Sankaracharya, Madhawacharya and Ramanujacharya. There are also reference about this place in Tamil vaishnava literature like "Panniru Alvar Vaibhavom", "Alvar Thiruvanimozhy" and classics "Chilapathikaram" and "Pathittupathu."





Pitfalls Cyber

Mutilation! Yes, that will be the effect if we abstain from computer and internet. Such is the extent of their influence on our lives. They have become the part and parcel of our daily life. Our day-to-day life is covertly or overtly, in one way or other way, connected to the cyber world. No doubt, it is a boon. But there is a darker side also. In many instances, they act as a rapier. Crimes are there not only in the real world but in the virtual world of cyber technology also. More the technologies, numerous the threats!

Cyber Crime

But along with these blessings of the technology, criminals have found their ways to make use them for their goals

such as theft, fraud, intimidation, and harassment and so on. Crimes committed through the use of computer systems are known as cyber crimes. Cyber crime is a general term that refers to all criminal activities done using the medium of computers, internet and electronic media. In fact, the term 'cyber crime' doesn't yield to a clear-cut definition and the Indian law does not define 'Cyber Crime'. Hence, let us have a look into some common types of cyber crimes to get what cyber crime is.

Hacking

According to the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary 'hack' means 'to get into someone else's computer system without permission in order to find out information or do something illegal'. Or, in other way, an

unauthorised attempt to bypass the security mechanism of an information system or network. Now, 'Hacking' has become a familiar word and threat in the cyber world.

Identity Theft

Majority of Internet fraud are financial in nature. 'Identity Theft' is a term used to refer to the fraud that involves stealing money or getting other benefits by pretending to be someone else. Cyber criminals hack into personal financial accounts and website databases of banks and financial institutions to gain access customer details such as usernames, passwords that can be used for financial transactions as they like. Besides, they take out credit cards or loans in another person's name. That is why this type of fraud is known as Identity

Theft.

Internet Fraud

Now, consumers can buy or seek any commodity or service through internet-online. Payment can also be made through online. This seems to be very convenient. But there are frauds here. Many are cheated here. Some fraud websites exploit money from online service seekers. Recently, a famous ophthalmologist from Trivandrum was cheated by a website. He tried to book hotel, using his credit card, at Emakulam. He used the link which was seen on the web portal of the concerned hotel. He made the payment for getting booked the hotel. But, when he contacted the hotel personnel over telephone for confirmation, he got the shock that that hotel did not

in World

provide online booking facility. Hence, he was cheated very cleverly by the frauds. Here, the cyber cell of the police seems to have some limitations. Since many of these frauds are being operated from overseas, the cyber cell cannot book them properly.

Data Theft

The act of extracting, downloading or copying any data or information without permission and knowledge of the owner or the person who is in charge of that computer system can be termed as 'Data Theft'. In a simple way, it is the unauthorised copying or removal of confidential information from a business or large enterprise.

Cyber stalking

The internet can also be an ideal tool for stalkers. Stalking means 'the victims themselves are forced to hand over the information about them to the stalkers by intimidation'. Unwary social media site users may give away their name, age, occupation,

home and work addresses, even their current location by using sites such as Facebook without making full use of privacy protections.

Cyber Bullying

Cyber Bullying is any harassment that occurs via the internet and mobile phones, vicious forum posts, name calling in chat rooms, posting fake profiles on websites and mean or cruel E-mail messages are all ways of cyber bullying. Several cases have been reported in which persons bullying one another over the internet. It is embarrassing to know that there are many teenagers among these harassers or bullies. In most instances of cyber bullying, bullies post obscene or cruel messages or false allegation to harm the reputation of the victims on the social media sites like Facebook, or upload embarrassing videos of them to sites like YouTube, or impersonate someone else to toy with their emotions. Recently, a housewife from Ernakulam



Spam mails

Unsolicited e-mail, known as 'spam' is more than something annoying us. Spam messages can be used to trick people into giving up sensitive personal information. This is known as phishing. These mails may be used as carriers for computer worms and viruses. Again, opening a spam e-mail could leave you vulnerable to 'spoofing', where a spammer gains the ability to send more of this junk e-mail through your account.

Spreading Virus or Worms

Computer virus is a programme that can do any amount of damage the creator intends to do to your system. A virus can send the data stored in a computer to a third party and then delete the data from your computer. It can also ruin up your system and render it unusable without a re-installation of the operating system. A worm is a similar programme that exploits the vulnerability in an operating system or application that a computer user is running. These may be implanted by a competitor in any field or by an enemy country or so on.

E-mail Fraud

Fraud whether financial, banking and social committed with the aid of an e-mail would be called as e-mail fraud. E-mail is an inexpensive and usual method for distributing fraudulent messages to potential victims. Many of us might have come across such e-mails that announce winning in 'International Lotteries' and so on.

E-mail Spoofing

'E-mail Spoofing' is sending an E-mail to another person so that it appears that the E-mail was sent by someone else. Such an E-mail appears to originate from one source but actually has been sent from another source. Spoofing is the act of electronically disguising one computer as another for gaining personal and confidential information.

E-mail Bombing

An E-mail bomb is a form of net abuse by sending huge volumes of E-mail to an address in an attempt to overflow the mail box or overwhelm the server where the E-mail address is hosted in a denial of service attack.



Statutes to Address Cyber Crimes

Until 2000, there was no exclusive statute in India to address cyber crimes apart from Indian Penal Code. With the propensity of misusing of technology, and having seen that IPC is not suffice to the victims of cyber crimes, there arose a need of stringent statutes to check the criminal activities in the cyber space and to safeguard the genuine technology. Thus, our Parliament enacted the Information Technology Act in 2000 to protect the field of e-



committed suicide due to the stress resulted from a Facebook post.

Phishing

Phishing' can be described as the fraudulent acquisition, through deception, of sensitive personal information such as usernames, passwords, and credit card details etc. by masquerading as a trustworthy entity with a real need for such information. Credit card users, online banking users etc are the usual victims of phishing.

Debit or Credit Card fraud

Advancement in technology made financial transactions very easy. Customers need not go to banks for cash transactions. It can be done sitting in the comfort of one's living room or bedroom or whenever he be. One can make almost all transaction using either a debit card or a credit card or net banking. But cyber criminals hack vital information of these customers and misuse it.

Damaging reputation

Some use the cyberspace to

harm the reputation of persons. This is done by making false accusations, impersonation, posting morphed images, embarrassing videos on the net. If such one is posted on net, it will be spread in lightning speed. Women pose the majority among the victims of these types of crime. Morphed pictures of women with obscene comments are posted to harm the dignity of the women. This may be done due to vengeance or jealousy. Instances are there in which students in their teens have



Cyberspace is used for terrorist activities too. Any act of any person on the computer or internet or otherwise which threatens unity, sovereignty and security of the state can be termed as cyber terrorism.

commerce, e-governance, e-banking and fix penalties and punishments to cyber criminals. The above Act was further amended in 2008 so as to suit with the complex nature of cyber crimes.

Applicability of the Amended Acts

The scope and applicability of ITA-2000 was increased by its amendment in 2008. The word 'communication devices' inserted with a view to cover cell phones, personal digital assistance or such other devices used to transmit any text, video

etc under the ambit of law. The amended Act covers the offences such as the sending of offensive messages through communication service, misleading the recipient of the origin of such messages, dishonestly receiving stolen computers or other communication device, stealing electronic signature or identity such as using another persons' password or electronic signature, cheating by personating through computer resource or a communication device, publicly publishing the information about any person's location without prior permission or consent, cyber terrorism, the acts of access to a computer resource without authorization, such acts which can lead to any injury to any person or result in damage or destruction of any property, while trying to contaminate the computer through any virus. The offences covered under section 66 of the Information Technology Act are cognizable and non-bailable. Whereas, the consequence of Section 43 of earlier Act were Civil in nature having its remedy in the form of damages and compensation only, but under Section 66 of the Amendment Act, if such act is



done with criminal intention, it will attract criminal liability having remedy in imprisonment or fine or both.

