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MUSLIM ARTS COLLEGE
Thiruvithancode, Kanyakumari, Tamilnadu, India.
LEMURIA RESEARCH FORUM



FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that *Dr/Mr/MS/MS* **G. P. Pushpavaj**, *Assistant Professor of History*, *Muslim Arts College*, *Thiruvithancode*..... participated in the 1st International Conference of Lemuria Research Forum on "Revelations of Submerged Continent" held at **MUSLIM ARTS COLLEGE, Thiruvithancode**, on 13-10-2021 and presented a paper entitled... *Historical Evolution of the Theory of Lemuria*.....

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HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF THE THEORY OF LEMURIA

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Abstract

Lemuria is a place considered to be submerged into the Indian Ocean thousands of years back. It is called as Kumarikkandam in Tamil language. As most of the scholars, researchers and geographers in Tamil Nadu and even some of the world renowned scholars accept this theory, some others are propounding a separate theory of another land known as Gondwana land. As the sources are there, though in meager, to prove the above two theories, the contradiction prevails all through the years from the 19th century. In this article, using the given opportunity, the authors share their thoughts on the historical evolution of the theory of Lemuria. It is a historical narration just to understand emergence and development of the concept of Lemuria continent.

Introduction:

As a part of knowing the origin of earth and the universe, many scholars propounded many theories and concepts. Galileo Galilei the "father of modern physics" proved the theory of Copernican heliocentrism (Earth rotating daily and revolving around the sun) the astronomical model developed by Nicolaus Copernicus in 1543. This model positioned the Sun at the center of the Universe with Earth and the other planets orbiting around it in circular paths at uniform speed. Later it was modified by epicycles. The Copernican model displaced the geocentric model that had placed Earth at the center of the Universe. With this many new theories on the origin and genesis of the earth and the life including the human beings had evolved.

Charles Lyell, Scottish geologist was largely responsible for the general acceptance of the view that all features of the Earth's surface are produced by physical, chemical, and biological processes through long periods of geological time. The concept was called uniformitarianism. Charles Lyell was probably the most famous geologist alive in the mid-nineteenth century. He had a great inspiration for famous scientists like Charles Darwin. For Lyell, continents could rise and fall, but they couldn't move. The distribution of land and sea in

particular region did not endure throughout all time, but it became sea in those parts where it was land, and again it became land where it was sea. These changes were taken place according to a certain system, and within a certain period. Sunken continents and land bridges that had crumbled into the sea became the most popular solution to a riddle that scientists of all stripes were desperate to solve.

Concept of Gondwana:

Eduard Suess an Austrian geologist laid the basis for paleogeography and tectonics—i.e., the study of the architecture and evolution of the Earth's outer rocky shell. In 1857 he published a book entitled "The Origin of the Alps". In this book he argued about the concept of horizontal movements of the lithosphere, the rocky outer shell of the earth. At that time, the vertical uplift of the lithosphere was the widely accepted concept. According to the vertical uplift of the lithosphere, mountain ranges were formed by the folding and thrust faulting of the rocky outer shell of the earth. Further, Suess in his four-volume treatise on the geologic structure of the entire planet, "The Face of the Earth" discussed in detail about the tectonic plates of the earth including the Gondwanaland, a supercontinent that once consisted of South America, Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, India, Australia, and Antarctica. Thus he became the first one to propose the theory of Gondwanaland.

This concept of Gondwana was later expanded by Alexander Du Toit, a South African geologist, in 1937 in his book "Our Wandering Continents".

According to the above theories, Gondwana was a supercontinent that considered to be separated from the supercontinent, Pangaea that was considered to be existed during the late Paleozoic and early Mesozoic eras. Geologists are of the opinion that the Gondwana supercontinent existed from the Neoproterozoic era, about 550 million years ago and began to break up during the Jurassic era, about 180 million years ago. The continent of Gondwana was named after the Gondwana region of central India which is derived from Sanskrit for "forest of the Gonds". The name had been at first used in a geological context by H.B. Medlicott in 1872. The term "Gondwanaland" is preferred by some scientists in order to make a clear distinction between the region in India and the supercontinent. The remnants of Gondwana make up around two-thirds of today's continental area, including South America, Africa, Antarctica, Australia, the Indian Subcontinent, Zealandia, and Arabia.

