

THE BRAHMINS OF MALABAR¹

By K. RAMAVARMA RAJA, B.A., M.R.A.S.

THE lofty chain of the Western Ghats bears much the same relation to the land of Bhārgava - kṣetra,² a Sanskrit name of the coastal country of Kerala or Malabar, as the gigantic Himālayan range bears to the land of Bhārata-varṣa, or the Indian continent as a whole. This huge and impervious mountain-barrier, shutting off the low-lying seaboard region from the high table-land of the Deccan behind, has made it a separate world in every respect. The face of Nature, with its luxuriant growth of palms nurtured by the abundant tropical monsoons, differs from that of any other part of the Indian Peninsula. The language, Malayālam, though a branch of Dravidian speech, is confined to this region.

¹ Note by Professor Macdonell: "This article is a result of my Indian tour, in the course of which I stayed, in December, 1907, at the Residency on the island of Bolghatty, near Ernakulam, Cochin State. The writer, with whom I had previously been in correspondence, had two long interviews with me there. He is a graduate of Madras University and the author of a small collection of essays on some highly problematic questions of mythology, etymology, and race, entitled *Comparative Studies* (Madras, 1908, pp. 47), of which he has presented a copy to the Royal Asiatic Society. I found him eager for advice as to how to set about some line of research which his knowledge qualified him to pursue. I suggested to him an account of the Brahmins of Malabar, about whom little is known in Europe, and with whose life and literature he himself is personally familiar. Setting to work on this task he completed it last year, when he sent me his manuscript. This I have revised and prepared for publication in the form of the present article, adding a few footnotes of my own."

² In allusion to the legend that this country was created or reclaimed from the sea by Bhārgava Rāma for the purpose of free distribution among the Brahmins whom he is said to have brought and settled here, in sixty-four villages, in order to expiate the sin of having exterminated the Kṣatriya dynasties thrice seven times.

The pre-Āryan population, isolated for many centuries, retained their ancient institutions and customs, such as polyandry and matriarchy, some of which have survived unmodified down to the present day. Into this region Āryan Brahmin colonists migrated, settling down in it perhaps fifteen centuries ago. They, too, suffered the fate of isolation, which became so complete that they contented themselves with local substitutes for the holy Ganges and Gayā, the sacred city of the north—with the river Nila, otherwise called the Bhārata or Ponnani, and the hilly hamlet of Tirunelli. Cut off thus from their brethren in other parts of India, they formed themselves into a distinct caste—a caste formed by migration, as Sir H. Risley would express it—chiefly known as Nambūtiris. The first part of this word is *nambu*, “faith” or “knowledge”, being the Dravidian equivalent in sense of the Sanskrit *veda*, “sacred knowledge.” This name, as well as the corresponding Sanskrit Brāhmaṇa, is extended in Malabar to include Brahmins of an inferior order who are not entitled to study the Vedas, though enjoying certain quasi-Brahminical privileges. The latter are excluded from the scope of this paper, which will confine itself to describing the Vedic section of the Brahmin community of Malabar.

In order to understand fully the internal structure of this caste, it is necessary to be familiar with the order of precedence recognized among these Vedic Nambūtiris and the privileges on which that precedence is based. The section called Aghuvancheri Thampurakkal (which is the combined family name and title of the members of a single Nambūtiri house) occupies the highest rung of the social ladder. Even the (native) rulers of the land pay homage to the members of this house by inviting them to their courts as well as by visiting them to show their respect in person. Next in order come the remaining noble (*ādhyā*) houses. These Brahmin chiefs

are said to have been at the head of the theocracy of ancient Malabar. They are now mostly the rich landlords, having armed retainers to attend on them and scorning to serve as priests. It is doubtless for this reason that sacrifices have become obsolete among them. The Brahmins of the third grade are called *Āsyas*. They are not all of equal status, but are arranged in the following gradation :—

- A. (1) The *Bhaṭṭavṛtti* Brahmins, or those who are supposed to be proficient in the *Śāstras* of Grammar, sacrificial lore (*Pūrvamīmāṃsā*), and *Vedānta* ;
- (2) The *Āgnihotra* Brahmins, or those who have the right to perform sacrifices.
- B. (1) Brahmins who are eligible for service as Vedic teachers ;
- (2) Brahmins who are eligible for admission into the order of *Sannyāsis* or ascetics.
- C. (1) Brahmins entitled to services as *Pujāris* or ministrants (but not as *Tantris* or temple priests) ;
- (2) Brahmins entitled to the bare right of Vedic study.¹

All the titles and privileges I have mentioned are supposed to be hereditary. Instances are, however, not wanting of interchange of status between *Āsyas* and *Ādhyas*, that is to say, of members of the former class becoming members of the latter, and vice versa.

In order to describe and illustrate the village organization of the Brahmins of Malabar, I propose to select three well-known and typical villages (*grāmas*) : (1) *Chovvaram*, (2) *Perumanam*, and (3) *Irinjalakudai*. In each of these

¹ According to another view the two subdivisions of the C class are : (1) those entitled to the full right of Vedic study ; (2) those entitled to the performance of temple service as *Pujāris* and to the bare right of Vedic study.

are found Nambūtiri householders, who are not only entitled to perform, but have actually performed or still perform, the Vedic sacrifices (e.g. *Agnihotra*, *Iṣṭi*, *Agniṣṭoma*, and *Atirātra*). Each contains two families of hereditary Vaidikas or sacrificial priests (or altogether six Vaidika families) who are at the same time the highest authorities on all religious, social, or caste rules, entitled also to prescribe the expiatory procedure for the violation of such rules. Each of these villages further possesses an endowed institution called the *Sabhāmath* (assembly college), which is said to have been originally intended for training the Brahmin youths of the village in sacrificial lore and priestcraft, but the net income of which is now divided among its managing trustees, the Karmis (those who have actually performed any of the sacrifices other than the daily *Agnihotra*). The Karmis have an additional source of regular income in the funds set apart for annual distribution among them, and called *Kurmi-thānam* = *Kurmi-sthānam* ("sacrificers' share"). Hence they are sarcastically, but perhaps truly, described as "performing sacrifices for livelihood only". *Bhaṭṭa-vṛtti*, or the status of the Bhaṭṭas, is the hereditary privilege of many a Nambūtiri of these villages, qualifying him for *putta-thānam*, the vernacular form of *bhaṭṭa-sthānam* ("scholars' share"), or a share of the sum divided annually among a certain number of the Bhaṭṭas of each village, but originally meant only for those who had studied and acquired proficiency in either *Mīmāṃsā* (according to the Bhāṭṭa or the Prābhākara system), *Vedānta*, or *Vyākaraṇa* (grammar). These subjects could be studied in a class of endowed *Sabhāmaths* different from those in which sacrificial priests were trained. There is still in existence a *math* of the former kind, which has a few pupils on its roll and possesses a library of old Grantha MSS., including, as I am told by the present head of the institution, several volumes that originally belonged to the

learned Payyur Bhattatiris of old, and, after their death, found their way into this *math*.

