

**Documentation of Jaiminiyasāmaveda of Kerala Nampūtiris by
Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady.**

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त्रिंशद्भाम विराजति ।

वाक्पतङ्गाय धीयते ।

प्रतिवस्तोरहद्युभिः ॥

(सामवेदः-१०६-२०)

Kerala is a hereditary land of Vedic rituals. Here more than 95% of Nampūtiri Brāhmins are Ṛgvedins and Yajurvedins. Atharvaveda was not traditionally taught in Kerala. The families who belonging to Sāmaveda is very few in number. So in the way of traditional Vedic study circle, Ṛgveda and Yajurveda are almost preserved and still it continues. But in the case of Sāmaveda, it is very painful to say that the tradition is almost in the declining stage.

The Prācīnakauthūmaśākhā or the oldest Kauthūma recension of Sāmaveda was existed in the Putukkōṭ village of Palakkad district, but unfortunately, today it is no more. Jaiminiya recension of Sāmaveda is traditionally taught here. It is attributed to 21 traditional Kerala Nampūtiri families. Only five of them preserve this tradition now, they are Perumaṅgāḍ, Nellikkāṭṭil Māmaṅṅu, Muṭṭattukāṭṭil Māmaṅṅu, Tōṭṭam and Korāṭṭikkara. All of them are residing at Panjal, a village in Thrissur

District. There is a Tamil version of Jaiminīyasāmaveda also preserved by Tamil Brahmins in Kerala at Koṭuntirappuḷḷi village of Palakkad District.

Unfortunately, the young generation did not take interest in the study of Veda in traditional way especially in the case of Sāmaveda. As a result, this valuable hereditary knowledge system is going through a critical situation. So the preservation of Jaiminīyasāmaveda tradition became necessary.

Preservation of Keralīyajaiminīyasāmavedasamhitā - Earlier attempts

Frits Staal, Dr. E.R. Sreekrishna Sarma, Prof. Gune from Denmark, Dr. K. Krishnadas, A. I. R Calicut, Tirupathy Devasthanam and some agencies from Nasik tried to record the oral tradition of Sāmaveda, but those are incomplete and not successful.

The only available textual edition of Ārcika portion of Jaiminīyasāmaveda was that edited by Dr. R. Raghuvira in 1930s and it was totally different from Kerala version. The entire Samhitā of Keralīyajaiminīyasāmaveda is not printed so far in Devanāgarī script. It is preserved in the transcript form among the Kerala Nampūtiris. It contained 400 pages of notebook size, written in Malayalam character. As a first step to make text available to the academic community, Dr. K.A Ravindran made a hand written copy of the text of Ārcika portion from those transcripts deposited at Nellikkāṭṭil Māmaṅṅu Mana and Korattikkara Mana and brought out an edition in Malayalam script, in his book

Sāmavedadarpaṇam published by Sankaran Namboothirippad Smaraka Granthasala, Kanippayyur in 2007.

Recently, The National Mission for Manuscripts had sanctioned to Centre for Heritage Studies, Hill Palace, Thrippunithura a project for publishing rare and unpublished manuscripts in a series named Prakāśikā. As part of this, Dr. K. A Ravindran prepared a complete version of Jaiminīyasāmavedasamhitā including Ārcika, Gramageyagāna and Āraṇyagaeyagāna of Kerala tradition and for the first time it was published in the year 2013.

Documentation of Keraḷīyajaiminīyasāmaveda by Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady

School of Vedic Studies, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady took initiative to document and preserve the oral tradition of the entire portion of Keraḷīyajaiminīyasāmaveda in Audio-video CDs during the year 1997 to 2001. Dr. C. M. Neelakandhan who was the in-charge-of School of Vedic Studies at that period headed the project. It was done with the financial assistance from the University. (The School of Vedic Studies was renamed as Centre for Vedic Studies later).

System of the Work

The Centre for the Documentation of Performing Arts (CDPA), a registered society under the guidance and leadership of the expert scholar

Sri. Killimaṅgalam Vasudevan Nampūtirippād, collaborated with the University in carrying out this project. As a part of this project, it was decided to document the Prakṛti and Vikṛti pāṭhās of Jaiminiyasāmaveda preserved by Nampūtiris of Kerala.

As a first phase, in 1997 July, University started the audio- video recording of Ārcika portion, Sāmagāna or Gramageyagāna and Candrāsāma or Āraṇyageyagāna. In the second phase, which began in 2001 May, Sāmastutis used in Atirātra and Somayāga rituals were recorded. Panjal Lakshminarayana Temple was the location of the project.

