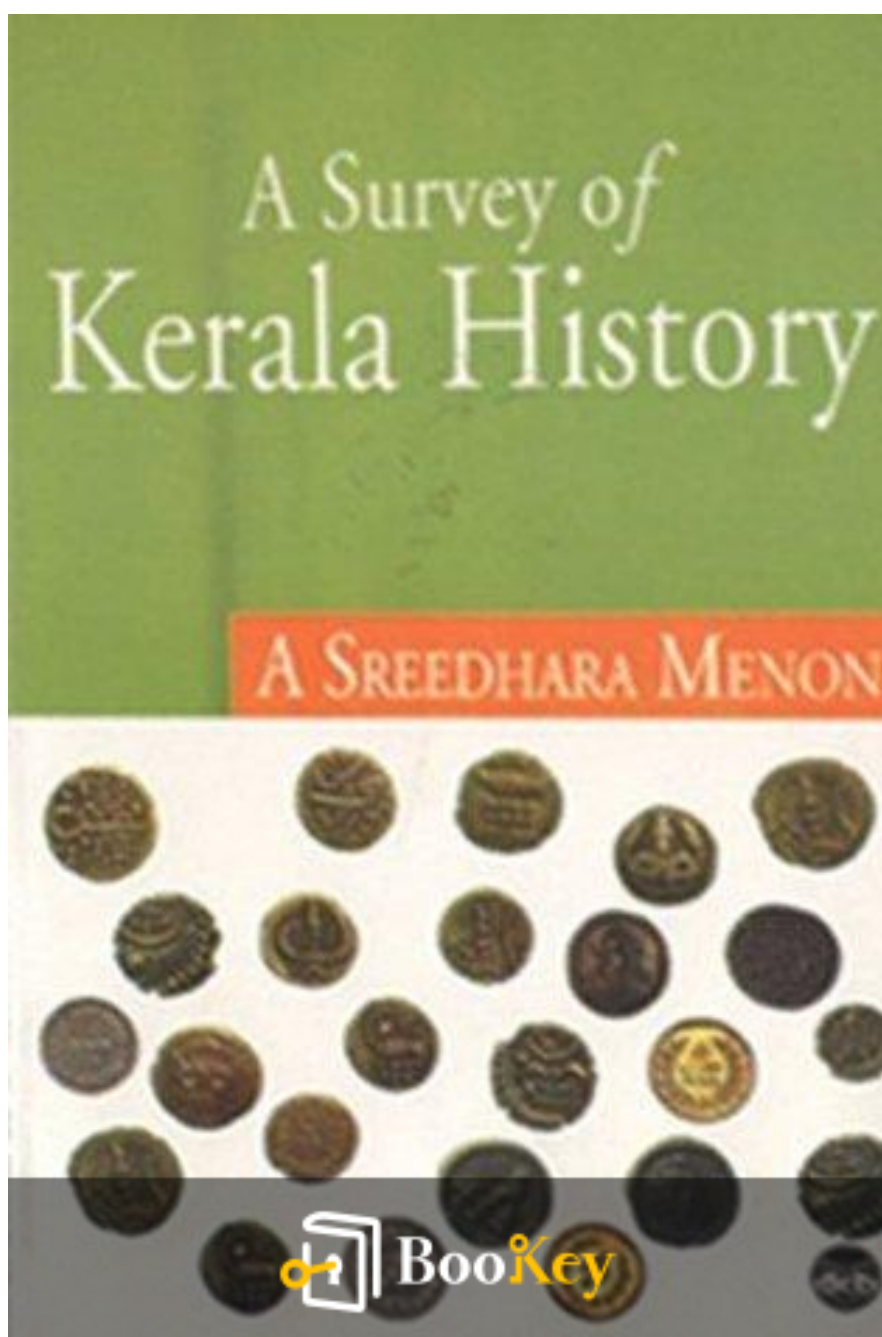


A Survey Of Kerala History PDF (Limited Copy)

A. Sreedhara Menon



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A Survey Of Kerala History Summary

"Unveiling the Rich Tapestry of Kerala's Heritage."

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About the book

Dive into the enchanting tapestry of Kerala's past with A. Sreedhara Menon's "A Survey Of Kerala History." This meticulously crafted narrative unfolds the mesmerizing journey of a land rich in culture, trade, and ancient wisdom. From the early hominid settlements that roamed the lush landscapes, bringing alive tales of Tipu Sultan and European colonialists' interventions, this timeless tome encapsulates the spirit and resilience of the people who call Kerala home. Menon's scholarly exploration offers both the seasoned historian and curious reader a rare glimpse into the evolving socio-political, economic, and cultural dynamics that have shaped this southern Indian state. A treasure trove for history enthusiasts, Menon's work illuminates Kerala's storied legacy, urging readers to explore a civilization infused with a profusion of traditions, cross-cultural influences, and formidable maritime prowess. Allow yourself to be transported through time as Menon artistically charts the transformations of Kerala, enmeshing the past with the present, to offer a sweeping survey of a land where the past is not yesterday, but an ever-present, living memory.

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About the author

A. Sreedhara Menon (1917-2010) was a prominent Indian historian best known for his comprehensive works on the history of the Indian state of Kerala. Born in Ernakulam, he dedicated his life to academia, garnering respect for meticulously documenting the cultural and political evolution of the region. With a Master's degree in History from the University of Madras and a short stint at Madras Christian College, Sreedhara Menon brought a scholarly yet accessible approach to his writings. Over the years, he served in various educational and administrative roles, including Registrar of the University of Kerala and member of the Kerala State Planning Board, contributing significantly to the intellectual fabric of the state. His works, marked by clarity and depth, shed light on various periods of Kerala's history, making them valuable resources for academia and casual readers alike. As an author, he left an indelible mark on the historiography of Kerala, with his book "A Survey of Kerala History" being a testament to his meticulous scholarship and narrative prowess.

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Chapter 1 Summary: THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Chapter I: The Geographical Background

Kerala, a distinctive region in the Indian subcontinent, boasts a rich history intertwined with India while maintaining unique geographical and cultural identity. Geographically, it occupies a narrow coastal strip bordered by the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea. This position has both isolated Kerala from and connected it to the outer world, influencing its historical and cultural trajectories.

Natural Divisions

Kerala's landscape is characterized by three distinct regions: the highlands, midlands, and lowlands. The highlands are home to the Western Ghats, with dense forests and plantations. The midlands feature laterite soil with valleys and hills, conducive to agriculture, while the lowlands stretch along a sandy coastline. These divisions have played a crucial role in shaping local biodiversity and agricultural practices.

Geographical Position

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Kerala's geography has shielded it from many political upheavals faced by northern India, allowing a unique social development, including the Marumakkathayam, a matrilineal system of inheritance. Despite this insularity, figures like Adi Shankaracharya ventured north to spread philosophy, and multiple invasions from neighboring Tamil and Kannada regions occurred over time. Cultural exchanges are visible in language and architecture.

Mountains and Hills

The Western Ghats act as a natural fortification, influencing both historical defense and religious ideologies, with peaks like Anamudi and Agastyakutam holding cultural significance. Hills like Ezhimala and Puralimala are historically significant, influencing maritime navigation and local uprisings, respectively.

Sea

Kerala's extensive coastline has fostered early maritime trade, inviting influences from various cultures and establishing ports like Muziris and Cochin. The state's exposure to European colonial powers began with Vasco da Gama's arrival in 1498. Sea routes also facilitated the introduction of religions like Christianity and Islam.



Rivers

The rivers of Kerala, though short, have significantly influenced cultural and economic life. Bharatapuzha, Periyar, and Pamba are culturally important, with historical sites located on their banks. The rivers have been central to local irrigation and hydroelectric projects in modern times, catalyzing industrial growth.

Backwaters

Kerala's backwaters, including Vembanad Lake, serve as essential transport routes and support unique ecosystems. These waterways have helped maintain cultural and economic continuity along the coast.

Climate

Kerala experiences diverse climatic conditions due to its varied topography. The state's climatic diversity, with high rainfall, has traditionally influenced agriculture. The strategic timing of monsoons has also impacted historical military campaigns, such as Tipu Sultan's withdrawal during floods.

Fauna, Flora, and Resources

Kerala's biodiversity is rich due to its varied climate, with forests providing



timber, spices, and other exports historically significant to trade. The demand for Kerala's spices attracted European colonial powers, shaping the state's history.

Parasurama Tradition

The legend of Parasurama, a mythological figure, is said to explain Kerala's creation from the sea. Despite its mythological nature, this legend hints at geological changes and reclamation. The land's dynamics hint at ancient geological shifts, reinforcing local myths.

Names: 'Kerala' and 'Malabar'

The names 'Kerala' and 'Malabar' reflect the region's geographical nature. While 'Kerala' might derive from local languages denoting a coconut-rich region or 'Cheralam' meaning 'added land,' 'Malabar' emphasizes the area's hilly geography, with 'mala' meaning 'hill' in Dravidian languages.

In conclusion, Kerala's unique geographical features have shaped its history, culture, and way of life distinctly from the rest of India, making its study within the broader historical context of India both fascinating and essential.



Chapter 2 Summary: A PEEP INTO THE SOURCES

Chapter II - A Glimpse into the Sources

This chapter delves into the evolution of historiography and the various sources contributing to our understanding of Kerala's history. Unlike classical civilizations, ancient India, and by extension, Kerala, did not produce renowned historians like Herodotus or Thucydides. However, Kerala's historiographic tradition, though initially embryonic, saw significant developments over the centuries.

Early Historiographic Tradition in Kerala:

- The Mushakavamsa, a Sanskrit Mahakavya composed around 1100 AD by Atula, chronicles the Mushaka kingdom of Kolathunad, providing one of the earliest dynastic histories. It predates the renowned Rajatarangini of Kalhana.
- During the 16th century, historiography revived with Shaik Zainuddin's Tuhafat-ul-Mujahiddin, which documented the Portuguese period in Kerala and medieval Malabar's social customs.
- Accounts from European writers like Duarte Barbosa and Samuel Mateer kept the tradition alive, leading to the compilation of Logan's influential Malabar Manual in 1887.



Advancements in Kerala Historiography:

- Early historians focused primarily on political history, often neglecting social and cultural aspects. Native scholars such as P. Shungoonny Menon and K.P. Padmanabha Menon gradually shifted the focus to include social history, although their works were limited by the absence of Tamil Sangam works and insufficient archaeological and epigraphical studies.
- Prof. Elamkulam P.N. Kunjan Pillai and M.G.S. Narayanan significantly advanced Kerala historiography by methodically studying inscriptions and literary works, reconstructing a coherent history from the Sangam age to the Portuguese period, and establishing a chronological framework for Kerala's pre-Portuguese political history.

Diverse Historical Studies:

- Studies on art and literature by scholars like Dr. Cousins, Stella Kramrisch, and others expanded the cultural history of Kerala, while works on Malayalam and Sanskrit literature further enriched historical knowledge.

Traditional and Literary Sources:

- Traditional sources like Keralolpathi and Keralamahatmyam were historically unreliable, containing inaccuracies and anachronisms. More

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reliable sources converged in literature and archaeology.

- Indigenous Sanskrit works, such as Aitareya Aranyaka and epic references, offered early mentions of Kerala. Dramas and kavyas reveal much about social systems, dynasties, and cultural practices.
- Tamil Sangam literature and post-Sangam works provide valuable insights into Kerala's political history, society, and culture, while early Malayalam compositions offer glimpses into political and social life from the 12th century onward.
- Western classical accounts, Chinese pilgrim writings, Arab traders, and European traveler narratives enriched understanding, presenting Kerala as a thriving trade hub with a rich cultural tapestry.

Archaeological Evidence:

- Monuments such as megaliths, temples, and religious structures bear testimony to Kerala's diverse cultural influences and architectural evolution.
- Coin findings, including Roman and other foreign currencies, indicate early trade ties and economic systems.
- Inscriptions spanning various eras offer invaluable data for reconstructing timelines and understanding Kerala's socio-political landscape.