The Indian Penal Code, 1860

The Indian Penal Code was also amended so as to cover the potential crimes in cyber space. Now, electronic record and electronic documents have also been treated just like physical records and documents during commission of acts of forgery or falsification of physical records in a crime. Hence the investigating agencies can book the culprits combining the relevant sections of both Acts and ensure to minimise loopholes.

Prior to enactment of ITA, all

evidences in a court were in the physical form only. After existence of ITA, the electronic records and documents were recognized. It is evident that there is a lack of awareness among the youngsters about penal provisions in the IT Act. They get frequent chances to visit pornographic sites, mostly from their homes. Tighter surveillance on online activities of young people is the only way out here. Besides, Anti-Piracy Cell of Kerala Police has arrested a number of persons including students in their teens for uploading pirated videos to internet. Widespread awareness programmes and campaigns are required to conduct among both youngsters and parents to liberate the 'promise of the future' from the clutches of this evil.



posted morphed images of their teachers, relatives and neighbours.

Circulation of Offensive, Obscene or Sexually Explicit material

Some use cyberspace for spreading Offensive contents such as racist propaganda, obscene or sexually explicit contents.

Child Pornography

This is the most dangerous threat we come across in the cyber world. Children are being used ruthlessly by criminals for making porn videos and films.

Copyright Violation

Copyright violation is the unauthorised or prohibited use of literary or artistic works covered by copyright law. This violates the copyright owner's exclusive rights

such as the right to reproduce or perform the copyrighted work or to make derivative works. Cyber world is the most convenient place for piracy. Usually copy righted videos, films and software are spread through the net. This causes huge loss to film and software industries respectively. Our Malayalam film industry is the one being severely affected by piracy. It is embarrassing to see that teenagers and students are booked for piracy.

Cyber Terrorism

Cyberspace is used for terrorist activities too. Any act of any person on the computer or internet or otherwise which threatens unity, sovereignty and security of the state can be termed as cyber terrorism. It is a growing apprehension of nations that

foreign intelligence service groups, terrorists etc may create security holes in critical systems. A cyber terrorist is someone who intimidates or coerces a government or organisation to continue his or her political or social objectives by introducing computer based attack against computers, network, and the information based on them. Generally, cyber terrorism can be defined as an act of terrorism which is being taken place through the use of cyberspace or computer resources. There are many instances in which our government websites have been hacked by foreign terrorist groups.

The list does not end here. It is getting increased assuming new names, shapes and ways. ■





IFFOK 2014

The first International Folk Fest of Kerala (IFFOK), 2014, organised by the Cultural Department and the Kerala Folklore Academy, was held at Durbar Hall Ground, Kochi. "At a time when folk arts are not receiving proper representation, such an initiative will be very helpful. We will continue with the IFFOK in the coming years with more groups from other countries," said Minister for Culture K C Joseph.

Mudi yettu, Garudan Parava, Thiriuzhichil, Chavittu Nadakam, Bihu of Assam, Nadav Dance of West Bengal, Goti Pua Dance of Orissa, Folk dance of Bihar and Rikamba Dance of Arunachal Pradesh etc. were staged in the festival. Workshop on various folk arts were also held. Artists from 20 states in India along with those from countries like South Africa, Sri Lanka and Cambodia, participated.









World Red Cross Day

The Red Cross Story

On 8th May, we celebrate together 151 years of humanitarian action and the Red Cross's continued relevance, locally and globally in today's changing world. We remain committed to providing relevant and timely humanitarian service to vulnerable communities now and into the future.

World Red Cross day (8th May) is celebrated every year as the birth anniversary of founder of the Red Cross. Jean Henry Dunant was the founder of the Red Cross as well as the founder of International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), born in the Geneva in the year 1828. He was the most famous person and became the recipient of 1st Nobel Peace Prize.

World Red Cross Day is an annual event celebration,

celebrating the principles of "International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement". It is celebrated every year to pay tribute to the volunteers participated in the event as well as welcome their precious contribution for helping people in need.

Jean Henry Dunant, whose vision led to the creation of Worldwide Red Cross and Red Crescent movement and his compassion, has saved millions in the world through this philanthropic association.

Dunant was born on 8th May 1828 in Switzerland, Geneva. After incomplete secondary schooling, he was apprenticed to a Geneva Bank. In 1859, he wanted to approach Napoleon III, to obtain the business documents he needed.

At that time, Napoleon III was commanding the Franco – Sardinian troops fighting the Austrians in the Northern Italy, Henry Dunant decided to meet him and this was how he came to be present at the end of the battle of Solferino, in Lombardy. The



tragic scenes of Solferino battlefield changed his mind and became a kindhearted to help the wounded soldiers.

Dunant put down his ideas in a campaigning book, A Souvenir of Solferino, published in 1862. The Public Welfare Committee in his home town in Geneva took them up and formed a working group, which 1st met in February 1863. The following October, an International Conference was

wounded soldiers at the battle of Solferino in 1859 and then lobbied political leaders to take more action to protect war victims. His two main ideas were

(i) For a treaty that would oblige armies to care of all wounded soldiers and

(ii) For the creation of National Societies that would help the military medical services.

In August 1864, delegates from a dozen countries adopted 1st Geneva Convention which put a legal framework around the decisions and made it compulsory for armies to care for all wounded soldiers, whatever side they were on.

Though Dunant became famous, his financial affairs were going bad to worse and he was declared bankrupt in 1867. He resigned from the post of Secretary of the committee on 8th Sept, 1867. The committee decided to accept his resignation not only as Secretary but also as member. Dunant left for Paris, where he was reduced to sleeping on public benches. There followed years of wandering living on charity and hospitality of few friends. Remind unknown from 1871 to 1887.

At last he fell ill and took refuge in a local hospital in Swiss Village Heiden, where he was discovered by a journalist George Baumberger, who wrote an article about him and because of this article, messages of sympathy reached Dunant from all over the



world. He became famous once again and honored. In 1901, he received the first Nobel Prize for peace. He expired on 30th October, 1910. The date of his birth day is celebrated as World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day.

World Red Cross Day 2014 Message " My Red Cross Story/ My Red Crescent Story"

The year 2014 marks 151st anniversary of the birth of Red Cross. On world Red Cross Red Crescent Day and through 2014, we will celebrate the power of community and people helping people, both in the spot light during crises and behind the scenes in day today life.

Every day most people, or someone they know, are touched by the Red Cross and Red Crescent without even realizing it.

The Red Cross will invite citizens to share their Red Cross Red Crescent stories with family, friends and people around the globe.

Internally, it is aimed to bring people back to what inspired by them to be involved with the movement in the first place. Externally, it aims to bring home the well hidden fact that almost everyone has a connection to the Red Cross or Red Crescent. Almost everyone has a Red Cross or Red Crescent story.

On 8th May, we celebrate together 151 years of humanitarian action and the Red Cross's continued relevance, locally and globally in today's changing world. We remain committed to providing relevant and timely humanitarian service to vulnerable communities now and into the future. Around the world, the Red Cross and Red Crescent helps support 180-million people every year in community programmes, responding to disasters and inspiring hope. Indian Red Cross Society, Kerala State Branch is organising a function in connection with the 187th birthday of Jean Henry Dunant at the World Red Cross Day, at Kanakakunnu palace. ■

The writer is Chairman, Indian Red Cross Society, Kerala Branch

convened, to formalize the concept of National Societies. The conference also agreed on a standard emblem to identify medical personnel on the battlefield; a red cross on a white background. (The Red Crescent emblem was adopted by the Turkish Ottoman Empire in the 1870s.)

The Red Cross came into being in 1863 at the initiative of Jean Henry Dunant, who helped





The Indian concept of dance and dancers is peculiar and very different from that of other cultures. For Indians Lord Siva, represents Nataraja (Thandava/masculine nritha) and Parvathi as Mohini, the lasya (feminine /Sukumara) danseuse, are the primordial male and female dancers. Their dance is considered to be eternal. The thandava dance of Lord Siva fills the entire universe. This is imagined to be the personification of Siva. This throbbing supreme soul of creation filling up the whole

universe gradually diminishes and merges with Siva. Marking the end of an aeon, it again wakes up and resurrects as the thandava of the universe. The attributes of thandava indicate the integral connection between dance and creation of the universe.