What is common to all the households of a village is its patron deity. The villagers are regarded as once having had a voice in the management of his temple and the property belonging to it. On the other hand, the characteristic features of a typical village community, such as equality of holdings, their customary management and periodical redistribution, communal lands, hereditary village officers, and so forth, are all absent, having perhaps been swept away by lapse of time. The houses are not clustered together nor built in rows with streets between them, as in the adjoining Tamil country, but are scattered far and wide, many of them being situated miles away from the central village temple. They are built in gardens fenced on all sides. Their plan is rectangular, the four blocks which enclose the rectangular central courtyard being supposed to constitute four tenements separated from one another by some conventional contrivance of native architecture, such as a beam, a narrow passage or corridor, so as to prevent pollution from one to another by contact. The traditional explanation of this plan is that a Brahmin can by this device provide separate lodgings for his four wives taken from each of the four castes. But tradition fails to supply specific instances of such a practice. The village of Panneur, which was once a rival to Chovvaram and held in high esteem as a centre of culture, is now under the ban of perpetual degradation for a very sacrilegious act which the villagers are accused of having committed in the distant past—the burning of the idol of their patron deity (the *varāha-mūrti* or Boar incarnation of Viṣṇu) and the spoliation of his temple. Similar interesting traditions account for the peculiarities of other villages, but they are too numerous to be included in this short paper.

Only the first three Vedas (*tri-vidyā*), the Rig-, Yajus-, and Sāma-, are current among the Nambūtiris. The first

two have a larger following than the last. The Sāmaveda is, indeed, confined to a dozen or two households only, all of which belong to the school of the Jaiminīyas. The Kauṣītaki and the Āśvalāyana sections of the Nambūtiris have one and the same Saṃhitā text of the Rigveda, but separate Brāhmaṇas and Sūtras. For the advanced study of the Rigveda there exist two rival colleges, or *maths*, the one at Trichur and the other at Tirunāvayē, each managed by its hereditary Vādhyān or managing teacher. These ancient endowed institutions are respectively patronized by the Rāja of Cochin and the Zamorin of Calicut, the heads of the two rival kingdoms of ancient Malabar. Almost every year pupils from these rival colleges meet at the Temple of Kadavellōre and whole-heartedly compete for the verdict of proficiency. The syllabus consists of the text of the Rigveda in the four forms of the *Padapāṭha*, *Krama-pāṭha*, *Jaṭā-pāṭha*, and *Ratha-pāṭha*. The last, which is the most complicated and difficult mode of recitation, is based on the second (*krama*) method. It may be described thus: if one *anta* or half-verse consists of four words *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*, these must be grouped in the following order: *ab*, *ba*, *ab*, *bc*, *cba*, *ab bc*, *cd*, *dcb*, and *ab, bc, cd*, and *d*. The symbolic representation and teaching of the *Padapāṭha* and the more elaborate methods of recitation based on it seem to be peculiar to, if not a special invention of, the Nambūtiris of Malabar. All the verses that are analysed in the Pada text, and these only, are mechanically reproduced with exactness, being communicated and taught by means of a series of finger and palm signs or symbols resembling those of the deaf and dumb alphabet. This course also is taught in the two Vedic colleges I have mentioned.

The text of the Yajurveda current among the Nambūtiris is that of the Taittirīya school of the so-called "Black" recension of this Veda. Its Āpastamba subdivision is said to have existed in Malabar till not very

long ago, but is now extinct. Almost all the Yajurvedic Nambūtiri families belong to the Baudhāyana school, the remaining few representing the Bādhūlaka¹ section. The latter I am inclined to regard as the followers of the Vādhūna Sūtra mentioned by Mahādeva in the introduction to his commentary on the Kalpa Sūtra of Satyāśādhā Hiranyakeśin.² The only difference now existing between these two schools—the Baudhāyanas and the Bādhūlakas—is to be found in their Vedic ritual and ceremonies, not in their Vedic texts, both the Saṃhitā and the Brāhmaṇa being the same for both.

The period of *Brahma-carya* or pupilage, from the seventh to the fifteenth year inclusive, of every Nambūtiri youth is wholly devoted to the learning of his Veda by heart, though some discontinue the study afterwards and even forget what they have already committed to memory. Considerably more than half the Nambūtiris, indeed nearly 75 per cent., can recite the Saṃhitā texts of their respective Vedas.³ Much smaller is the number of those well-versed in the *Padapāṭha* and the more elaborate methods of recitation. One or two may even be found who can recite more than one Veda. Those who have committed the Brāhmaṇas to memory are limited in number. The Vedic texts are not only learned by heart, but are also practically applied, both in everyday religious observances (such as the *Svādhyāya* or the *Brahma-yajña*), and in the great Vedic festivals held in the temples, such as the Vāram, Trisandha, Ōthūkottu, Pañchasandha, and others. The Nambūtiris' intonation (not accentuation) in chanting the Vedic hymns is peculiar, differing much to the ear from that of the

¹ On Bādhūla as the name of a family see Hall's *Index to the Bibliography of the Indian Philosophical Systems* (Calcutta, 1859), p. 112, and Burnell's *Catalogue of the Sanskrit MSS. at Tanjore*, pp. 97, 122. [A. A. M.]

² See Weber's *History of Sanskrit Literature*, second edition, London, 1882, p. 100.