Despite challenges, these varied sources collectively paint a detailed picture of Kerala's rich historical tapestry, enabling a better understanding of its dynamic past.



Chapter 3 Summary: PREHISTORY

Chapter III: Prehistory

The Stone Ages in Kerala

The prehistory of Kerala, located in southern India, is an intriguing yet elusive subject due to its scarce archaeological evidence. Renowned archaeologist H.D. Sankalia has notably excluded Kerala from the Palaeolithic map of India. The primary material for Palaeolithic tools, quartzite, is rare in Kerala, possibly due to dense forests that were difficult for early humans to navigate with primitive tools. Although no Palaeolithic artifacts have been discovered in Kerala, it is suggested that the region's evolving coastline might harbor ancient sites yet undiscovered.

Transitioning to the Neolithic (New Stone Age) era, it's hypothesized that humans settled in Kerala due to the availability of traprock along the coast, conducive for tool-making. The presence of microliths, smaller stone tools, at Calicut supports a transitional Mesolithic phase bridging the Old and New Stone Ages.

Megalithic Culture

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Kerala's landscape is dotted with megalithic monuments, part of a broader South Indian tradition linked to death rites. The term 'megalith' stems from the Greek words for "great" and "stone," denoting structures built with large stones. These monuments serve as sepulchral or commemorative structures underlining ancient burial customs. The practice of fractional burial—burying specific bones rather than complete skeletons—was widespread, with internments often accompanied by valuable belongings like tools, ornaments, and sometimes coins.

Various megalithic types, including dolmens, cists, menhirs, and rock-cut caves, have been identified across Kerala, each bearing local names and variations. The geographical diversity and intricate designs of these structures offer insights into the complex funerary practices of the past.

Discoveries Across Kerala

Recent archaeological efforts have uncovered numerous megalithic burial sites throughout Kerala. Notable locations include Varkala, where old pots and skeletons were found in cave-like settings, and Pulimathu, where cists containing bronze bells and iron spearheads were discovered. Idukki district and Marayur village also boast significant megalithic sites with dolmens and menhirs, illustrating a long-standing tradition of stone monument construction.



Trichur, a region dense with historical sites, displays an array of megalithic monuments such as isolated dolmens with port-hole openings and port-hole cists, alongside unique sepulchral monuments like the Topikallu (cap stone) and Kudakallu (umbrella stone), particular to its laterite-rich terrain.

Rock-cut Caves

Kerala is rich in rock-cut caves, with notable examples in Chovannur, Kandanasseri, Kakkad, and Porkalam. These caves typically feature rectangular pits carved from solid laterite, leading to hollowed-out chambers accessible by steps cut from rock. The architecture varies, with some caves having rock-cut pillars and circular openings, supporting their sepulchral function and revealing much about ancient practices and beliefs.

Antiquity and Cultural Connections

The megalithic culture of Kerala, though not contemporary with the Indus Valley Civilization of the north, shares burial practices, suggesting cultural exchanges or parallel developments. Scholars suggest its introduction by an iron-using people from the south between 300 B.C. and the 1st century A.D., aligning it with similar cultures in Deccan and Peninsular India.

While some theories propose a connection between South Indian and Mediterranean megaliths, key differences in age and material usage,



particularly iron, render this idea contentious among scholars. Nevertheless, these monuments highlight a sophisticated ancient society adept at monumental construction and agricultural practices.

Racial Composition and Cultural Evolution

Kerala's demographic history reflects a rich tapestry of racial and cultural synthesis. The earliest inhabitants, represented by Negrito-type hill tribes, were gradually superseded by Proto-Australoids and later Mediterranean Dravidian settlers, who are believed to have significantly shaped the region's cultural landscape.

With the Aryan advent in Kerala around two to three centuries before the Christian era, cultural interactions intensified, leading to a distinctive synthesis of Aryan and Dravidian elements. Intermarriages among Nairs, Arabs, Portuguese, and local communities further enriched Kerala's pluralistic cultural heritage.

The ongoing integration and adaptation of diverse racial and cultural influences have contributed to Kerala's dynamic and resilient cultural identity, underscoring its significant place in South Asian history.



Chapter 4: EARLY FOREIGN CONTACTS

Chapter IV: Early Foreign Contacts

From ancient times, Kerala has been a significant nexus of global interactions, facilitated by its renowned spice trade. The state's rich resources, particularly its spices like cardamom, cinnamon, and pepper, attracted various ancient civilizations, including the Arabs, Assyrians, Babylonians, Phoenicians, Israelites, Greeks, Romans, and Chinese. These interactions were historically commercial, but they also introduced religions such as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, contributing to Kerala's diverse and cosmopolitan culture.

The allure of spices from Kerala is evident from historical records, such as the extensive spice trade by ancient civilizations like the Assyrians and Babylonians. The Egyptians valued Kerala's spices for their rituals, including the creation of perfumes and embalming processes. Ancient texts, including the Old Testament, mention spices indigenous to Kerala, illustrating their significance in religious and cultural practices of the time.

The Arabs and Phoenicians were pioneers in the spice trade, with the Arabs potentially making the first voyages to Kerala. A robust trade route possibly extended from South India through North India to the Middle Eastern



regions. The Phoenicians, known for their maritime prowess, also played a crucial role. King Solomon of Israel's Phoenician-manned fleet reportedly brought back gold, ivory, apes, and peacocks from places identified by some as being within Kerala.

As the Greek and Roman empires rose, their trade with Kerala flourished. Greek physician Dioscorides noted the medicinal properties of several Keralan spices, and even linguistic links suggest cultural exchanges. The Roman conquest of Egypt further integrated the Roman and Keralan spice trade, with Roman coins found in Kerala testifying to the economic exchanges taking place.

The Chinese also had long-standing trade relations with Kerala, which persisted longer than those with the Romans. Archaeological discoveries and historical accounts, such as those of the traveler Marco Polo, highlight the active pepper trade between Kerala and China. Marco Polo documented the significant amount of pepper trade and the sizable profits earned from it.

Kerala's strategic seaports, such as Muziris, facilitated these foreign contacts. Muziris, noted for its protection by Chera kings and a hub for various cultural exchanges, was integral to spice trade routes. Despite the port's decline in the 14th century due to natural disruptions, others like Quilon, Calicut, and eventually Cochin, rose in prominence, adapting to changing trade dynamics and sustaining Kerala's global trade role.



Indigenous maritime tradition also played a part in Kerala's history. Local poets and historical records speak of Keralan ships actively participating in global commerce, fetching wealth from foreign lands and maintaining supremacy in regional waters. Over centuries, local trade organizations further solidified Kerala's status as a center of oceanic commerce.

In summary, Kerala's early foreign contacts were instrumental in shaping its history, culture, and economy. These interactions brought together diverse cultures and laid the foundation for Kerala's role as a critical player in global historical exchanges.

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Chapter 5 Summary: KERALA IN THE SANGAM AGE

Chapter Summary: Kerala in the Sangam Age

The Sangam Age, spanning the first five centuries of the Christian Era, marked a formative period in Kerala's history, with the region being part of Tamilakam, a collective of culturally linked regions. During this period, Kerala was divided into five topographical divisions: Venad (the land of the Vels), Kuttanad (the land of lakes), Kudanad (the western land), Puzhinad (the marshy tract), and Karkanad (the impregnable area). These divisions are known from contemporary Tamil literature, though their precise boundaries remain unclear.

Political Landscape:

In the early Sangam age, Kerala was governed by three major powers: the Ays, the rulers of Ezhimala, and the Cheras. The Ays controlled the southern territories, from Nagercoil to Tiruvalla, and are noted in Ptolemy's records as "Aioi." Their significant leaders included Ay Antiran, Titiyan, and Atiyan. The Ezhimala kingdom, with its capital at Mount Eli, extended from Badagara to Mangalore, and was ruled by notable kings like Nannan, celebrated in Tamil poetry for his military achievements until his downfall.

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by the Cheras.

The Cheras emerged as a dominant power, with their influence extending northward and eastward from their base in Kuttanad. Utiyan Cheralatan was the first great monarch, followed by his successors like Nedum Cheralatan, known for expanding the Chera influence and engaging in notable battles against adversaries like the Kadambas and the Yavanas.

Cheras' Succession and Achievements:

The Chera succession was organized along collateral lines, indicating primogeniture among the ruling family, with capitals in Vanchi, Tondi, and Karur. They were known for their military prowess and extensive trade networks. Notable Chera rulers included Vel Kelu Kuttuvan, associated with the mythical hero of *Silappadikaram,* and his reputed expeditions to the Gangetic valley. The Patittupattu (Ten Decade), an integral text, provides details about various Chera princes and their exploits.

Cultural and Social Developments:

The Sangam works reveal a highly sophisticated culture in Kerala, depicting monarchy as the central political institution, adorned with pageantry and

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ritual. Despite a patrilineal inheritance system, elements of matrilineal culture were present, influencing societal norms and family structures. The Chera monarchy, though autocratic, operated within customary limits, with kings seen as guarantors of justice and protection.

Poetry and scholarship thrived under royal patronage, with poets receiving generous rewards and hospitality. The society was marked by relative social freedom, with caste rigidity and exclusiveness notably absent. Various communities, like the Panas and Kuravas, held esteem and engaged in various professions, transcending rigid caste divisions that would emerge later.

Women enjoyed substantial freedoms, participating actively in social and economic life, receiving education, and even composing poetry. The purdah system was unknown, child marriage was uncommon, and widow remarriage was permitted. Economic life flourished with agriculture as the mainstay, supported by thriving trade networks, particularly in spices and pepper, and an internal barter system buttressed by coins like dinars and kanams.

Religious Practices:

Dravidian practices dominated the religious landscape, with widespread

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ancestor worship and the propitiation of local deities like the war goddess Kottavai. Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism coexisted, each cultivating followers. Over time, Aryan cultural influences began making inroads into Kerala society.

Post-Sangam Era:

The Sangam age was followed by a period of obscurity known as the 'Dark Period' due to scant historical records. Kerala witnessed invasions by outside powers like the Chalukyas, Pallavas, and Rashtrakutas, each claiming temporary victories and influence. However, the enduring state structures established during the Sangam age laid the groundwork for Kerala's resilient cultural and political identity, which would have enduring influences in later historical developments.

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Chapter 6 Summary: THE CONFLUENCE OF RELIGIONS

Chapter VI: The Confluence of Religions

The intertwining of religions in Kerala offers a fascinating exploration of cultural and spiritual integration. Throughout history, the region served as a welcoming ground for various Indian philosophies and global faiths. This chapter provides a concise view of the evolution of religions in Kerala, from native beliefs to the introduction of major world religions.

Dravidian Religion

Ancient Kerala was dominated by Dravidian practices, which were a blend of primitive rituals rather than a structured religious doctrine. Central to their spiritual life were totem gods, spirits of nature, and ancestor worship, highlighting a deep connection to the natural world. Rituals included offerings and dance, especially to the War Goddess Kottavai during the Sangam age. With time, northern religions like Jainism, Buddhism, and Brahmanism entered Kerala, coexisting and mingling with native customs in a tolerant society.



Jainism

Jainism likely reached Kerala by the 3rd century B.C., inspired by Chandragupta Maurya's journey to the south with the Jain saint Bhadrabahu. Although Jainism was initially a mode of peaceful retreat rather than active proselytization, it garnered followers and royal patrons, such as Ilango Adikal. Several Jain temples dotted ancient Kerala, many later converted into Hindu shrines. The conversion of these spaces often involved accommodating both traditions, reflecting the region's inclusive spiritual landscape. Jainism's decline began in the 8th century A.D., overshadowed by Saivite and Vaishnavite influences.

Buddhism

Buddhism flourished in Kerala around the 3rd century B.C., bolstered by Emperor Asoka's missionaries. Influential texts like the Manimekhalai underscore its prevalence, with monasteries serving as educational and healing centers. Various Buddhist relics, including images and ruins, testify to its historical significance. Over time, Hindu reformers, notably Sankaracharya, promoted a resurgence in Hindu practices, leading to Buddhism's decline by the 12th century. However, Buddhism left a lasting cultural impact, evident in local medical practices, temple architecture, and



festivals like Kettukazhcha, reflecting a synthesis with Hindu traditions.