Parvati performs Lasya dance. Lasya, which is feminine, is tender and graceful. Among the various styles (Vritti-s) detailed by Bharata Muni in his Natyasastra says the 'Kaisiki' style is the most appropriate for Lasya dance especially for erotic sentiment (sringhararasa). The primordial



LASYA AND THANDAVA

goddess, Parvathy danced to attract lord Siva towards creation. She allures Siva who is spiritual as well as ascetic and brings out erotic love in him. Creation is 'Ananda' (Pure happiness) The goddess of creation is known as 'Nateswari' or 'Mohini'. And her dance is the 'Dance of Mohini.'

This universe is formed due to the everlasting rhythmic movement of the cosmos. This rhythmic movement could be considered as the basis of life on earth.

This rhythmic movement is innate to every living thing. And dance is the extended and most developed form of this cosmic

rhythm. The sign of life is vibration or movement. It is called 'Sivam'. When the body stops its vibration it becomes 'Savam' – meaning a corpse devoid of motion.

NATARAJA The universal dancer

The form of Nataraja is one of the most important forms of Siva. The pundits/traditionalists, today, opine that Nataraja form is the noblest symbol of creation, being and dissolution. This is a special dance that goes on eternally. It was believed that the universal dance could not split atoms. But now that belief has



undergone a change. It has now been found that atoms can be split and they ultimately can transform into energy. Scientists are of the view that Nataraja dance represents the incessant activity of the atoms. Nataraja dance, it is believed, is the dance of energy. These are called the "Thandavas"

Ananda thandavam

It is the cosmic dance of creation by Siva. Let us see the sloka related to this which is recited at the beginning of Mohiniyattam. The first sloka in "Mohiniyattam" is:-

*Ananda Nritha samaye
natanayakasya
Padaravinda
maninoopurashinchithani
Anandayanthi madayanthi
vimohayanthi*

*Romanchayanthi nayanani
kritharthayanthi*

I worship Anandabhairava who performs the thandava dance along with 'Samaya'devi who resides in thy mooladhara chakra. The universe was destined to have parents thanks to the graciousness of these two (Anandabhairava and Samaya devi) who looked benevolently upon the regeneration of the universe that was destroyed in the annihilative fire. When uniting with Devi, Samharabhairava becomes Anandabhairava. Devi's thandava is a flourish of the nine rasas. When sringara, the king of rasas, and its basic emotion of ecstasy and the lasya-friendly Samaya combines, the expression of emotion by gestures, that the



Natya preceptors speak of, appear harmoniously. The emotions of harlotry are naturally displayed. Thus the Purusha and Prakrti assume the role of a married couple. The universe is brought forth by the union of Siva and Sakthi who become its father and mother. (This indicates that creation of the universe is the consequence of the union of Siva and Sakthi.)

Bhairava Thandavam

Siva assumes the form of 'Veerabhadra'. The expression is 'Darkness'. It is visualized as being performed by Siva along with Devi and his Bhootaganas in crematorium. This is also known as the Dance of Destruction.

Sandhya Thandavam

Devi, the goddess of the three



April 29th is celebrated as International Dance Day, also known as 'World dance day'. The day was introduced in 1982 by the International Dance Committee of the UNESCO International Theatre Institute. The date was chosen to commemorate the birthday of Jean-Georges Noverre, a French dancer and ballet master and a great reformer of dance.

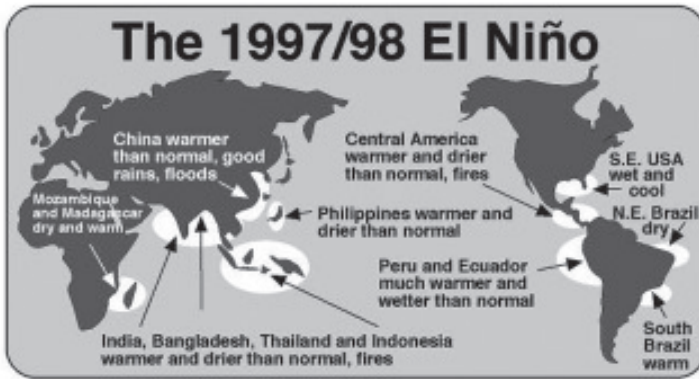
worlds, is seated in a decorated golden throne and lord Shoolapani is dancing on the peak of Kailasa. While goddess Lekshmi sings Lord Vishnu plays 'Maddhala'. This is known as the Dance of Twilight. The gandharvas, yakshas, kinnaras, yogis, vidyadharas – all heavenly beings witness this dance. Siva is depicted with just two of his hands and the asura at the feet is absent.

Devi is the woman who excites Siva who has renounced all worldly attachments. The goddess who is the incarnation of love is said to be Mohini. The goddess, who is the embodiment of love, is the goddess at the time of Creation, which is that of ecstasy. The goddess of Creation is Nateswari and Nateswari is Mohini. Mohiniyattam thus

presents Nateswari in the form of Mohini as Sriparvathi assumed to be entice Siva for the sake of creation.

People of different cultures have their own different body movements and gestures peculiar to their geographical, social and political environment and beliefs. These very movements and gestures form the basis of the different dance forms. Man has stylized these movements into a well coordinated and controlled way and this paved the way for the origination of various dance forms. Let us all celebrate the world dance day 'with these dances and the dances of the universe. ■

The writer is Director, Natanakaisiki Mohiniyatta Gurukulam of Natanakairali, Irinjalakuda.



Worrying Super El Nino

We are now in May, approaching the Monsoon. Climate researchers are seeing the beginnings of what could be the most powerful El Niño event since 1997/98. An El Niño is a change in Pacific Ocean and atmosphere that typically causes shortage of rain, drought, extreme heat and bushfires in South Asia and Australia.

Last year was a neutral El Niño and we have been surprisingly lucky with only a few small El Niño's since the 21st century started, despite having two of the hottest years on record globally in 2005 and 2010. Over the past month and a half, three strong westerly wind blasts along the equator

appear to have triggered ocean subsurface warming. The warming has intensified and rolled to the eastern equatorial Pacific - a strong sign of a developing El Niño.

But it is not the ocean warming by itself that is significant, it is also the amount of water involved. Even at this early stage the equatorial Pacific is storing the largest amount of warm water since 1997/98. From these observations, it appears that a very strong El Niño may be initiated. Forecasters suggest the probability of an El Niño is now above 70%, which is a remarkable estimate considering the time of year.

Food Ingredient From Rice Bran Oil

Rice bran oil, mild-flavoured oil and a staple at Asian food markets is rich in vitamin E - an advantage that many other well-known cooking oils can't offer. The oil comes from the outer layers of the rice kernel that are removed when the grain is milled and polished to produce white rice. Scientists at the Agricultural Utilization Research in Peoria, Illinois, USA have shown how to extract natural compounds from the oil to make an interesting new food ingredient. It looks something like nut butter and shows promise for several uses, including as a replacement for some of the butter, margarine, or shortening currently used in popular baked goods.

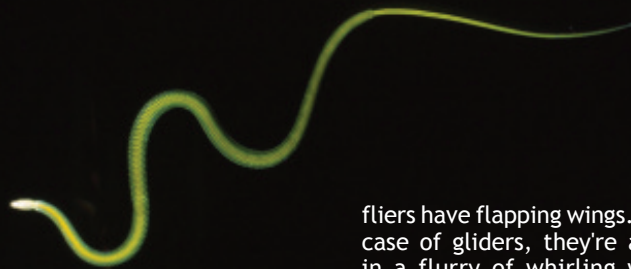
The product, or "extract," consists primarily of unrefined rice bran oil and rice bran's natural wax, used in confections. It also contains



Flying Snakes: Technology of Gliding

Flying snakes are particularly intriguing to researchers because they lack wings or any other features that remotely resemble flight apparatus. Researchers has

good at generating a force of lift, but it also gets an extra boost of lift when facing the air flow at a certain angle. So much of the aerodynamics of animal flight - especially that of flying snakes - remain a mystery. Rather than fixed wings, animal



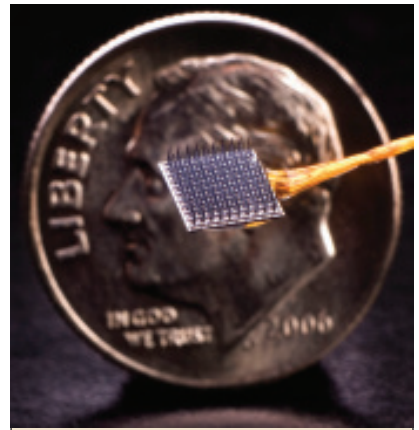
attempted to analyse the technology of this by using small - about 1 metre in length and the width of your thumb - snakes that live in the lowland tropical forests of Asia.

