

A MONTHLY OF DRAVIDIAN LINGUISTICS ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

**KOLLAM AND KOṬUṆṆALLŪR**

(Continued from the last issue)

Nicolo Conti of the 15<sup>th</sup> century states that he visited a place Columguria situated at the mouth of a river Paluria at the northern mouth of which stands *KoṭuṆṆallūr*. The other names noted above - Jangli, Shinkali, Chinkali and Singuyli are not, in any way, connected with *KoṭuṆṆallūr*. They could not be treated as alternant names of *KoṭuṆṆallūr*. The present writer thinks that they are related to *Vañci*, a component of the place-name, *Tiruvañcikkulam*, a suburb of *KoṭuṆṆallūr*.<sup>7</sup>

*KoṭuṆṆallūr* is remembered in history as a glorious city where the Perumāls settled and ruled over Kerala, and the Jews and Muslims migrated for the first time into the Indian peninsula. It was here that Cheran Cenuṭṭuvan consecrated an idol of Pattini, eulogised in the famous epic poem, *Cilappatikāram*, written by Iḷamkō Aṭikaḷ. The glory of modern *KoṭuṆṆallūr* lies in the imperial honours and attention bestowed upon the Bhagavathi temple situated there.

**Origin: A Word Clue**

In fact, southern *Kollam* is a semi-island with Paravūr and Naṭayaṛa lake in the south, Arabian Sea in the west and Aṣṭamuṭi lake in the north and east as boundaries. The geographical nature of *Kollam* tempts one to believe that the present *Kollam* city was under water in a remote past. Likewise, *KoṭuṆṆallūr* also is a semi-island. It lies in the southern part of *Chettuvāy* island surrounded by the river Periyar in the south, Arabian Sea in the west and extensive canals in the north and east.

The common factor which appears in both place-names - *Kollam* and *KoṭuṆṆallūr* - is *kolla(y)*, a pure Dravidian word, which means 'high ground', 'a breach in a bank'. *Koll* + *am* is *kollam* where *-am* is a derivative suffix. *koṭum* + *kolla(y)* + *ūr* is *KoṭuṆṆallūr*. *koṭum* means 'severe', 'steep', 'intensive' etc. *koṭum* + *kollay* + *ūr* became *koṭumkollayūr* and later, by dropping *y* (a glide), became *koṭuṆṆallūr* and, finally, with nasal assimilation, the present form *KoṭuṆṆallūr* evolved (*koṭum* + *kolla(y)* + *ūr* > *koṭumkollayūr* > *KoṭuṆṆallūr*).

Word analysis gives the clue that the places denominated by *Kollam* and *KoṭuṆṆallūr* were the outcome of *kolla* caused by flood or intensive earthquakes. Similar cases are not rare in this part of the country such as the formation of *Vaippin* Island of Cochin. The heavy flood of 1341 C.E. brought forth this island. So also is the case with *Sherthalai* (*Cērttala*), a place north of *Alappuzha*. No documentary evidence is available regarding the origin of *Kollam* and *KoṭuṆṆallūr*. The river burst out through flood or earthquake in a remote past causing the alluvial soil and other deposits to heap up in the southern part of *Chettuvāy* island and a new landscape thus formed adjacent to old Muziris was called *KoṭuṆṆkollayūr* and later *KoṭuṆṆallūr*. The ancient Muziris lost its importance as a port city with the emergence of new land. Sand and stones thrown by the flood in the river-mouth of the *Periyar* swallowed the lagoon and, as a consequence, foreign trade through Muziris ended forever.

CONTENTS

Kollam and KoṭuṆṆallūr	1
Report - 42 <sup>nd</sup> A.I.C.D.L.	2
Dr. Puthusseri Ramachandran honoured	3
Books gifted by Prof. C.J. Daswani & Prof. Tilottama C. Daswani	4
New Life-Members	5
Administrative Assistant - Vacancy	5
Seminars	6
(a) Language Disorders ....	
(b) Automatic Language Translation..)	
DLA/ISDL Publications - Discounts	6
43 <sup>rd</sup> A.I.C.D.L.	6

Thus, it may be concluded that both *Kollam* and *Koṭuññallūr* mean the land of *kolla* or the land formed by *kolla*.

