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A Kadan Creation-Myth.

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1. Introductory Note.

Since B. S. GUHA established Negrito racial affinities among the Kadar of Cochin¹, anthropological interest for this small tribe in the south Western Ghats has been considerably increased. Kadan² sociology and their primordial system of food-gathering economy had already attracted the attention of ethnographers³ at the beginning of the XX-ieth century and the tribe has ever since been considered as representative of India's most primeval groups in respect of race and sociology⁴.

It is, therefore, surprising that the religious conceptions of the Kadar⁵ and their belief in a definite creation-myth of the world has so far found

¹ B. S. GUHA, *Nature* (1928), p. 121 ; (1929), p. 123 ; *Census of India* (1931) and : *Racial Elements in the Population*, Bombay, 1944, p. 9.

² The word is derived from the Dravidian root *kadu*, forest, meaning a forest-man. The plural form of the word is *Kadar* ; neither "*Kadirs*" nor "*Kadars*". It is not a Kadan word. The significance of the Kadan-word *Matté* (*Mattalé*) and *Matta* (*Mattala*) will be discussed in a book on The Kadar of Cochin, now in preparation.

³ E. THURSTON and RANGACHARI : *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Madras, 1906, pp. 21/III ff. and L. K. ANANTHAKRISHNA AYYAR : *The Cochin Tribes and Castes*, Madras, 1909, pp. 4/I ff. ; comp. also T. K. SANKARA MENON : *Census of India* (1931), Vol. XXI, pp. 284 ff.

⁴ J. H. HURTON : *Caste in India*, Cambridge 1946, p. 7.

⁵ *Kadar* is the plural form of *Kadan*, v. F.-N. No. 2.

little interest in their scientific descriptions and was held to be scarcely, if at all, different from those of their aboriginal neighbours and even from the Depressed Classes in the plains from whom the Kadar are no doubt distinguished racially and in their social organization.

Already before I had come in personal contact with the tribe I suggested the possibility of the existence, under the guise of their present conventional *Kali*-worship, of a genuine Kadan religion with a female deity in a prominent position⁶.

Since I began ethnographic field-work among the Kadar, over a year ago, early in 1947, various features of original Kadan religious conceptions have been encountered by me, centred, as it were, round a creation-of-the-world-myth which is the object of the following description. The Kadar are even more reluctant to talk to outsiders on the subject of the creation-myth properly than on that of its central figure: the divine couple *Malaway* and *Malakaratti*⁷; apparently because they feel more self-conscious about this quite original Kadan creation-myth than about the mere name of gods which are less unfamiliar to the people from the plains. The peculiar and all too rapid mode of culture contact between the Kadar and the civilization from the plains will have to account for that self-consciousness and shyness.

The tribe had lived, for uncounted generations, in almost complete isolation on one of the densest and most inaccessible parts of the Western Ghats, half-way between Polachi and Chalakudy, where the Coimbatore- and South Malabar-Districts border the Chittur Taluq of Cochin State, until the construction of a timber transport tram-line suddenly opened the very centre of the Kadan territory in the beginning of the XX-*i*eth century. A great number of coolies, both Tamil and Malayalam speaking, tradesmen, minor officials and forest employees were rushed to the place, especially during the time of the construction of the tram-line. They were certainly not the type of people who would show any interest, or love, for the mythological beliefs of a shy and primitive hill tribe, but exhibited much rather contempt and disgust. If the number of the invaders from the plains decreased later, the influence of their conceptions and prejudices on the Kadar was not less intensive. Contractors to whom the exploitation of the forest products is being rented on lease maintain their agents in the hills and some of the Kadar themselves are now being employed in the Forest Administration. One of these, with whom I had wandered about the Kadan territory, once told me chuckingly that he could well remember his father one day packing off bag and baggage and shifting the whole family to a remote place in the jungle for the sole reason that he had found some rice grains in a human excrement; — a clear indication of a low-countryman's presence! Such was the attitude of the Kadar to low-country-folk only a generation ago. This rapid change from former isolation and

⁶ EHRENFELS: *Mother-right in India*, MILFORD, 1944, p. 46.

