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Dear Mr. Boris Vlasov,

As suggested by Mr. Menon, I am sending herewith an article on possible co-operation between the Soviet Union and India in the field of Text Book production. I hope you will find it suitable for publication.

Yours sincerely,

Acc:1

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# Influence of Sanskrit on Malayalam Language and Literature.

(N.V. Krishna Warrior)

Malayalam is the mother tongue of more than 25 million people living mainly in the State of Kerala on the West Coast of India. A narrow coastal strip lying between the Western Ghats in the east and the Arabian Sea in the west, Kerala was supposed to extend from Gokarna in the north to Kanyakumari in the South. <sup>However,</sup> the mother-tongue of the people inhabiting the northern half of this region was not Malayalam, but Tulu. ~~after the conquest of the Tulu area~~ Having been conquered by and administered for long by the rulers of Mysore, the Kannada became the official language and the medium of instruction in this <sup>Tulu</sup> area. Discarding its former script which it shared with Malayalam, Tulu adopted the Kannada script. This completed the cultural separation of the Tulu area from the Malayalam area, and naturally at the time of the reorganisation of the States the Tulu area was finally incorporated in Mysore. Kasaragode thus became the northern boundary of Kerala.

Kanyakumari area in the South had always been under heavy Tamil influence, because here the Western Ghats tail off to the plain <sup>barrier</sup> with the result that no natural boundary separates the Tamil-speaking area from the Malayalam-speaking area at this point. ~~At the first~~ <sup>Since</sup> Malayalam developed as a medium of literary expression only comparatively late, Tamil remained among a large sections of the people of Kerala as the medium of higher education and administration. This was especially true in the native State of Travancore which formed the southern half of Kerala, the result being that at the time of the reorganisation <sup>of</sup> States <sup>Kanyakumari</sup> this area was ceded to the State of Tamil Nadu on the basis of the <sup>numerical</sup> predominance of Tamil-speaking people, and the small town Parassala <sup>in Travancore (T.)</sup> <sup>to be</sup> became the boundary of Kerala in the south.

<sup>The majority of the</sup> Malayalam speaking people are now densely packed in this small <sup>State of Kerala with an</sup> area of 38,900 sq. km. <sup>and</sup> a population according to the 1971 of 2,12,80,397 according to the 1971 Census. 60.16 per cent of this population is literate. Malayalees can also be

met with in all States of India, and the former European colonies of Asia and Africa, where they are scattered among the native population, and do not form sizable blocks of linguistic minorities.

Geneologically Malayalam is a Dravidian language and is closely related to Tamil. Malayalam developed from an old Tamil dialect current on the West Coast towards the 10th century A.D. From this period onwards we have epigraphical records which enable us to trace its development, while the earliest literary compositions in Malayalam date from ~~the 13th or 14th~~ <sup>12th</sup> century A.D.

There are various theories as regards when and how Malayalam separated from Tamil and assumed the status of an independent language, but all are agreed on the ~~reason~~ <sup>view</sup> which ~~marked~~ <sup>was</sup> this was mainly responsible for this break. It was solely due ~~the~~ to the overwhelming influence exerted <sup>by Sanskrit</sup> on the dialect of the west coast ~~by Sanskrit~~ cut its connections with the mainsprings of Tamil and ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ started on its ~~glorious~~ career as an independent language.

The transformation was ~~slow~~ and stretched ~~ed~~ over several centuries. We have practically no record of this formative period in the career of the language. The earlier epigraphical records were all in VATTIZHUTHU script which provides graphemes only for the Tamil phonemes. Hence we cannot be absolutely certain that the written forms were also current in the speech of the people, for attempts at approximations to ~~Tamil~~ standard Tamil cannot be ruled out from these inscriptions. Still, <sup>the</sup> increasing use of <sup>specifically</sup> Sanskrit phonemes and abandoning of personal and numeral terminations in verbs, which, together with increasing nasalisation and palatalisation <sup>as well as a</sup> ~~xxxxxxxx~~ ~~with~~ preference for certain forms of case endings and primary (krd) suffixes ~~xxxxxxxx~~ <sup>no longer in vogue in Tamil, and which form</sup> ~~to distinguish Malayalam from Tamil~~ are evident in these inscriptions. And in these the influence of Sanskrit is clearly discernible.