Previously, experiments in a wind tunnel had returned an unexpected finding: the snake's shape is not only

fliers have flapping wings. In the case of gliders, they're always in a flurry of whirling winds. Whirls of wind can be particularly useful because they give flying snakes an extra lift. The shape of the snakes in flight - which is a flattened version of its shape at rest - gets help from little vortices around it.

minor amounts of such compounds as vitamin E; plant sterols, including some that are of interest to medical and nutrition researchers because of their potentially health-imparting properties; and gamma-oryzanol, shown to lower levels of "bad" LDL cholesterol in humans.

Unlike some shortenings and margarines, the extract is free of trans fats, which contribute to increased risk of heart disease. Another plus: The extract is shelf-stable: It resists oxidation that could otherwise result in off-flavours and unpleasant odours.



Brain Implant to Restore Memory

Highly secretive US military researchers say, in the next few months, they will unveil new advances toward developing a brain implant that could one day restore a wounded soldier's memory. The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) is forging ahead with a four-year plan to build a sophisticated memory stimulator.

The science has never been done before, and raises ethical questions about whether the human mind should be manipulated in the name of staving off war injuries or managing the aging brain. Some say those who could benefit include the five million Americans with Alzheimer's disease and the nearly 300,000 US military men and women who have sustained traumatic brain injuries in Iraq and Afghanistan.

What researchers have been able to do so far is help to reduce tremors in people with Parkinson's disease, cut back on seizures among epileptics and even boost memory in some Alzheimer's patients through a process called deep brain stimulation. Those devices were inspired by cardiac pacemakers, and pulse electricity into the brain much like a steady drum beat, but they don't work for everyone.

The new idea is to restore a function back to normal or near normal of the memory processing areas of the brain so that the person can access their formed memories, and so that they can form new memories as needed.

Pyramid Stones Transported over Wet Sand

Physicists from the FOM Foundation and the University of Amsterdam have discovered that the ancient Egyptians used a clever trick to make it easier to transport heavy pyramid stones by sledge. The Egyptians moistened the sand over which the sledge moved. By using the right quantity of water they could have the number of workers needed.

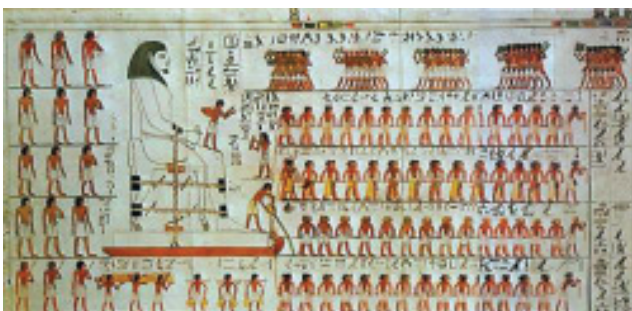
For the construction of the pyramids,

the ancient Egyptians had to transport heavy blocks of stone and large statues across the desert. The Egyptians therefore placed the heavy objects on a sledge that workers pulled over the sand. Research has now revealed that the Egyptians probably made the desert sand in front of the sledge wet. Experiments have demonstrated that the correct amount of dampness in the sand halves the pulling force required.

The physicists placed a laboratory version of the Egyptian sledge in a tray of sand. They determined both the required pulling force and the stiffness of the sand as a function of

the quantity of water in the sand.

To determine the stiffness they used a rheometer, which shows how much force is needed to deform a certain volume of sand.





The term ‘diplomatic’, the French *diplomatique*, is a modern adaptation of the Latin phrase *res diplomatica* and is employed to denote a critical study of diplomas, which include all kinds of documentary sources of history such as charters, acts, treaties, contracts, judicial records, rolls, registers, grants, deeds, etc. Thus, it is not to be confused with the word diplomatic which as an adjective form of diplomacy refers to the skill with which trained and experienced diplomats conduct negotiations to protect and promote the interests of the countries, they represent.

It may also be borne in mind that the science of diplomatic is quite distinct from epigraphy, though the ultimate object of both of them is one and the same, namely to deduce history. While epigraphy deals primarily with the interpretation of the contents of ancient records and documents taking into account the language, paleography and orthography, the science of diplomatic concerns itself mainly with the mode, the style, the form and finally the conventional phraseology of a document or a set of documents.

The History

In Europe the science of diplomatic sprang into being sometimes towards the end of the 17th century and interestingly enough it was the

records and documents of the various monastic houses (monasteries) which first caught the imagination of the European scholars. The first serious study of the subject was made by the learned Benedictine, Dom Jean Mabillon of the abbey of St. Germain-des-Prés and his great work, the *De re diplomatica*, which was brought out in 1681. A.D., established the science of diplomatic on a secure basis. Since then a lot of work has been done by the European scholars, especially those of France, Germany, Austria and Italy, for a systematic study of this highly interesting and complex subject.

In this context, it may, however, be observed that this valuable science has not yet been born in most of the countries in the East- so much so, even the very meaning of the term ‘diplomatic’ as the name of a

distinct branch of learning is little known, except perhaps to the Archivists. In India also this science is still in a state of infancy and we have yet to make efforts along truly ‘diplomatic’ lines for a systematic analysis of the immense documentary material, especially the stone inscriptions and the copper charters dating from a comparatively remote past.

It is a matter of common knowledge that with the growth of civilization, various people in

The Science of Diplomatic

The study of diplomatic is a highly complex affair, and that we have to make the formal analysis of documents with cogent reasoning and plausible proofs for drawing certain conclusions on the basis of authority which as already been established.



the world have all along been creating huge bulk of records as documentary evidence both in public and private life. And, though with the passage of time most of these records-whether on paper or on any other material, such as copper plates, bronze plates, etc.- have perished, we are still left with a very large number of papers and documents of various kinds. This obviously means that the field covered by the study of diplomatic is extremely vast and extensive and that we do require the best type of knowledge and experience of archives for a proper understanding of the history of documentary system created and developed by various countries at various stages.

In this connection, it is

worthwhile to remember that documents and papers which the exigencies of public and private life called into existence have followed almost a set pattern in a particular region during a particular period of time. This is because of the fact that right from the early ages, more especially from the early Middle Ages, down to the present days the various people of the world have followed a kind of system of teaching the art of composition not only of charters but also of general correspondence

along the traditional formulas and models. It may also be noted here that the necessity of conforming to exact phraseology in diplomas and the need of observing a certain degree of regularity in expressing the formulas led to the compilation of formularies and manuals on the subject. And, as time rolled on these formularies and manuals became indispensable both for the teachers and the taught

in the various monasteries, madrasas and other centres of lore and learning.

Scope of the study in India

For the study of diplomatic in India, we have to take into account not only the documents of recent times or the Mughal period (they are generally on paper) but also the early palm-leaf manuscripts and the old Sanskrit or Prakrit copper-plate charters, etc., which have survived the ravages of time and exist both in public and in private keeping. The palm-leaf manuscripts, which are available from about the tenth century A.D. and the copper-plate charters which go back to a much remoter antiquity have something very important to tell us, and as such an inquiry into their history along diplomatic lines should be all the more interesting for scholars working on the subject.





the ring) have a weight of about two hundred and sixteen pounds.

While passing, a word may be added as to the practice of engraving the record of these royal charters. All the evidence now available goes to prove that with a view to making the record more enduring, the inscription was first written out in ink (usually black ink) on the sheets by an efficient and responsible officer, and that when the ink would completely dry, the sheets or the plates were passed on to the engraver for cutting the written letters into the metal. The job of engraving was usually done in the neatest possible manner, and that the name of the engraver—he was either a goldsmith or a brazier—was normally mentioned along with that of the scribe at the end of the charter.