Concept of Lemuria: Simultaneously in 1864, Philip Lutley Selater propounded a new theory of Lemuria. Selater was specifically perplexed by the fauna of Madagascar. There are dozens of different lemur species on Madagascar but none at all on mainland Africa. At the same time there are related creatures in India and Southeast Asia. Therefore, he proposed that a sunken landmass must have linked Madagascar with India in the past and christened it as Lemuria. In 1870, Ernst Haeckel promoted Selater's lost continent from lemur land bridge to potential birthplace of the human race. Soon respectable figures including Friedrich Engels, E.M. Forster, and H.G. Wells began to make references to the continent in their books.

The idea of Lemuria was later incorporated into the philosophy of Theosophy and subsequently into general fringe belief. However, the theories about Lemuria became untenable when the scientific community accepted Alfred Wegener's theory of continental drift in 1960s. This theory was at first presented to the German Geological Society by Alfred Wegener, the German Polar researcher, in 1912. But the idea of Lemuria continent lived on in the popular imagination, especially in relation to the Theosophist tradition. The revivalist movement merged the concept of Lemuria with the submerged kingdom of Kumari Kandam mentioned in sangam literature. For the Tamil reformers, Lemuria was

Kumari Kandam, or the Kumari continent. They were on the opinion that, the people who lived on this lost continent or land bridge, the supposed birthplace of humanity, spoke Tamil. According to them, Kumari Kandam was the place where the first two Tamil literary academies (sangams) were organised during the Pandyan reign. They claimed Kumari Kandam as the cradle of civilisation to prove the antiquity of the Tamil language and culture. A few Tamil writers also depicted Gondwanaland as Kumari Kandam.

Tamil writers were introduced to the concept of Lemuria in the 1890s, when in 1885 the Indian Civil Service officer Charles D. Maclean published *The Manual of the Administration of the Madras Presidency*, in which he theorized Lemuria as the proto-Dravidian urheimat. In a footnote in this work, he mentioned Ernst Haeckel's Asia hypothesis, which theorized that the humans originated in a land now submerged in the Indian Ocean. Maclean added that this submerged land was the homeland of the proto-Dravidians. He also suggested that the progenitors of the other races must have migrated from Lemuria to other places via South India. This theory was also cursorily discussed by other colonial officials like Edgar Thurston and Herbert Hope. In 1898, J. Nallasami Pillai published an article in the philosophical-literary journal *Siddhanta Deepika* (aka *The Truth of Light*). He wrote about the theory of a lost continent in the Indian Ocean (i.e. Lemuria), mentioning that the Tamil legends speak of floods which destroyed the literary works produced during the ancient sangams.

Concept of Kumari Kandam:

Between the 1890s and the 1940s, the idea of a lost Tamil homeland would go from being the province of editorials in philosophical journals to a key part of the radical reformulation of Tamil identity. The term Kumari Kandam ("Kumari continent") was first used to describe Lemuria in the 1930s. However, the word "Kumari Kandam" first appear in *Kanda Puranam*, a 15th-century Tamil version of the *Skanda Purana*, written by Kachiappa Sivacharyara. The *Andakosappadalam* section of *Kanda Puranam* describes that there are many worlds, each having several continents, which in turn, have several kingdoms. Paratan, the ruler of one such kingdom, had eight sons and one daughter. He divided his kingdom into nine parts and the part ruled by his daughter Kumari came to be known as Kumari Kandam after her. Tamil scholars like M. Arunachalam, D. Savariroyan Pillai and Kandiah

Pillai emphasized the word "Kumari" (meaning virgin or maiden) symbolizes the purity of Tamil language and culture, before their contacts with the other ethnic groups such as the Indo-Aryans.

