

## Appendix 8      Manichaeism in India

### 8.1. Karuthedathu *ola*

From an *ola* MSS. transcribed by T.K. Joseph, in Malayalam.

In *Malabar Christians and Their Ancient Documents* (1929:AppendixII), Trivandrum.<sup>1</sup>

#### **The state of the Christian Way in Kerala**

Matters relating to the time after the sacred and holy Christian Way of Blessing [=Christianity] came to Malayala.

The Vellalas of Kaveripoompattanam were persecuted by the kings, and so they boarded ships and arrived in Kollam. The 72 families that arrived in Kollam became relatives with those believers in Kollam. When they were continuing in this way, in the Year of our Lord 293, those believers in Niranam and those in Kollam with the above-mentioned Tamils, did some things in the Tamil tradition and some in the Malayalam tradition. As they continued in this manner, in the year 315,<sup>2</sup> a sorcerer called Manikkavacher arrived. He began directing his sorcery against some of those who followed the Way, and released among them some evil spirits ['his familiars']. This caused (among the Christians) fevers, madness, spasms of the limbs and death of their animals. When those who were affected by these calamities found that if they went to the sorcerer, and put some of the ashes he gave them on the sick people, they were seen to recover somewhat. [When the ashes were put on them] Some of the others experienced violent and fitful spasms, after which evil spirits were exorcised out of them. Because this was a land full of heathen, the people began to accord the sorcerer respect and they became friends with him, and they began to accompany and lead other Christians also secretly to the sorcerer Manikkavacher. They listened to the 'five-syllabic mantra' (*panchakshram*) uttered by him over them, and they secretly gave offerings and made vows to the heathen temples. And they performed, and went to see being performed, rituals of *karumani* and *mudiyettu* [exact meaning not known]. They also learned the stories of the heathen sacred books (*kavyas*), and learned by heart the magical formulae from these sacred

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<sup>1</sup> Translated into English by Sarah Knight

<sup>2</sup> Both these dates appear to be incorrect, as Mani is thought to have died in 273 AD.

books, and they were continuing in this way secretly. [In those days] of those who had come from Chozhamandalam (Chozha country on the east coast), 24 families arrived [in Kollam?], looking for Manikkavacher. They and the 72 who had arrived earlier, united with each other by marriage.

During this time, an elder, who was given the ‘elder’ status by all the 72 families, died. Then 8 out of the 72 who had become entrapped in the sorcery of Manikkavacher in the Hindu-country (Coromandel), 4 of those (24) who had come looking for him, and 20 of those who were from here (Malabar), in this manner 8 plus 4 plus 20, i.e., 32 families who had grown into 116, they set their hearts together, and decided that the above mentioned deceased person must be wrapped in unwashed new cloth and cremated. Those in Malayala (of?) the 64 families of the 336 families, those of Kurakkeni (Kollam) argued that, from the time they had become Christians and until then, they had always only buried their dead after wrapping them in washed white cloth, and interred them in the precincts of their homes. So, this group argued that the deceased person must be buried in this manner, and there was much dissension on account of this. The eight families got together and declared that ‘we listened to the Master’s five-syllabic mantra, we drank the *Pancha Gavya* of the cow’s dung, urine, milk, buttermilk and ghee, and we are thus his disciples. If you will not listen to our words, we 116 will change our faith and leave’.

Manikkavacher entrusted to them the ‘familiar’ *moorti* (evil spirit) that served him, and they took her and settled her in the Panayannar grove (*kavu*). By Manikkavacher’s name, those families are called ‘Manigrammakkars’. Those 64 families who did not listen to the mantra of Manikkavachar and refused to wear his ashes, then wrapped the deceased in white cloth, and buried him in the precincts of his house, and these people came to be called ‘Non-wearers’ (*Dhariyakkal*).

#### 8.2. Excerpt from Abdel Ahad (Patriarch Yacoub III) 1948:475-483):

(After a brief account of Mani’s birth etc.)