It is equally important to remember that for the sake of authentication and for guarding against any tampering, the sheets

destroyed during the troubled period of the 18th century. It is quite pleasing to note that India of the days of the Mughals had all the instruments of civilised government and that full records were kept of all official decisions and happenings. The Mughal rulers were record conscious in the real sense of the term and they took pains to carry their documentary system almost to the point of perfection.

Indeed, it was during the Mughal period that formulas became more exactly fixed, definitions more precise and accurate and the phraseology and the arrangement of the text of the various documents and papers more regular and systematic. In this context, it is worthwhile to remember that some of the Mughal Emperors were good Calligraphists themselves. For instance, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb would often write in their own hands while addressing the Rajput princes. Further, the Mughal administration being highly complex and centralised, every possible care was taken to ensure complete authentication of the papers which had to pass through a number of stages before their final issue. The thoroughness on the part of the Mughal rulers naturally led to the growth of a huge bulk of records with bewildering variety.

Apart from the proceedings of the royal assembly, the Court diaries, the office bulletins, the more-well-known and important documents of the Mughal period are the farmans (royal patents or royal orders), hukms (generally the orders issued by the queens), nishans (letters and orders of the princes or the princesses), shuggas (letters from the king), parwanas (orders issued by ministers and high officials to their subordinates), arzdashts (petitions or addresses from an inferior to a superior), ruqas (a kind of small writings usually between persons of equal ranks), etc. Some of the above mentioned categories of documents, say the farmans and parwanas, are

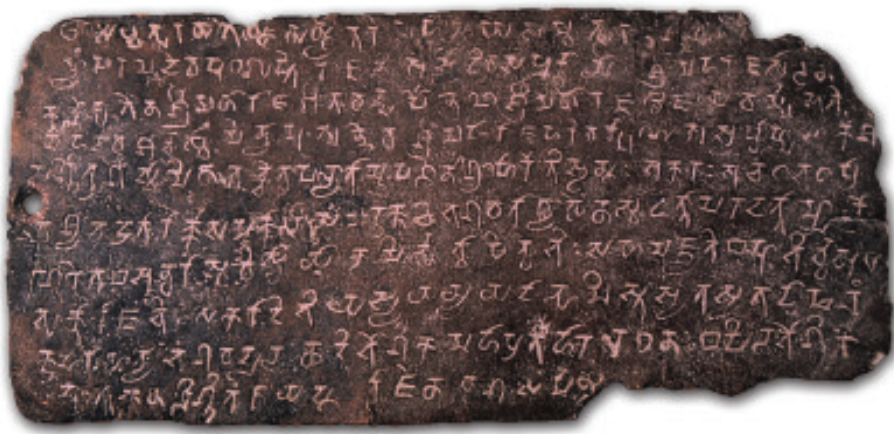
It is equally important to remember that for the sake of authentication and for guarding against any tampering, the sheets of the copper charters were strung on a ring, generally of the same metal, in such a manner that a bronze reproduction of the royal seal could be easily attached at the point where the two ends of the ring met.

For instance, the copper-plate charters, which are mostly in the form of title deeds of land grants, etc., are a class by themselves and afford and extremely welcome information of the system of documentation in the ancient times. It is interesting to know that these copper-plate grants conform more closely to the idea of the Roman diploma, so called because it was formed of two sheets of metal which were shut together like the leaves of a book. It may, however, be noted that from region to region and from reign to reign these copper-plate grants (mostly the royal charters) do vary in their size, shape, arrangement of writing etc. While the earliest grants are usually simple in their form and

style and generally consist each of three sheets of modest dimensions, weighing only some few ounces, there have been discovered some copper charters of later period which display a poetic glamour and beauty in their details, besides having a fantastic style and huge weight. For instance, the Tiruvalangadu Charter of Rajendra Chola I (1012-1044 A.D.) comprises thirty one large sheets, strung on a ring nearly seventeen inches in diameter, and weighs in all about two hundred pounds or two and a half maunds. This record has been beaten by another copper-charter of Rajendra Chola I himself which has been recently found at Karandai near Tanjore. It consists of as many as fifty-five large sheets which alone (without

of the copper charters (when they comprised more than one sheet) were strung on a ring, generally of the same metal, in such a manner that a bronze reproduction of the royal seal could be easily attached at the point where the two ends of the ring met. It may, however, be noted that with the passage of time, these copper charters have ceased to be legal documents and that we can now very safely cut open their rings and take out the copper plates for subjecting them to historical examination.

While there does not exist much material for a proper study of diplomatic of the days of the, Sultanate of Delhi, we are really fortunate to have the Mughal documents and papers in a fairly large number inspite of the fact that most of them were



available almost in an unbroken sequence, and as such they should be of immense use for the study of diplomatic, which certainly requires the scholars working on the subject to be fully conversant with the whole range of a particular kind or a group of documents.

Besides the Mughal archives, we have huge records of the

also be pointed out that the private documents and papers lying in the custody of old families and Houses or some local bodies or even unknown individuals from the mass of material of historical and diplomatic research. There is no gainsaying the fact that besides displaying their individual characteristics, the private deeds quite often

material for our study. Running into billions of folios and kept in their proper order in the National Archives of India, these huge records have, indeed, much to say about some of the newer developments and changes which the science of diplomatics has witnessed following a blend of ideas and practices of the East and the West. However, a study

already been established. Further, in view of the growing tendency on the part of historians to unearth material from original documents and records, sunk into the dust of centuries, for shaping correctly the national history, the study of diplomatic has become all the more essential, for it ensures the correct position, classification and denomination of both the public records and family papers. While in this article note it is not possible to discuss the different types of records, it should perhaps be enough to say that all documents and papers belonging to a particular group or emerging from particular sources have certain patterns as a child born of a family has certain features.

For instance, a royal farman of the Mughal period, apart from having the essential divisions or sections - (i) Preamble, (ii) Notification and (iii) the Conclusion- as also the various sub-sections, as found in similar charters or title deeds conferring grants and favours, has some other outstanding features as well. It has been noticed that the first two lines of the Mughal farmans are always abbreviated and that the royal seal and the tughra with their almost exact location on its top (the seal being on the right side of the tughra) are its inevitable features. Further, the set phraseology and the arrangement of text, the various endorsements on the reverse with the seals of ministers as also certain signs and symbols should make a farman quite distinct from a nishan or a hukm, which too have their first two lines in an abbreviated form and which have often been mistaken for the royal farmans.

The study of diplomatic is, therefore, of unique and gigantic value, as it goes a long way to help us examine the various documents in the right perspective, besides enabling us to give a proper place to the stray papers and single out those which are forged and spurious ones. ■

The writer is an Archivist



Rajendra Chola I



Shahjahan



Aurangzeb

various local dynasties, viz., those of Oudh, Murshidabad, Mysore, Hyderabad, Travancore, Arcot, Poona, Gwalior, Nagpur, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bharatpur, etc. By and large these records which are available in the respective State Archives as also in the National Archives of India are of equally great interest and value in as much as they supplement our information about the documentary system of the Mughals as a whole, besides displaying their own regional characteristics for the study of diplomatic. While passing, it may

furnish a much needed supplementary information about the diplomatic of official and public records of the period concerned, for the latter's form and style have been generally imitated in their composition with some changes here and there.

As to the records of the Company's period and the British rule in India, it can well be stated that in view of their being the administrative papers of various kinds, covering almost the whole range of documentary system, they perhaps make the richest

of these records on diplomatic lines should not pose much of a problem, because they are mostly available in regular series and also because we are somewhat familiar with their normal features and characteristics.