Further, Tamil writers like Somasundara Bharati came up with several other names for the lost continent. In 1912, he first used the word "Tamilakam" (a name for the ancient Tamil country) to cover the concept of Lemuria, presenting it as the cradle of civilization. Another name used was "Pandiya nadu", after the Pandyas, regarded as the oldest of the Tamil dynasties. Some writers also used "Navalan Tivu" or Navalam Island, to describe the submerged land. However, the prominent among all is Kumari Kandam. Because, many ancient and medieval Tamil and Sanskrit works contain the accounts of lands in South India being lost to the ocean.

The earliest explicit discussion of a *katakol* ("seizure by ocean", possibly tsunami) of Pandyan land is found in a commentary on Iraiyanar Akapporul. This commentary, attributed to Nakkeerar, is dated to the later centuries of the 1st millennium CE. It mentions that the Pandyan kings, an early Tamil dynasty, established three literary academies (Sangams): the first Sangam flourished for 4,400 years in a city called Tenmadurai (South Madurai) attended by 549 poets (including Agastya) and presided over by gods like Shiva, Kubera and Murugan. The second Sangam lasted for 3,700 years in a city called Kapatapuram, attended by 59 poets (including Agastya, again). The commentary states that both the cities were "seized by the ocean", resulting in loss of all the works created during the first two Sangams. The third Sangam was established in Uttara (North) Madurai, where it is said to have lasted for 1,850 years.

Though Nakkeerar's commentary does not mention the size of the territory lost to the sea, the size is first mentioned in a 15th-century commentary on *Silappatikaram*. The commentator Adiyarkunallar mentions that the lost land extended from Pahruli River in the north to the Kumari River in the South. It was located to the south of Kanyakumari, and covered an area of 700 kavatam (a unit of unknown measurement). It was divided into 49 territories or *nadus*. Other medieval writers, such as Hampurana and Perasiriyar, also make stray references to the loss of antediluvian lands to the south of Kanyakumari, in their commentaries on ancient texts like *Tolkappiyam*. Another legend about the loss of Pandyan territory to the sea is found in scattered

verses of Purananuru (dated between 1st century BCE and 5th century CE) and Kaliththokai (6th-7th century CE). According to this account, the Pandyan king compensated the loss of his land by seizing an equivalent amount of land from the neighboring kingdoms of Cheras and Cholas.

It is worthy to note that none of these ancient texts or their medieval commentaries use the name "Kumari Kandam" or "Kumari Nadu" for the land purportedly lost to the sea. They do not state that the land lost by the sea was a whole continent located to the south of Kanyakumari. Nor do they link the loss of this land to the history of Tamil people as a community.

Map of Lemuria:

The first map to visualize Lemuria as an ancient Tamil territory was published by S. Subramania Sastri in 1916, in the journal *Centamil*. This map was actually part of an article that criticized the pseudohistorical claims about a lost continent. Sastri insisted that the lost land mentioned in Adiyarkunallar's records was equivalent to a taluka (not larger than a few hundred square miles). The map depicted two different versions of Kumari Kandam: that of Sastri, and that of A. Shanmugam Pillai. The lost land was depicted as a peninsula, similar to the present-day Indian peninsula. In 1927, Purnalingam Pillai published a map titled "Puranic India before the Deluges", in which he labeled the various places of Kumari Kandam with names drawn from ancient Tamil and Sanskrit literary works. Pulavar Kulanthai, in his 1946 map, was first to depict cities like Tenmadurai and Kapatapuram on the maps of Kumari Kandam. Several maps also depicted the various mountain ranges and rivers of Kumari Kandam. The most elaborate cartographic visualization appeared in a 1977 map by R. Mathivanan. This map showed the 49 *nadus* mentioned by Adiyarkunallar, and appears in the Tamil Nadu government's 1981 documentary.