⁷ ANANTHAKRISHNA AYYAR, *op. cit.*, p. 11/1 refers to *Malawazhi* (ruler of the hills) as "another vague sylvan deity whom they (*i. e.*: Kadar) worship".

fear of the outsider, to the present constant contact, resulted in the desire to imitate the civilization of the plains and produced, in the Kadar, soon an inferiority-complex regarding their own culture-type. They now show and talk as much as possible of the newly acquired "civilization", trying to assimilate their habits to those of the plains-people and feel self-conscious about everything in their customs that differs from the new standard.

This attitude, most probably, was the main reason why the simple, unspectacular, but yet very original Kadan creation-myth has so far escaped scientific attention.

The continuation of the tradition is likewise being neglected now. Though most Kadar know, even nowadays, the names of the main figures in their creation-myth — *Malavay* and *Malakuratti* — few only are still able to give a full account of its entire narrative and much less will be willing to do so, making an excuse by saying, for instance, that the old story simply referred to the appearance of *Hanuman* in these parts of the country, or that the two gods were really no creators at all, but merely reformers. Kadar are now loath of talking of the real old myth because they are aware of the fact that it is different from what plains-people generally believe. It was, therefore, only by the chance of good luck that I had gathered an inkling of the Kadan tribal gods and a tradition, connected with them, which was later followed by fuller accounts of the entire myth on the part of older folks.

Slight variations in these accounts are being discussed in a monograph on "The Kadar of Cochin and their Neighbours" which is now under preparation. They do not, however, appear sufficiently important as to justify their full inclusion in the present paper.

2. The Creation-Myth.

Karimalai (Gopuram) Kovil is the name of a dominant, double-pronged mountain in the very centre of the hills in which the Kadar roam. The name means Black Hill Sanctuary referring, as some say, to the black clouds by which it is often covered and, according to others, to the black rocks on its northern slopes. These rise from the southern shore of the Chalakudy river, near its confluence with the smaller Manjakutti river which plays also a rôle in the Kadan mythology, as we shall see presently, similarly as the hill is surrounded by legendary tales.

On the rocky ridges leading to these northern slopes of the Karimalai Hill, are two rather insignificant holes in the ground, just broad enough for a man to pass through, but not deep enough to give a real shelter.

It is round these holes that the Kadan creation-myth is centred and, by the standards of our logic, these holes must have existed before the rest of the now visible world had been created, according to the Kadan myth. It was the "Ocean in the West which was rising and rising until it had filled all the interior crevices of the earth and came as high as the two holes. This was the reason why two divine beings, *Malavay* and *Malakuratti*, had to

leave their customary abode below the ground and came out of these two holes, to appear on the surface of the earth. They came naked, thus as we Kadar all had once been, and they came through these holes". It is therefore that the holes, and the rocky place round them, is known as *Karazhi Purapara*, — an expression of the Kadan dialect which may best be rendered as Without-clothes-(born)-rock.

Beyond this there is very little known about the nature of the divine couple. They were two and they were naked. After their appearance on the surface they created the first human man and woman. This was a Kadan couple who married, had children and thus became the first ancestors of mankind.

One of the variations which I heard in the accounts given of the myth, was found in that of an old Kadan woman, Veluppu, who said that *Karia Muppan* (Black Old Man) had, on his way through the forest, come across the two deities *Malavay* and *Malakuratti* and gave them clothes to wear. He also, she thought, advised them to create the first Kadan man and woman. This story made me believe that there was evidence of an older tradition, forgotten by all other Kadar of today, which referred to the belief in a single creator deity under the name of *Karia Muppan*. On further investigation I found, however, that such an interpretation seems erroneous and this, mainly, for the following three reasons :

1. Old Veluppu, among all Kadar with whom I have so far discussed the myth, was the only one who mentioned *Karia Muppan* in it. But even she stated quite definitely that it was *Malavay* and *Malakuratti*, not *Karia Muppan*, who had created the first human beings and the rest of the world. She said that *Karia Muppan* had simply seen them and gave them clothes.

2. None of all other Kadar, with whom I discussed Veluppu's statement, appear to have ever heard that *Karia Muppan* had given clothes, or advise, to the divine couple.