Significance of the study

It should thus be clear that the study of diplomatic is a highly complex affair, and that we have to make the formal analysis of documents with cogent reasoning and plausible proofs for drawing certain conclusions on the basis of authority which as

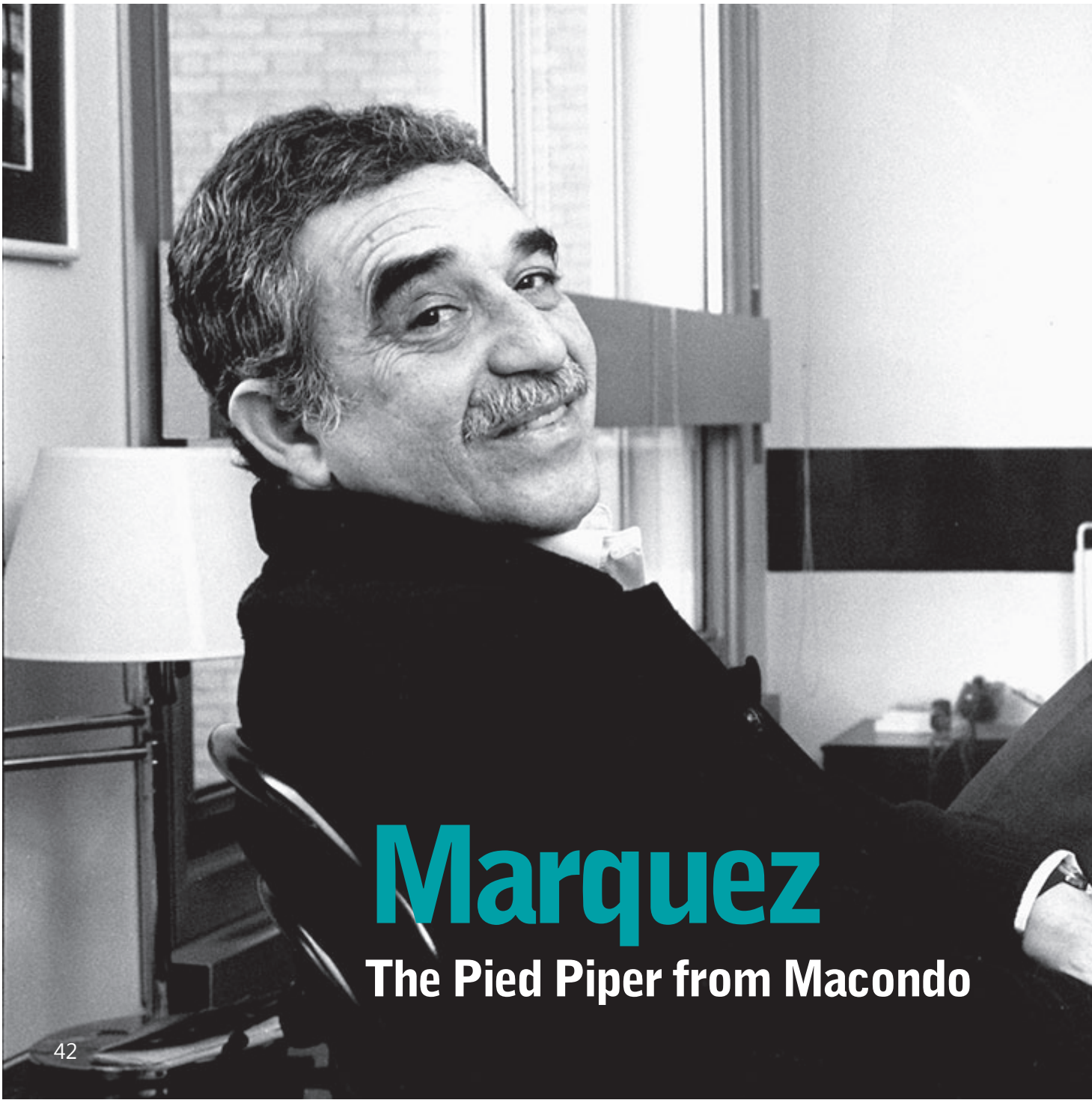


Marquez, the magician in writing rests in solitude. The death of the legend came on Good Friday this year after a brief period of Alzheimers. He had lymphatic cancer followed by forgetfulness. The Magician who drew the world go around the magical square he had drawn was in mere oblivion

for more than two years. From a short sleep, he passed into an endless one. Mexico is lucky to be his final resting place.

Gabriel José de la Concordia Garcia Marquez is Colombian in origin and considered one of the greatest writers of the 20th century. A journalist by profession in the early stages of his writing career, Marquez discovered his own path as a

novelist though he has written fiction and non fiction. What Pablo Neruda, the Chilean poet, is for poetry in the 20th century, Marquez is for novels. He was the Nobel laureate in the year 1982 mainly for his much acclaimed work One Hundred Years of Solitude through which the world got acquainted with the term 'Magical Realism'. He was the magician and he mesmerized the



Marquez

The Pied Piper from Macondo

world with his craft. He waved his magic wand and the whole world went after him in wave after wave. Just like the Pied Pieper of Hamelin, he led us to his city of mirrors, Macondo. He made us believe unbelievable events. Ironically, for him, they were believable ones! No one can ever believe 250 elephants flew across the sky. But for Marquez it was

possible. It was possible only for him to depict such a sight. And, it is possible only in the mysterious and magical sky of Latin America.

Love in the time of Cholera is considered an epic of eternal love. Once we read this novel, we are in love with love. It's poem in prose. Only Marquez can create such a masterpiece in words. It has a personal touch. It is based on the

love story of his parents.

"She has not slept alone in that room since the loss of her virginity". This simple yet classic sentence is from Love in the Time of Cholera. This sentence is the comment of the novelist on the loneliness of a wife; the loneliness felt by the heroine Fermina Daza in her bed room just after the death of her beloved husband,

Dr. Juvenile Urbino. It mirrors the pain of her solitude in sleeping alone for the first time since her marriage with Dr. Urbino that spanned over more than 50 years. Through this, he shows us the fidelity in married life. No one, but Marquez himself could write such a sentence.

The general in his labyrinth, is a political novel based on the life of Great Liberator of the Latin America, Simon Bolivar

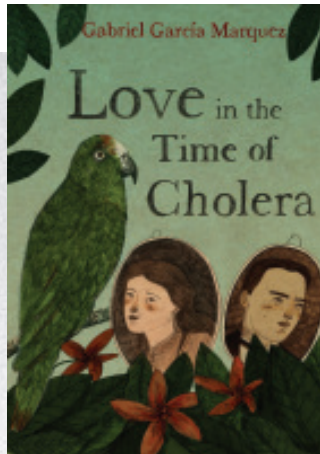
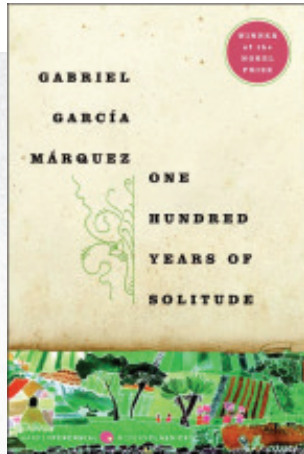
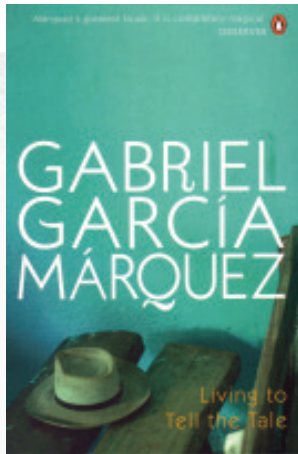
His short novels include in evil Hour/the autumn of the Patriarch, of love and other demons. He has also written short stories such as Leaf Storm/ No One Writes To The Colonel/ Chronicle Of A Death Foretold/ Memories Of My Melancholy Whores. His non fictions include The Story of A Ship Wrecked Sailor/News of a Kidnapping/ Living to Tell the Tale etc.

Marquez was the alter ego of the Cuban president Fidel Castro. Fidel remained the first reader of many of his masterpieces. Marquez got many of his manuscripts corrected and edited by Fidel. "Chronicle of a Death Foretold" was edited together by Marquez and Fidel. He had a left leaning devoid of violence.

Marquez was in a sense the John the Baptist in literature. He baptized every reader of his with his magic wand dipped in magic realism. Thus he heralded the era of magic realism and became the harbinger of the movement.

