

CHAPTER - VI

OTHER WORKS OF VARIOUS AUTHORS TAKING THE
SAME THEME

1. RĀMAVARMAKĀVYA OF KOCCUNNI TAMPURĀN:

This poem eulogises King Rāma Varman of Cochin, who is the same person as the hero of Rāma Varma Vijaya of Kuñjan Varier.¹ At the end of the first canto of Rāma Varma Kāvya the poet says 'इति श्रीमत्तमहीश्वरान्तर्गते रामवर्म - काव्ये प्रथमः सर्गः'. This suggests that the poet originally intended to compose the poem with the title Mātamahīśvaramāsa and that the present work is only a portion of that.

At the beginning the childhood, education and upbringing of Prince Rāma Varman

1: Journal of Manuscript studies Vols. XXXI and XXXII - 1990-91, p. 38. Oriental Research Institute And Manuscript Library University of Kerala, Kāriavattom, Tiruvananthapuram.

are described. His accession to the throne is described in the next canto. The third deals with the first death anniversary of his predecessor, Virakerala Varma. The next two cantos described the regions north and south of his kingdom. The sixth canto celebrates the prosperity of the country at the time of the reign of the hero. The title of honour given to King Rāma Varman is the subject of the seventh canto. Then the King's journey to the capital is described. The last canto deals with the celebration of the Sixteenth birthday of the King and his visit to his favourite temple at Tiruvañcikkulam.

The author of the poem, Koccuñi-Tampūrān was a member of Kotungallūr royal family. He was born in 1858 as a son of Ikkāvu Tampurāṭṭy. His wife was Jānaki Amma the sister of Kāttuḷḷil Acyuta Menon. In 1890 he moved to Irin̄jālakkuṭa, because of his

friendship with the prince died 10 years later, his grief was unbearable. After this he stayed in various towns in the former state of Cochin. His death took place at Koṭuṅgallūr in 1922.

Koccuṅṅi Tampurān's first lessons were from his family teacher Valappil Aśān. He learned Vyākaraṇa from Kuñṅjunṅi Tampurān and Kṛṣṇaśāstri, two of the greatest scholars of the time. Svāmi Manaḡiriḡi and Itṅiri Musu of Taikkāṅṅtu taught him Vedānta and Vaidya respectively. In 1921 the Prince of Wales honoured Koccuṅṅi Tampurān for his contribution to literature. Later he received the title of Kavi Sārvabhauma from the King of Cochin.

Koccuṅṅi Tampurān has produced many works both in Sanskrit and Malayalam.

2.

RAMAVARMAŚATAKAM OF K.P. KĀMAPISĀRATI:

The Saṣṭyabḍapūrti of the Mahārāja of Cochin who later abdicated this throne was celebrated in M.E.1088². This Śataka was written at that time. This is a poem celebrating the great King's versatile and unique virtues. The first verse is-

श्रीमान् लुषान्नां महेतः त्रिविधो
श्रेयो ददानः पुरुषोत्तमोऽथम् ।
पूर्णतथीति प्रथिते पुत्रे श्री-
पूर्णे विशजन् विजयेत नित्यम् ॥²

Here the meaning applies to both the Maharaja and Lord Viṣṇu.

The author was the pupil of the Mahārāja and learned books in Tarkasāstra like Dinakarī and Mukṭāvalī from him.

The title of 'Sahrdayatilakam' was given to Rāmapīṣarēṭi by King RāmaVarman. Pīṣarēṭi also received the title of 'Paṇḍitarājan' in the assembly of scholars at Trippunittura.

3. MĀTABHŪPĀLĀCARITAM OF PANTALATTU RĀGHAVA
VARMA TAMPURĀN:

The most important Sanskrit work by Pantalattu Raghava Varma Tampurān is Mātabhūpāla-carita Mahākāvya.³ The subject is the story of the Mahārāja of Cochin who abdicated his throne. It has 100 cantos and contains many passages of great literary merit. The author has given more importance to sense than to sound.

The poem begins-

जोश्री मुखाल कुचकुडुम पडुजात -
जोश्रीगणद्वैपाणितद्याति कर्मुर्जन)
जोश्री भयाज्जलमल्लकृतवकञ्जतद्
जोश्रीधमाश्रुति चन्नास्तु चिदं मुशरे : ॥

In this verse the subject matter of the work is indicated.