3. *Karia Muppan* is a historical figure among the Kadar round Parambikulam. He was a Kadan who collected forest products and sold them in the plains. "This was a long time ago, before there were any contractors or contractor's shops and even before the timber transport tram-line was built. Yet this was not so long ago that he could have seen *Malavay* and *Malakuratti* appearing from the holes of *Karazhi Purapara*" remarked a responsible seeming elderly Kadan. He thought that Veluppu might have heard a tale of *Karia Muppan*, in her young days, and must have later mixed it up with the creation myth. "*Karia Muppan*", it was said, "used to roam about a lot in the forests whilst collecting forest products and thus may have come to see *Malavay* and *Malakuratti* without any clothes. It was probably this what he said and what old Veluppu vaguely remembers now". But all agreed that he could not have advised the divine couple in the matter of the creation of either the first human beings, or the world at large.

The divine couple, then, created not only the first man and woman, but also "the big mountains, the trees and all other things".

Three different strains of narrations follow the description of this first stage in the creation-myth. It is somewhat difficult to reconcile these three later parts with each other and it is therefore that each of them has to be recounted separately here.

3. The World after Creation.

a) A Daughter of Divine Nature ?

Atwacherry (*Attuvasseri*)- *Ammal* (Mother), is a goddess, or a female spirit, who dwells in the big banyan trees which surround a pool in the Manjakutty river, near its source on the Cochin-Coimbatore border. We have seen that this river joins the Kuryarkutty river near the *Karazhi Purapara* holes from where the divine couple, *Malavay* and *Malakuratti*, emerged. It might, therefore, seem geographically suggested that *Atwacherry-Ammal* was the divine mother of the creator-couple. The Kadar, however, are unanimous and quite definite in saying that she is the daughter of *Malavay* and *Malakuratti*. There is only divergence of opinion as to the question, whether she is to be considered as the creation, or the child, of *Malavay* and *Malakuratti*. But the general opinion seems to tend to the former interpretation.

Kadar show generally an affectionate kind of respect to *Atwacherry Ammal* and it might almost seem that she was a tribal mother-goddess, were it not for the fact that an elaborate *Kali-puja* nowadays takes a more prominent part in the Kadan religion. This feast in honour of *Kali* is performed with a ritual, varying but little, from that of similar celebrations in the plains. This *puja* is centred round a pool in the Chalakudy river, not far from the *Karazhi Purapara* holes (from which *Malavay* and *Malakuratti* had come). An image of *Kali* is said to have been immersed in this river-pool "long ago". Ever since then the *puja* is being conducted and seems to distract some of the attentions which might previously have been directed to *Atwacherry-Ammal*. There is, however, also a small temple in ruins, near *Atwacherry-Ammal's* pool in the Manjakutty river. Though it shows every sign of comparatively recent origin, it is generally held, by Kadar, to have been there, "since the beginning of the world". It is associated with *Atwacherry-Ammal*, or considered to be her work. Especially the figures on the temple and alleged letters (of which I could find no traces) are said to have been made by the goddess, as proof for which an old Kadan told me that they, the Kadar, never carved in stone, nor wrote letters.

Though both: *Atwacherry-Ammal* and *Kali*, are being worshipped at river-pools, only about 4 hours walk from each other, the Kadar yet differentiate quite clearly between the two *ammas*, of whom the one is closely associated with the divine creator-couple, whilst the other, *Kali*, is said to be worshipped, though since "a long time", after her image had been brought from the plains and immersed into the river only. There is no connection, or relation, between *Kali* and the divine creator-couple; whilst that between them and *Atwacherry-Ammal* is not being questioned, though some hold her to be a child, others the creation of the divine couple.

b) The Behavior of the Mountains.

In all stories, relating to the creation of the world, Kadar lay special stress on the mountains. Soon after they had come to exist in this world, however, the mountains began to quarrel among themselves. Various and mutually contradicting stories are being recounted, in all of which the double-pronged *Karimalai* Hill plays an important rôle. According to one of them the two joined peaks of the mountain represent two giants who fought a fierce battle whilst, according to others, they are brother and sister and the battle was fought with two mountains, farther east, *Perungunnu* and *Mayangunnu*, who had proposed to the sister-part of *Karimalai* as a bride.

