

Oral and Textual Traditions of Veda in Kerala

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The land of Kerala has sufficient contribution in the field of Vedic studies. It is generally accepted that the Vedic culture was established in Kerala by 10th century AD. There are some strong textual, inscriptional and historical evidences regarding the antiquity of Vedic tradition of Kerala. The words of the jester in *Bhagavadajjuka* (a satirical drama written in 13th C. A.D.) marks one of the striking evidences regarding the establishment of the three Vedic traditions here. The jester in the drama enquires and clarifies the Vedic tradition and family details of a dead person before performing the funeral rites, which, as per tradition, could be done strictly according to the respective Vedic áakhas. From this, it can be assumed that by that time, the different branches of Vedas became powerful here.¹ It can also be inferred that deep thoughts on Vedic knowledge had acquired considerable basis in Kerala by that time.

Later on several Vedic learning centres were established here in the form of Sabhamaḡhas, áilas and Yogams for teaching, learning and practicing of Vedas. But these establishments could not resist the passage of time and accidents of history due to several reasons. As a result, many of them disappeared for ever. Some remnants survived the adverse situations and they helped to retain Vedic culture here, especially the oral tradition. Presently, with the aid of those survived traces, the studies and researches on Vedas and allied topics are going on with more enthusiasm.

Traditional study of Rgveda

The traditional method of teaching – learning process of Veda in Kerala, in general, was conducted at residential Vedic institutions. The student who wants to learn Vedic texts is admitted to traditional learning centres after the Upanayana ceremony, generally at an age of seven. Some individual houses of Namboothiri community also were functioned as learning centres during the past.

¹ For details, vide *Bhagavadajjuka on Kutiyattam Stage*, K.G. Paulose, New Bharatiya Book Corporation, Delhi, 2000.

The method of teaching was oral and it is continuing even today at traditional Pīṭhās. The student learns the entire Samhitā from the preceptor. During this period he has to undergo several austerities (Vratas) of year lasting and of small duration.

Traditionally Ṡgveda was taught at Brahmaswam Maṭham, a residential Vedic school, situated at central part of Thrissur in Kerala and another, situated at Tirunavaya in Malappuram Dist., on the banks of the river Nila and near to the famous temple, Navamukunda, where the famous historical event, Mīmīkām was held. Of these, Brahmaswam Maṭham at Thrissur is only functioning now and preserving that tradition. There had another practice also that the student will study basic text at own home under his father or other family members who are well versed in all the types of chanting – the Prakṛtipīṭhas (Samhitāpīṭha, Padapīṭha and Kramapīṭha) and Vikṛtipīṭhas (popularly Known as Aṅgavikṛtis – Jaṅgi, Mīli, āikhji, Rekhji, Dhvaja, Daḥa, Ratha and Ghana - among which, Jaṅgi and Ratha was taught and practiced in Kerala). After completing the Samhitā course, they will move to these traditional institutions for higher studies. Several chanting techniques were also taught as part of Samhitā course. The hand gestures or Mudras were used while chanting to understand the actual pronunciation and text, which was very much helpful for remembering the text and to preserve the oral tradition. The learned lessons are repeated for several days. The student is permitted to participate in certain ceremonials and religious activities at temples. Thus all the four aspects - study, understanding, practice and popularization - were included in the syllabus and they were the significant features of Kerala Vedic tradition from the very beginning.

Methods of Preservation - Textual

Within a period of four to five years, the student will study by heart the whole Samhitāpīṭha. After that the higher levels of chanting, Jaṅgi and Ratha are taught and it will go for about 12 – 15 years. During this period, the student will also learn the techniques used for the preservation and memorizing of the whole text studied. To memorize the whole chanting style and text studied for a long time, is a difficult task and chances are there to get it forgotten. To overcome this situation, some preservation

techniques are also practiced along with normal learning process, from very ancient periods. Most of them are preserved in oral tradition and some have printed texts. *ÁikÀ* texts, *Ti,Ḡams* etc. are some textual devices. Generally the traditional Vedic chanting was imparted on the basis of *ÁikÀ* texts. But in Kerala Vedic tradition, unfortunately, such basic treatises are not available. On the other hand, there existed several other textual devices for the life-long memorizing of the studied lessons. *Ti,Ḡams* and *SĒktaḡloka* belong to this type. There are also some non-textual preservation methods in the form of rituals conducted occasionally. They include *Svḡdhyḡya*, *Trē,i*, *VedalakÀḡrcanḡ*, *Vḡram*, *Muḡajapa* and *Trisandhḡ*.²