### References

7. Colonel Yule thinks that the name Shinkali or Shigala was probably formed from Tiruvanchikulam. K.P. Padmanabha Menon. *History of Kerala* Vol. I. P. 313.

### Appendix

I. Regarding the etymology of *Kollam*, Dr. Caldwell gives the following remarks:

- From *kolu*, the ‘royal presence’ or ‘presence chamber’ or ‘hail of audience’, *Kollam* might naturally be a derivative of this word; and, in confirmation, I find that other residences of Malabar kings were also called *Kollam*. E.g. Kodungallūr or Crangannur.
- From *kolu*, the same word but with the meaning ‘a height’ or ‘high ground’- hence *kollei*, a very common word in Tamil for ‘dry grain field’, ‘a backyard’. *Kolli* is also used by the poets, said to be the name of a hill in the Chera country i.e., the Malabar Coast. (The Chera king has the name Kolli Kavalan in Tamil annals.) *Kolam* in Tamil has not the meaning of ‘pepper’; it means ‘beauty’ and it is said that it also means ‘the fruit of the jujuba’.
- It might possibly be derived from *kol* ‘to slay’; *kollami* ‘slaughter’ or ‘a place where some slaughter happened’.

II. Dr. N.R. Gopinatha Pillai suggests the following derivation for *Koṭuññallūr*. “It, I think, is derived from an earlier *Koṭuññallūr* (*koṭum* + *kola* + *ūr*) the big river mouth, *kolla* is *maṭa* ‘a floodgate’ (*Perspectives in Place Name Studies*. P. 227).

Though *kolla* in Malayalam also denotes ‘floodgate’, it is appropriate here to take it as ‘the land emerged from flood’. In usages like *kolla vīṇu*, the speaker conveys the idea of throwing sand and mud by water-course which normally occurs due to heavy rainfall. So, *Koṭuññallūr* ‘the village at river-mouth’, as explained by Dr. N.R. Gopinatha Pillai, is not acceptable because the land at the river-mouth in olden days was known as Muziris or it was rightly styled as *pseudostomos* in Greek which signifies ‘false mouth’. There is no reason to believe that the word

‘Muziris’ became extinct in due course and, in that place, the word *Koṭuññallūr* came forth. The word *Koṭuññallūr* came only after the formation of *kolla* in the southern part of *Chettuvāy* island.

*Mucciṛi* is the word in Malayalam to denote *pseudostomos*. *Mucciṛi* means ‘fissured upper lip like that of a hare’. Greek navigators, who watched the seashore through binoculars from the anchored ship, saw the river Periyar going to the sea through one or two tributaries which created a false-mouth appearance to them and they observed it as *pseudostomos* in their language. The local name of the place from where the river Periyar falls into the sea was *mucciṛi* or *muciṛi*. Incidentally, the word *mucciṛi* also denotes the meaning *pseudostomos*. Muziris actually is a Hellenic version of the Malayalam word *mucciṛi* or *muciṛi*.

III. Chattampi Swamikal derives *Koṭuññallūr* from *Koṭumkōlūr* meaning ‘the place of slaughtering’. In the olden days, culprits might have been brought here for execution. *Sri Chattampi Swami Satabdi Smāraka Grantham* – Quilon. 1953. Pp. 123-125.

IV. *Koṭuññallūr* is the form found in Tamil sources for this place. E.g. the Tamil epic *Periyapurāṇam* (A.D. 12). A certain Kodunkōlūrān of Malanadu gifted 40 Kalanju of gold for setting up a lamp in the Tiruchanur Tiruvilankoil (near Tirupathi in Andhra Pradesh) in A.D. 936 (1-12) during the reign of Parantaka I (907-953). *Koṭuññāl* is the capital of Malayaman Tirumuṭikkāri of Sangam times, situated on the banks of Peñṇiyāru near Tirukkoyilur (*Akam*: 35: 14-16). *Koṭu(m)* is a frequent prefix found in Tamil and Malayalam place-names of very old origin. E.g. *Koṭumaṇam* (*Patirruppattu* : 74: 5), *Koṭukūr* [*Ibid.*: VIII Patikam : Line 12), *Koṭumpālur* (*Cilappatikāram* : S-I.I. XXIII No. 131), *Koṭumpālur* [*Ibid.* Vol. VII No. 398), *Koṭuvūrkkūṭipālḷi* [*Ibid.* Vol. No. 469), *Koṭunturai* (*Kanyakumari Inscriptions* Vol. V No. 1969-10), *Koṭuññaiyur* (Chengalpet District), *Koṭuvāy* (Coimbatore District) etc.