Neither the Kadan tribe as such, or any individual human beings, appear in these narrations about the mountains and their early quarrels. I could also not find any traces of religious awe, love, or dislike for these superhuman mountain giants. They seem to have this in common with their Greek cousins that they populated the world in a very early phase of her history but had little, if anything, in common with human beings.

Though these mountains are described as men and women, brother, sister, bridegroom and bride, I was yet unable to form a clear picture about their mythological past. Were they living, moving beings who had later been petrified as mountains, or was it that the mountains used to move about? No decided answer could be elucidated to this question, through from one story it would appear that the mountains as such are considered as living beings. It is said that *Perungunnu* in the East is smaller than *Karimalai*, because the former bowed down to avoid a missile, thrown by the latter, whilst the northern slopes of *Karimalai* are steep and show the bare rock, because a missile, thrown by *Perungunnu*, had hit *Karimalai* there. There is also a pit on the *Karimalai* Hill from which, it is said, blood can still occasionally be seen flowing.

c) The First Kadar and the Deterioration of their Living Conditions.

Later tribal "history" in the shape of Hinduized myths, mainly dealing with the relations of the Kadan tribe and other castes of Hindu society⁸, can be omitted in this connection as these stories bear all the marks of recent borrowing from the plains-people and can hardly be considered as part of the original Kadan conceptions relating to world-creation.

A bearing on the question of world-creation, however, has the Kadan description of the Golden Age, linking it up with the primeval stage of human life on earth, such as the creation by *Malavay* and *Malakuratti* had brought about.

At this stage, it is said, life was very easy. Not only was the forest full of fruit-bearing trees, well within reach of the human hand, but also black monkeys, a favourite delicacy to the Kadar, were easily available

⁸ A full account of these tales and their significance to present Kadan religious conceptions will be given in *The Kadar of Cochin*, a book now in preparation.

because the monkey's tails were, in those days, so enormously long that it was not difficult to catch them whenever one felt like feasting on roast monkey. This ideal state of plenty and comfort would no doubt have continued had it not been for the foolishness of some mischievous little boys and girls who, without any necessity or provocation, set one day out for the jungle and began to dig small pits into the ground. There was no need, at all, for this. Yet they persisted in digging for roots and even used sticks for the purpose. As the children began to tear out the roots from their places, these became tougher and harder every day. It was no more possible to dig roots with bare hands and soon the simple, un-armoured digging stick, the *parakole*, which is only sharpened and hardened on one end, did not do either. So it became necessary to use the *kooramkole*, a digging stick which is on one side clad with a sharp stone edge. But the trouble did not stop even there. Fruit-bearing trees began to disappear and so did long-tailed monkeys. Life became increasingly more difficult. The more the people had to rely on roots, instead of fruits and monkeys, the harder it became to dig them up. A time came when stone edges would not do anymore and iron had to be substituted instead. It is since then that the iron-tipped digging stick is being used by the Kadar.

This myth is usually being related with the inclusion of latest developments, when, according to Kadan conception, the plains-people had become so numerous and consequently so poor that they began to creep up the hills and to construct a tram-line with a view of bringing down all the riches from the hills. It is further related how the Kadar declined in number, as a consequence of the plains-peoples' appearance in their hills, and how the benevolent Government of Cochin opened schools for the Kadan children who had by now become so few and so rare that it was necessary to put them into schools. This part of the myth, being no more connected with the creation-story, may, however, be omitted from the present account.

I did not come across any hint at the idea that the digging children violated the earth, not to speak of an earth-deity, and therefore brought about the hardening of the roots and the deterioration of life generally, nor could I find any indication of a conscious connection between digging these pits into the ground and sex, or sexual life. It is invariably stated that "boys and girls" were digging those pits, but no hint to any sexual connection between them was ever encountered by me, whilst discussing this myth.

4. Originality of the Myth.

A short review of the myths relating to world-creation or first tribal history among aboriginal neighbours of the Kadar, and related castes, will help us to appreciate the Kadan version of the myth as an indication of this tribe's originality in religious matters.