The kingdom of Cochin is described beautifully. A description of the Cerākingdom follows. Here, the Cerā King who was the first of the Māta dynasty is mentioned. The descriptions of Śivapuram and Eppākulam form an important part of the first canto-

अकृष्टहृणत्राणितेरेन पुप्रया २ -
विच्छिन्तये विशयिताद्यनार्थे सौधः ।
अनुकृतमभिवहनं श्रुतिं भाति यत्
शर्तुः श्रितेवित्तमभुशिव प्रतीतः ॥

The ninth canto is characterised by Yamaka. He handles this figure with great ease.

The subject of the tenth and the last canto is the Sastya celebration of the hero.

धरणीपतिनेष रामवर्मो
सविद्युत्थं निजषाढे कूर्तिद्योषम् ।
अधिकाश्च सुरन्धरानवोचत्
सह विस्ताश्च महामहं विधास्यन् ॥

The celebration has been described
beautifully.

4. PANDIT KARUPPAN'S PLAY NAMED BĀLAKALEŚAM IN
CONNECTION WITH THE SASTIPŪRTHY CELEBRATIONS:

Pandit Karuppan wrote a play named
Bālakaleśam for the competition held by Rāo
Sahib Namparumal Cetti in honour of the
celebration of the Rajaraj's Sastyaśabdapūrthy.⁴
It won the first prize. At that time Pandit
Karuppan was a Sanskrit teacher at the Govern-
ment Girls High School, Ernakulam. There were
many who could not tolerate a member of the

4: Hariśarma A.D. Sāhityācāryaṇmār, Bhāṣākavikal.
Part-1, Printed by Sahodaran Press, Ernakulam,
pp. 113-125.

backward castes defeating many upperclass play wrights, and hence there were protests here and there. But like all baseless protests, these proved short-lived.

Bālakaśam is a work in the allegorical mode, praising the timely reforms brought about by the hero Kalaśan (standing for the Rājā) and indicating further necessary reforms. It requested the King to annihilate social evils like untouchability.

Pandit Karuppan had much to demand from the Government. He had to do without creating hostility in high places, but had to make certain things clear.

Through the play, Pandit Karuppan thanks the King for what he has already done for the backward castes, and asks for further rights. He exhorts both the King and the people to

think progressively. The 'Jātikummi' sung in the last scene of the play is full of revolutionary fire. To fully appreciate Paṇḍit Karuppan's righteous courage, we must remember that the King fully believed in observing Varṇāśramadharmā.

Another work by Paṇḍit Karuppan, "Udyānavirunnu" contains an interesting incident. Once the Governor of Madras visited Cochin. A tea-party was arranged in his honour by the King. All the MLC's of Erṇākulam were invited for the party. Although Paṇḍit Karuppan was an MLC, he alone was left out. This deeply wounded his self-respect. Udyānavirunnu, a short poem in twenty-five verses was written to convey this idea and T.K. Kṛṣṇa Menon presented this poem to the King. The poem brought to the notice of the King many sensitive social injustice and disturbed him very much. After this it was decided that all MLC's should

be invited to official parties, irrespective of caste and religion and with no discrimination.

5. ENTE RĀJARSI - AN ARTICLE BY DR.M.V.PARAMESVARA AIYER:

This article contains the record of the experience of a Doctor whose patient, the Rājarsi, was in the last years of his life.⁵ He describes how the King showed no discrimination among the various peopled served him. He treated them all as his own children. He helped them in all ways, both materially and with his wise advice, and nobody had the least cause for complaint.

The King had a rare gift for entertaining all kinds of people with his scholarly and

5: Rājarsi. Vol. 1, Dhanu. M. E. 1110, pp. 114-115.

witty conversation. He could mingle equally well with statesmen, merchants, scholars, people with grievances, college students and little children. His knowledge in many subjects was remarkable.

6. VILĀPASAPTATI OF PANDITARĀJAN K. ACYUTAPODUVĀL:

Vilāpasaptati by K. Acyutapoduvāl is a poem lamenting the death of the Mahārāja of Cochin who abdicated his throne.⁶

वनाग्रमानं भुवनं शरीरं
भाक्ष्यमाणं , भवता विना नः ।
अव वा कथं वा परिशिष्टमेत -
न्नेतन्वमायुः स्थिरकुः स्वकथम् ॥
इतः परं किं नु चनेन , किं वा
धान्येन , किं वा विभवान्तरेण्य ।
अवत् प्रसादस्फुरणानि तानि
प्रबोधनान्येव अवकिशोरे ॥

The poem contains many such verses filled with genuine grief and marked by high literary merit.