*Naduvattom Gopalakrishnan*

## 42<sup>ND</sup> ALL INDIA CONFERENCE OF DRAVIDIAN LINGUISTS

(Continued from January 2015 issue)

Prof. Boologa Rambai chaired Session 19 conducted at Sri. Gidugu Ramamurti Hall. The paper

titled *Code Mixing and Code Switching in Sri Lankan Print and Electronic Media in Tamil* was presented by Subathini Ramesh. Upendra Maloth in the paper *Code Switching between Telugu and English in the Speech of News-Readers and Reporters in Telugu News Channels* made an attempt to investigate as to what extent news-reporters and readers code-switch between Telugu and English when they convey news. The findings of the data reveal the percentage of code-switching in their speech. The next paper was on the *Impact of Dravidian on Gutab-Gadaba* by K. Ramesh Kumar. He made an attempt to study the features of Gutob-Gadaba, an endangered Munda language, due to the impact of Dravidian languages, especially Telugu. A *Brief Study on the Religious and Ritual Aspects of Cholanaikan Tribes* was presented by Hridya V.R. and Aparna Sreevalsan. Cholanaikan is a primitive tribe found exclusively in the Nilambur Valley. They have their own dialect to communicate among themselves and they use Malayalam to speak to outsiders. Their dialect consists of words from Kannada, Tamil and Malayalam languages.

Session 20, focused on Semantics, at Prof. Nagamma Reddy Seminar Hall was chaired by Prof. K. Umaraj. Prof. K. Rangan presented the paper *Honorific Masculine Singular in the Language of Sangam*. The paper *Variation in the Use of Politeness in Personal Pronouns in Telugu and Hindi: A Comparative Analysis* by K. Viswanatham gave a detailed description of pronouns used to express politeness in these languages. Naresh Keerthi's paper was on *Semantics of 'cunakku' in Sangam Tamil Poetry*. Kedar Bilash Nagila's paper *Inferentiality in Dura: One of the nearly Extinct Languages of Nepal* shed light on inferential markers in Dura discourse, one of the nearly extinct West Bodish units of the Sino-Tibetan language family. H. Shashikala's paper dealt with the *Development of -tana Suffix in Kannada*. In the paper, *Poetry as a Creative Mental Activity through the Information Processing of Brain*, N.G. Devaki described how poetic metre, which is a creative mental process, results from the ordering capacity of the brain through various harmonious interactions. Each session ended with lively interactions among the scholars.

The valedictory function conducted at Emeneau House was presided over by Prof. P. Subbachary, Dean, School of Human and Social Sciences, Dravidian University. P. Sreekumar welcomed the dignitaries to this auspicious occasion. The Guest of Eminence was Ch. A. Rajendra Prasad, Registrar, Dravidian University. While speaking of the different functions of linguistics, he highlighted the creative use of language. Prof. U.P. Upadhyaya handed over a cheque worth one lakh rupees to ISDL for creating an endowment in the name of his wife. The Vice Chancellor appreciated the magnanimity and generosity of Prof. Upadhyaya and invited the attention of the audience to emulate the path shown by him. In his keynote address, Prof. Rangan reiterated the need for concentrating on the Central Dravidian languages and suggested ways to develop these languages. Prof. Naduvattom Gopalakrishnan offered the felicitation speech. The report of the 42<sup>nd</sup> All India Conference of Dravidian Linguists was presented by Y. Vishwanatha Naidu. Impressed with the functioning of DLA, Prof. K. Rathnaiah, Vice Chancellor, Dravidian University expressed his desire to be its life-member. He appreciated the DLA conference and asserted that he would definitely attend the next conference. The best paper presenter, Satheesh Kumar Nadimpalli, was felicitated and awarded. All the senior Professors who blessed the occasion with their erudition were also honoured. M.C. Kesavamurthy offered the vote of thanks and the session ended with the National Anthem.