Every work of Marquez is a masterpiece. But his masterpiece of masterpieces is undoubtedly, One Hundred Years of Solitude. It transcended all the conventional reading habits. The fictional village makando mesmerized the world with its breathtaking events. The whole world became spectators and Macondo was the centre stage. The famous critic Alastair Macaulay said "Marquez has drawn a magic circle and we go round and round within it" ■

The writer is Assistant Information Officer, I&PRD



Marquez was in a sense the John the Baptist in literature. He baptized every reader of his with his magic wand dipped in magic realism. Thus he heralded the era of magic realism and became the harbinger of the movement.





The Paradise Flower

A flower with its spectacular shape resembling a bird's beak and head plumage.. This is the Bird of Paradise Flower which is one of the most colourful flowers in the world. The flowers which originated in South Africa grow wild there and bloom from September through May. It was scientifically named

Sterlitzia reginae for the Queen of England, Meckleburg –Sterlitz the wife of King George III.

Since the flowers have a striking resemblance to a brightly coloured bird in flight it got the name "Bird of Paradise". A bird in flight symbolises freedom. Among other meanings conveyed by the Bird of Paradise flower are faithfulness, magnificence and happiness. The unusually

beautiful shape and brilliant colours have made these flowers not just floral designers favourite, but also a popular symbol of paradise. The spectacular blossom also makes the plant an exceptionally attractive landscape specimen and also occupies a place of pride in the garden. It gives a tropical ambience to the landscape. Florists admire this flower for its

unique look and versatility as a special cut flower. They prefer to use these tropical flowers in wedding arrangements, multi-bloom tropical bouquets or as single flower centre pieces. This is also known as Crane flower due to its exotic avian shape.

Long stemmed flowers emerge from green boat-shaped bracts which are bordered in red or purple. The numerous pointed



POPULAR SPECIES OF BIRD OF PARADISE ARE

**Sterlitzia reginae-
Bird of Paradise/Crane lily**

**Sterlitzia alba-
White Bird of Paradise**

**Sterlitzia Nicolai-
White or Giant Bird of Paradise**

Sterlitzia caudata

petals of brilliant orange colour are contrasted with an arrow-shaped tongue of vivid blue. The female part of the flower is the long extension of the blue tongue, which is extended well away from stamens. Some species have white and blue. The flowers have several sets of flowers in each bract which are formed on the end of a stalk. They are produced in a horizontal



inflorescence emerging from a stout spathe. The paddle shaped leaves are thick, waxy, glossy green, large, long and broad resembling banana leaves in appearance but with a longer petiole and arranged strictly in two ranks to form a fan-like crown of ever green foliage. Because of this the plant is also having a very attractive foliage specimen apart from its handsome flowers. The flowers are pollinated by sun bird which uses the spathe as a perch when visiting the flowers. The weight of the bird when standing on the flowers opens the spathe and releases the pollen to the bird's feet, which is then deposited to the next flowers. The plant usually reaches a height of 4 feet.

The plant prefers to grow in well drained loamy soil. Potting medium consisting of one part

each of organic soil, peat and sand is ideal. Bright sunlight, even including some direct light helps the plant to bloom well. However, only habituated plants can tolerate, mid day summer sun. Bird of Paradise is propagated by seeds, division of clumps and separation of offsets. The plants are slow growing and clumps that are split will take at least two years to re-establish themselves and flower again. The best way of propagation is by division of clumps or planting offshoots. To get a mature flowering plant from seeds it may take about three years. When planting in ground



take pits of 60 x 60 cm size which is filled with soil and organic matter. Bone meal and plenty of mature compost used will help in healthy growth of the plant.

Cut flowers of Bird of Paradise plant last two or three weeks in vase. There are certain steps maintained by flower growers so as to cut the blooms. Pick a flower on the plant that is about to bloom. Cut the stem of the flower at an angle to ensure maximum water intake. Use a sharp knife for this and cut at a low point on the stem. Fill a vase a little more than half a way with stones or pebbles. Fill the vase with fresh water to 3 inches from the top. Carefully insert the stem of the Bird of Paradise flower into the vase so the pebbles hold it up. Change the water once a week. When you remove the flower from the vase, cut an extra 3/4 inch from the end of the stem at an angle to keep the flower fresh.





Kerala's Own Festival



Summer festival fever commences in Thrissur and Palakkad districts from February onwards and it concludes during the month of May after the annual Pooram festivals.

Kerala a land that has to be seen to be believed is one among the forerunners as far as tourism business in the country is concerned. Famed as "Gods Own Country" in tourism the state offers an array of diverse and exotic tourism products ranging from natural to historical and from cultural to heritage. One among the reasons for this slogan is the presence of big and small attractive festivals held in different parts of the state throughout the year. Throughout history festivals had been an essential part of celebrations and entertainments and many festivals of the state are listed among the most graceful in the world. These festivals are also reflections of the diverse religious and

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cultural traditions of the state.

Summer festival fever commences in Thrissur and Palakkad districts from February onwards and it concludes during the month of May after the annual Pooram festivals. A visit to the temple premises during the festival day and wandering through its vast fields to experience the thrilling atmosphere is enjoyed by majority of the tourists.



Villages of Central Kerala “Land of unique festivals”

Central Kerala comprises mainly the districts of Thrissur & Palakkad. Thrissur is known as the cultural capital of the state because of its vast cultural and heritage resources. Central Kerala is a territory having colorful and unique festivals typical to that region. Among them the famed ones are pooram, vela, thaipooyam, thalappoli etc. All the major village festivals of

the region take place in between the months from February to May. These spectacular festivals are being participated by people from all religions irrespective of caste and creed. Let me discuss some of the famed village festivities of central Kerala which attracts horde of tourists during the summer season.

Vazhalikavu Vela

Vazhalikavu Vela is held at Vazhalippadam in Thrissur every year during the Malayalam month of 'Kumbham' on the Aswathy day. The festival is the birth day of devi & her daughter and the event is celebrated by all villagers. Both the two deities of the temple are having equal importance as far as vela festivities are concerned. This year the vela were celebrated during February with great pomp and the grove was beautifully illuminated. The

elephants are decorated with caparison and it adds charm to the festival. The Kavadiyattam, Ezhunallippu, Panchavadhyam, Para Vela and the fire works held during late night and early mornings are fabulous and colorful. At the outskirts of the grove there is a Koothumaadam located on the centre of the paddy fields for performing Nizhalpaavakoothu (shadow puppet play) during the seven day's vela festival.





Thaipooyam at Sree Maheswara Temple

Thaipooyam is the prominent festival held at Sree Maheswara Temple, Koorkanchery in Thrissur. The festival is held just before the peak of summer season. Kaavadi procession is the highlight of the festival. The temple will become a riot of colors with large number of 'Pookkavadi'

and 'Peelikkavadi' are being displayed having different shapes and sizes. The color combinations of the kavadis are a stunning view for the eyes of the visitors. Numerous people especially from Thrissur, Ernakulam, Palakkad and Malappuram districts witness the Kavadi procession every year.

Uthralikavu Pooram

Uthralikavu Devi temple situated in Paruthipra near Wadakkanchery in Thrissur is famed for its annual pooram festival held during the Malayalam month of Kumbham (February/March). The one week festival is conducted by three desams. Uthralikavu pooram was earlier known as Uthralikavu Vela and the change from vela to pooram was gradual. The procession of elephants caparisoned with beautiful ornaments along with Panchavadyam and Pandimelam is awesome. These traditionally decorated elephants line up in the ground with mahouts sitting

top of them and hold colorful parasols, swaying venchamarams (white tufts) and aalavattams (peacock feather fans). The cultural fairs during the festival include temple and folk art performances like pootham, thira, nayadi, kummatti etc which provide a magical spectacles to the viewers including tourists. The festival is famed for its massive firework extravaganza and the pomp and gaiety of this occasion is matched only by the fireworks of the Thrissur pooram or Nenmara Vallengi Vela.