Malai Malasar are a food-gathering hill-tribe, occasionally engaged in a sort of "shifting gardening", nowadays mostly dependent on either forest-administration or coolie-labour in tea- and coffee-plantations. Socio-

logically they are almost as simple and bilateral in their organization, as the Kadar, though there are somewhat more traces of matrilineal institutions, among them. The Malai Malasar in the neighbourhood of the Kadar hold that the world had been created by *Atwacherry Ammal* and do *puja* to her at the pool of Manjakutty. They know of *Malavay* and *Malakuratti* and are also aware of the fact that the Kadar believe them to have come through the two holes of *Karazhi Purapara* when a flood had filled all space below the surface of the earth, yet they say: "Those are the gods of the Kadar. Not ours. Our goddess was *Atwacherry Ammal* who has created the world." Some Malai Malasar told me that it was not this goddess, but Lord *Isvaran*, who had created the world and that he was the brother of *Kali*. To *Kali* these Malai Malasar do *puja*, not to *Atwacherry Ammal* who, according to these informants, seems to be worshipped more as a local goddess. More agreement as to who actually had created the world, was found among Malai Malasar regarding their tribal history of mythical character. They say that their original homes were in the plains. One day a tribesman watched a bird coming from the hills, killed it and found seeds of a hill reed in its bowels. These seeds tasted so well that the tribe decided to migrate to the hills.

The Muduvar are a tribe of energetic hillmen who are devoted to their higher form of shifting cultivation in which they raise vegetables, rice- and millet-crops on patches of land which they have previously well prepared with the help of axes. Their social system is based on a complicated five-class-organization of matrilineal and exogamous kinship groups. They are also racially different from both, Kadar and Malai Malasar. The Muduvar claim to be *Malai Nayar*, Hill Nayar, the descendants of them have now become the leading community in the plains of Kerala.

The religious conceptions, and especially the creation-myth, of the Muduvar reflect the degree of specialization and, generally, the difference of their cultural past, as compared to the primordial conceptions of Kadar. The world, according to the Muduvar, was created by *Shandiatu Bhagavati*, a goddess whose original seat had been the big town of Madura on the eastern (Tamil) side of the Western Ghats. A violent flood destroyed the city and, with it, the temple of the goddess. It was therefore that *Shandiatu Bhagavati* left the plains and, taking her children on her back, migrated to the hills in the Western Ghats. It is also therefore that the children of the mother-goddess are known as Muduvar, a word which is derived from *mudu*, Malayalam: back.

I found that the creation-myth of the Kadar was known to more experienced and elderly Muduvar but, like the Malai Malasar, they also said that *Malavay* and *Malakuratti* were the gods of the Kadar, but had nothing to do with them. To them there appeared neither identity nor similarity in the two flood-myths. The Kadan flood filled the crevices of the earth whilst theirs destroyed a temple in a big city.

The Malayar are a tribe of people in the lower ranges of the Cochin Hills, who have become so assimilated to the lower classes of plains-people

that it is little surprising to find them without any creation- or tribal- myth of their own. But it is perhaps significant that they consider themselves as the children of a divine couple, though it is in their case the generally recognized *Siva* and *Parvathi*⁹ of the plains-people. Those of the Malayar with whom I discussed the Kadan creation-myth, however, knew it well but did not acknowledge any connection between their own divine ancestor-couple: *Siva* and *Parvathi*, with that of the Kadar: *Malavay* and *Malakuratti*. This does not, of course, prove that there had not been such a real connection, or in fact assimilation, of the latter under the names and attributes of the former.

Among a group of even more assimilated semi-tribal classes of the plains, whose former connection with the hills and also with the Kadar as such is suggested on sociological and racial grounds, a god is worshipped under the same or a similar name as the *Malavay* of the Kadar. There are, however, several significant differences between the *Malavay* of these plains-people and that of the Kadar who associate *Malavay* always with *Malakuratti*.