Ti,Ḡam is a unique technique used for the preservation of *Ġgveda* chanting in Kerala. The word, in Malayalam, literally means ‘the way to overcome the difficulties’. The *Ti,Ḡams* are of three types— *Pattarutḡam* (*Ti,Ḡam* prepared by *Pattar*),³ *Malayalatḡam* and *Samhitḡ-tḡam*, written texts of which are available. *Pattarutḡam* includes the topics such as *Áamḡna*, *Vila’khyā*, *Napara*, *Tapara*, *Avarḡi* and *Ēvarḡi*. This text is written by two Tamil scholars by name *Nḡgadeva* and *Yajḡanḡrḡya,a*. It is called *Pattarutḡam* since the authors belongs to non-Kerala region. The texts, *Malayalatḡam* and *Samhitḡ-tḡam* are Keralite works but nothing regarding the identity of authors is given in the texts. *Malayalatḡam* contains six topics. They are *Akḡrḡntas*, *IkḡrḡntapadasĒci*, *Rephas*, *Ēdyudḡttas*, *Antodḡttas* and *Pragḡhyas*. These two texts are popularly used by Kerala Pandits to clear the doubts regarding the splitting of *Padas* while chanting of *Ġgvedasamhitḡ*. *Samhitḡ-tḡam* is used to clear the doubts on *Sandhis* in *Samhitḡ* portion. The explanations for *Ac-Sandhis*, *Hal-sandhis* and *Svarasandhis* found in *Ġgveda* are given in them with examples.⁴

² For details, see the article by Dr. C.M. Neelakandhan : *Some Special Methods for Preserving the Skill of Rgvedic Recitation in Kerala – Textual and Ritual*, *Anyonyam Smaranika*-2014, Kadavallur Anyonyaparishath, Thrissur, Kerala.

³ The word *Pattar* in Malayalam is used in Kerala to denote a Tamil Brahmin who settled in Kerala after migration.

⁴ *Preservation Techniques of the Ġgveda Chanting of Kerala (PTRCK)*, Editors: Dr. C.M. Neelakandhan & Dr. K.A. Ravindran, *Vedic Studies*, SSUS, Kalady, 2010 pp.13-14, 51 -124. Also see the article by Dr. C.M. Neelakandhan in the *Anyonyam Smaranika* -2014, Kadavallur Anyonyaparishath.

SĒkta ślokas, written by the renowned Kerala poet-grammarian, MelputtĒr Njriya, a bhaĒĒa is another text of this type. It contains nine verses in Sragdharj metre. The first one is an introduction denoting the significance of the text. The following eight verses explains the Vargas⁵ in each SĒkta using the method of KaĒapayjdi. Each śloka is devoted to each AĒĒaka.⁶

Methods of Preservation - Ritual

Among these types of methods, Trisandhj is very important. It is an oral/ritual technique used for the preservation of Vedic tradition in Kerala and is a long-term ritual process used for memorizing the whole Īgvedasamhitj. Teaching and learning method is used in this ritual and it takes almost eight months for completion, when continuously performed. One prominent scholar, acting as a teacher, recites the Mantra and the others repeat the same as students. After each Varga, the person who acted as teacher, changes his position and the process is repeated in this way, which provides opportunity to each scholar to act as teacher and student. Full time involvement of twenty or more scholars are needed for this process. At least five scholars at a time have to chant the Veda without break from morning to evening on the days of working (Svjdhya). SamhitjpiĒha, PadapjĒha and KramapjĒhas with Svāra are chanted in this method.⁷

Commentaries on Vedic texts

As a simultaneous process, several treatises on Vedic literature were written by Kerala authors in the form of original texts and commentaries. Regarding the commentarial tradition, the following points are to be noted. Both the Brjhma,as of Īgveda-*Aitareyabrjhma,a* and *KauĒtakibrjhma,a* have commentaries from Kerala. The name of the commentary of the former is *Sukhapradj* and the commentator is āa·guruĒiĒya⁸ whose real name is unknown. Date of āa·guruĒiĒya is taken as latter half of 12th century A.D. The denotation of life period using Kali days and use of some Malayalam words such

⁵ Varga denotes a branch in the classification of whole text of Rgveda according to Kerala tradition. The order is: Astaka-Adhyaya-Varga-Mantra.