Aryanisation

The Aryanisation of Kerala started subtly around the 3rd century B.C., intensifying by the 8th century A.D. through an influx of Brahmin immigrants. These immigrants established Vedic rituals and the caste system, significantly altering Kerala's societal structure. Aryan influence spurred profound changes, such as the decline of Buddhism and Jainism, the establishment of Hindu temples, and the integration of Dravidian deities into Hinduism. This cultural synthesis was achieved not through force, but by harmoniously blending Aryan and Dravidian elements.

Christianity

Introduced to Kerala in the first century A.D., Christianity's roots in the region are attributed to Apostle St. Thomas, who is said to have founded seven churches along the Malabar coast. The arrival of Syrian Christians in 345 A.D. strengthened the community, which flourished under the patronage of local rulers, receiving rights and privileges akin to their Hindu counterparts. Over centuries, the Christian liturgy in Kerala evolved under various cultural influences, resulting in the diverse denominations seen

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today. Despite theological divisions, Kerala's Christians have maintained a strong cultural affinity with their Hindu neighbors.

Jews

Traditionally, it is believed that Jews settled in Kerala in the first century A.D., escaping persecution. Establishing colonies initially in places like Cranganore, they eventually spread to other regions, gaining economic prosperity and royal favors. The decline of their influence began with Portuguese persecution in the 16th century, prompting a migration to Cochin. The Jewish community thrived under Dutch and British rule, but the establishment of Israel in 1948 significantly reduced their numbers in Kerala, leaving only a small community today.

Islam

Islam made its way to Kerala by the 7th or 8th century A.D., likely introduced by Arab traders. Though the broader adoption of Islam was slow, it eventually gained ground with the support of local rulers, notably the Zamorins of Calicut, who provided Muslims with political and naval roles. Many local traditions, including a tale of a Chera king converting to Islam and traveling to Mecca, underscore the religion's historical depth in the



region. Today, Muslims constitute a significant community in Kerala, especially concentrated in areas like Kozhikode and Malappuram.

Overall, the confluence of religions in Kerala is a testament to centuries of cultural intermingling and adaptation, where diverse spiritual traditions have coexisted, influenced each other, and collectively enriched the region's religious tapestry.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: Harmonious Cultural Synthesis

Critical Interpretation: In Chapter 6, you'll encounter the diverse spiritual blending that has characterized Kerala's history. This chapter demonstrates how various faiths from across the world, including Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam, have come together harmoniously in a small geographical region. Such synthesis not only mirrors the spirit of tolerance but also showcases how differing beliefs can coexist, influence each other, and contribute to cultural richness and societal cohesion. Let this key point inspire you by reminding you of the power of inclusivity, adaptability, and understanding. It serves as a beacon for embracing diversity in your own life, appreciating disparate viewpoints, and nurturing an environment where differences are seen as strengths rather than obstacles.



Chapter 7 Summary: THE AY KINGDOM

Chapter VII: The Ay Kingdom

The Ay kingdom was a prominent ancient ruling dynasty in South Kerala, with its history spanning from the Sangam age to the 10th century A.D. The Ays established an extensive kingdom in South Kerala, predating the Venad kings' rise to power. Covering territories from Tiruvalla in the north to Nagercoil in the south, the Ay domain was notable for including the strategically significant Western Ghats. Historical references, including those by Ptolemy, identify the Ay region and emphasize their influence and dominance in the area.

The Ay dynasty's origins are somewhat obscure, with legendary accounts linking them to the Yadavas or Vrishnikula. However, these claims are likely exaggerated, and historical evidence suggests that the Ays, like other significant Dravidian dynasties such as the Cholas, Cheras, and Pandyas, were native to the region. Key figures from the Sangam age include Ay Antiran, Titiyan, and Atiyan, each contributing to the cultural and military landscape of the kingdom.

Ay Antiran, an illustrious patron of the arts and a Saivite by faith, was celebrated for his generosity and military prowess, particularly in his



victorious campaigns against the Kongu kings. He was followed by Titiyan and Atiyan, who faced challenges from the Pandya dynasty. Atiyan's successor fought to regain autonomy after Pandya conquests, but the kingdom never returned to its former prominence.

In the post-Sangam period, by the 7th century, the Ays served as a buffer state between the Pandya and Chera kingdoms. Successive invasions by Pandya kings such as Jayantavarman and Arikesari Maravarman impacted the Ay kingdom, eventually leading to partial Pandya control. During the reigns of kings like Sadayan, Karunandan, and later Karunandadakkan, who built significant temples and educational institutions, the Ay kings struggled to reclaim autonomy. The Paliyam Copper Plate Inscription under Vikramaditya Varaguna further highlights the shifting allegiances and the influence of external dynasties like the Cholas.

However, after Vikramaditya Varaguna's death, the Ay dynasty lost its independent status and merged into the Venad region under the Chera empire, with prominent military defeats marking the end of their rule. The Ay kingdom's cultural legacy included strong educational and religious institutions, like the renowned Kandalur Salai, which shaped the educational landscape and mirrored the cultural accomplishments of the Nalanda University in the north.

Chapter VIII: The Kollam Era

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Dating systems in ancient India were diverse, with various eras used across regions. The Kollam era (825 A.D.) was pivotal in Kerala's chronology, marking a shift from earlier eras like the Saka era. The Kollam era, beginning on the Zodiacal month of Leo (Chingam) in the south and Virgo (Kanni) in the north, remains an enigma due to several unresolved theories regarding its origin.

Traditional accounts suggest King Udaya Marthanda Varma of Venad initiated the Kollam era after a grand assembly at Kollam. However, historical inconsistencies debunk this, as records show no ruling king by that name during the purported time, and records indicate the era's widespread use only from the 12th century onward. Similarly, Logan's theory of Kollam marking independence from Perumal rule is historically inaccurate, given the imperial dominance of the Kulasekharas.

Theories linking the era to Sankaracharya or the founding of Kollam town are similarly contentious, with historical and chronological evidence discrediting these hypotheses. Others speculate the era's origin might trace to the erection of significant temples or influence of Christian traders, while some associate it with existing Saptarshi era cycles, albeit with adjustments for local traditions.

Despite various proposed theories, including the romanticized Cheraman



legend and connections to notable temples, the true origin of the Kollam era remains unresolved. Prof. Sundaram Pillai's theory, suggesting a link to the Saptarshi era, offers a scientific basis, possibly explaining the adoption and name shift to the Kollam era. However, until more evidence emerges, this theory remains provisional, highlighting regional differences in the commencement dates as indicative of local astronomical debates prevalent even in modern times.

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Chapter 8: KULASEKHARAS OF MAHODAYAPURAM (800-1102 A.D.)

The chapter titled "Kulasekharas of Mahodayapuram (800-1102 A.D.)" explores the resurgence of the Chera dynasty in Kerala, marking a significant period in South Indian history. Emerging from the shadowy period following the Sangam Age, the Kulasekharas, also known as the Second Chera Empire, helped reshape Kerala's political landscape from 800 to 1102 A.D. By situating their capital at Mahodayapuram (modern-day Kodungallur), this chapter highlights their unified control over Kerala, countering earlier scholarly notions of fragmented principalities.

Kulasekhara Alwar: The founder of this dynasty, Kulasekhara Varman, is identified as the illustrious Hindu saint, Kulasekhara Alwar, a key figure in the Vaishnavite movement in South India. Known for his Tamil devotional work, *Perumal Tirumozhi*, he possibly also authored several Sanskrit dramas. His contributions underline his dual role as a ruler and religious influencer.

Rajasekhara Varman: Kulasekhara's successor, identified with the Saivite saint Cheraman Perumal Nayanar, had significant religious leanings as indicated by the Vazhapalli inscription. His reign saw the introduction of the Kollam era in Kerala in 825 A.D., a crucial chronological marker.



Sthanu Ravi Varman: His reign from 844 to 885 A.D. was marked by peace and prosperity, bolstered by amicable relations with the Cholas. He is noted for his patronage of the sciences, particularly astronomy, as evidenced by the presence of a well-equipped observatory during his rule.

Rama Varma: Known for his patronage of literature and arts, his reign saw the strengthening of Chera-Chola ties through marital alliances. The foreign traveler Masudi documented his impressions of Kerala during Rama Varma's reign, adding to historical records of the period.

Goda Ravi Varma: During his reign, the Cheras expanded their territory significantly, although rising tensions with the Cholas foreshadow a period of conflict. The strategic southern centers of Vizhinjam and Kandalur were fortified as military outposts during his reign.

Bhaskara Ravi Varman I & II: These periods were crucial due to the Chola-Chera conflicts, dubbed the 'Hundred Years War'. Bhaskara Ravi Varman I issued the noteworthy Jewish Copper Plate Grant, illustrating Chera's policy of religious tolerance. The era was defined by persistent Chola aggression aimed at Kerala's conquest.

Raja Raja Chola and Rajendra Chola: The Chola kings launched multiple campaigns against the Cheras, capturing crucial southern territories but failing to subdue Kerala entirely. Bhaskara Ravi Varman II continued



resisting the Cholas despite internal and external pressures.

Vira Kerala: Under him, the Cheras faced further Chola advances, experiencing significant losses. His capture and execution underlined the depths of Chola-Chera enmity, leading to a temporary eclipse of Chera power.

Rajasimha and Subsequent Rulers: After setbacks, Rajasimha and his successors endeavored to restore Chera dominance. However, they faced challenges from ongoing Chola invasions, which occasionally took advantage of the political vacuum to reassert their power.

Rama Varma Kulasekhara: The last prominent ruler, Rama Varma Kulasekhara, played a pivotal role in pushing back against the Cholas despite significant challenges, eventually resulting in the rise of Venad as an independent kingdom. His leadership marked the end of the Second Chera Empire and a new era in Kerala history.

Foreign Perumals and Cheraman Legend: The chapter challenges the traditional Keralolpathi narrative of foreign Perumals ruling Kerala, asserting that the Kulasekharas were indigenous rulers. The Cheraman legend, proposing a Chera king's conversion to Islam and subsequent pilgrimage to Mecca, is dismissed as an anachronism lacking historical basis.



Through the examination of genealogies and the debunking of myths, the chapter effectively reclaims the history of the Kulasekharas, emphasizing their role as native rulers and central figures in Kerala's illustrious past.

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Chapter 9 Summary: GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY IN THE KULASEKHARA AGE

In Chapter X, "Government and Society in the Kulasekhara Age," the narrative unfolds the historical, cultural, and societal dynamics of Kerala during the 9th and 10th centuries, known as a 'Golden Age' under the Kulasekhara dynasty. This era was marked by unparalleled achievements in administration, culture, and trade. However, the succeeding 11th century witnessed the decline of central power, cultural stagnation, and economic decay, primarily due to the prolonged Chola-Chera war, which initiated significant socio-economic transformations.

Political Divisions and Administration:

At the height of its power, the Kulasekhara Empire included most of modern Kerala and parts of neighboring regions. The empire was divided into several provinces called nadus, each governed by feudatory chieftains or hereditary rulers under the supervision of the emperor, known as Perumal. The emperor held supreme authority, supported by local assemblies and various officials, who managed the Empire's administration and law enforcement.

Economic and Trade Dynamics:

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The Kulasekhara Empire thrived on extensive trade networks with foreign nations, including China and Arab regions, facilitated by major ports like Quilon and Cranganore. Strategic alliances with merchant guilds, such as Manigramam and Anchuvannam, were crucial in sustaining economic prosperity. These guilds had significant influence over regional commerce and even shared responsibilities for local security.

Language, Literature, and Education:

The period saw the emergence of Malayalam as a distinct language, although Tamil and Sanskrit dominated literary output. Significant figures like Kulasekhara Alwar and Shankaracharya contributed to the rich intellectual tradition, with works covering religious themes and philosophy. Educational institutions, especially attached to temples, became prominent centers for learning, teaching Vedic and classical subjects.