When we come to the earliest literary works <sup>the</sup> in Malayalam this transformation <sup>of Malayalam from</sup> into an independent language is almost fully achieved. The earliest available literary creation in Malayalam is perhaps BHASAKAUTALIYAM, a prose commentary on Kautalya's Arthasastra composed <sup>perhaps</sup> in <sup>11th or 12th</sup> 10th or 11th century A.D. The present script of Malayalam, which is an adaptation of the Tamil Grantha script introduced by Pallavas for writing Sanskrit works and ~~there~~ commentaries ~~in~~ of Sanskrit works in South Indian languages/ This script is also closely allied to the Singalese script current in Ceylon. Malayalam script provides distinct <sup>graphemes</sup> symbols for ~~the~~ all the phonemes in Sanskrit and Tamil, ~~and~~ The use of this script facilitated not only orthographically correct representation of Sanskrit words in Malayalam, but reversely also approximation of the pronunciation of many purely Malayalam words to somewhat similar Sanskrit words. <sup>Started perhaps as a pedantry, this "Sanskritisation" of Malayalam words gained quick currency.</sup> Use of Sanskrit terminations along with purely Dravidian stems was the next logical step.

All this contributed to the development of the so-called Manipravala style. Use of local dialects along with Sanskrit has been a very ancient practice <sup>on Indian Stage</sup> in India and is testified by Bharata's Natyasastra and the commentary of Abhinavagupta on Natyasastra. Abhinavagupta has pointedly referred to the Manipravala style current in Dakshinapatha. Even before Abhinavagupta the term Manipravala has been used by Jains, but <sup>the</sup> ~~their~~ Manipravala <sup>of the Jains</sup> seems to have been Sanskrit passages interspersed with passages of ~~Dravidian~~ local dialects. <sup>application of the</sup> ~~The mixing of the principles of~~ Grammatic devices of Sanskrit <sup>on</sup> ~~and~~ local dialects and the creation of a mixed dialect seems to have been a later development.

However,  
At the dawn of the history of Malayalam language we find this mixed dialect Manipravalam in its fulfilled <sup>form</sup> state. The earliest use of this dialect has been for presenting Sanskrit plays in Temples in what is now termed as the Kutiyattam style, and for commenting on all kinds of scientific and philosophical works in Sanskrit.



The problem of finding Malayalam equivalents to Sanskrit words was solved by indiscriminate borrowing from Sanskrit, with the result that the difference between Sanskrit and Malayalam got blurred <sup>So much so that</sup> and all ~~xxxx~~ Sanskrit words with ~~xxx~~ Malayalam terminations were considered to be Malayalam words by the ~~xxx~~ author of Lilatilakam, a 14th Century work on <sup>Manipravalam</sup> grammar and poetics.

From the time of Sri Sankara, for about twelve centuries, Sanskrit has been intensively cultivated in Kerala. <sup>u</sup> Sanskritization in its widest meaning has been going on in this area for more than a millennium. Almost all available works in Sanskrit were <sup>critically</sup> intensively studied by generation after generation and were expounded in the local language. Most of these were also commented upon in Malayalam. <sup>gradually</sup> Kerala almost forgot its Tamil heritage. Even ~~xxxx~~ Tamil ~~xxxx~~ classics like ~~Shikappathikaxxxxxxx~~ Patittupattu and Chilappathikaram, which were composed by Keralites in Kerala, were almost forgotten <sup>in the region of their origin.</sup> It is only recently that we find a revival of interest in this Tamil heritage in Kerala.