⁶ Sanskrit commentary of this text, prepared by Dr. Kompakkulam Vishnu Namboothiri and original text is included in the book: *PTRCK*, pp.145-172.

⁷ *PTRCK*, p. 18. Also see the article by Dr. C.M. Neelakandhan in the *Anyonyam Smaranika-2014*, Kadavallur Anyonya parishath.

⁸ For details of āa·guruĒiĒya, see *Aitar·jirāyaka* with M^okĒa pradj commentary of āa·guruĒiĒya - sanskrit text published by Dr K Raghavan Pillai, TSS, 1968.

as áa'kita, Tavaº; KirihyaÆ, Mutal, Munpu etc. are trustworthy evidences for the settlement of his birth place as Karala. The commentaries by name *MokÀaprad; and Abhyudayaprad;* on *Aitarey;ra,yaka* and *Ë;val;jyana;jrautasÆtra* respectively also are written by áa.guru;ïÀya.

The *KauÀctakibr;hma,a* has been commented by Udaya (16 C.A.D.) of Muriya mangalam family. The name of the commentary is *Sukhad;|Sadarthavimar;inç*. It is divided into three Da;akasa, each having ten chapters just like the *Br;Àma,a* text. This commentary is very valuable for proper understanding of sacrificial tradition of Kerala.⁹

A vast and wide commentarial literature on áikÀ; texts, produced from Kerala, is available. The commentary on áaunaka;ikÀ;, written by the great Vedic cum Vy;kara,a scholar from Kerala, Sri K.N.M. Divakaran Namboothiri, is outstanding.¹⁰ A commentary on the *Sarv;nukrama,ç* of *K;ty;yana* is available from Kerala. The author is Akkitham Narayanan Namboothiri and the name of the commentary is *N;j;ya,çyam* which is also famous as *Dçpaprabh;.*¹¹

The *Ved;ga* text - *Nirukta of Y;ska* has been commented by a Kerala author. His name is *G;jrgya Nçlaka,¶ha* and the commentary is called *Nirukta;|lokav;rtikaÆ*. He belongs to c. 13-14 centuries of A.D.¹² *Îgvedam Bh;À;bh;Àyam* by O.M.C. Narayanan Nampoothirippad is a Malayalam commentary on *Îgveda* from Kerala. *Ëmn;jyathanaÆ* of Erkkara Raman Nambuthiri is an independent work on Vedic subject.

S;jmaveda - Jaiminçya tradition

There are two distinct traditions of *S;jmaveda* preserved in Kerala – Nambutiri tradition and Tamil tradition. The Nambutiri tradition is studied and preserved by the Nambutiris of Kerala and the

⁹ The text of *KauÀctakibr;hma,a* and Udaya's commentary has been edited and published by Dr. E.R. Sreekrishna Sarma from Germany in 1968 and 1976 respectively.

¹⁰ The text of *Saunakasiksa* and its commentary is given in the text: *PTRCK*, pp. 21-50.

¹¹ For more details, *PTRCK*, pp 222- 375

¹² *Contribution of Kerala to Sanskrit Literature*, Dr. K. Kunjunni Raja, Madras Uty, 1980. App. – p. iii.

Tamil Tradition is followed by the Tamil Brahmins residing at Kodunthirappilly Village in Palakkad district. Both the traditions are very feeble now and are struggling for maintain the continuity.

