

THE TAMILIAN CREED

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Antiquity and creed of the ancient Tamils form part of this brief but informative essay. Adigal's proficiency in English is as much as that of his in Tamil. This essay testifies to this fact.

“Wilfred Scawen Blunt says that Huxley had long suspected a common origin of the Egyptians and the Dravidians of India, perhaps a long belt of brown skinned men from India to Spain in very early days.

“This ‘belt’ of Huxley’s, of dark-white and brown-skinned men, this race of brunet-brown-folk, spread even farther than India; they reached to the shores of the Pacific, and they were everywhere the original possessors of the Neolithic culture and the beginners of what we call civilization. It is possible that these Brunet peoples are, so to speak the basic peoples of our modern world.” H.G.Wells in his *‘Outline of History’* P.138.

What had been suspected by the genius of Prof. Huxley and accepted by Mr. H.G. Wells, has recently come off an undoubted fact established by the archaeological evidence which the excavations conducted at Harappa and Mohenjo daro in the Punjab have afforded us. For Sir John Marshall, Director General of Archaeology in India has conclusively shown in his epoch-making work “Mohenjo daro and the Indus Civilization” that the pre-Aryan people, the originators of the Indus Civilisation could be none other than the forefathers of the Dravidian people who at present occupy Southern India and that their culture bears a close resemblance to the culture of the Sumerians and the Egyptians as the result of the commercial intercourse they had had with the latter five thousand years ago. In exposing the error into which some of the oriental

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scholars had fallen when they came to speak of the pre-Aryan inhabitants of India. Sir John Marshall observes,

“They (the orientalist) pictured the pre-Aryans as little more than untutored savages (whom it would have been grotesque to credit with any reasoned scheme of religion or philosophy). Now that our knowledge of them has been revolutionized and we are constrained to recognize them as no less highly civilized-in some respects, indeed, more highly civilized-than the contemporary Sumerians or Egyptians, it behoves us to re-draw the picture afresh and revise existing misconceptions regarding their religion as well as their material culture.” And in another place of his remarkable work he says: “The Indus civilization was pre-Aryan and the Indus language or languages must have been Pre-Aryan also. Possibly, one or other of them (if, as seems likely, there was more than one) was Dravidic. This, for three reasons, seems a most likely conjecture-first, because Dravidic speaking people were the precursors of the Aryans over most of Northern India and were the only people likely to have been in possession of a culture as advanced as the Indus culture; secondly, because on the other side of the Krithar Range and at no great distance from the Indus valley, the Brahu is of Baluchistan have preserved among themselves an island of Dravidic speech which may well be a relic of pre-Aryan times, when Dravidic was perhaps the common language of these parts; thirdly, because the Dravidic languages being agglutinative it is not unreasonable to look for a possible connection between them and the agglutinative language of Sumer in the Indus valley, which as we know, had many other close ties with Sumer.”

So much precaution and reservation with which the above statement made by Sir John Marshall as regards, the high antiquity of the Dravidian people, their language and culture, may seem unnecessary to those who possess an intimate knowledge of ancient Tamil literature, some of the extant works of which such as *Tholkappiam*, *Paripadal*, *Purananooru* and others date from 3500 B.C. to the first century A.D. and bear witness to the high level of civilization which the Tamils reached in pre-Aryan times. Certainly there could have been at that remote period none but one Dravidian language spoken not only all over India but even beyond its frontiers, and that language could have been no other than Tamil which still lives among twenty million people in all its literary glory and

usefulness. Except Tamil no other Dravidian language possesses such vast, antique, varied, original, valuable literature, the literatures of the other few cultivated Dravidian tongues such as Kanarese, Telugu and Malayalam being not more than seven or eight hundred years old at most and even these consist of works either translated from Sanscrit or written in imitation of some Sanscrit works, it is an admitted fact that that language alone which possesses grammar and literature that forms the only criterion to estimate the height of civilization to which the people who owned them had attained. If in India of pre-Aryan times, there had existed no literary work that could be brought forward from any of the existing Dravidian languages except Tamil, then it is as certain as two and two makes four, that that language did not exist at that time or if it could be assumed that it did exist, it was not cultivated by a civilized people in any way. For the life of a civilized nation cannot get on without the cultivation of its language and the production of a varied literature. If Sir John Marshall had had a first hand knowledge of the *Tholkappiam* and some other ancient classics of Tamil, he would have easily shown in corroboration of what he stated as regards the pre-Aryan antiquity of one of the Dravidian language, that Tamil alone, and not any other as he vaguely affirmed, must have been the language spoken and cultivated by the pre-Aryan inhabitants of the Indus valley. Still, he has benefited the historians of the antique past by producing solid and substantial evidence in proof of the Tamilian civilization which was contemporaneous with the civilizations of the Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Sumerians and other ancient nations of the west. Fortunately we are now in a position strong and unshakable to correlate with the above archaeological evidence, the proofs afforded by the ancient and genuine literary works of the Tamil language.