Religious and Cultural Flourishing:

The Kulasekhara period heralded the resurgence of Hinduism, bolstered by the Bhakti movement led by saints like Kulasekhara Alwar. Temples became focal points of religious and cultural life, encouraging the construction of grand edifices and promoting arts like Kuthu and Kudiyaattam. Social and religious harmony prevailed, evidenced by royal patronage across different faiths, including Christianity and Judaism.

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Impact of the Chola-Chera War:

The 11th century Chola-Chera conflict dramatically reshaped Kerala's socio-economic and political landscape. The war led to increased influence of Namboothiri Brahmins, emergence of the Janmi system of landlordism, and a shift to a matrilineal inheritance system called Marumakkathayam. The conflict also disrupted foreign trade and led to the decentralization of political authority, fragmenting Kerala into smaller feudal states and diminishing the unity that once defined the Kulasekhara era.

In summary, the chapter intricately portrays the rise, apex, and decline of Kulasekhara's sociopolitical structure, detailing the transitions triggered by military conflicts, and setting a foundation for the complex societal currents in Kerala's subsequent history.

Section	Summary
Overview	This chapter covers the Kulasekhara Age (9th-10th century), a 'Golden Age' in Kerala under the Kulasekhara dynasty marked by advancements in administration, culture, and trade, followed by decline in the 11th century.
Political Divisions and Administration	The empire was divided into provinces (nadas) governed by local chieftains under the Perumal. The emperor held supreme power, assisted by local assemblies and officials.
Economic and Trade	Trade with China and Arab countries flourished through ports like Quilon and Cranganore. Merchant guilds like Manigramam and



Section	Summary
Dynamics	Anchuvannam played vital roles in commerce and regional security.
Language, Literature, and Education	Malayalam emerged as a distinct language. Tamil and Sanskrit dominated with contributions from figures like Kulasekhara Alwar and Shankaracharya. Temples served as educational centers.
Religious and Cultural Flourishing	Hinduism saw a resurgence with the Bhakti movement. Temples became cultural hubs, promoting arts like Kuthu and Kudiyaattam, while patrons also supported Christianity and Judaism.
Impact of the Chola-Chera War	The conflict led to the decentralization of power, increased Brahmin influence, introduction of the Janmi system, and fragmentation into feudal states, overshadowing the previous unity and prosperity.
Conclusion	The chapter delineates the socio-political and economic transitions during the Kulasekhara era, influenced significantly by military upheavals, shaping Kerala's historical trajectory.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The Role of Merchant Guilds in Sustaining Prosperity

Critical Interpretation: Imagine that your community operates like the Kulasekhara Empire, where prosperity flourishes through strategic alliances and cooperation with your local merchant guilds. In the narrative of history, the mutual respect and symbiotic relationships built during this time propelled trade and economic stability, transforming bustling ports into hubs of cultural exchange and innovation. Let this example inspire you to foster networks of trust and collaboration within your professional domains. By creating partnerships that are mutually beneficial and rooted in trust, you have the power to catalyze growth and innovation in your personal and collective pursuits, mirroring the success witnessed during this 'Golden Age' of Kerala's history.

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Chapter 10 Summary: VENAD TILL 1314

Summary of Chapter XIV: The Rise of Venad and Its Historical Significance till 1314

The state of Venad, located in present-day Kerala, India, began rising to political prominence in the 12th century A.D. following the decline of the Kulasekharas as the dominating power in the region. Although sporadic references to Venad appear in Pandyan records from the 8th century onwards, neither Sangam literature nor post-Sangam texts provide substantial mentions. Early records suggest the Venad royal lineage lived in various locations and were collectively known by several denominations including Venad, Tiruvitamkode, Trippappur, Chiravai, and Desinganad Swarupams, though historical research has largely debunked this view.

Initially, until the 9th century, the regions south of Trivandrum were part of the Ay kingdom, and it wasn't until the 12th century that Venad gained independence as a kingdom, governed by the Kizhperur family with its capital at Quilon. The Venad royal house expanded when branches of the Ay family merged into it, bringing about the titles Chiravai Muppan for the ruler and Trippappur Muppan for the heir-apparent, who managed the Sri Padmanabhaswami temple as well as other religious duties.



The earliest attested ruler of Venad was Ayyan Atikal Tiruvatikal, known for the Terisapalli Copper Plate Grant made in 849 A.D., which facilitated the establishment of a church and a trading center at Kurakkeni Kollam. Later rulers like Sri Vallabhan Kotha and Govardhana Marthanda, who contributed to the expansion of temple patronage, marked significant developments in the region's history. The Venad kingdom gained further autonomy during Rama Varma Kulasekhara's reign in the late 11th century, following the Chola-Chera wars.

A succession of rulers began with Kotha Varma post-1102 A.D., and his descendants continued to enhance the prominence of Venad through both military and religious endeavors. Kotha Kerala Varma and his successors enhanced temple structures and expanded the kingdom's influence, with Vira Ravi Varma, Aditya Varma, and Udaya Marthanda Varma making notable contributions to the administrative and socio-cultural landscape.

Ravi Varma Kulasekhara, who ascended the throne in 1299 and ruled until 1314, was one of the most prominent kings, overcoming Pandyan control to establish Venad's dominance in South India. Amidst internal conflicts and external threats, he extended his realm across South India, positioning himself as a champion of Hinduism against Islamic incursions, a precursor to the later Vijayanagar Empire.

During this era, Venad experienced significant economic prosperity and



social progression. Quilon emerged as a major trade hub, connected to global markets, particularly with China, reflecting a lively mercantile environment. The social fabric included diverse religious communities, with Hinduism prevailing as the dominant faith supported by royal patronage for temples and Vedic education. The administrative framework of Venad included assemblies, illustrating a degree of participatory governance, while foreign travelers documented the region's thriving trade and remarkable civic conditions.

Ravi Varma Kulasekhara's contributions to arts, scholarship, and religion, alongside his political and military achievements, solidified his legacy as a pivotal figure in Kerala's history and elevated Venad's status in the region during a time of dynamic change and expansion.

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Chapter 11 Summary: RISE OF KOLATHUNAD AND COCHIN

Chapter XII: Rise of Kolathunad and Cochin

Following the disintegration of the Kulasekhara Empire in 1102 AD, Kerala saw the emergence of several independent Swarupams (states), including Kolathunad, Cochin, and Calicut. Before delving into Calicut's history, it is important to understand Kolathunad and Cochin's origins.

Kolathunad's Mushaka Dynasty: Kolathunad, also known as North Malabar, was originally ruled by a dynasty with its capital at Mount Eli (Ezhi Mala). By the Second Chera Empire (800-1102 AD), parts of North Malabar were under Kulasekhara control. However, the Mushaka kings ruled independently over the Chirakkal-Kasargod areas. Their history, recorded in the "Mushakavamsa," reveals a transition from a patrilineal to a matrilineal system of succession. Notable rulers include Vikrama Rama, who saved the Sri Mulavasam shrine, and Valabha II, who boosted trade by founding ports like Marahi (Madayi) and Valabhapattana (Balipatam), and annexed islands in the Arabian Sea.

By the 14th century, Kolathunad was under a new dynasty called the Kolathiris, descendants of the Mushaka kings. Marco Polo's accounts from



the late 13th century mention the Kingdom of Eli, likely Kolathunad, describing its natural defense, wealth, and trade activities.

Perumpadappu Swarupam (Cochin): The Cochin royal house gained prominence in the early 16th century with the arrival of the Portuguese. Its origins trace back to the Kulasekharas of Mahodayapuram.

Post-Kulasekhara, the Perumpadappu chief moved the capital from Vanneri to Mahodayapuram, then to Cochin in the 14th century, amidst threats from the Zamorin of Calicut and the shifting importance of ports following floods in the Periyar River. The Perumpadappu rulers, Kshatriyas by birth, held moral and religious authority as Koviladhikarikal, managing numerous temples across Kerala. However, internal strife weakened their power, setting the stage for conflict with the Zamorin.

Chapter XIII: Calicut under the Early Zamorins

Calicut, or Kozhikode, rose to power under the Zamorins, who were descendants of the Ernad Utaiyavar. Traditionally, it is believed that the Cheraman Perumal partitioned land, granting the Eradi brothers power over Malainadu, a story with little historical corroboration.

Rise of Calicut: In the 13th century, Calicut was part of Polanad. The Eradis of Nediyruppu strategically aimed to conquer Polanad for its coastal



access, eventually succeeding after prolonged warfare. They shifted their headquarters to Calicut, building a fortified palace, which became the seat of their power. Known as the Zamorins (from "Samuri"), they elevated Calicut to a trading hub. The Arab merchants, recognizing the Zamorins' tolerance and fair trade practices, flocked to Calicut. Chinese traders established a colony there too. The Arabs, in particular, found favor with the Zamorin, who secured a monopoly over the export trades and wielded their military support for territorial expansion.

Zamorin's Conquests: The Zamorin extended his influence over Beypore, Parappanad, Vettat, Kurumbranad, and beyond. The conflict with Valluvanad's ruler, particularly over the prestigious Mamamkam festival at Tirunavai, marked his early campaigns. Following his victory, the Zamorin expanded into Nilambur, Manjeri, and other territories.

Conflict with Cochin: Internal conflicts within Cochin allowed the Zamorin to exert influence there by backing contenders favorable to him. Consecutively, the Zamorin amassed allies, tightening his grip over regional power, until Cochin became a vassal along with North Kerala's various chieftains.

Administration and Culture: The Zamorin oversaw a sophisticated administration, despite being an autocrat. His governance was supported by ministers such as Mangat Achan and a structured civil service. Calicut



flourished as a cultural nexus under his rule, hosting the Revati Pattathanam, an illustrious literary assembly. Scholars and poets thrived in his court, with Calicut celebrated for its intellectual achievements.

Foreign Accounts: Noted travelers like Ibn Batuta and Abdur Razzak described Calicut as a bustling trade port populated with traders from around the world, including Arabs and Chinese. The Zamorin's kingdom, known for its justice and security, was a beacon for merchants and wealth, illustrating Calicut's pre-Portuguese commercial and cultural zenith.

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Chapter 12: MINOR PRINCIPALITIES

Chapter XIV provides a detailed examination of the minor principalities in Kerala during the turbulent period of European colonial rivalry, mainly involving the Portuguese, Dutch, and other European powers seeking political and commercial dominance. These smaller kingdoms and principalities, while not as dominant as the major powers like Calicut and Venad, played a crucial role in the region's socio-political landscape.

Kerala Polity on the eve of the Arrival of the Portuguese:

By the end of the 15th century, Kerala was marked by a fragmented feudal system, where numerous smaller principalities coexisted under the oversight of larger powers like the Zamorin of Calicut and the rulers of Venad. The absence of a strong central authority resulted in endemic feuds among these minor states, alongside a complex religious polity where Hindu temples held significant secular power through territories called Sanketams. The religious landscape was additionally marked by the influence of the Namboothiri Brahmins, whose jurisdiction and penal powers added another layer to the intricate political scene.

Elayadathu Swarupam and Other Principalities:

The principalities, many emerging from branches of royal families, often fell



under the influence or control of more potent neighboring powers. For instance, Elayadathu Swarupam originated as a branch of the Venad family and was later absorbed into Travancore in 1742 by Marthanda Varma, a recurring figure in these territorial consolidations.

Desinganad, Trippappur, and Attingal:

Desinganad and Trippappur evolved from splits within the Venad kingdom, with the latter becoming central to the emerging Travancore state. The strategic and political roles were underscored by family ties and the European dealings facilitated by such splits.

Political Intrigue and European Alliances:

The minor principalities frequently navigated shifting alliances with European powers, leveraging these relationships to counterbalance rival local rulers or assert regional dominance—such as the struggles between Kayamkulam and Marthanda Varma, or Purakkad's precarious balancing act between supporting the Portuguese and local powers.