The Nambutiri Tradition

The text of Jaiminēya Samhita that Kerala Namboothiris follow, contains 1698 hymns distributed in five Kṛ,as, Ēgneya (1-12 Ottus), Aindra (13-48 Ottus), Pavamaṇa (49-59 Ottus), Dvīdaḥha (60-106 Ottus), and Uttara (107-112 Ottus). Thus, it contains a total of 112 chapters (Ottus). The Nambūthiris of Kerala use the names Sṛma, Candrasṛma, Īha and ĪĀni or Īhya respectively for Grṛmageyaṇa, Ēraṇyageyaṇa, Īhagaṇa and Rahasyagaṇa. 107th Ottu is Ēraṇyaka portion according to Kerala recension though it is included in the Uttararcika. (Candrasṛma is the Nambūthiri term for the chanting of the Ēraṇyakaṇa. The chapters in each Kṛ,a is designated by Kerala Brahmins as "Othu", which means hymn or prayer).

Of these Kṛ,as, the first three contain hymns in praise of corresponding deities and constitute the Grṛmageyaṇa, which contains 59 Sṛmans. The next two are containing hymns that are adapted musically for the sacrificial procedure. There are 25 Sṛmans in Ēraṇyageyaṇas, which are recited in the ceremonies connected with Vratas during Brahmacharyaḥrama. Īhagaṇas are 77 in number and are arranged in eight Daḥatis (decades). First seven Daḥatis contain 10 songs each and the last one contains seven. Īhyaṇa or ĪĀi contain 16 Sṛmans. Most of the ritual chants of Agnicayana included in the Grṛmageyaṇa and Ēraṇyageyaṇa. The 29 Sṛmastutis that are used in the Atirṛtra are listed in the Īhagaṇa and Īyaṇa. All these portions are recited musically according to Kerala tradition. No much importance is given to the musical chanting to the Ērcika portion in other parts of India.

Tamil Tradition

The Tamil tradition of Jaiminēyasṛmaveda is preserved in the Kodunthirappully Village at Palakkad Dist. This tradition also is at the stage of extinct. The text of this tradition remains unpublished. The transcripts of the different portions obtained from them leads to conclude that the text

of Ērcika portion of this tradition is slightly different from the Nambutiri tradition. They usually chant the Ērcika portion in single Svāra but are more studied and experts on the chanting of Gṛ̥ṇa portion,

Methods of learning

Among the 21 Nambutiri families of Śṛ̥ṇmaveda existed in Kerala, only three keep this valuable heredity today. The scholars who keep this tradition in these families are very old and they have studied the whole text by heart traditionally. The common practice of Vedic study in Kerala is that each student has to study the Samhitṛ̥ portion, which is the Prakṛ̥ṭi, by heart with Svāra. Then the variations or Vikṛ̥ṭipṛ̥ṭhas that are used in different rituals are learnt. The period of study even extends from seven to ten years, utilising almost full time for the purpose.

There are four year lasting special Vratas. They are Gaudṛ̥ṇekavratam, Vr̥ṭikavratam, UpaniṂādamvratam and Mahṛ̥ṇṃnyavratam. Among these austerities, most important is the Mahṛ̥ṇṃnyavratam, otherwise called Īran Vratam (austerity to be performed wearing wet clothes) in which the student has to practise Vedic chanting wearing wet cloths after bath, full day. It is supposed that this particular Īran Vrata is practiced for developing beautiful and melodious sound. (The regular practice of singing, standing in water up to the level of breast was very common among musicians, though theoretical evidence about the scientific aspect of this practice related to its result is yet to be established. Since Śṛ̥ṇmavedins also has to develop beautiful sound (Svāra) for better chanting, this Īran Vrata may have significance). The student learns the UpaniṂādic parts and Vikṛ̥ṭipṛ̥ṭhas like Īha and ĪṂṛ̥ṇi after Samṛ̥ṇvartana. They will have to hear some UpaniṂādic Mantras, chanted by the teacher as part of traditional learning.