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ During the long period of intensive cultivation of Sanskritic lore, certain families in Kerala developed into <sup>famed</sup> Gurukulas specialising in specific fields. The ~~Asht~~ <sup>Asht</sup> Vaidyas or the eight families of Physicians and their numerous disciples kept the torch of Ayurveda burning. Original texts in Sanskrit were studied, but commentaries which supplemented the texts and practical manuals were mostly written in Malayalam. This was also the position in Astronomy-Astrology, which was another field of knowledge to be systematically developed in Kerala. The study of Vedas and Dharmasastras also continued. One of the earliest works in Malayalam is Yagam Bhasha, a manual on the performance of ~~Yagaxxxxxxxxifixasx~~ Vedic sacrifices. There were also families specialising, generation after generation, in Mimamsa, Vyakarana and even Sahitya.

As education meant study of higher texts in Sanskrit, the entire system of rural education was Sanskrit-oriented. After mastering the Malayalam script, the students studied Siddharuppa (Sanskrit declensions and conjugations) and Amarakosha. ~~frax~~ Study of a few cantoes of the three small Kavyas (Laghutrayi- ~~Sik~~ Krishna vilasa, of Sukumara and Raghuvamsha and Kuamarasambhava of Kalidasa) and the three big Kavyas (Brihatrayi- Sisupalavadha of Magha, Kiratarjuniya of Bharavi and ~~Nash~~hadhiyacharita of Sriharsha) followed, after which students selected their fields of specialisation. This was the general pattern of education in Kerala until the modern system of school education came into vogue.

In the latter half of the 19th century A.D. when there was a renaissance in Malayalam literature, a flood of ~~sanskrit~~ translations of Sanskrit poems and plays inundated the literary scene. More than a dozen translations of Kalidasa's Abhijnana Sakuntala have been published in Malayalam. Literary genres in Sanskrit supplied the models which were ~~thoughtlessly~~ <sup>indiscriminately</sup> imitated by ~~the~~ writers. This state of affairs continued till nineteen thirties, when the attraction of western models presented a powerful alternative.

The points emerging from the above discussion <sup>now</sup> may be summarised. Though geneologically belonging to the Dravidian group, Malayalam has been ~~in morphology~~ <sup>both phonetically and morphologically</sup> ~~profoundly~~ influenced ~~sanskrit~~ by Sanskrit. <sup>besides</sup> Almost the entire lexical stock in Sanskrit has been incorporated in Malayalam. The use of Sanskrit words, ~~in Sanskrit~~, nouns, verbs and indeclinables, with Sanskrit terminations, has been very common. Now this sort of excess has been bridled, and ~~only in exceptional cases~~ Sanskrit case-endings are used in Malayalam only in certain exceptional cases. But there is no bar in the use of Sanskrit loan words. And it appears that when necessary Malayalam <sup>ers</sup> prefer to take a Sanskrit word on loan rather than ~~create~~ <sup>create</sup> a new word from a Malayalam root. Recently there has been a massive attempt for the creation of a technical

and scientific terminology in Malayalam, and it was found that the people of Kerala prefer Sanskrit-based terminology with all-India currency rather than purely Malayalam words created from Dravidian roots. This ~~is~~ provides a marked contrast to the practice in Tamil Nadu where the tendency is to discontinue the use of even simple Sanskrit words and to coin in-stead words of pure Tamil origin.

The literature in Malayalam has been moulded, for centuries, after Sanskrit models. ~~Thaxkiz~~ Not only the literary norms, but even also figures of speech, conventions and even the most popular metres were those of Sanskrit. Even though of late this situation has changed and the main models are now supplied by the more developed literatures of the west, and ~~the~~ in the realm of expression <sup>has been</sup> pedantry ~~is being~~ replaced by simple native idiom, the ~~long~~ rich Sanskritic tradition is still very powerful and, <sup>it can be safely assumed</sup> ~~it~~ <sup>will</sup> continue to exert its beneficial influence for as long a time as we can envisage.