Merging into Travancore:

Several principalities, including Kayamkulam, Purakkad, and others, were eventually incorporated into the rising Travancore kingdom under



Marthanda Varma. This consolidation was often facilitated by strategic marriages, military conquests, or diplomatic manoeuvres, aiming to unify the region under a central authority.

The Role of Religion and Culture:

Many of these principalities played essential roles in the cultural and religious milieu of the time. For instance, Vadakkumkur was renowned as the "pepper kingdom," illustrating the integration of economic resources and cultural identity. Others, like Valluvanad, participated in important cultural festivals such as the Mamamkam.

Impact of European Colonization:

The influence of European colonization played a significant role in shaping the destinies of these minor kingdoms. Alliances and conflicts with European traders were not uncommon, as seen with the Ali Raja of Cannanore, who harnessed such connections to bolster his power and influence in the region.

In summary, this chapter underscores the significance of minor principalities in Kerala's historical tapestry, reflecting a period of complex feudal dynamics, colonial interactions, and the gradual political consolidation leading to the prominence of Travancore. The chapter sets the stage for



understanding how these smaller states fit into the larger narrative of Kerala's history during European expansion in South Asia.

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Chapter 13 Summary: THE PORTUGUESE PERIOD

Chapter XV of the book focuses on the Portuguese period in Kerala, marking a significant epoch in the region's history with Vasco da Gama's landing at Calicut in May 1498. His arrival symbolized the beginning of European exploration and expansion in India, with the Portuguese initially aiming to find a new trade route to India and expand their trade with the Orient. However, they soon aspired to build an empire by subjugating local powers.

The geopolitical dynamics of Kerala, characterized by rivalries between the Zamorin of Calicut and the Raja of Cochin, alongside other minor powers like the Kolathiri, Quilon, and Purakkad, created opportunities for the Portuguese to establish commercial supremacy on the Kerala coast. The Raja of Cochin, seeking to strengthen his position against the Zamorin, forged alliances with the Portuguese. This partnership was solidified as the Zamorin became the primary defender against Portuguese aggression, while the Cochin Raja acted as their accomplice.

Vasco da Gama's expedition in 1498 met with mixed responses. Though initially greeted with hospitality in Calicut, tensions arose due to disputes over trade practices, leading to strained relations. Subsequently, the Portuguese under Pedro Alvarez Cabral established a factory at Calicut but faced hostility, resulting in violence and the destruction of their factory.



Cabral's expedition ultimately succeeded in aligning with the Cochin Raja, securing another base for Portuguese interests.

The following years saw increased hostility between the Portuguese and the Zamorin, as the Portuguese sought to solidify their influence through treaties and military confrontations. The Zamorin's steadfast resistance eventually prompted the Portuguese to pursue aggression alongside strategic alliances, resulting in territorial clashes and shifts in allegiances.

Francisco d'Almeida, as the first Viceroy, focused on fortifying Portuguese possessions, furthering tensions with the Zamorin, who rallied local powers against the Portuguese advances. Meanwhile, Affonso de Albuquerque, succeeding Almeida, pursued a policy of territorial expansion rather than relying solely on naval supremacy, leading to both military action and diplomacy through treaties with local rulers.

The chapter also highlights the decline of Portuguese power, accelerated by administrative corruption, religious intolerance, and cultural insensitivity, which alienated the local population. The arrival of rival European powers, like the Dutch, signaled the beginning of the end for Portuguese dominance in Kerala.

With the Portuguese presence came socio-economic changes, including the introduction of new agricultural products and European cultural influences.



However, Portuguese religious zeal and intolerance culminated in the forced Latinisation of the Kerala Church, sparking resistance exemplified by the Coonan Cross Oath of 1653, which divided the Christian community into factions.

Additionally, the chapter discusses the rise of the Bhakti movement as a counter to the era's political instability, social degradation, and economic hardship. This movement, led by prominent figures like Tunchat Ezhuthachan, Melpattur Narayana Bhattatiri, and Puntanam Namboothiri, emphasized devotion and religious fervor, contributing to Kerala's rich cultural tapestry during the Portuguese period.

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Chapter 14 Summary: VENAD (1314 -1720)

Chapter XVI of the book delves into the history of the Venad kingdom from 1314 to 1720, following the reign of Ravi Varma Kulasekhara. This period witnesses significant political and military events, with changes in leadership and the region's interaction with other South Indian powers.

After Ravi Varma Kulasekhara's reign ended abruptly around 1314, Vira Udaya Marthanda Varma ascended the throne using the matrilineal succession system, marking a pivotal change in succession practices. Although he faced defeat by the Katatiya ruler alongside Vira Pandya in 1317, Marthanda Varma still managed to maintain influence over parts of the Tirunelveli district. Notably, the reign saw the adoption of princesses from the Kolathunad royal family into the Venad royal house, indicating political alliances and royal family expansions.

Kunnummel Vira Kerala Varma Tiruvati followed, ruling briefly and actively contributing to the Sri Padmanabha temple, showcasing the turbulence of the time through conflicts with temple trustees, often resulting in casualties.

The period from 1350 to 1383 A.D., corresponding to the Kollam Era 525 to 588, was marked by the joint rule of brothers Iravi Iravi Varman and Iravi Aditya Varman. They were notable for their efforts against Muslim raids in



the Tovala region and for being patrons of the arts, as evidenced by the Malayalam poem "Unnunilisandesam," likely composed during their reign. Successor Aditya Varma Sarvanganatha (1376-1383) stands out as a cultured ruler with scholarly and martial skills, who continued resisting Muslim advances.

Chera Udaya Marthanda Varma's reign (1383-1444) was marked by territorial expansion into the interior Tirunelveli region. His patronage to temples and contributions to literature, such as the acclaimed "Lilatilakam," are notable. He was succeeded by figures like Ravi Varma and several others, whose rules saw further consolidation and encounters with powers like Vijayanagar. Notably, Ravi Ravi Varma led the kingdom's defense against Vijayanagar's aggression, earning praise from the Portuguese Viceroy Albuquerque for his military prowess and initiating trade relations with the Portuguese.

The thoughtful administration of Bhutalavira Sri Vira Udaya Marthanda Varma (1516-1535) expanded Venad's territories, although clashes with Vijayanagar reflected the period's volatile political landscape. The aftermath involved handing over territories back to the Pandyas.

Subsequently, leaders like Sri Vira Kerala Varma and Rama Varma saw fluctuating fortunes, with temple renovations and brief respites from external threats. However, invasions by entities such as the Nayaks of Madurai



disturbed the overall peace, driving Venad into prolonged disputes and conflicts over autonomy and tribute collection.

Ravi Varma (1684-1718) and his successors faced daunting challenges, including revolts spurred by oppressive taxation and internal dissent from groups like the Pillamar—a trend that characterized much of Venad's later history. Aditya Varma, who ruled from 1718-1721, saw deteriorating governance, culminating in attacks against English merchants and instability, culminating in a period of defense restructuring under Rama Varma. During his reign, alliances were sought with external powers like the Madurai Nayaks to counter internal unrest from groups such as the Yogakkar and ensure stability in Venad.

This chapter of Venad's history paints a picture of a kingdom battling both internally with administrative challenges and externally with formidable adversaries, setting the stage for Marthanda Varma's accession in 1729, where new strategies and alliances would redefine the kingdom's legacy.



Chapter 15 Summary: THE RISE AND FALL OF THE DUTCH

Chapter XVII: The Rise and Fall of the Dutch in Kerala

The Dutch, as the first Protestant nation to challenge the Portuguese monopoly, played a significant role in the history of Kerala. The Dutch East India Company, established in 1592, spearheaded this effort by forming early trade connections. In 1663, the Dutch solidified their presence by capturing Cochin from the Portuguese, marking the official start of their period in Kerala.

Early Relations with Kerala Rulers

The Dutch first established a diplomatic connection with the Zamorin of Calicut in 1604 through a treaty that focused on mutual cooperation against the Portuguese. This treaty allowed the Dutch to trade freely and set up a base in Calicut, laying the groundwork for their future endeavors.

Subsequent treaties and visits by Dutch admirals saw the strengthening of ties, although initial attempts to oust the Portuguese were not immediately fruitful.

By the early 17th century, a combined Dutch and English fleet attempted



actions against the Portuguese, and further agreements bolstered the Dutch position as a significant threat to Portuguese interests in Malabar.

Expansion and Conquest

The Dutch systematically expanded their influence by forming treaties with smaller kingdoms in central Kerala, securing exclusive trade rights. They forged alliances with Purakkad, Kayamkulam, and others, solidifying their presence and enabling the construction of strategic trading posts and warehouses.

In 1658, the Dutch, under Admiral Van Goens, captured Quilon from the Portuguese, cementing their status as the leading European power in the region. The subsequent retaking of Quilon and strategic treaties with local powers further entrenched Dutch influence.

Capture of Cochin and Subsequent Rule

The pivotal moment came in 1663 when Dutch forces captured Cochin following internal conflicts within the Cochin royal family. With support from local rulers and the strategic removal of Portuguese allies, the Dutch installed Vira Kerala Varma, a prince favorable to their interests, solidifying their control. They then entered into treaties ensuring monopolies on lucrative spice trades and positioned themselves as political puppeteers over



Cochin and neighboring regions.

The Dutch subsequently secured agreements with Cannanore and other local powers, further expanding their trade network and administrative reach across Kerala.

Interference and Dutch Policies

Under Henrick Van Rheede's leadership in 1673, the Dutch intensified their control, imposing themselves in local political matters and limiting royal power in Cochin. While this approach briefly positioned them as dominant, it also led to unrest within the royal family and revolts, which they quelled by reinforcing administrative oversight with loyalists.

Challenges and Decline

Attempts at consolidating power were hindered by the rise of local powers such as the Zamorin of Calicut, who resisted Dutch influence. The Dutch pursued a strategy of deepening their presence and exploiting local rivalries, yet by the mid-18th century, unforeseen developments thwarted their ambitions. Marthanda Varma of Travancore delivered a critical blow to the Dutch with his victory at the Battle of Colachel in 1741, annexing nearby states and unraveling Dutch strategic positions.

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Final Days and Legacy

Following successive defeats and unfavorable treaties, the Dutch influence waned substantially. The arrival of Mysore's Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan further destabilized the region, compromising Dutch possessions. The final blow came during the Napoleonic Wars when the British captured Cochin in 1795, with formal cession occurring in 1814.

The inability of the Dutch to sustain their dominance in Kerala stemmed from several factors: the ascendance of military strongholds like Travancore, the emergence of competing European powers, primarily the British and French, and strategic missteps. Unlike the Portuguese, the Dutch administration was efficient and less corrupt, promoting trade and contributing significantly to sectors like agriculture. However, complex political and military currents beyond their control led to their decline.

The Dutch legacy, marked by economic contributions and cultural exchanges, left an indelible imprint on Kerala's history, from advanced agricultural practices to the iconic "Hortus Malabaricus," a seminal work on the region's botany. Despite their fall, the Dutch period is remembered as one of relative administrative competence and economic ambition in the history of Kerala.



Chapter 16: KERALA POLITY AND LIFE IN THE 16th AND 17th CENTURIES

Chapter XVIII of the book delves into the complex and multifaceted societal structure of Kerala in the 16th and 17th centuries, providing insightful perspectives on the polity, social customs, and economic life of the region during this period.

Political Structure:

Kerala's political landscape was characterized by a feudal system without a centralized government. Instead, the region was divided into small principalities, or Nadus, each governed by a local chieftain known as the Naduvazhi. Despite possessing significant power, the Naduvazhis' authority was curbed by the local assemblies of the Nairs, reflecting a unique blend of feudal and participatory governance. The Naduvazhi's income was derived from several sources, including customs revenue, succession fees, and levies on merchants, illustrating a complex economic structure that intertwined with the social hierarchy.

Military Institutions:

A significant aspect of Kerala's society was its military tradition. The Nairs, traditionally the martial class, maintained private armies, and military

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training was provided in institutions called Kalaris. These were crucial for preparing youth in martial arts such as Kalaripayattu, as celebrated in the Northern Ballads, which highlight characters like Unniarcha and Aromal Chekavar. Dispute resolution sometimes involved organized fights, such as Ankam (group combat) and Poithu (individual duels), reflecting the martial culture of the time.