Learning Centres

Strictly speaking, there were no traditional learning centres for the study of Śṛ̥ṇmaveda in Kerala. The study was formerly held at the premises of Muttathukattil Mamannu Mana and Nellikkattil Mamannu Mana, the two famous Śṛ̥ṇmavedic families in Pṛ̥ṇṃṃl village situated in Thrissur Dist., Kerala, Later on, a Śṛ̥ṇmavedagurukulam was started at Pṛ̥ṇṃṃl. The aged scholars who keep this tradition today

are the products of this Gurukulam. But it is very painful to know that now-a-days, that institution is not working properly for want of students. The very recent development is that the authorities of traditional learning centre for Îgveda at Thrissur, the Brahmasvam Maᅒham, has taken steps for the teaching of Sjmaveda also. Some students are studying Sjmaveda there and this move is a good sign with regard to the revival of Sjmvedic tradition of Kerala.

Methods of preservation - Upjsana, Vjram, Vacanam Collal and Svjddhyjya

Sjmavedins of Kerala perform the rituals or Upjsanas like VjraÆ and Trisandh; like that of Îgvedins. The chanting of Sjmastutis used in the sacrificial rites and in some Tantric rites, is of much importance as Kerala tradition is concerned. The types of Vedavikᅙtis - Jaᅒj; and Rath;, peculiar to Îgvedins are observed in Sjmaveda but commonly known by another name, VacanaÆ Collal. The word means recitation of Vedic Hymns. (The word Vacanam also indicate chanting in one breath. Collal in Malayalam means reciting). Sjmavedins perform Svjddhyjya by chanting the hymns sitting in front of the deity in the Sanctum Sanctorum.

Chanting Methods

Sjmaveda is chanted in different methods. Samhit; portion is chanted normally as in the case of other Vedas, using different movements of hands, which indicates the accentual variation. When the chanting shifts from Samhit; to Sjma, several changes happen. These alterations are necessary so that the text can be adapted more conveniently to melody. As a result, many words in the Samhit; are changed or left away and new syllables are inserted. During chanting, the words may split in between so that the meaninglessness is affected to the hearer. Thus some meaningful or meaningless words also incorporated sometimes. Thus, the adaptation of text to melodies results in several textual changes or rather distortion of the text. Eight different levels in which these changes occur are listed below:

Vikjra: modification of syllables. It is the method by which a base verse is altered in order

to make it more melodious. For example, Agne becomes O gn; yi.

Vi;leÀa,a: dissolution of letters. Here, Vçtaye is changed as V; yi T; y; yi.

Vikar: suspension of letters. In this method, a syllable is broken up into two parts. For example, Ye becomes y_i yi.

Abhyasa: repetition of syllables. Here, Taya becomes T_i y_i y_i T_i y_i y_i.

Virjma: pause or stop in between. For example, G_ṛ,no Havyad_itaye is chanted as G_ṛ,no H_i Vy_i D_i T_iy_iy_i.

Stobha: It is the insertion of non – textual portions or syllables in S_imavedic chant. It is believed that all these insertions have magical or mystical powers. Perhaps they are added when the original text required extra syllables for making the hymns more melodic. For example, the words H_ibu H_ibu and Au Ho V_i are added in the beginning of chanting. The lengthening and shortening of words, while singing, is done with the help of these Stobhas.

Lopa: Dropping or disappearance of one or more letters. e.g, Pracoday_it becomes Pr_ico Hum D_iyo.

Ēgama: augmentation. It is the insertion of an extra letter within a radical word. For example, Vare_iyam is pronounced as Vare_iiyom.

Mudras used in Sama chant

S_imavedins chant the S_imans with the help of Hastamudras. Mudra recitation is a peculiar feature of Vedic learning. It is believed that the Mudras used in classical arts has their origin from Vedas. Samavedins has special Hastamudras to indicate the seven Svaras or notes. They are marked by the total movement of the palm as used by Kerala Pandits or by the touching of different fingers by the thumb, which is seen among the non-Kerala Pandits.