Support of the Government:

When the Dravidian parties came to power in the 1967 Madras State elections, the Kumari Kandam theory got momentum. In 1971, the Government of Tamil Nadu established a formal committee headed by M. Varadarajan to write the history of Tamilakam (ancient Tamil territory) "from the time of Lemuria that was seized by the ocean". A textbook written by this committee was published in 1975 and it detailed the Kumari Kandam theory, stating that it was supported by "the foremost geologists, ethnologists, and anthropologists". As late

as 1981, the Tamil Nadu government's history textbooks mentioned the Kumari Kandam theory. Further, in 1981, with support from the Tamil Nadu government and Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran in particular, the film Kumari Kandam was produced and screened at the Fifth International Conference of Tamil Studies held in Madurai. The purported documentary presented a history of the world that pivoted around the lost Tamil land, language, and literature.

In 1991, R. Mathivanan, then Chief Editor of the Tamil Etymological Dictionary Project of the Government of Tamil Nadu, claimed that the Kumari Kandam civilization flourished around 50,000 BCE, and the continent submerged around 16,000 BCE. This theory was based on the methodology recommended by his teacher Devaneyya Pavanar. Even as recently as 2010, N. Mahalingam, a politician and industrialist, wrote an article in *The Hindu*, peddling a history of the Tamil people that involved Mohenjo-daro, the island of Moo, Lemuria, Easter Island, Atlantis, and Kumari Kandam.

Criticism of the concept: Though the concept of Kumari Kandam is popular in Tamil Nadu, many historians like M Seshagiri Sastri, CH Monahan, K. N. Sivaraja Pillai, K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, K. K. Pillay and N. Subrahmanian, were of the opinion that the Lemuria myth or the Kumari Kandam myth should be revisited with the authentic sources.

Conclusion: Though there were many contradictions, it is important to observe that the Lemurian continent must have existed, if at all, long long ago. According to geologists, the dismemberment of the Lemurian or Gondwana continent into several units must have taken place towards the close of the Mesozoic era. The entire continents sinking beneath the oceans may not have done in a single or a particular day or year. However could have happened for a longer period. As the polar ice melts away, rising sea levels promise calamity to coastal communities and the occurrence of tsunami like the stories of Lemuria and Gondwana. Nevertheless, Sclater and some of the other scientists of the mid-1800s were partially right about Lemuria despite their limited knowledge. A lost continent didn't suddenly sink into the Indian Ocean and vanish without a trace. But, long ago, there was something there, something that is now gone forever. Obviously, for the Tamil revivalists, as their beloved Tamil language and their traditions are about the utter state of humiliation and neglect in colonial and postcolonial India, they fantasize about

Lemuria as their former homeland, a place of promise, plenitude and perfection that had once existed elsewhere but no more.

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LEMURIA RESEARCH FORUM KANYAKUMARI

VISION AND MISSION

Over a past few decades, explorers have found traces of the lost continents submerged deep in waters that once witness to legendary epics and religious books. But, recently they found evidence of a huge landmass submerged towards the South of today's Indian Peninsula, the region extended from Kanyakumari in the North, to the Far West Madagascar and nearing the East coast of Australia. Scientists have agreed on backing claims, on how humans evolved from Africa and migrated to the rest of the world, based on the evidence gathered.

It is believed that around the last leg of ice age, earth's temperature was on rise, causing the large glaciers to melt, and thus the sea level rose. According to Oceanographic Researchers, sea levels around the Indian peninsula have been a stark rise over 100 meters, in past 14,500 years and Dravidian peninsula was engulfed into waters. A huge mass around sunken into sea, splitting Lemuria into 49 territories, and a few years the entire Lemuria or Kumari Kadam got submerged in the Indian Ocean.

Lemuria Research Forum is basically committed to promoting quality research towards the submerged continent among the scholars, faculties and fresher's in higher education institutions. Also, LRF will relentlessly take forward the research of sunken continents and reveal the facts about them to the coming generations.

Dr.C. Amose

General secretary- LRF