The Panans, a numerically small and socially depressed class of magicians, sorcerers and devil-drivers, hold *Malavay* in respect and consider him as a hill-god, as the name indicates, *mala*, being the Dravidian word for hill. The Panans are said to worship him in a particular rite, in which a magical design is made round a pit, dug in the ground, where one of the devotees will be buried. During this burial, a tube seems to be inserted to afford the buried man breathing air, though all pretend that he is fully buried alive and that a fire, lighted over the refilled pit, proves the earnestness of the ordeal. After the lightening of the fire, *mantras* will be recited in honour of *Malavay* for half an hour and more, after which the devotee will be exhumed. The ceremony is considered as a test of the devotee's belief in *Malavay*. L. K. ANANTHAKRISHNA AYYAR does not include this rite into the description of the Panan religion but states that they worship, among other deities, also "*Malankorathi* and *Kali*"¹⁰. The Panans, he tells us, are "in some places called Malayans and they may be the descendants of that hill tribe who have settled in the plains"¹¹ (mentioned above as the children of *Siva* and *Parvathi*). The Panans, however, do not connect their *Malavay* or *Malakuratti* with any myth relating to the creation of the world.

The Nayadis, a depressed class of hunters and beggars in Northern Cochin and South Malabar worship "*Mallan*, *Malavazhi*, and *Parakutty*", a male god who brings them game and protects them against the attacks of wild animals¹². Among "Settled Nayadis" in Kunnamkulam, a village in the north-west corner of Cochin State, not far from the sea-shore, nobody

⁹ AYYAR, *op. cit.*, p. 29/I.

¹⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 178/I.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 171/I.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 53/I.

could give me any details about the nature of the god whose name was pronounced as *Malavazhi* (Ruler of the Hills). There were no indications of the worship of *Malakuratti*, or of any other *Shakti* of *Malavazhi*.

Among Parayar of the place I found, however, two conical stones on a platform, in front of their hut, said to represent *Malavay* and *Karinkutti* (Black Child). This *Karinkutti* is again not a goddess but a male god, affectionately worshipped by various Depressed Classes in the plains. There was no traditional connection, among the Parayar of that place, between the two gods, represented by two stones, and a divine couple, nor were they connected with a creation-myth. The Parayar women of the region perform a ceremonial dance in honour of the two gods on the second Friday of the Malayalam month Vrichigam in October.

5. Summary and Analysis of the Myth and its Setting.

1. The account of world-creation, as such, is perhaps the most outstanding feature in the entire complex of the Kadan myth, as compared to accounts of neighbouring Aborigines, or some depressed classes in the plains who, on account of their Negrito affinities, may be considered as racial cousins of the Kadar. These classes of people either believe in the generally accepted Hindu mythology, so far as the creation of the world is concerned, or else do not bother about this problem at all.

2. The character of the creators, as a closely united divine couple, distinguishes the Kadan myth on the second place from that of the two other groups. With the only exception of the semi-tribal Malayar, who consider themselves as children of *Siva* and *Parvathi*, all other aboriginal neighbours of the Kadar believe either in a male (Lord *Isvaran* of some Malai Malasar), or more often in a female ultimate creator, if not of the world as such, so at least of their tribe. Panan, Nayadi and even Parayar do also worship a god, called *Malavay* or *Malavazhi*, but do not associate him with either world- or tribal- creation-myths.

3. The subterranean flood as the immediate cause for the creation of the world constitutes the third feature in the Kadan legend which distinguishes it from those of their neighbours. There is a flood-myth also in the Muduvar-mythology. But whilst it destroyed there a big city and the temples of a mother-goddess, it filled, in the case of the Kadar, the interior of the earth, thus driving the divine creator-couple to the surface and causing them to bring the actually visible world into being.

4. The fourth original element in the Kadan myth is the reference to a concrete place, in the midst of their present habitations of the tribe, where the divine couple is held to have come from below the ground to the surface of the earth and to have created the world. If there are places mentioned, in the myth of other tribes of the region, they are references to far away localities in the plains.

5. The story of the mountains, fighting as giants just after the creation of the world and, probably, even before the appearance of human

beings, is the fifth element in the Kadan-myth which is original and peculiar to them at least in the south Western Ghats.

6. The sixth characteristic element in the Kadan myth is the elaborately described aboriginal Golden Age of which there is no parallel among the neighbouring hill tribes in Cochin.