³ The Rājā of Cochin informed me that at least 3500 Brahmins in his State can recite the whole of a single Veda. [A. A. M.]

Brahmins in other parts of India. Their customs and observances also diverge in many respects from those prevailing elsewhere. Some of the more important of these peculiarities I will here indicate.

1. The tuft of hair is worn on the top or crown of the head.

2. Not more than one sacred thread is ever worn at the same time.

3. The dress of both sexes must be made of white cotton cloth.

4. The eldest son alone is allowed to marry. The object of this restriction seems to have been to prevent the family being divided into branches. The inevitable result was polygamy, subject to the restriction that a Brahmin cannot marry another woman while he has three wives alive or during the lifetime of his sacrificial partner (*putnī*). His brothers, however, may marry if there is a sufficiently cogent reason, such as lack of issue on the part of the eldest brother, or exchange of girls in marriage to avoid the necessity of cash payment to a bridegroom as a dowry. Otherwise they are "to live a life of strict celibacy" as *Snātakas* (those who have completed the period of studentship); but they generally lead a licentious life by freely contracting what are called fugitive alliances with the women of the Marumakkathayam or matriarchal families.

5. The marriage of girls after attaining puberty, and even at a more advanced age, is not only permitted but is common. Infant marriage is unknown.

6. The marriage is consummated very soon after the wedding ceremony, generally on the fourth day. This is also the custom in the rare cases in which girls are married before they attain the age of puberty.

7. A form of marriage known as *Sarva-sva-dānam* ("gift of one's entire possessions"), not recognized in the

Mitākṣarā, but based on Vasīṣṭha's formula, "I give unto thee this virgin (who has no brother), decked with ornaments, and the son who shall be born of her shall be my son," is still in force among the Nambūtiris; and the adoption of a son in the elsewhere obsolete *Dvayāmuṣyāyana* form, that is, as the son of two (the natural and the adoptive) fathers, is the one current in Malabar.

8. The Nambūtiri women's life is regulated according to the strict Gosha system of female seclusion. Their noses are never bored, and their ornaments are far from showy, attractive, or fashionable. The punishment for unchastity is excommunication, following upon the confession of the guilty woman and of her male partner in the sexual crime, after an elaborate investigation, which includes what is known as *dāsī-vicāra* or "examination of (her Nayar) maidservant".

9. The corpse of the dead man is burned in his own compound, not being conveyed to a common crematorium.

10. *Śrāddhas*, or death anniversaries, are performed on the star-day (*nakṣatra*), on which the person died, and not on the lunar day (*tithi*), of his death, unless both coincide. There are, however, a few exceptions to this rule.

Besides the customs I have mentioned there are many special rules regulating the ablutions, observances, and ceremonies of daily life, which are, generally speaking, performed with care and punctiliousness, and seldom neglected or wilfully violated.

From what I have said it would appear that, as far as the religious side of life is concerned, ancient tradition is by no means neglected among the Brahmins of Malabar; for Vedic study, inasmuch as it consists of learning the Vedas by heart, may be said to flourish among them, and Brahminical rites are still carefully observed. On the other hand, general Brahminical learning and culture are in a state of decline. For the *Sabhāmaths* have become

lifeless institutions, rarely resorted to, and hardly utilized as they were intended to be, while the religious endowments no longer fulfil their original educational purpose.

I can now proceed to describe briefly what the Nambūtiri Brahmins have preserved of their ancient literature and science down to the present day.

Bhārgava Rāma, the Brahmin warrior, the mythical creator of Malabar, is also regarded as its first lawgiver, and the author of a special code for Malabar, known as the *Bhārgava Smṛti*. It exists now only in name, for no copy of it has ever been found in any library yet searched. It is, however, cited as the chief authority followed by Śaṅkara in his abridged code, the *Laghu-dharma-prakāśikā*, of which the first part, in twelve chapters, has been published in Malayālam characters, and in which are noted the peculiar customs and observances current in Malabar. The Śaṅkara to whom this work is attributed has, however, by no means been proved to be identical with Śrī Śaṅkarācārya,¹ the versatile and encyclopædic genius of ancient Malabar.

There are six ancient native authorities who are consulted in regard to sacrificial (*śrauta*) and domestic (*grhya*) ceremonies and allied subjects. Thekkad Yogiatiri and Erkara Brahman are specially connected with the Kauṣītaki school. Parangode and Mazhaingalam follow the system of Āśvalāyana, the latter also that of Baudhāyana. Puthumana Chomatiri belongs to the school of Āśvalāyana, and Kovād to that of Bādhūlaka.

As regards the study of the speculative and philosophical portion of Vedic literature contained in the Upanishads, the people of Malabar, with pardonable pride, claim its great exponent, Śaṅkarācārya, as a native of their country. He is regarded as a divine teacher,

¹ In fact, he is more probably Śaṅkara Bhaṭṭa, son of Nārāyaṇa, author of the *Sarva-dharma-prakāśa*, a work of which there is a MS. in the India Office Library. [A. A. M.]

a prophet, an incarnation of Śiva, as one whose mission it was to stamp out heresy, reform religion, and regenerate society. The revival of asceticism, and the consequent establishment of the order of Sannyāsis, or religious mendicants, and their endowed *maths* at Trichur and elsewhere in Malabar, are standing witnesses of his propaganda of religious reform.

Special attention was paid in former days to the study of Astronomy (including Astrology) in Malabar. The following are the most authoritative works on the subject produced in the country. (1) The *Daśādhyāyī* is an elaborate commentary on the first ten chapters of Varāha Mihira's *Horā-sāstra*, by Thalakkolathur Bhaṭṭatiri; (2) the *Āryabhaṭīya Bhāṣya* is a commentary on Āryabhata; (3) the *Tantra-saṃgraha* is a treatise on computation; (4) the *Grahaṇa-nirṇaya* is a work dealing with the "determination of eclipses". The last three treatises (2-4), as well as another, the *Siddhānta-darpaṇa* (5), were all written by Kelallore Nilakaṇṭha Chōmatiri (Somayājī, 'one who has performed the Soma sacrifice'). In addition to these are to be mentioned the *Mānasa-gaṇita* (6) on "mental calculation", by Puthumana Chōmatiri (Sōmayājī), and the *Kāla-dīpaka* (7) or "Lamp of Times", by Mazhamgalam. There are, besides, many minor textbooks on *Muhūrta* (division of time), *Praśna* (astrological inquiry), *Jātaka* (horoscope), and *Gaṇita* (calculation).¹

Medicine and surgery have been from early times the hereditary professions of Vaidya (medical) families who have not only practised but taught, and thus popularized, the system of *Āyur-veda*, or medical science, introduced into Malabar from elsewhere. No indigenous Sanskrit works of any importance on this subject are, however, known to me.