*Y. Viswanatha Naidu & K.N. Geethakumari*

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### DR. PUTHUSSERI RAMACHANDRAN HONOURED

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Prof. S. Guptan Nair Foundation award was bestowed on Dr. Puthusseri Ramachandran, a well-known scholar in Dravidian linguistics, an eminent poet and the Honorary Professor of International School of Dravidian Linguistics, by His Excellency the Governor of Kerala Sri. Justice (Retd.) P. Sathasivam at a meeting organised at the Mascot Hotel, Thiruvananthapuram on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2015. It is in recognition of his contribution to Malayalam linguistics and literature. All the members of the Dravidian Linguistics Association express their happiness and congratulate him on this occasion.

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**Prof. C.J. Daswani & Prof. Tilottama C. Daswani**  
**(Continued from the last issue)**

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Reported by Bindu R.B.

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## NEW ENROLMENT FOR LIFE-MEMBERSHIP (January 2015)

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## VACANCY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

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Applications are invited from qualified candidates for the post (temporary) of Administrative Assistant for doing administrative (including accounting), DTP, Publication and such other works assigned by the Hon. Director. The pay is Rs. 8000/- per month (consolidated).

Interested persons may submit their application to Hon. Director, ISDL, V.I. Subramoniam Memorial ISDL Complex, St. Xavier's College P.O., Thiruvananthapuram - 695 586 on or before **25<sup>th</sup> February 2015**.

For more details, contact the Hon. Director at 0471-2704953.

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Recent Publications: **The Contribution of Melpūttur Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭatiri to Sanskrit Literature with Special Reference to Vyākaraṇa**, P. Visalakshy, 2013, Crown ¼, pp. 428, Rs. 900/- (US\$ 81/-). **A Contrastive Analysis of the Phonological Systems of Bengali and Malayalam**, Dhruvajyoti Das, 2014, pp. xii + 140, Rs. 220/- (US\$ 20/-). **Veṭṭakka:ḍa Iruḷa Tuṇḍumallige - Ballads and Dictionary - Three Dialects**, R. Perialwar, 2014, pp. 8 + 112, Rs. 150/- (US\$ 15/-).

### SEMINAR ON

#### LANGUAGE DISORDERS AND THERAPEUTIC PROCEDURES OF DIFFERENTLY ABLED CHILDREN

The International School of Dravidian Linguistics is organizing a seminar on *Language Disorders and Therapeutic Procedures of Differently Abled Children* on **10<sup>th</sup> March 2015** in the ISDL campus, St. Xavier's College P.O., Thiruvananthapuram.

Those who are interested in participating and presenting papers in the seminar may please contact **Dr. Jeena S. Nair** (Co-ordinator).

[9446-479025, [ijdlisdl@gmail.com](mailto:ijdlisdl@gmail.com)]

### SEMINAR ON

#### AUTOMATIC LANGUAGE TRANSLATION - PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

The International School of Dravidian Linguistics is organising a seminar on *Automatic Language Translation - Problems and Prospects* on **11<sup>th</sup> March 2015** in the ISDL campus, St. Xavier's College P.O., Thiruvananthapuram.

Those who are interested in participating and presenting papers in the seminar may please contact **Dr. K. Krishna Kumar** (Co-ordinator).

[9846-678740, [ijdlisdl@gmail.com](mailto:ijdlisdl@gmail.com)]

### SPECIAL DISCOUNTS FOR DLA AND ISDL PUBLICATIONS

Special discounts offered in connection with the commemoration of the 125<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Suniti Kumar Chatterji, the doyen of modern linguistics in India and the Founder-President of the Dravidian Linguistics Association will be continued for a few more months.

The rates of discount for all publications are as follows:

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### 43<sup>rd</sup> ALL INDIA CONFERENCE OF DRAVIDIAN LINGUISTS

*Annamalai University, Annamalainagar*  
**18-20 June 2015**

#### Local Convener: Prof. S. Raja

Director, Centre of Advanced Study in Linguistics, Annamalai University, Annamalainagar - 608 002, Tamil Nadu (09486-517121; [kiranrajaling@gmail.com](mailto:kiranrajaling@gmail.com)).

#### Convener at Thiruvananthapuram:

##### Prof. N. Rajendran

Secretary, Dravidian Linguistics Association  
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