7. MAHĀMAHIMAŚRĪ KOCCI VALIYATHAMPURĀN TIRUMANASSILE
STĀNAPARITYĀGAM OF PALLATTU RĀMAN:

The author of this Malayalam poem is Pallattu Rāman.⁷ This work narrates that Mahārāja Rāma Varman who had been the King of Cochin, was great and gifted by reason of his dignity, compassion towards his people, and statesmanship. Even the Emperor had given him special honours. The news that this famous and able King who had ruled for twenty-four years, was going to abdicate this throne spread like wildfire. The King had brought happiness and freedom to all through his various reforms, and this won great praise. Like the Sun, who hands over his light to the Moon after having filled

7: KK.1089 M.E., Minam, Vol. 9, pp. 279-82.

the world with his radiance, Śrī Rāma Varman handed over his kingship, along with the aura of fame that he had won, to his successor. His life was like that of the ancient kings of Raghuvamśá, who spent their boyhood as students, youth as householders and oldage as sages. Now-a-days, when people engage in all sorts of malpractice and violence for the sake of power, such men are rare. This King's example should be a lesson for all kings. Among the kings of Cochin, very few have been able to celebrate the sixtieth birthday. One may consider Śrī Rāma Varman, who celebrated his Śaṣṭyābdapūrti, as Śrī Rāma himself. The short poem concludes with prayer that the Almighty might grant every happiness to King Rāma Varman, who had given up power in his old age and was leading a peaceful life.

Although short, the poem has considerable literary merit. This is an example

of Pallattu Rāman's simple and spontaneous style. The details he has said about the King will please scholars and ordinary men alike.

8. ORATYADBHUTAM OR KOCCI VALIYA TAMPURĀN TIRU-
MANASSILE RĀJĀYA PARITYĀGAM:

A poem about the King's abdication was published in the Kavana Kaumudi in the name of "subjects overcome with wonder, grief and joy"⁸. This poem narrates the peoples reaction on the news of the King's abdication. The people could receive the news of the abdication of the virtuous and renowned King only with extreme wonder. Only a few saintly people can cast off worldly power like this. He was like a father to some, like a mother or a teacher to others, and gave each the kind of friendship he needed. The people were plunged

8 : KK.M.E.1089, Dhanu, pp.118-121.

in grief when they heard that such a King who was going to abdicate. In ancient times it was normal for kings to handover power to their successors and renounce worldly life. King Rāma Varman has won a place among such kings. This King had as yet completed only half a Puruṣāyus. There is no justification for entering Vānaprastha at this age. But none can tell how great minds work. The Yuvarāja, who had learned from the able rule of this King was scholarly and renowned. He could not defy the command of the King. So he took over power from him. Although the King was following the ancient tradition in his abdication, it can be seen only with wonder. The poem ends with a wish for his long and happy life.

9.

MĀTARĀJYA VAIRĀGYAM:

In this Malayalam poem written by Mahākavi Vallattole Nārāyaṇa Menon, there are

thirty-two stanzas.⁹ Here the poet gives his opinion of the abdication of the King of Cochin.

When the people speak in fattering voices of the abdication of their King the poet feels a thrill of joy within him. That is because with this deed the King has revived a sacred old tradition. The poet addresses Mother India and expresses his relief that thanks to her blessings, at least some of her sons remember the good deeds of their ancestors. Times have changed and most of the good customs once observed are forgotten, and it is gratifying that the Mother still has a few such virtuous children. The King had introduced reforms in keeping with the times and brought progress to the land and the people. He renounced his throne when there was hope every where that he would rule for many more years.

⁹: KK. M.E.1089.Metam.pp.292-97.

The land was as dear to the King as Brahma to Sarasvatī, Mahaviṣṇu to Lakṣmī, Indra to the Gods and the spring to poets. His renunciation of the rule of this land in favour of his successor, in accordance with the Dharma prescribed by the sages, shows that he is the most courageous of men. This act of the just and magnanimous King is treated like a new chapter of the Purāṇas in every home. His renunciation of the land is like Mahaviṣṇu, the Lord of all the world, renouncing Lakṣmī. Kingship is the object of everyone's desire. Nobody could have believed that a King could cast off his power. People are ready to commit any evil deed for the sake of a little money. Only this lion among men could renounce kingship which is the source of endless wealth and power. It is only a fact that such great men are less than one in ten thousand. The poet compares the King to Lord Buddha, who renounced everything. Men are attached to pleasures even when poor, old and ill. It is astonishing that

the King, who was at the peak of prosperity, could give up his pleasures.