The Mudras of Nambuthiri Jaiminīya is very different and unique. Wayne Howard notices that "Nambuthiri chanting is melismatic to such a degree that new terminology seems required" The Nambuthiri tradition has been strictly oral and the Samagas are not acquainted with any system of

notation.¹³ In locating the notes, Kerala Brahmins adopt a particular method. They move the entire palm towards upward, downward and sidewise. This practice is called "Kai Kijjuka" (showing the hand). The Namputhiri Simavedins use the term "i½akkam" (shaking) for the total movement of chants. The hand is held at three vertical levels - high (Upari) middle (Madhyam) and low (Adhah). A lower middle level called Pjdam is also used occasionally. The hand is moved to three horizontal positions - right, (DakÀi,a), middle or left (Vjma). The hand may be held in four ways in each position - Malartti PiGikkuka, Kami¾tti PiGikkuka, UpariÀGha PiGikkuka, MaGakki PiGikkuka.

Malartti PiGikkuka - The palm of the hand faces the chanter (to turn face upward).

Kami¾tti PiGikkuka - The back of the hand faces the chanter when the hand is held in the high position (to be turned upside down.).

UpariÀGha PiGikkuka - The hand is turned sideways so that the edge of the little finger faces the onlooker. UpariÀGha means Staying above and PiGikkuka to hold. This position is also called "Cericcū PiGikkuka" where the palm is turned sideways to the left.

MaGakki PiGikkuka - The hand is held in a fist.

A procedure called Ka,akku (Counting) is sometimes observed, while chanting certain Simans. The counting is made by bending forward each finger of the right hand in turn, beginning with the little finger, when the hand is motionless, as mostly done in the Upari position.

In addition to these obligatory movements, which must be performed while chanting a Saman, There are certain optional Mudras which correspond to Anusvara, Visarga, and final ½, É, and ,. Another movement, referred to have Vila''attil (in transverse) is also used and here the thumb is placed upon the nail of the index finger and the arm is moved horizontally back and forth. During chanting, the above mentioned movements are shown even for a single syllable. For example, Agna in Ērcika

¹³ *Samavedic Chant*, Wayne Howard, New Haven & London, Yale Uty., Press, 1997, p. 200-202.

portion becomes Ogn̄yi in Samagana. Here O Gn̄ Yi are three different syllables. To chant "O", the following 15 steps in hand movements (Kai K̄j̄j̄uka) are used.

(1-3) Kanakku, (4) Maḡakki Piḡikkuka, Malartti, Upari, (5) Maḡakki Piḡikkuka. Malartti, Madhyam (6) Malartti, Adhah (7)Malartti, Upari (8) Malartti, Madhyam (9) Malartti, Adhah (10) Malartti, Madhyam (11) Kami³/₄tti, Upari (12) Kami³/₄tti, Adhah (13) Cericcu, Kami³/₄tti, Dak̄i,a, Upari (14) Cericcu, Kami³/₄tti, Madhyam (15) Kami³/₄tti, Adhah. Similarly Gn̄j̄ has to be uttered with 12 movements. Yi has no Svāra.¹⁴

The text of entire Samhita of Jaiminiyasamaveda of Namputiri version either in Malayalam or Sanskrit script was not available in printed format. The present scholar prepared a transcript of Arcika portion comprising 1968 Mantras in Devanagari script based on the handwritten transcripts preserved by the traditional Samaveda Pandits at Panjal, Kerala. The first edition of Arcika portion in printed form in Malayalam script was released in 2007.¹⁵ Later on, the entire Samhita of Jaiminiyasamaveda comprising Arcika, Sama (Gramageyagana) and Candrasama (Aranyageyagana) portions was prepared and edited by the present scholar and published jointly by National Mission for Manuscripts, New Delhi and Nag Publishers, Delhi in 2013, in two volumes.

In 1997, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady started School of Vedic Studies for preservation, promotion and propagation of Vedic Studies in Kerala. As a first step, the authorities decided to preserve the Namputiri Jaiminiya tradition in audio and video CDs. The portions of Arcika, Sama, Candrasama and some Samastutis used in Atiratra and Soamyaga rituals was recorded and preserved. Later on in 2008, the Centre for Vedic Studies got a financial assistance from Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India to remake the already recorded CDs into interactive DVDs and HDD incorporating the text in Devanagari script along with chanting, English translation and

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Appendix to the book, *Samavedadarpanam*, K.A. Ravindran, Kanippayyur Sankaran Nampoothirippad Smaraka Granthasala Series, 2007.

transliteration, graphics and indices. The project will be completed soon. Thus Kerala has a significant mark in the oral and textual tradition of Samaveda.