‘But soon he (Mani) began to deviate very far from the Orthodox faith, and began to preach some heretical views. (He taught that) as causes of good and evil, there are two self-generating gods, a Good God and an Evil God respectively. He taught that the Good God was

the creator of the Soul, and the creator of the body was the Evil God. He mingled the teachings of the Persian doctrinarian Zoroaster with the doctrines of Christianity, and his heretical teachings reflected the tenets of Persians. Holding these ideas, he travelled about preaching these statements and teachings which opposed the Truth when he was only 25 or 30 years of age. At the coronation of the Persian emperor Shapur I (between 241 and 242) it was at the royal palace that he first preached his above-cited heretical beliefs.

‘He (Mani) chose twelve disciples in order to propagate his doctrines, and sent them to different parts of the world, and he too set off from Persia, and travelled preaching in different places. He appointed and sent one of his disciples Adai to convert the Aramians, and the disciple Thomas to evangelise the country of India. When they came back and announced to him that none would accept their teachings, he became enraged, denounced Christianity, and declared that he himself was Christ and the Holy Spirit. His doctrines generally refuted the Doctrine of Resurrection, and not only that, but he also preached the principle of transmigration of souls. He did not encourage marriage, considering it prohibited. Setting aside the initial obstacles in the spread of his doctrines, he and his disciples worked hard to propagate his heretical views in diverse places. Gradually his objectives were fulfilled and many came to be knowledgeable in his teachings. But he was unable to continue his activities without obstacles. The bishop of Kashkar Archalavon debated with him and rejected his heretical teachings. By the end of the reign of Shapor (270+) Mani came back to the capital of Persia and won followers to himself in the royal palace as well.

But the heathen priests and the Magi compelled the king to persecute Mani, and he was imprisoned. Somehow he escaped and ran away from there. Shapur’s successor Hormisdas (272 or 273) seem to have supported Mani. However, we see that later Bahram I had him flayed and crucified. Historians have different accounts of his end.

(Here follows a story about his end, with Mani claiming that he could heal the king’s son of an illness, on failing which the king had him killed and flayed, and his skin stuffed with straw and hung on the city wall. Then there follows an account of various books said to have been written by Mani, six of which were in Syriac and one in Persian, including ‘The Holy Sacraments’ and the ‘Gospel treasures’(?); how his teachings ‘spread like fire’ even after his death, in Persia, Turkey, regions in the Roman Empire, Armenia, India, China etc.; how not only the Christians, but also other religionists strongly opposed his teachings; how Diocletian sent a Decree to persecute his followers (in April of 287) and to eradicate them as traitors and

enemies of the Roman emperor; and finally is given an account of the mode of worship of the Manichaeans: Sunday was a day of fasting, the anniversary of Mani's death was a day of great celebration, baptism was conducted in a mixture of oil and water, the Lord's Last Supper was a rite of worship open only to the Select, and they also taught that those things in the Gospels that supported Mani's teachings were 'assured Truths', and the rest were rejected. They also rejected the Old Testament entirely.

The Synod of Antioch that had deposed and excommunicated Paul of Samosata (269) is said to have excommunicated Mani also.<sup>7</sup>

8.3. The Rev. Joseph Peet (C.M.S Missioanry based in Mavelikara, Kerala) on the terms 'Manigrammakkar', 'Tharissa' and 'caste-designators'.

Cited in: Gundert, Herman (1844) *Translation and Analysis of the ancient documents engraved on copper in possession of the Syrian Christians and Jews of Malabar*. Madras Journal of Literature and Science, No.30, June 1844, pp115-146.

Below, the first half (p.146):

146 *Ancient documents engraved on copper &c. &c. [No. 30.*

1. "Manigrámmam," he asserts, "is the name of a class of Christians, relapsed into heathenism through the influence of a sorcerer (Manica Vachakar?). Some of that class are still to be found near Quilon. Each individual is called (in Native books?) a *ΩΩΩ* ( ), a jewel, on account of their apostacy—and the whole of them constitutes now a subdivision of the Sudras." I had indeed been startled by the Indian-looking name "Iravi Corttan," which does not at all look like the appellation of a Syrian Christian: still I thought myself justified in calling Manigramam a Christian principality—whatever their Christianity may have consisted in —on the ground that from Menezes' time, these grants had been regarded as given to the Syrian Colonists. I now venture the conjecture, that they were disciples of Mani, a colony of Manicheans, such as the Arabian travellers found in Ceylon.