¹ Cf. Mr. Sthanu Pillai's article on Āryabhata in the *Indian Review*, July, 1905.

Temple ceremonies and kindred topics connected with idolatry, including the principles and rules of temple construction, form the subject-matter of what are known as *Tantra-granthas*. Of these, the most important indigenous work is the *Tantra-samuccaya*, by Chenna Mangalath Narayanan Nambūtiri, himself a Tantrī, or temple-priest (not one of the Pujāri or ministrant class), as well as a Mantra-vādī or magician, who also seems to be the author of a commentary on the *Kriyā-sāra* ("Essence of Magic"). The *Śeṣa-samuccaya* is said to form a supplement to the *Tantra-samuccaya*. Another class of *Granthas*, closely related to that just described, are the *Mantra-granthas*, or treatises dealing with spells, their intrinsic value, their use, and so forth. The well-known and often quoted standard work on this subject is the *Prapañca-sāra* ("Essence of the World"), by Śrī-Śaṅkarācārya, who is also the reputed author of a number of *Stotras* or short prayer-books, such as the *Saundaryalaharī*, the *Bhujāṅga-prayāta-stotra*, and the *Dakṣiṇāmūrti-aṣṭakam*.¹ To this last class belongs the *Nārāyaṇīya*, by Narāyaṇa Bhaṭṭatiri of the Meppathur family. It is an abridgment of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, addressed in the form of prayers to the god Narāyaṇa in the Guruvāyur Temple. It is especially current among such castes as are not entitled to read the original *Purāṇa*. One of its commentators, Desamangalath Variyar, belongs to one of these castes. Kulāśekhara Bhūpa, mentioned as the author of the well-known *Mukunda-mālā* and of some other *Stotras* in the Catalogue of the Palace Library at Trivandrum, seems to have been a native hymn-writer belonging to a royal house.²

¹ Aufrecht in his *Catalogus Catalogorum* enumerates more than fifty *Stotras* attributed to Śaṅkarācārya. He there gives a list of nearly 300 works attributed to the same scholar, who is reputed to have died at the age of 32! [A. A. M.]

² He is perhaps identical with the Kulāśekharavarma Bhūpa mentioned below.

Sanskrit grammar has always been a favourite subject of study in Malabar. The Koodallore or Nareri Nambūtiri house, which possesses one of the oldest and best manuscript libraries in Malabar, has been a welcome resort for all persons wishing to devote themselves to this branch of Sanskrit learning. The following indigenous works under this head may be noted here. The *Prakriyā-sarvasvam* (1) and an incomplete commentary (2) on Kaiyaṭa's *Mahābhāṣya-pradīpa* are both by Narāyaṇa Bhaṭṭatiri. The *Sarva-pratyaya-mālā*, by Śaṅkarācārya, mentioned in the Catalogue of the Palace Library at Trivandrum, seems to be known outside Malabar by only one entry in Oppert's *Lists of Sanskrit Manuscripts in Private Libraries of Southern India*.¹

Under the comprehensive heading of general poetical and prose literature, including the Court epics, lyrics, and dramas, as well as the class of writings known as *Campūs* and *Prabandhas*, written partly in prose and partly in verse, mention might be made of many modern books, some of them by authors still living, but in this brief sketch I can only refer to old standard works. The *Āścārya-cūḍāmaṇi*, by Śakti-bhadra, the *Samvarana* and the *Subhadra-dhanamjaya*² of Kulasekhara-varma Bhūpa,³ are the three dramas that are even now acted according to local stage-lore by the native Nāṭa caste, the Chakkyars, who are said to be the representatives in Malabar of the Purāṇic *Sūtas*, or story-tellers, and in this capacity entertain their audiences on festive occasions with Purāṇic tales humorously related, and in so doing instruct their hearers with moral sermons, for which the texts are generally chosen from *Prabandhas* and *Campūs*. In the Catalogue

¹ Vol. i, p. 453, No. 5701, as existing in the private library of Anṇāsvāmī, at Śrīvalliputtūr, in the Tinnevely District. [A. A. M.]

² The only drama with this title in Aufrecht's *Catalogus Catalogorum* is there stated to be by Gururāma Kavi. [A. A. M.]

³ Identified by tradition with the Cheraman Perumal or one of the Perumal rulers of ancient and undivided Kerala.

of the Palace Library at Trivandrum, Narāyaṇa Bhaṭṭatiri is mentioned as the author of several *Prabandhas*; and the *Mānaveda Campū* was composed by a Zamorin of Malabar.

The well-known old Kāvyaś are the *Śrī-kṛṣṇa-vilāsa* of Sukumāra and the *Yudhiṣṭhira-vijaya* of Pathath Vasudevā Bhaṭṭatiri, who belonged to the village of Perumanam. The *Śuka-saṁdeśa*, or "Parrot's Message", is a lyrical poem, similar in metre, diction, and subject to Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta*. It was written by a poet of the Karingampilli Nambūtiri family, Lakṣmīdāsa as he calls himself, and was commented on by a scholar of the Zamorin's family. The authorship of the *Amaru-śataka*, "The Hundred Stanzas of Amaru," is, like that of so many other works, attributed to Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, who, before establishing his claim to encyclopædic knowledge, had to prove his proficiency in erotic science also. The *Kṛṣṇa-nāṭakam* (in Malayālam *Kṛṣṇāṭ-tam*) is a lyric drama of the *Gīta-govinda* type, which was composed by a pious Zamorin of old. It is even now acted, especially in the southern district of British Malabar, not by members of the professional-caste, but by men specially trained for the purpose.