Judicial Practices:

Kerala lacked a formal judiciary, relying instead on customary law administered by local rulers and Brahmins. Trial by ordeal was a common practice for determining guilt, with various methods like ordeal by balance, fire, and even snakes. Punishments were severe and varied significantly according to caste hierarchies. The caste system profoundly influenced legal proceedings, highlighting social inequalities deeply entrenched in the societal norms.

Social Structure and Customs:

The caste system heavily influenced Kerala's social fabric. The Namboothiris represented the highest caste, with the Nairs following closely as the martial elite. Social mobility was limited, and social practices like polyandry were prevalent, particularly among the Nairs, as observed by foreign visitors like Barbosa and Zainuddin. Women's status varied; they



enjoyed societal freedoms apart from the purdah system followed by the Namboothiri community.

Economic Life:

The economy of Kerala was significantly shaped by bustling trade, primarily through its major ports like Quilon, Cochin, and Calicut, which were hubs of international commerce. Merchants from different religions and regions, including the Mappilas and Syrian Christians, contributed to a vibrant trade atmosphere. Despite active trade, economic challenges surfaced, such as the fall in pepper prices impacting the local economy.

Relations and Tolerance:

The interactions among diverse communities, including Hindus, Muslims, and Christians, were generally cordial, with evidence of religious tolerance. This is reflected in the peaceful coexistence and mutual respect between different religious and social groups. The Hindu rulers maintained a policy of openness, contributing to the spread of Islam and Christianity and fostering social progress.

Overall, the chapter presents a detailed exploration of Kerala's socio-political and economic dynamics during the 16th and 17th centuries, offering a nuanced understanding of how historical forces shaped the



region's culture and society.

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Chapter 17 Summary: MARTHANDA VARMA AND DHARMA RAJA

Chapter XIX: Marthanda Varma and Dharma Raja

In the 18th century, the region of Venad, later known as Travancore, rose to prominence under the leadership of two significant rulers: Marthanda Varma (1729-1758) and his successor, Kartika Tirunal Rama Varma (1758-1798), commonly known as Dharma Raja. Their reigns marked a transformation of Travancore into a dominant military state through conquests and administrative consolidation.

The Reign of Marthanda Varma

Upon ascending the throne, Marthanda Varma found Venad in disarray, dominated by feudal elements like the Pillamar and Matampimar, and complicated by European political rivalries. He adopted a "blood and iron" policy to quell these feudal forces and solidify royal authority. His strategy, supported by alliances with the English East India Company and the Nayaks of Madurai, led to the elimination of these factions and the integration of smaller principalities into Travancore.



His administrative reforms included reorganizing state finances and military enhancements. By incorporating regions like Attingal and waging successful campaigns against Quilon and Kayamkulam, Marthanda Varma expanded Travancore's boundaries. The decisive Battle of Colachel in 1741, where his forces defeated the Dutch, marked a significant victory, allowing further territorial expansion.

Marthanda Varma's achievements were not limited to military conquests. He enacted significant administrative reforms, improving infrastructure such as roads and canals, expanding agriculture through irrigation projects, and establishing a centralized system of governance. The dedication of Travancore to Sri Padmanabha established a rule guided by religious sanctity, stabilizing the kingdom by deterring future insurrections.

The Legacy of Dharma Raja

Karthika Tirunal Rama Varma, known as the Dharma Raja, continued the work of his predecessor with diplomatic astuteness and administrative efficiency. He maintained friendly relations with neighboring states like Cochin, which were further cemented through strategic alliances to counter threats from powers like Mysore under Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan. The Dharma Raja's reign is noted for providing refuge to many nobles and commoners fleeing the Mysore invasions, earning Travancore a reputation as



a "Land of Charity."

Dharma Raja's administration saw the strategic construction of the Travancore Lines or Nedumkotta to defend against Mysorean advances and the acquisition of forts to strengthen the northern defenses. Domestically, his reign witnessed reforms in revenue collection and agricultural development, expertly navigated by his chief ministers, especially Raja Kesava Das who made notable contributions in infrastructure and trade, transforming places like Alleppey into bustling commercial centers.

Culturally, the reign of Dharma Raja was a golden age, fostering advancements in literature, arts, and religious architecture. He was a patron of the renowned poets Kunjan Nambiar and Unnayi Warriar, contributing to the evolution of Kathakali. The court of Travancore became a hub of cultural and intellectual activities under his patronage.

Dharma Raja's reign concluded with the transition of the capital to Trivandrum, marking an era of prosperity and cultural flourishing. His rule, characterized by stability, effective diplomacy, and cultural patronage, left an indelible mark on Travancore's history, establishing him as one of its most respected and celebrated rulers.

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Chapter 18 Summary: HISTORY OF COCHIN (1500-1805)

Chapter XX: History of Cochin (1500-1805)

In this chapter, the history of Cochin from 1500 to 1805 is covered, detailing the significant rulers and major events of this period. The narrative picks up from the arrival of the Portuguese at Cochin and their interactions with the local rulers, leading to notable shifts in power and culture.

Portuguese Period (1500-1663):

The arrival of the Portuguese, led by Captain Cabral, initiated trade relations with Cochin under the rule of Unni Rama Koil I, thereby increasing the political prominence of Cochin. His successor, Unni Rama Koil II, strengthened these ties, setting a foundation for future alliances. Vira Kerala Varma, ruling from 1537-1565, initially maintained cordial relations with the Portuguese, but tensions arose following the Portuguese's plundering of the Palluruthi temple. It was during Vira Kerala Varma's reign that the influential Battle of Vaduthala occurred, in which the Vadakkumkur chief was slain. The Portuguese gifted a palace to Cochin's royalty during this time, known as the "Dutch Palace" after later renovations.



Kesava Rama Varma (1565-1601) stands out in this era. His reign was marked by cultural patronage and significant events like the settlement of Jews in Cochin (1567) and the establishment of the Tirumala Devaswam temple in Mattancherri (1599) for the Konkanis. A revolt against the Portuguese over customs duty occurred under his rule, leading to the Synod of Diamper (1599), which aimed to reform the local Christian community.

The succession of rulers from 1601 witnessed varying degrees of influence over and against the Portuguese, with notable scholars earning patronage. The reigns of his successors and a brief regency by Rani Gangadhara Lakshmi saw continued, though declining, interactions with the Portuguese, culminating with the Dutch taking control of Cochin in the mid-17th century.

Dutch Ascendancy (1663-1790):

The Dutch gained power in Cochin following Vira Kerala Varma's accession in 1663. This period was characterized by Cochin's administrative subordination to Dutch interests, marked by treaties and a reduction in royal authority. The Dutch influenced succession disputes, such as the War of Vettam succession, using their military might to favor certain factions. While Cochin's rulers chafed under this subordination, they managed to negotiate a few advantageous treaties and secure limited benefits.



During this time, the connection with the kingdom of Travancore became pertinent. The final phase of Dutch influence saw economic pressures and warfare shaping the political landscape, with a focus on feudal power dynamics.

Saktan Tampuran's Reforms (1790-1805):

Rama Varma, known as Saktan Tampuran, became the prominent ruler of Cochin, ushering in an era of administrative reform and economic development. His reign marked significant progress in centralizing power, diminishing the influence of the feudal nobility and the Brahmin clergy. Economic initiatives included developing trade, market establishments, and infrastructure improvement, impacting the socio-economic landscape positively. The security and justice systems flourished under his leadership, making his reign an epoch of transformation akin to Marthanda Varma's administration in Travancore.

Chapter XXI: The Mysorean Interlude

This chapter explores the turbulent period in Kerala's history during Mysorean dominance, driven by internal political strife among local Kerala rulers, and the territorial ambitions of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan, the rulers of Mysore.



Mysorean Invasions (1766-1784):

Mysore first intervened in Kerala during a dispute in Palghat in the 1750s and escalated with Haider Ali's full-blown invasions beginning in 1766. Prompted by local disputes, territorial ambitions, and strategic needs, such as securing a supply route from Mahe, Haider seized opportunities presented by Kerala's divisive politics and European influence. The first invasion led swiftly to Mysorean dominance, with Haider establishing centralized control but facing popular uprisings among the Nairs.

Tipu Sultan's Campaigns (1788-1790):

Tipu Sultan, succeeding Haider Ali, continued aggressive policies, albeit meeting significant resistance. His controversial policies, attempted social reforms, and religious actions led to widespread unrest. Despite the challenges, he managed to reconquer significant territories but faced political pushbacks from both local rulers and the British.

The End of Mysorean Occupation and Its Impact:

Tipu's campaigns ended abruptly in 1790 when the British declared war on Mysore. Subsequent treaties formalized British rule over Malabar, including Cochin, thereby ending Mysorean attempts at hegemony. The Mysorean



interlude left deep political, economic, and social impacts on Kerala. The traditional feudal administration was disrupted, and the Nair dominance significantly declined, making way for centralized governance inspired by Mysorean precedents. Moreover, the Mysorean invasions led to demographic shifts, economic hardship, and social change, setting the stage for the British colonial era.

The Mysorean era was transformative but divisive, marked by warfare, trade volatility, and changes in social hierarchies, ultimately paving the way for new political dynamics in Kerala.

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Chapter 19 Summary: THE GROWTH OF BRITISH POWER

Chapter XXII: The Growth of British Power

The development of British influence in Kerala, akin to that of the Portuguese and Dutch before them, was primarily driven by trade. Master Ralph Fitch, often celebrated as the 'Pioneer Englishman,' initiated contact when he arrived in Cochin in 1583. His journey preceded the more famous voyages of James Lancaster, marking the beginning of English interest in the region.

Early engagements saw Captain Keeling in 1615 negotiating with the Zamorin of Calicut, aiming to expel Portuguese forces from Cranganore and Cochin but ultimately not committing British forces to combat. Instead, the English East India Company secured agreements allowing trade access to Portuguese ports by 1634-35, and by 1644 they had established a presence in Vizhinjam, albeit challenged by Dutch expansion.

In response to difficulties, the British shifted focus to Anjengo in 1684, obtaining land from the Rani of Attingal to establish a vital trading position. Anjengo became a strategic point, second in importance only to Bombay, facilitating British expansion. However, manipulation of local trade,



especially pepper prices, led to local resentment, culminating in the Attingal Outbreak in 1721 where tensions boiled over into violence against the British.

A lasting peace was sought through treaties, such as the 1723 agreement with Travancore under Prince Marthanda Varma, which cemented alliances and British commercial interests. The English also expanded north, establishing a factory at Tellicherry amid local opposition, thus securing their position across Kerala.

By the 18th century, the British faced competition from the French, an example being the conflict at Tellicherry against French-backed native forces. However, strategic alliances and military interventions, like the support of local rulers against Mysore aggression, steadily strengthened British control.

Chapter XXIII: The Challenge to British Supremacy

Despite establishing control over Kerala by the late 18th century, British dominance was consistently challenged. Initially, resistance came from members of the Zamorin's family, notably the Patinjare Kovilakam Rajas, who opposed British settlements and political settlements that marginalized local rulers.



One of the most notable uprisings was led by Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja of Kottayam. His rebellion from 1793 to 1797 centered on opposition to British revenue policies and favoritism towards rival local leaders. Despite initial successes, including guerilla warfare tactics taught by Pazhassi himself, British diplomacy and military pressure eventually subdued these revolts.

Following a brief period of peace, Pazhassi Raja rose again in 1800 against attempts to seize Wynad, resulting in a prolonged series of skirmishes which persisted until his death in 1805. His resistance is remembered as a people's war, uniting different classes and invoking a spirit of national liberation.

Simultaneously, the Revolt of Velu Tampi and Paliath Achan in Travancore and Cochin marked another seminal moment of resistance. Velu Tampi, initially supportive of the British, turned against them due to their overreach into local governance. Despite initial successes in organizing a broad alliance against the British, the revolt ultimately failed with Velu Tampi's death, which is remembered as a sacrifice in the struggle for independence.