Machad Mamankam at Tiruvanikkavu Temple

Machad Mamankam is the unique festival celebrated by the people in Mangalam, Thekkumkara, Karumathra, Manalithara and Viruppakka villages of Thalappilly taluk. The ceremonies of the festival exhibit the true bucolic charm of village festivals and were performed in the milieu of the vast paddy fields situated in between Vazhani hills and Wadakkanchery town during the month of February/March. The festival popularly known as Machad Kuthira Vela is being organized by one of the three village teams in alternate years. The teams in charge are Thekkumkara, Punnamparambu and Panangattukara villages. Most of the temple festivals in this region are celebrated with the Ezhunnallippu of

caparisoned elephants but the attraction of Machad Mamankam is the huge horse motif made of wooden planks and hay. The horses are considered as the offerings of the devotees to the goddess. Pakal Vedikkettu is an added attraction of the festival. Five villages in the general area of the temple participate in the festival in a competitive but spiritual way. The 'Purappadu' of the horses from various desams started after fireworks. The procession of the motif horses reaches the Thiruvanikkavu around 2 p.m. Kumbakudams accompanied the Manalithara horses. Harijan Vela and Tholpavakkotthu are the added attractions of Machad Mamankam.





Aryankavu Pooram



Valluvanad "The festival zone of central Kerala"

The Valluvanad festival season kicks off with the Tholpavakoothu (puppet show) held at Cherpulassery Puthanalkkal Devi temple. The culturally vivacious Valluvanad region consists of Ottapalam and Mannarkkad taluks in Palakkad district and Perinthalmanna taluk in Malappuram district. The festival season which lasts for four and a half months will reverberate the region with the festivals tunes from various places of worship. As many as

hundred temples and a couple of mosques hold their annual festivals during this time. The major festivals are the ten day long festival held at Cherpulassery Ayyappankavu and Panamanna Sankaranarayana Swamy Temple. The 'poorams' at Chinakkathur, Mannarkkad, Pariyanampotta, Aryankavu and Tirumandhamkundu attracts people from all across the state. Pattambi Nercha is also a unique festival.

One among the biggest pooram festival held in the Palakkad district used to take place at the Aryankavu temple of Shoranur. The temple was owned and administered by the Kavalappara Mooppil Nair family. The Pooram is held in the Malayalam month of Meenam from first to twenty first with the involvement of ninety six villages under the Kavalappara Swaroopam. The Goddess Bhadrakali at this temple has an aversion to elephants as she does not like their smell. So unlike other temple festivals Aryankavu Pooram does not feature elephants in their finery.

Many of the Desam that were under the sway of Kavalappara Nair bring mock horses with heads of wood and bodies made of bamboo and cloth with a layer of straw inside. They are a symbol of the commitment of the leader and people of the desam to provide horsemen and foot soldiers to the Nair's army. The first days of the festival are the trade fair, followed by the puppet play called Tholpavakoothu (leather puppet play) which is a ritual art performed during the annual festivals in the Kali temples of Palakkad district.

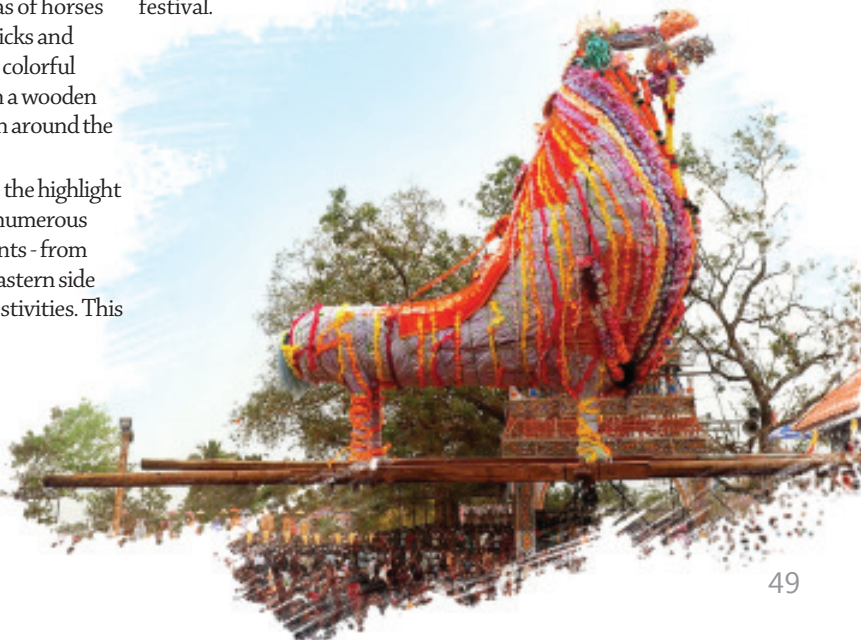
Chinakkathur Pooram

Chinakkathur temple is located in Ottapalam of Palakkad district. The Pooram is held during the month of February/ March and includes elephants and artificial horses like those of the Thiruvannikkavu temple are the greatest attractions. The Chinakkathur Pooram is rated as the most famous festival of the Valluvanadu region. Hundreds of people including foreigners are witnessing the Chinakkathur pooram. The festival starts with a Poothamthirakali. The festival is organized by the Desams including Ottapalam, Palappuram, Vallaramangalam, Meetna and Erakkottiri representing the western side

and Thekkemangalam and Vadakkemangalam in the eastern side. Sixteen replicas of horses made of bamboo sticks and straw covered with colorful cloth complete with a wooden horse head are taken around the temple.

Elephant carnival is the highlight of the pooram and numerous caparisoned elephants - from both western and eastern side add charm to the festivities. This is accompanied by Panchavadyam, Chendamelam, Kelikottu and fire works. Finally another horse play will happen which marks the end of

the Pooram celebrations. The annual trade and industrial exhibition is the highlight of the festival.



Mayannoor Thalappoli

Mayannur serves as a perfect epitome of communal harmony and this sacred village on the banks of river Bharathapuzha in Thrissur is home to temples dedicated to Lord Rama and Lord Siva. Mayannur Kavu is the abode of Shri Kurumba Bhagavathi and the annual festival of the temple is

enthusiastically celebrated during the months of April/May with a gorgeous procession of elephants carrying Bhagavathi's idol. The temple is beautifully illuminated during the Thalappoli festival. This is the time all non-resident Mayannurians return to their home every year.

Nenmara Vallengi Vela

Vela is the time of reunion for the two villagers namely Nenmara & Vallengi. The Nenmara Vela is celebrated on a grand scale equalling with the famed 'Thrissur Pooram'. According to folklore the festival is celebrated because of the birthday of the presiding deity of the village temple or in memory of a major event like the killing of a demon by the goddess. The Vela falls on the 20th day of Malayalam month 'Meenam' (2nd or 3rd of April every year). Nenmara and Vallengi are the two villages participating in the vela and

they have their own temples and a common temple known as the Nellikkulangara Bagavathy temple where the two groups can meet and interact. The festivities begin ten days prior to the actual day of Vela with the hoisting of a flag known as Kodiyettam in the respective temples and the natives are not supposed to leave the village limit once the flags have been raised. Fireworks are the highlights of Nenmara - Vallengi Vela and it is rated as the biggest in the state in terms of explosion, intensity and duration.



VILLAGE FESTIVALS - "A Sparkling Tourism Product"

Villages are considered as the soul of Kerala tourism and its essence lies in its vibrant festivals. Being a tourism product all village festivals like pooram, vela, thailappoli and thalappoli are greater attractions for tourists. To a great extent each of these festivals are enabling us to preserve our rituals, customs & traditions which are surely part of our heritage and an asset for the future generations. Besides this it also creates harmony & tolerance among the people from different religions & caste. Cultural exchanges are one of the major outcomes of festival tourism. Special Interest Tourists (SITs) to a great extent are interested in witnessing

central Kerala's village festivals & fairs. Many tour operators are including these unique festivals in their tour packages in order to offer a novel experience for the tourists. The department of tourism is promoting each and every big as well as small festival of the state and

majority of them are listed in the website of Kerala tourism's calendar. Among the festivals of central Kerala which attract tourists the most is the prominent Thrissur Pooram known as pooram of poorams which is noted for its extensive pageantry and mass number of

foreign tourist attendance. Kudamattam, caparisoned elephant display and fire works are the highlight of Thrissur Pooram.

Central Kerala is a region blessed with diverse festivals and each has its own uniqueness which attracts tourists. Village festivals provide a great facelift for the local economy and it enables to find out new markets for local products such as handicrafts and pottery and souvenirs are also sold in large numbers. The villages of these regions are truly incredible because of the presence of its charming and vibrant festivals. ■

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