The foregoing sketch of the institutions and literature of the Brahmins of Malabar is meagre, and largely based on traditional knowledge. Before an exhaustive and critical account of them can be written, every manuscript library, and there are many such in Malabar, must be carefully and patiently searched, and all rare works believed to be of indigenous origin, together with the native traditional lore and the current chronograms (astronomical formulas recording the dates of great and memorable events), must be subjected to a thoroughly systematic and critical examination, an undertaking for which I am not sufficiently well equipped. This will indeed be a huge task, which nothing short of an organized enterprise will succeed in accomplishing.

In conclusion, I wish only to add that almost all the above-mentioned departments of learning are also well represented by standard textbooks in the vernacular Malayālam literature of the country. I would also point out as noteworthy the fact that the Malayālam texts dealing with the Vedic ceremonies and kindred topics have acquired a semi-Vedic sanctity, and are treated as sacred literature.¹

¹ Further information on the subject of the paper will be found in the following publications: (1) Mr. Fawcett's monograph on the Nambūdris, Madras Museum Bulletin, vol. iii; (2) the old District Manual of British Malabar and the recently published District Gazetteer, Malabar and Anjengo; (3) the Travancore State Manual, 3 vols., Trivandrum, 1906; (4) *The Census Reports of Cochin, Travancore, and British Malabar*, 1901, more especially that of Cochin, chapter viii, on Caste, Tribe, or Race.

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

OF

GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND

22 Albemarle Street, Piccadilly, W.

Special Notice.

THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY publishes Quarterly an *Illustrated Journal*, containing Original Articles on the Languages, the Archæology, the History, the Beliefs, or the Customs of the East.

A Special Article in the Journal gives each Quarter an account, as complete as possible up to date, of all scholarly work being done throughout the world in these branches of inquiry.

The Annual Subscription to the Society is THREE GUINEAS a Year for Resident, and THIRTY SHILLINGS a Year for Non-Resident, Members.

Each Member who has paid his Subscription for the current year receives the Journal post free, has the use of the Library at the Society's rooms, and admission to the meetings of the Society. Three-guinea subscribers may also borrow books.

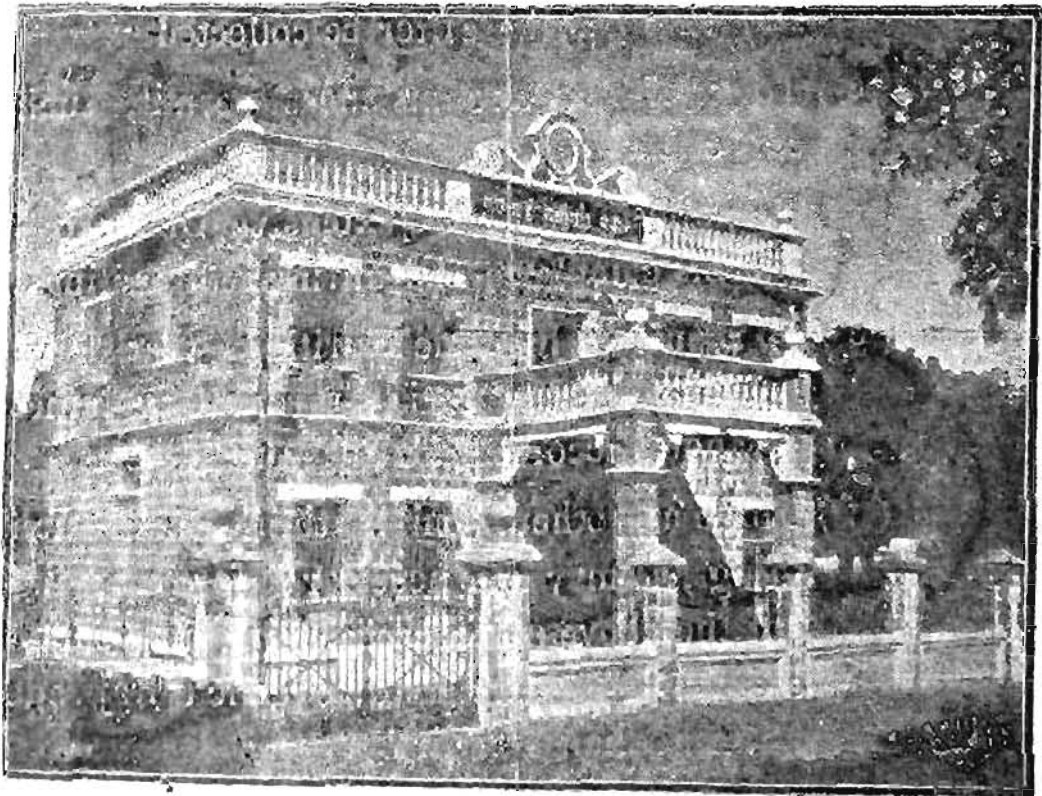
Libraries and Non-Members may obtain the Journal post free by a Subscription of Thirty Shillings a year if paid in advance direct to the Secretary. The Price of each Part separately is Twelve Shillings.

Shri Vishwanatho Vijayate

The Rajwade Sanshodhan Mandal

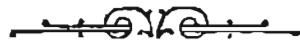
D. Subia.
—
W.K.

A Short Account of the
Origin and Work of the Mandal



~G Rajwade Sanshodhan Mandir ~

The Itihasacharya
Vishwanath Kashinath Rajwade
Sanshodhan Mandal (Society), Dhulia
**Objects and Rules
of the Society**



1. The objects of the society are as stated below:—
 - (a) To carry on historical and literary research.
 - (b) To preserve Rajwade's collection of old manuscripts and historical papers and other collection of such papers hitherto collected and that may hereafter be collected.
 - (c) To publish, as circumstances permit, such collection.
 - (d) To publish Rajwade's extensive Dhatukosh and his completed and unfinished writings.
 - (e) To republish Rajwade's writings that have now become rare in separate volumes arranged according to different subjects.
 - (f) To do all other similar things and such things, as may be necessary for carrying out the above objects, including immediate erection of a Mandir, to be called Rajwade ' Sanshodhan Mandir '.
 - (g) To collect funds to carry out the above objects.