These insurrections, including the Kurichiya revolt in 1812, highlighted regional unrest against colonial policies, though they were quenched with British diplomatic and military strategies. What followed was consolidation of British rule but also gradual internal reforms that spurred development in the region.



Critical Thinking

Key Point: The Resilience of Local Leaders Against Colonial Domination

Critical Interpretation: Amidst the overwhelming influence of British colonial power in Kerala, a beacon of inspiration shines through the spirited resistance led by figures like Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja. His unwavering resolve to oppose unjust treatment, exploitative revenue practices, and political favoritism resonates deeply. Your life's challenges may seem insurmountable, much like the vast forces Pazhassi faced. Yet, his commitment to justice and fighting for the rights of his people encourages you to stand tall against adversity. With strategic thinking, unwavering determination, and a heart filled with purpose, you can channel his indomitable spirit to inspire meaningful change, advocating for what you believe is just.



Chapter 20: ENLIGHTENED ADMINISTRATION IN TRAVANCORE

Chapter XXIV: Enlightened Administration in Travancore

The chapter chronicles the evolution of progressive governance in Travancore, beginning with the reigns of Marthanda Varma (1729-1758) and Dharma Raja (1758-1798), who laid the groundwork for a modern administrative system despite the turbulent political landscape. Their efforts paved the way for numerous reforms enhancing state administration and societal welfare.

However, the ascension of Balarama Varma (1798-1810) marked a period of regression, as he relinquished control to a corrupt triumvirate led by Jayanthan Sankaran Nampoori, Sankaranarayana Chetty, and Mathu Tharakan. These ministers focused on personal gains, leading to public dissatisfaction and financial instability through exploitative practices like forced loans. Velu Tampi, Karyakar of Talakkulam, resisted these malpractices, leading a revolt that resulted in the dismissal of these corrupt officials. Appointed as Dalawa in 1800, Velu Tampi implemented reforms to restore administrative integrity and efficiency, including reorganizing the revenue department, promoting education, and improving infrastructure such as roads and public buildings.



Under ummini Tampi's brief tenure as Dalawa, financial stabilization and the introduction of district courts were notable achievements, although public support was limited. In 1810, administration passed to Rani Gouri Lakshmi Bai, who, with the help of Resident-Diwan Col. Munro, ushered in a new era of transparent governance. This included the adoption of a secretariat system, revenue reforms, and the abolition of slavery, modernizing the overall administrative framework of Travancore.

Her successor, Gouri Parvati Bai (1815-1829), continued the trajectory of societal and economic advancements, further aided by Munro's counsel. Trade and agriculture thrived as restrictive practices were abolished, and significant emphasis was placed on improving public health and education systems, fostering a spirit of civic equality across different communities.

The reign of Swati Tirunal (1829-1847), deemed a 'Golden Age,' saw significant cultural and administrative progress, including judicial reforms and the initiation of English education. Subsequent rulers, such as Utram Tirunal and Ayilyam Tirunal (1860-1880), continued evolving the state's administrative capabilities by enforcing fiscal discipline and improving social conditions. Noteworthy advancements included the abolition of slavery and the establishment of hospitals and educational institutions.

Ayilyam Tirunal's rule witnessed significant agrarian reforms, while



subsequent leaders like Sri Mulam Tirunal Rama Varma (1885-1924) focused on administrative modernization through education reforms and improved infrastructure. A significant development was the establishment of the first legislative council, symbolizing responsible governance and increased public interaction in administrative affairs.

Regents Setu Lakshmi Bai and Sri Chitra Tirunal Balarama Varma introduced further administrative reforms and promoted industrialization, facilitating advancements in healthcare and education, and infrastructure projects like the Pallivasal Hydroelectric scheme and state transport services. Throughout these regimes, the progressive nature of Travancore's governance placed it among the leading states in modernizing its administrative and social structures under British India.

Chapter XXV: Progress of Cochin

The emergence of Cochin as a progressive state began under Saktan Tampuran (1790-1805), who centralized administrative governance, although subsequent political turmoil limited progress until British intervention. The failed revolt by Paliath Achan in 1809 led to Kunhikrishna Menon's appointment as Chief Minister, whose mishandling of state affairs prompted the British to assign Col. Munro (1812-1818) as Diwan. Munro's administration mirrored his work in Travancore, focusing on rooting out



corruption, enhancing the judicial system, promoting education, and developing infrastructure, thereby laying a sustainable foundation for future advancements.

Subsequent Diwans like Nanjappayya (1815-1825), who introduced judicial reforms and modern medical practices, and Venkatasubbayya (1835-1840), who improved agriculture and education, contributed significantly to Cochin's development. Sankara Warriar (1840-1856) expanded public works, abolished slavery, and improved state finances, leaving a legacy of reform-centric governance.

His successor, Thottakkat Sankunni Menon, further advanced the state's infrastructure, judicial efficacy, and educational services. Govinda Menon, succeeding Sankunni, continued liberal policies and focused on female education, police reform, and dispute resolution with Travancore.

Later Diwans continued to build on these foundations, establishing public health services, advancing industrialization, encouraging education, and implementing social reforms like the abolition of slavery and caste-based oppression. Sir R. K. Shanmukham Chetti's tenure (1935-1941) marked completion of harbor schemes and administrative reforms, emphasizing communal representation in governance.

Cochin's political evolution culminated in the integration with Travancore in



1949, forming the new state of Travancore-Cochin. This period was marked by significant administrative progress characterized by insightful reforms and socioeconomic development initiatives, placing Cochin among the notable princely states under British India.

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Chapter 21 Summary: BRITISH MALABAR

Summary of Chapter XXVI: British Malabar

Integration and Administration:

Following its integration on May 21, 1800, the Malabar district became an administrative wing of the Madras Presidency under British rule. Major Macleod took charge as the first Principal Collector on October 1, 1801. Despite its distinct progress, the district's development was less remarkable compared to the princely states of Travancore and Cochin.

Judicial System:

The British administration prioritized an organized judicial system in Malabar. As early as 1793, a code for civil and criminal justice was established, led by Northern and Southern Superintendents. In 1802, the Cornwallis Code separated judicial and executive roles, resulting in the establishment of Provincial and Zilla Courts. Over time, the district evolved into North and South Malabar judgements.

Communication and Economic Advancements:

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Malabar's infrastructure, notably its communication system, improved steadily under British rule. This was propelled by the necessity of military roads during the Pazhassi revolt. Key roads like the Periya Ghat Road, and later railway installations, facilitated economic activities. The introduction of a spice plantation and the development of coffee and tea estates, alongside industrial endeavors like weaving mills and tile factories, marked economic progress in Malabar.

Educational Developments:

Education in Malabar experienced growth spearheaded by missionaries, particularly the Basel Evangelical Mission, which founded several primary and English schools. Institutions like Tellicherry Brennen School and Malabar Christian College emerged from these efforts, marking significant strides in education.

Local Self-Government:

The late 19th century saw the initiation of local self-governance, guided by the Madras Town Improvement Act of 1865. Municipalities provided public services such as education and health care, further contributing to social advancements.

Social Unrest and Rebellion:

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Despite progress, Malabar experienced violent disturbances, notably the Mappila Riots from 1836 to 1856, triggered by agrarian disputes and religious tensions. The riots, marked by attacks on Hindu landlords, were investigated by various officials. The unrest persisted until the early 20th century due to underlying issues like poverty and landlord-tenant conflicts.

National Movement Initiation:

Malabar played a pivotal role in India's freedom movement. The Indian National Congress, formed in 1885, had early support in the district. Political activities included a 1908 District Congress Committee, and later, the Home Rule Movement gained momentum, signaling an increase in local political engagement.

Non-cooperation and Independence Movements:

With Gandhi's leadership, Malabar engaged in non-cooperation, boycotting British goods and institutions. The district was also swept by the Khilafat Movement, binding Hindus and Muslims in shared opposition to British policies. The Malabar Rebellion of 1921, emerging from this backdrop, initially challenged British authority but gradually assumed a communal character, leading to tragic events like the Wagon Tragedy.



Political Journalism and Continued Activism:

Political journalism emerged with newspapers like Mathrubhumi and Al-Amin aiming to unify the populace. Movements continued into the later decades, advocating for tenancy reform and participating in broader national campaigns like the Salt Satyagraha and Civil Disobedience movement.

Communal Politics and New Directions:

As the Congress split into Right and Left factions, new political entities like the Communist Party and Muslim League gained strength. By the 1930s, political activism in Malabar was marked by ideological shifts and organizational restructuring. During WWII, the Quit India movement was only weakly felt due to Communist alignment with the British following Russia's entry into the war.

Independence and State Reorganization:

Post-independence, Malabar remained part of Madras State. In the 1951 elections, Congress faced setbacks due to a Left alliance. The state reorganization in 1956 merged Malabar with other regions to form Kerala, aligning with linguistic identities and marking a new chapter in its history.



Chapter 22 Summary: POLITICAL MOVEMENTS IN TRAVANCORE AND COCHIN

Chapter XXVII: Political Movements in Travancore and Cochin

The princely states of Travancore and Cochin experienced significant political struggles throughout the British period, driven by a quest for good governance and political rights, culminating in achieving responsible government in 1947.

Early Struggles in Travancore

In Travancore, early resistance highlighted the people's emerging political consciousness. A notable struggle in 1799 was led by Velu Tampi against the oppressive rule of a triumvirate of ministers. Although subdued for some time, dissatisfaction simmered with the appointment of outsiders, notably Tamil Brahmins, in administration, as indigenous talents were overlooked.

Malayali and Ezhava Memorials

By the late 19th century, educated natives voiced their discontent,

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epitomized by the "Malayali Memorial" of 1891, led by G. Parameswaran Pillai, seeking fair representation in government jobs. The call was amplified by the "Ezhava Memorial" in 1896, led by Dr. Palpu, demanding similar rights and opportunities for the marginalized Ezhava community. Though initially met with governmental resistance, these actions stirred socio-political awareness and advocacy for rights.

Rise of Political Journalism and Terrorism

Political dissent continued with figures like Swadesabhimani Ramakrishna Pillai, an influential journalist whose criticism of government policies led to his expulsion and the confiscation of his press in 1910. His efforts paralleled the rise of revolutionary activities, inspired by broader Indian movements, including an assassination in 1911 inspired by Anusilan Samiti.

Chempakaraman Pillai and International Advocacy

Internationally, revolutionaries like Chempakaraman Pillai contributed to the freedom struggle from abroad, organizing support for Indian independence and advocating military approaches during World War I. His legacy foreshadowed notable figures like Subhas Chandra Bose.



Agitation for Civic Rights and the Nivarthana Movement

The Poura Samatvavada Prakshobhanam sought civic equality across communities, leading to incremental administrative reforms in 1922. The more intense Nivarthana (Abstention) Movement in the 1930s addressed unequal legislative representation. It culminated in community leaders like T.M. Varghese and C. Kesavan voicing public demands, paving the way for broader political reform.

Struggle for Responsible Government

By 1938, the need for responsible government was undeniable. The Travancore State Congress, led by Pattom A Thanu Pillai, launched civil disobedience, confronting Diwan Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Ayyar's repressive regime. This period was marked by violent incidents like the Punnapra-Vayalar uprisings in 1946, where the push for political reforms faced brutal suppression.

Path to Independence

Eventually, Travancore's political landscape shifted, especially with British

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departure looming. Diwan Sir C.P.'s declaration of independent Travancore met resistance, culminating in his departure following an assassination attempt. Travancore finally acceded to the Indian Union, with the first popular ministry taking office in 1948.

Early Political Agitations in Cochin

Cochin mirrored Travancore's initial struggles for reform. Dependent on British oversight, early administrative protests led to diwan dismissals and shaped a cautious yet progressive political environment. Like Travancore, Cochin saw Congress activities early, with peasants and workers joining national movements.