Every nobleman does all he can to attach the title of King to his name. But this King gave up that title as if it were nothing. The people pray that he should become their King in the next birth too, but the King is trying to avoid rebirth. His abdication has plunged all his people in grief. The King now leads a life of rest for the good of his country, like the Lord who rests in the Ocean of Milk for the good of the world. It is the good fortune of the royal crown that it could receive his head which is as great as emperor's. His brother took up the reins of the state like Śrī Rāma's brother Bharata. The poem ends with the prayer that the Almighty will help all that Śrī Rama Varman does for the salvation of his soul. This poem is an excellent example of Vallattole's skill in euphonious composition.

10. IPPOZATTE KOCCI VALIYA TAMPURĀN:

In this short poem in Malayalam by Koyeppillil Prameśvarakuruppu, there are eleven stanzas.¹⁰ Rājaraṣi Rāma Varman was a Mahārāja who ruled in a most praiseworthy manner and was respected by all his subjects. He was courageous, learned and wealthy. His character was excellent. He was like Brahaspati the preceptor of Gods, in his knowledge of the Vedas and the Śāstras. The poem concludes with the wish that the King, who looks after his people as a father looks after his children, will live for many more years.

11. RĀJYABHĀRAMOZHŪM KOCCI VALIYATAMPURĀN TIRUMANASSU KONTU:

This is a poem on the King's abdication

10: KK. M.E. 1090, Makaram, pp. 162-64.

written by Natuvattu Mahan Nampūtiri.¹¹ It is especially noteworthy among the many such eulogies on the King. It is among the most beautiful and imaginative. The King is compared to many mythological figures; the Sun the Moon, Indra, Agni, Varuṇa, Vāyu, Kubera, Śrī Maheśvara, Garuda and Śrī Mahaviṣṇu.

Just as the Sun removes darkness with his intense light, the King removed the ignorance of his people by establishing more schools. He ruled according to his will and kept his subordinates under his control, as the Sun wholes the planets in their places and makes them move at his will. Thus it can be said that this King is equal to the Sun. The Moon gives comfort to all creatures alike with his soft and cool rays, but he cannot be seen at all times. The King brought happiness to his people with timely reforms, and because he had to make investigations about these, he could not be seen at all times. Thus he is

11: *ibid* M.E.1101,Dhanu,pp.97-103.

equal to the Moon.

The great Indra always had his son Jayanta at his side to ward off attack from Rākṣasas. The King always had Jayam (victory) at his side to keep away economic offenders from his country. So it can be said that the King is equal to Indra. Anyone can obtain Agni for his needs. But if he does not take due care Agni will destroy every thing. The King was accessible to all, but those who did not behave carefully his anger could be as destructive as fire. Thus he is equal to Agni. Europeans who had come from across the sea honoured him as much as Mahāviṣṇu, who sleeps on the Ocean of Milk, is honoured. In this the King can be said to be equal to Viṣṇu. The King travelled all over the land without rest, attending to the essential needs of his subjects, like Vāyu who travels every where and keeps all creatures alive. So he can be compared to Vāyu. As Kubera is the Lord of all wealth, all prosperity, and all good things,

the King possessed all kinds of wealth and good qualities. So it can be said that he is equal to Kubera. The King lived in his Bunglaw on a hill top with his wife, just as Śrī Parameśvara, the refuge of all creatures, rides on a bull with Śrī Parvatī, and dwells on Kailāsa. So the King can be compared to Śrī Parameśvara. Like Vinata's son Garuda, who is immensely strong, brilliant and gives death to serpents, the King is strong, brilliant and gives death to his enemies. So there is nothing wrong with comparing this King to Garuda. The King is endowed with all virtues and has deep knowledge in Śāstras, Vyākaraṇa and Literature. There is no doubt that he is a perfect scholar. Like the four-armed Viṣṇu in the company of Goddess Lakṣmī and the Goddess of the earth, the King resplendent with miraculous knowledge and talent, rules the earth in the company of his wife. This King who gives good people comfort with his compassionate glance, and destroys evil-dovers, is equal to Śrī Pūrṇatrayīśa.

Thus the poet establishes that the former King is similar to many godly figures, and that his position is equal to that of Śrī Pūrṇatrāyīśa. The King who was heroic and virtuous and above all always concerned about the welfare of his subjects, received unlimited love and respect from the people. He is the Lord of the people in every sense and the poem concludes with a prayer that he will live very long and enjoy every kind of happiness.