Shri Vishwanatho Vijayate

**A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE HISTORY & WORK
Of
The Rajwade Sanshodhan Mandal,
*Dhulia***

Maharashtra, which has played a very important part in the History of Bharatvarsha, has a glorious past in the field of learning and scholarship. It can boast of a long and ancient pedigree of eminent and learned scholars who have made substantial contribution to the development and advancement of learning. The late Mr. Vishwanath Kashinath Rajwade belonged to this galaxy of scholars of whom Maharashtra can justly feel proud.

It was with the view to perpetuate the memory of such a distinguished scholar that the Rajwade Sanshodhan Mandir is constructed at Dhulia. In order to show how richly he deserves the raising of a Memorial to perpetuate his memory, it would be well to give

A short sketch of Mr. Rajwade's Life & Life-work

Mr. Rajwade was born in 1864 A. D. He received his early education in the New English School, Poona. After passing the Matriculation Examination of the Bombay University, he joined the Deccan College, Poona and took his B. A. degree. During the time that he was studying in the College, he had kept before him two ideals viz. to acquire superb physique by gymnastic exercises and Boating and to acquire

knowledge of all possible subjects by making full use of the College Library. He thoroughly succeeded in accomplishing both these ideals and thus laid a strong foundation for his glorious Life Work.



Late Mr. V. K. Rajwade

After taking University degree Mr. Rajwade served as a teacher in the New English School, Poona, for a year or two. At this juncture in Mr. Rajwade's life a sad occurrence—the death of his wife—took place. This tragic event, which occurred in 1894, gave a complete turn to Mr. Rajwade's life. Hereafter Rajwade, instead of marrying second time like ordinary people, resolved to devote his life to the research of Maratha History, Language, Literature, Sociology, Archaeology, Philology etc. From the year 1894 till his sudden demise in 1926 he unceasingly and untiringly spent all his time and energy for advancing the cause

of Maratha History, Language and Literature. From one end of India to the other he roamed in search of Sanskrit and Marathi manuscripts and Historical documents, belonging to the historical families of note, who had taken a leading and prominent part in establishing and spreading Maratha power in India. By his ceaseless efforts and never-failing energy, he succeeded in collecting about six thousand Manuscripts, covering the various branches of Sanskrit and Marathi Literature and ten to fifteen thousand Historical documents. In a country, where old historical documents are regarded as precious treasure, good many documents in Mr. Rajwade's collection would each fetch fabulous price if sold. Side by side with the work of collecting Manuscripts and Historical documents, Mr. Rajwade devoted himself to the writing of research essays on various subjects.

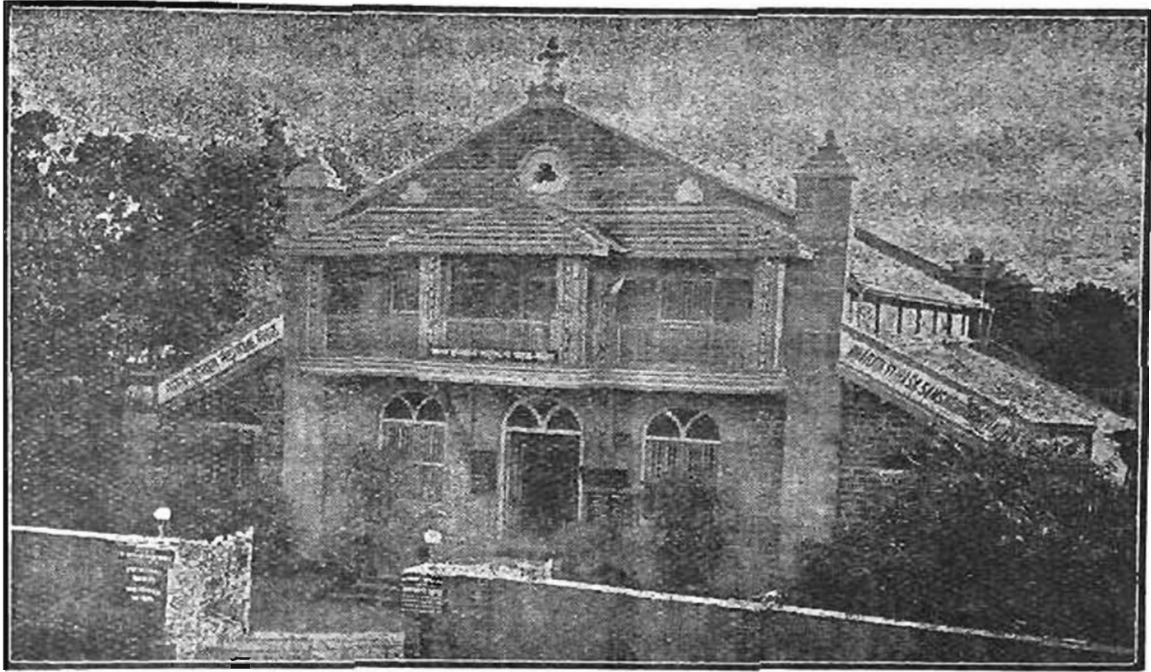
The output of Mr. Rajwade's historical and literary writings is stupendous. He published as many as 22 Volumes of original historical papers, known as the Marathyanchoya Itihasachi Sadhane. Each Volume consists of not less than 500 to 600 pages. His prefaces to these Volumes contain marvelous exposition of the various incidents and aspects of Maratha History. In addition to historical research essays, he has written several essays on Marathi grammar, meter, philology, origin of Sanskrit language, history of the development of the institution of marriage amongst the Hindus and Hindu sociology. There is hardly any branch of Marathi literature in which he has not made research and made his mark therein. He had taken a vow not to write in any other language except Marathi and he stuck to his resolve to the last. His writings are

known for their originality of thought and racy style. Mr. Jules Bloch, the well known French scholar of Marathi language, in his work relating to Marathi grammar, published after the Great War, has in his preface to that work paid a compliment to Mr. Rajwade for his research work relating to Marathi Grammar. Mr. Rajwade led a life of poverty and self-sacrifice and the publication of the volumes of original historical materials and his other writings was accomplished with the assistance of his friends and admirers. Mr. Rajwade was not an idle dreamer. He was fully conscious of the importance of founding institutions for giving concrete shape to his ideals. After devoting sixteen years of his life single handed to study and research of Maratha history, Mr. Rajwade thought that the cause of Maratha Historical Research would be better advanced by founding a Historical research society at Poona. He consulted learned gentlemen like the Late Rao. B. G. V. Joshi and K. N. Sane, in regard to the founding of such a society and in the year 1909 he, in conjunction with the Late Sardar Khanderao Chintaman alias Tatya-sahib Mehendale of Poona, founded