Whilst these six features in the Kadan world-creation differentiate their original *weltanschauung* from that of their neighbours, there is a

7. Seventh element which constitutes a link between the Kadan conceptions and those of all other indigenous people in Kerala. This is the prominent position of *Atwacherry-Ammal*. She would appear to be a typical Mother Goddess, were it not that she is definitely stated to be the daughter of the divine creator-couple, or else, has been created by them. It is not unlikely that the worship of this goddess constitutes a later addition to the original Kadan religion. If this is so, she is no doubt of higher age, among the Kadar, than *Kali* who is now being worshipped but in no way considered as connected with the divine creator couple. The important position of the motherly aspect in the Kadan godhead finds expression not only in this, but also in the close association of *Malakuratti*, the female partner of *Malavay*, without whom he is never being mentioned or approached in prayers.

The first and third named characteristics of the Kadan-myth: 1. Reference to world-creation; 3. Primordial Flood-Myth, appear to be generally characteristic of those among primitive tribes who belong to a sociologically bilateral and economically food-gathering type of civilization¹³; conditions by which the Kadan culture is in fact characterized. It thus appears that Kadan religious conceptions, apart from their sociological and racial affinities, justify my previously proposed selection of the tribe as representative of the primordial culture-type in S. W.-India¹⁴, though on grounds which had not been known to me then, so far as religion is concerned¹⁵.

A specific similarity of the Kadan creation-myth with those of Semang and other Negritoide peoples in S. E.-Asia is suggested especially by the second-mentioned features, namely equal representation of the male and the female element in the world-creating deity (deities), and also in the close association of this creator-couple with an ancestral couple of the tribe. This fact fits, no doubt, in the general picture of the Kadan tribe and especially the similarity of their bamboo-comb ornamentation with that of S. E.-Asiatic Negritos to which already THURSTON had referred¹⁶.

The creation-myth of the Kadar, apart from its genuine beauty and wealth of original features, may yield a clue to the cultural affinities of the probably oldest stratum in the aboriginal population of India.

¹³ P. W. SCHMIDT: *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee*, 7 vls., Münster i. W., 1912-1940.

¹⁴ Mother-right in India, *op. cit.*, pp. 44 seq.

¹⁵ The present observations are the result of ethnographic field-work which I began in March 1947 that is six years after the publication of the afore-mentioned book.

¹⁶ *Op. cit.*, pp. 27/III, seq.

It is regrettable that this beautiful and original myth is fast disappearing from the memory of the younger generations among Kadar who fear that the belief in their tribal gods stigmatizes them as "uncivilized" and therefore are inclined to let the old myth come into oblivion altogether.

The preservation of this ancient legend should be on the heart of every Indian, proud of the Motherland's all-comprising genius of civilization, of which this creation-myth is a still surviving monument. Its inclusion into the syllabus of Kadan schools is a part of the rehabilitation programme which has been submitted to the consideration of the Government of Cochin.

Appendix.

Only after completion of this article, in the Codassery Hills, I was able to consult more literature on the Semang and found EVANS' reference to (a) subterranean (female) mythological figures, (b) subterranean rising of a flood and (c) changes in the structure of the ground. These points appear to be in closer connection with the Kadan myth, especially the points 3 and 5 of Part 5 in this paper, as I had realized at the time of writing. I therefore wish to draw attention to these similarities now; especially as *Malavay* and *Malakuratti* of the Kadar lived under the ground, before the flood drove them to the surface, whilst among the Semang, it is "the three Grandmothers who live under the earth" and "make the waters rise from under the earth, causing *henweh*", which, in EVANS' foot-note 4 on p. 142 is explained as: "rising from below the earth accompanied by storms and subsidence of the ground" (IVOR H. N. EVANS: *The Negritos of Malaya*, Cambridge 1947, p. 142). The subterranean residence of these Grandmothers reminds us not only of the subterranean residence of the Kadan creator-couple, but also of the predominance of the female element in Kadan religion, to which we referred whilst discussing the position of *Atwacherry-Ammal* in Kadan belief. The rising of the waters from under the earth is being caused by the Grandmothers of the Semang, whilst it causes the Kadan divine couple to come to the surface. The subsidence of the ground, caused by the Grandmothers, finds a parallel in the fighting that took place, between the big mountains, shortly after the creation of the world, according to Kadan belief; — a fighting which was accompanied by the tumbling down of rocks and entire parts of mountains, in some cases, and the lowering of hilltops, in others.

These points show a closer resemblance between the religious conceptions of the Kadar and the Negritos of Malaya, as I realized when writing the present article.