2. "The *ωωωθ* ( ), whom Native books oppose to the party just mentioned as a class of stedfast confessors, exist still in the South of Travancore, have their ceremonies conducted by Syrian Priests, and differ from Nazranis merely only by their preserving the hair tuft." I see no reason, to give up my former conjecture of the identity of *ωωωθ*, and the *ταρισα* of the inscription; (fr. such dialectical changes as *வாயில வாதில* (Mal.) *வாசல*, but venture yet somewhat farther to attempt an indication what the Tarisa Church originally was. I find in John de Monte Corvino's travels, that the Nestorians in China and Tatary were called "Tarsa;" the word is there spoken of as of Mongolic etymology. Might it not be derived from Tarsus, since the heads of the Nestorians (such as Diodor of Tarsus) were from Cilicia, and the whole sect may have affected to derive their origin from Paul's

Below, the second half (p146):

and the whole sect may have affected to derive their origin from Paul's birth place. This hypothesis will be easily refuted or confirmed by those who have access to original works on the subject.

3. "Curakkéni Collam." Tradition states that the Syrians came to this country in two bodies, one party landed near the modern Quilon at a place now engulfed by the sea, the other at Codungalur or Mahodeverpatnam. The practice in documents observed till within the last 80 years was invariably to mark to which of these 2 bodies a Syrian belonged; for instance കുരാക്കെനി കേരളം ദ്വാരാ താഴെ അക്കാദൈത്യ ദാവി ദക്ഷിണ കുരാക്കെനി അം കുരാക്കെനി മുട്ടാടി മരുപ്പാടം മരുപ്പാടം and മരുപ്പാടം മരുപ്പാടം മരുപ്പാടം മരുപ്പാടം [

Transcription and translation of the Malayalam text above in the second half:

"Kurakkeni-Kollam mutual Tazhakkarē theruvil kudiyirikkum kuriśumūttīl Māthen, and Makotēvar-paṭṭanam mutual Muṭṭattangadiyil kudiyirikkum Puttanvīṭīl Kurian..."

'Mathen from Kurakkeni-Kollam, of Kurisumuttīl-house residing in Thazhakkare Street, and Kurian from Makothavar-pattanam, of Puthenveettīl family residing in Muttathangady..'

Here the first identifier is where each individuals originating from, that is their caste-identity, that is, 'Christian from Kollam', and 'Christian from Kodungalloor'. In point 2, Peet interprets *dhariyaikkal* (non-wearers of Mani's sacred ash) wrongly, as this word was corrupted to 'Tarutaikkal', and not 'Tarissa'. The word *Tarissa* was introduced in the 9<sup>th</sup> century with the arrival of bishops Mar Sabor and Mar Aphroth in Kollam. The term *tāriśā* is derived from a corruption of *trīśāi-śubhō* (=Thrice Holy), a term used to denote the Syrian Church in Mesopotamia because of the last line of its doxology: 'O thou that was crucified for us, have mercy upon us'. This being a doctrinal statement, it was rejected by the Church of the East, and the term *trīśāi-śubhō* used pejoratively to denote the Jacobite Syrians. The churches Mar Sabor-Aphroth built in Kerala continue to be called *tāriśā pally* (Malayalam)= Orthodox church'. The church in Udayamperoor where the Synod of Diamper was held was a '*tāriśā pally*', but Catholic Archbishop Menezes took exception to this name and ordered it to be changed to 'All Saints' church'.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The Synod of Diamper was held in one of these churches, and one of the acts of the Synod, under Menezes' directive, was to rename it from *Tharissa-pally of Mar Sabor and Aphroth* to *All Saints Church*.