The Bharat Itihas Sanshodhak Mandal, Poona

and ceaselessly toiled to develop the institution for a period of eight years. In addition to the Bharat Itihas Sanshodhak Mandal, he founded the Poona Arogya Mandal for improving the sanitary conditions of Poona city. His another attempt of founding a society for the advancement of scientific research at Poona, which would have produced far reaching effects on the future destiny of Maharashtra, unfortunately proved abortive owing to the very meagre and scanty

number of students fond of and devoted to the study of science in Poona.



The Bharat Itihas Sanshodhak Mandal, Poona

The Hindu Dharma Mahamandal, in recognition of his merit as a historical Researcher, conferred upon him the title of Puratatva Bhusan. The conferring of even a Doctorate by any of the Indian Universities on the Late Mr. Rajwade would have been a scant recognition of his learning and scholarship. As Mr. Rajwade never wrote in English, the leading lights of the Indian Universities could not see his worth and he died, leaving his merits as a scholar and researcher unrecognised. However Rajwade's sterling merits as a scholar came to be acknowledged though late, by His Excellency Sir Frederick Sykes, late Governor of Bombay, who in his opening speech, made at the first session of the Historical Congress, held at Bombay in the year 1930, mentioned Rajwade's name along with the name of the late Justice Ranade as

an illustrious Historical Research Scholar of the modern period.

Mr. Rajwade was closely connected with some gentlemen of Dhulia interested in Historical research. It was owing to this close connection that he stayed for at least from four to six months in a year at Dhulia and spent his time in his favourite literary pursuits. The whole of his collection of Manuscripts & Historical documents was kept at Dhulia. In December 1926 he died all of a sudden of heart-failure, while engaged in writing one of his most remarkable and unique Philological work viz. Marathi Dhatukosh.

After Mr. Rajwade's demise, at a condolatory meeting of the citizens of Dhulia, a resolution was passed that a fire-proof building called the Rajwade Sanshodhan Mandir be immediately erected to perpetuate his memory. It was with the laudable view of safely preserving Mr. Rajwade's precious collection of Manuscripts and Historical Documents and to make it available for study to future generations of Historical researchers that a memorial in the form of a fire-proof Building was conceived. With a view to carry out this resolution and also with the object of carrying on the work of Historical Research that a Society called

The Rajwade Sanshodhan Mandal

was established in 1927 and got registered under the societies Registration Act XXI of 1860. A year after the passing of the above Resolution, the Rajwade Mandal managed to secure the sympathy of about thirty-four prominent literary and influential gentlemen of Maharashtra and to issue under their signatures an appeal for funds for erecting the Mandir.

This appeal was published in Kesari. As a result of this appeal, donations, big and small, were received from the admirers of Mr. Rajwade and generous minded lovers of Maratha History and Language. Side by side with the work of collecting necessary funds, the Mandal was trying to secure a suitable site for erecting the Rajwade Sanshodhan Mandir and it succeeded in securing a nice plot from Govt. on the recommendation of Mr. J. A. Madan Esq. I. C. S. C. I. E., the then Collector of West Khandesh. The Bombay Govt. was pleased to give to the Rajwade Sanshodhan Mandal a suitable site in a prominent and central part of the Dhulia city, just near the fine and imposing Building of the Dhulia Municipality, as a revenue-free-grant. The Mandal, being thus equipped with necessary funds and the site, performed the ceremony of laying the foundation Stone of

The Rajwade Sanshodhan Mandir

in the month of December 1929. The function was performed under the presidentship of the great Sanskrit Scholar Mr. C. V. Vaidya, by an equally learned Sanskrit Professor Mr. Vaijnath Kashinath Rajwade, elder brother of the late Mr. Vishwanath K. Rajwade. The work of constructing the Mandir was commenced in April 1930 and was completed in October 1931. The opening ceremony of this simple yet attractive Mandir was performed by Her Highness Shrimant Saubhagyavati Maharani Indirabai Masaheb Holkar of Indore on 5th January 1932. Mr. Rajwade's priceless and valuable collection has now been safely deposited in this Mandir and one of the main objects of the Rajwade Sanshodhan Mandal is thus accomplished.

Work & Activities of the Rajwade Sanshodhan Mandal

Since its establishment, the Rajwade Sanshodhan Mandal, after completing the construction of the Rajwade Sanshodhan Mandir, has safely deposited in it Mr. Rajwade's collection in specially constructed steel Almirahs. The Sanskrit and Marathi manuscripts are classified and kept in separate Dafters. A tentative catalogue of the manuscripts has been prepared. The work of classifying and arranging Historical papers is being slowly done by the Mandal and will require a good deal of time for its completion. Some of the members of the Mandal are devoting themselves to the study of historical documents in Mr. Rajwade's collection and reading critical papers on them.