Traditional Sāmaveda scholars of Panjal; (Late) Sri. Perumaṅgāṭṭu Vasudevan Nampūtiri, Sri. Nellikkāṭṭil Māmaṅṅu Neelakandhan Nampūtiri, (Late) Sri. Nellikkāṭṭil Māmaṅṅu Vasudevan Nampūtiri, Sri. Tōṭṭam Aryan Nampūtiri & Sri. Tōṭṭam Narayanan Nampūtiri were involved in the first phase of the project and they, except Sri. Tōṭṭam Narayanan Nampūtiri, took part in the second phase also. The recoded matter is kept in CDs in the Sanskrit University Central Library and is available as reference material for those who want to do researches and higher studies in Vedic Literature. It only contains the chanting of Mantras. Thereafter, in 2008 a major project was sanctioned to Vedic Studies by the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India through Sangeetha Nataka Academy, New Delhi. Under this, a major amount sanctioned was to remake the old audio/video CDs as interactive DVDs and HDD, incorporating the text of the chanted portion of Ārcika part in Devanāgarī script, with transliteration

and simple English translation, graphics and indices. The process of remaking the CDs are in the final stage and the remade version of Ārcika Portion contains the details mentioned above. For Sāmagāna and Candrāsāma only the text in Devanāgarī script is provided.

As part of the project, the text of Ārcika portion was published by the Centre for Vedic Studies which is edited by Dr. C. M Neelakandhan and Dr. K. A. Ravindran in the year 2013.

Expert panel

University has constituted an expert committee for advising the project. The members of the committee in the first and the second phase are: (Chief Advisors) Dr. K. Kunjunni Raja & Sri. L. S. Rajagopal, (Honorary Director) Sri. Killimangalam Vasudevan Namboodirippad, (Assistant Director) Sri. M. Subrahmonian Namboodiri, (Technical Director) Sri. Kunju Vasudevan, (Technical Assistant) Sri. A. R Manoj and (Co-ordinator) Dr. C. M Neelakandhan. And that of the third and final phase, the following are the monitoring committee members:

(Chairman) Dr. D. Gopi Mohan, (Advisor / Expert Member) Dr. C. M. Neelakandhan, (Members) Dr. B. Chandrika, Sri. Soudamini K. G and Sri. Mohammed Sageer T. K., (Co-ordinator) Dr. K. A Ravindran.

Including me three other Research assistants are also involved in this project in different phases. They are Sri. Ajimon C. P., Sri. Sreelakshmi R. and Sri. Sudhanjali P. S.

Present condition and limitations of the project

After the retirement of Dr. C.M Neelakandhan, Dr. K.A Ravindran- Associate professor of Sanskrit Sahitya took in-charge-of Centre for Vedic Studies. The remaking project of Sāmaveda is continuing under his guidance now and is almost completed. All the data such as chanting of Ārcika, Sāmagāna, Candrāsāma and Sāmastutis were entered in computer in audio and video format with modern graphic systems.

As a technical limitation of the work, it is observed that some old CDs containing Sāmagāna and Candrāsāma portions have occurred the problem of video flickering. This is because of the rarely usage of the recorded CDs. It is to be noted here another limitation that the scholars who did the chanting earlier are not in a position to chant those portions again due to ill health. Some of them are passed away. Therefore a reconstruction of the tampered portions from their own mouth is impossible. In this circumstance, the present remade version becomes a document of most importance. The complete Jaiminīyasāmavedasamhitā of Kerala Nampūtiri tradition in interactive DVDs and HDD format will be available soon from Centre for Vedic studies, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady to the scholarly world. The oral tradition of Jaiminīyasāmaveda of Kerala Nampūtiris is a peculiar intangible heritage of Kerala. Today this system is almost extinct. Some of the traditional Sāmaveda scholars except Nellikkāṭṭil Māmaṅṅu Neelakandhan Nampūtiri, Tōṭṭam Aryan Nampūtiri and Tōṭṭam Narayanan Nampūtiri were expired. Moreover, they are at

above 90s and struggling with the discomforts of old age. There are no foot followers of them to conserve this oral heritage now. So, the mission of documentation of Keraḷīyajaiminīyasāmaveda carried out by the Centre for Vedic Studies earlier and the present remade version is a remarkable monument in the Vedic history.

This paper may conclude with the prayer;

“We salute our ancestors and those who are present in the Yajña for their help to offer praises to Soma.”

नमः पितृभ्यः पूर्वसद्भ्यः ।

नमस्साकन्निषद्भ्यः ।

युञ्जे वाचं शतपदीम् ।।

(सामवेदः-६०-१)

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