Yajurveda Tradition

The oral transmission of Yajurveda (Taittirīyasamhitī) was held at certain traditional families in the early period. Later on an institution was established at Iriṃṃlakkuta at Thrissur Dist. and it is functioning today very well. The Prakṛti and Vikṛti pīṣhas are taught with Mudras. There are some methods used for the preservation of this Veda also, conducted as ceremonies at certain temples. Important type of such ceremony is °ttukoṣṣu.¹⁶ This is a ceremonial method like Trisandhī and performed at different temples in Kerala. Minimum 32 Svīdhyaya days are needed to complete such a ritual. At least five persons should take part in this special type of Vedic recitation. It includes five types of recitations ; 1. Ca'ata, 2. Koṣṣu, 3. Padam, 4. Niṣṣoṣṣu Ca'ata and 5. Niṣṣoṣṣu padam. An °ttuṣṣu may consists of first three modes of recitation while all the five types also may occur. If it is the first type, it is called Trisanthī and if second, the Paṃcasandhī.¹⁷

Textual tradition of Yajurveda

Regarding the textual tradition, two important treatises are available. They are *Padapradīpika* and *Saptalakṣāṣa*. *Padapradīpikī* in 140 Karikas deals with the Padapīṣha of Taittirīyasamhitī. The author is Vītsyanīrīya, a belonging to 1667 A.D. He makes rules for the split of words which are doubtful, found in the Samhitī part. The *Saptalakṣāṣa* contains 76 Sutras and 261 Kīrikas in seven chapters (Prakaraṣas), dealing with āamīna, Vila'ghya, Napara, Tapara, Avarī, Ēvarī and Ani'gya. Chapter on āamīna contains 76 Sūtras, Vila'ghya chapter consists of 54 Kīrikas, Napara and Tapara have 40 Kīrikas, Avarī and Ēvarī have 42 and 24 Kīrikas respectively and Ani'gyaparakaraṣa contains 77 verses in different metres.¹⁸ Among the seven chapters, Vila'ghya is written by one Nīrīya, a, Napara and Tapara by āaurisṆnu and Ani'gya by ārivatsī'ka. Thus it can be assumed that at least three authors have contributed to its formation and the whole text is a compilation of

¹⁶ It is a colloquial word and can be split into Ottu and Kotto. Ottu Means Veda and Kotto is a special method of chanting exercise. Also see the article: *Some Special Methods for Preserving the Skill of Rgvedic Recitation in Kerala – Textual and Ritual*, Dr. C.M. Neelakandhan, Anyonyam Smaranika-2014.

¹⁷ For details, see the chapter : *Festivals of Vedic Recitation in Kerala* in the book ; *Srauta Sacrifices in Kerala*, Dr. V. Govindan Nampoothiri, Publication Division, University of Calicut, 2002.

¹⁸ For details vide, see *Padapradīpika* edited with introduction and notes by Dr. N.V.P. Unithiri in 1988. p. V.

all the seven chapters by one editor, giving the name *Saptalakṣa* to the text.¹⁹ Between the two, *Saptalakṣa* is supposed to be older as Vjtsyan;rjya,a, the author of *Padapradepik;* quotes verses from *Saptalakṣa*.²⁰

A survey of the different Vedic traditions – oral and textual - preserved and continuing in Kerala is attempted here. The preservation of these Vedic traditions in the traditional manner is becoming more and more difficult for want of students and teachers. Hence methods of preservation like audio and video documentation of Vedas becomes a necessary factor. Some measures in this regard have been carried out by different institutions. Centre for Vedic Studies at Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady and Vedic Research Centre at Vatakke Matham Brahmaswam, Thrissur have taken steps to preserve these intangible heritage in the above mentioned way. Such attempts will become the only records regarding these valuable traditions, in the future.

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¹⁹ Ibid, p. v,vi.

²⁰ *Vedapathasamraksanam* by Dr. N.V.P. Unthiri, Kanippayyur Sankaran Nambptherippad Smaraka Granthasala, Kunnankulam, pp. 53-56.

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