SANSHODHAK Quarterly

Mr. Rajwade, before his demise, had in contemplation the publication of a Magazine, which he intended to name as Sanshodhak. His idea was to publish in this magazine his own research writings and essays relating to the numerous branches of his study, in addition to old Marathi prose works, materials of the history of the Marathas, and rare unpublished Sanskrit works. The Rajwade Sanshodhan Mandal, with a view to carry out Mr. Rajwade's wishes, started the publication of the Sanshodhak quarterly in April 1932. The Sanshodhak consists of sixty four pages and in it Mr. Rajwade's translation of the 9th chapter of Dnyaneshwari in Sanskrit, done from a philological point of view, was begun to be published along with his unpublished Essays. The Magazine has now completed its third year. With a view to facilitate the writing of historical research essays and also for the benefit of the public of Dhulia

RAJWADE SANSHODHAN MANDIR GRANTHALAYA

has been started. At present it contains about two to three thousand English, Marathi, Sanskrit, Hindi books on Economics, History, Sociology, Philosophy, Art, Religion etc. The membership of the Rajwade Sanshodhan M. Granthalaya is kept open even to those, who are not members of the Rajwade Sanshodhan Mandal. High class English, Marathi and Hindi Magazines are kept in the Granthalaya for the use of its members. In addition to the books in the Granthalaya, a separate section, comprising of all Marathi Bakhars, Volumes of Marathayanchya Itihasachi Sadhane, Reports of the Historical Records Commission, Volumes of the Peshwa Daftar, Volumes of the Journal of the Department of Letters of the Calcutta University, all publications of Bharat Itihas Sansodhak Mandal and other publications and books specially useful to Historical research students, is kept in the Mandir. An addition of several important Historical works is still needed to fully equip the Library and the Mandal is trying its best to do it.

Portrait Gallery of Historieal Personages & Exhibition of Manuscripts & Historieal Documents

and other rare things are kept in the Mandir. Thanks to the efforts of historical Researchers that authentic pictures of good many Historical personages have been brought to light. The Mandal has managed to get these enlarged and has arranged a portrait Gallery in the Mandir. Portraits of distinguished Historical Researchers have also been kept in it.

A small exhibition of letters of Important Historical personages such as Malik Amber, Shahu, Balaji

Vishwanath, Madhavrao Peshwa (first), Balaji Bajirao, Raghoji Bhonsle, Maharaja Chetsing and others is also kept. About thirty five specimens of the Rajput and Mughal Art of painting, in addition to some select manuscripts and other rare objects, are kept on view in the exhibition.

VASUDEVASHRAM

On account of the rare collection of manuscripts and Historical documents kept in the Mandir, students of History, Marathi Language & Literature and sociology from outside, are likely to visit the Mandir and make a short stay here with the view of studying these subjects. Mr. Pandurang Wasudev Joshi, the leading Pleader of Hyderabad (Deccan), with a view to perpetuate his father's memory, gave a donation of Rs. 1500 towards the construction of a small building for accomodating outside visitors and students. With this donation the Mandal has erected a small building near the Rajwade Mandir called the Wasudevashram.

Rajwade Mandal People's Coop. Bank, Ltd.

With the spread and growth of education, various Institutions are springing up every where and these have to defray their expenses from funds locally raised. In view of this state of things, every institution, without depending much on funds from outside, must find out resources of its own for defraying its expenses. The Rajwade Sanshodhan Mandal, being conscious of this fact, has started the above named Bank in April 1933, for the support of the Rajwade S. Mandal. The Bank has been registered under the Cooperative Societies' Act. One of the Byelaws of the Bank provides that an amount, not less

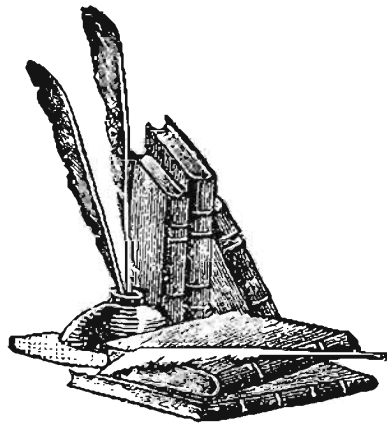
than one-fourth and not more than one-third of the total amount to be distributed as dividend to the shareholders, is to be given to the Rajwade Sanshodhan Mandal for carrying on its work. During the last two years of its existence the Bank has made extraordinary progress. Its lending business has extended to nearly two lacs of rupees. The Rajwade S. Mandal has high hopes about the Bank's fulfilling the purpose for which it is started.

Rajwade's Marathi Dhatukosh

The Rajwade S. Mandal has now undertaken the publication of Rajwade's Marathi Dhatukosh, (in the form in which he has left it) which he contemplated publishing at the time of his demise. A ceremony, in connection with the scheme of the publication of this work, was performed under the Presidentship of Shrimant Bhavanrao Shrinivasrao alias Balasaheb Pandit Pant Pratinidhi, the enlightened Ruler of Aundh State, on the 13th of January 1934. Mr. Rajwade's Marathi Dhatukosh is a unique work. It contains seventeen thousand Marathi roots with their Philological origins. The publication of this unique and rare work will prove a very valuable and important addition to the Philological literature of the Marathi language. There is no vernacular in India, which can boast of such a work compiled by any Indian or European scholar. The mandal will have to incur an expenditure of about ~~Rs~~ 5000 to ~~Rs~~ 6000 for the publication of this great work. The scheme of the publication of this work launched under the presidentship of the above mentioned distinguished patron of learning has every chance of being successfully carried out and will prove a fitting reward to the six

years' labours of a disinterested and self-sacrificing Scholar like the late Mr. Vishwanath Kashinath Rajwade.

The above, in short, is an account of the history and work of the Rajwade Sanshodhan Mandal and the Mandir constructed to perpetuate the memory of the Late Mr. Vishwanath Kashinath Rajwade, the foremost and leading Historical Researcher that Maharashtra has produced. The Mandal expects support and encouragement for carrying on its work from all—especially from enlightened and cultured Indians—who value and are proud of their History and Culture.



2. The year of the society commences on the 1st day of Chaitra (April) and ends on the last day of Falgun (March) of every year.

3. The members of the Mandal shall be of the following classes:—

Any person making a donation of rupees one thousand or more and who is a major shall be called an Adharstambha (supporter) of the Mandal (society).

Any person making a donation of Rs. 500/ five hundred or more and who is a major shall be called a Patron of the Mandal (society).

Any person making a donation of Rs. 100/ or more and who is a major shall be called a Life Member of the Mandal (society).

Any person paying Rs. 12, 6, or 3 annually shall be called an ordinary Member of the Mandal.

Note.—

(1) Names of donors paying Rs. 1000/ one thousand or more shall be inscribed on a stone tablet affixed in a prominent place in the wall of the building.

(2) All publications of the society shall be supplied to the members at half price.