Electricity Agitation and the Demand for Responsible Government

A turning point was the 1936 "Electricity Agitation"—a localized protest that unified diverse groups in Trichur, bringing new leaders like E. Ikkanda Warriar to the forefront. Subsequent demands for responsible government saw progressive legislative reforms, establishing a Dyarchy and elected Minister, albeit under limited scope.

Rise of the Cochin State Praja Mandal

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Formed in 1941, the Cochin State Praja Mandal galvanized efforts for full responsible governance, aligning closely with the national struggle. This persisted through the "Quit India" Movement, as Cochin's political landscape matured and saw significant electoral outcomes, leading to a coalition ministry.

Unified Future

By September 1948, the Praja Mandal, integrated into the Indian National Congress, enjoyed electoral victory and formed the first Congress Ministry under E. Ikkanda Warriar. Its tenure concluded with Cochin's merger with Travancore, uniting the states into modern Kerala in 1949, solidifying their democratic aspirations.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: Rise of Political Consciousness

Critical Interpretation: This chapter serves as a powerful reminder that awareness and the collective demand for rights can spark transformative change in society. When people recognize their inherent rights to fair representation and good governance, it inspires them to take collective action. This political consciousness is profoundly inspiring, urging you to stay informed, engaged, and willing to voice solutions for societal progression. Your ability to discern and challenge oppression or inequality holds the potential to catalyze progress and set a course towards a more just future. Embrace this consciousness, as history has shown, it's the cradle of genuine democracy and freedom.

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Chapter 23 Summary: TRAVANCORE - COCHIN AND KERALA

Formation and Political Evolution of Kerala

Historical Context and Aikya Kerala Movement

The State of Kerala was officially formed on November 1, 1956, fulfilling the long-held aspiration of the Malayalam-speaking populace to unite under a singular administrative entity. Historically, British rule had divided the region into three separate administrative units: Malabar, Travancore, and Cochin. Additionally, parts of the Malayalam-speaking areas were included in the South Canara district, further complicating unification efforts. The movement for a unified Kerala, known as Aikya Kerala, gained momentum in the early 20th century. The movement's pivotal moment came with a resolution passed at the State Peoples' Conference in Ernakulam in 1928, advocating for the formation of a united Kerala. Over the years, political rallies and conferences continued to rally support for the cause, culminating in the integration of various administrative units into what is now Kerala.

Integration of Travancore and Cochin

An essential milestone in forming Kerala was the merger of the princely states of Travancore and Cochin on July 1, 1949. This merger was part of a broader initiative led by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to unify and integrate



Indian states post-independence. The transition was smooth, with both ruling Maharajas signing the Covenant of Integration, leading to a new administrative entity named Travancore-Cochin, with its capital at Trivandrum. This merger set the stage for the complete unification of Kerala in 1956 under the States Reorganization Act.

Political Landscape and Early Ministries

The political dynamics of Kerala were tumultuous in the years following its formation. Initial ministries saw frequent changes due to internal conflicts within the Congress Party, leading to several stints of President's Rule. The State's first general election in 1957 resulted in the Communist Party of India (CPI) forming the government, marking a historic moment as it was the first democratically elected communist government in the world. However, rising opposition led to the 'Vimochana Samaram' or 'Liberation Struggle,' causing the government to fall and subsequently reintroducing President's Rule.

Shifts in Political Power

From the late 1950s through the 1980s, Kerala's politics was characterized by shifts in power between the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Indian National Congress, often involving coalition governments with smaller parties like the Praja Socialist Party, Muslim League, and Kerala Congress. The Communist Party of India underwent a significant split leading to the formation of the CPI(M), which played a crucial role in



subsequent electoral outcomes. Political instability was frequent, with coalition governments collapsing and resulting in several episodes of President's Rule.

Stability and Contemporary Politics

By the late 20th century, political coalitions solidified into two primary fronts: the Left Democratic Front (LDF) and the United Democratic Front (UDF). These alliances transformed Kerala into a competitive electoral battleground, with each front alternating in power. The political arena was marked by significant figures like E. M. S. Namboothiripad from the CPI(M), who wielded considerable influence. Economic policies, caste, and religious considerations often shaped coalition politics and electoral strategies, ultimately fostering a relatively stable political structure by the early 21st century.

This historical context provides a comprehensive overview of Kerala's complex political evolution, highlighting the state's journey from a fragmented colonial administrative region to a unified entity with a dynamic political landscape.



Chapter 24: TOWARDS A NEW SOCIETY

Towards a New Society

The late 18th to 20th centuries marked a transformative period in Kerala's social, economic, and cultural landscape. The traditional feudal order began to decline due to the centralizing efforts of rulers like Marthanda Varma and Saktan Tampuran, as well as external influences like the Mysorean invasion and British colonial policies. This period saw the eroding of feudal and caste privileges, heralding an evolving society in Kerala.

Society in Transition

Kerala's society had historically been stratified, with deep divisions between high castes like Brahmins, Nairs, and lower castes such as Mappilas and Ezhavas. Under British rule, upper castes maintained their dominance, enjoying exemptions from taxes and harsh penalties that weighed heavily on lower castes. Practices such as caste-based discrimination in legal and social spheres and the systemic prevalence of slavery underscored the oppressive societal norms of the time. Lower castes suffered extreme social and economic inequities, including inhumane treatment and restrictive customs.

Early Administrative Reforms

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The 19th century brought significant administrative reforms driven by liberal impulses from both British and Indian administrators. Key reforms included the abolition of slavery and the instigation of a judicial system based on Western principles to promote the rule of law and individual freedoms. These changes laid groundwork for a more equitable society, though progress was often met with resistance, necessitating concerted efforts from reformers.

Significant struggles, such as the Shanar Agitation, illustrated the societal push against oppressive customs. This movement, also known as the Breast-Cloth Agitation, sought rights for Shanar women to dress similarly to upper-caste women, eventually resulting in a Royal Proclamation allowing them greater freedom.

Influence of Western Education and Missionary Work

Western education acted as a catalyst for change, empowering communities like the Nairs and Christians who pursued education to improve their social standing. Christian missionaries played a pivotal role in this educational expansion, establishing schools and spreading liberal ideas across Kerala.

Religious and Social Reform Movements

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The early 20th century witnessed a surge in social reform movements driven by leaders like Chattampi Swamikal, Sri Narayana Guru, Brahmananda Sivayogi, and Swami Vagbhatananda. These movements sought to abolish caste barriers, promote social equality, and eradicate regressive customs among various communities. Particularly impactful were the efforts of Sri Narayana Guru, who advocated for "One Caste, one Religion, one God", and Chattampi Swamikal's work to awaken social consciousness among the Nairs.

Eradication of Untouchability and Communal Organizations

The movement against untouchability gained momentum with leaders such as C. Krishnan and T.K. Madhavan spearheading causes through satyagrahas like the Vaikam and Guruvayur Satyagrahas. These movements inspired legislative change, culminating in the historic Temple Entry Proclamation of 1936 by the Maharaja of Travancore, which allowed all Hindus entry into temples regardless of caste.

Muslim Social Reform

Muslim reformers like Vakkam Abdul Khadir Maulavi played crucial roles in uplifting and modernizing their communities, advocating for education and discarding regressive practices. Organizations like the Travancore Muslim Mahajana Sabha and educational initiatives contributed to



significant social progress among Kerala Muslims.

Reform in Marriage and Inheritance Laws

Reform of laws surrounding inheritance and marriage, notably the abolition of the Marumakkathayam system, were pivotal. Legislation passed from the early 20th century onward paved the way for individual property rights, curbed the power of family heads (Karanavar), and addressed family tensions by transitioning to a more nuclear family structure.

Land Reforms and Social Welfare

From the late 19th century onwards, land reforms targeted at securing tenant rights and abolishing the janmi system sought to alleviate agrarian distress. The post-independence era saw progressive social welfare measures, including labor rights, old-age pensions, and efforts toward total literacy, showcasing Kerala as a forerunner in social equity.

Planned Development and Rise of New Classes

Kerala's integration into India's Five-Year Plans emphasized agricultural enhancement and industrial development, fostering economic growth. The emergence of a new economic and professional class, propelled by industrialization and the decline of feudal aristocracy, marked a shift toward



a more dynamic society. Migration to the Gulf and other regions further catalyzed economic transformation, contributing to the evolution of a diverse and progressive Kerala society.

In summary, the transition through the 19th and 20th centuries saw Kerala progressively dismantle its traditional societal structures through reform, education, and social movements, paving the way for an egalitarian and dynamic modern society.

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Chapter 25 Summary: LITERATURE AND ARTS

Chapter XXX: Literature and Arts

Kerala's contributions to India's cultural heritage are significant, particularly in literature and arts. This chapter provides an overview of the development of Malayalam literature through several key phases, highlighting its evolution from early influences to its modern expression.

Origins of Malayalam Language

Before the 9th century, the region of Kerala was part of Tamilakam, and the language spoken was a form of Tamil. Prominent Tamil poets like Paranar hailed from this area. Malayalam emerged as a distinct language around the 9th century, evolving from Tamil and incorporating elements from Sanskrit and Prakrit, especially with the growing influence of Brahmins. This period also saw the development of a new script based on the Grantha alphabet.

Manipravalam and Early Literary Works

Between the 9th and the 12th centuries, Manipravalam, a blend of Tamil and

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Sanskrit, became a prominent literary medium. Notable works from this period include the Manipravalam compositions of Tolan and the Bhasha Kautiliya, a Malayalam commentary on the Arthashastra. The Ramacharitam, a Mahakavya based on the Yudhakanda of the Ramayana, also emerged during this period, showcasing artistic beauty and rich ideas.

Champu and Sandesa Kavyas

The 13th and 14th centuries saw the rise of Champus and Sandesa Kavyas—distinct poetic expressions within Malayalam literature. Champus, such as Unniachicharitam, comprised narratives in verse. Sandesa Kavyas like Unnunisandesam, written between 1350 and 1365 AD, followed in the tradition of Kalidasa's Meghaduta and captured regional beauty and historical insights. Kokasandesam, composed around 1400 AD, was another noted work from this era.

Medieval Literature and Bhakti Poetry

The Niranam poets, notably Rama Panikkar, enriched 15th-century Malayalam literature with translations of the Ramayana, Bharatam, and Bhagavatam. Cherusseri's Krishna Gatha and later Champus drew themes from Puranas. Bhakti poetry reached its pinnacle with Tunchat Ezhuthachan,

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whose works like Adhyatma Ramayanam garnered him the title "Father of Malayalam Language," and Poonthanam Namboothiri, known for devotional pieces like Krishna Karnamritam.

Attakathas and Kathakali

The 17th century introduced the Attakatha, a distinct form for Kathakali performances, with prominent figures like the Kottayam royal family contributing significantly. Vidwan Tampuran's works occupy a high place in this tradition. Kathakali, as a dance-drama, combined several art forms, gaining global fame for its expressive storytelling.

18th-19th Century Literary Developments

Kunjan Nambiar's Tullal songs emerged as a popular form, and early Christian missionaries significantly impacted Malayalam literature by setting up printing presses. The introduction of Western literary techniques by scholars like A. Balakrishna Pillai encouraged diverse literary forms and progressive schools.

20th Century and Modern Contributions

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The 20th century saw prolific growth in Malayalam poetry, novels, and short stories. Poets like Kumaran Asan and Vallathol brought dignity to Malayalam poetry, while novelists such as Takazhi Sivasankara Pillai and Vaikam Muhammad Bashir focused on social realism. The Progressive Writers Association pushed literature towards addressing social issues. In drama, figures like N. Krishna Pillai introduced Western influences and explored social themes.

Sanskrit Literature

Kerala has made lasting contributions to Sanskrit literature, with influential scholars like Sankaracharya. Works like the Narayaniyam by Narayana Bhattatiri and dramatic compositions by Aswati Tirunal reflect the region's intellectual legacy.

Arts and Cultural Expressions

Kerala has developed a rich variety of performing arts that mirror its diverse cultural influences. Kudiyaattam, Mohini Attam, and martial arts like Kalaripayattu highlight the traditional styles, while innovations such as Circus demonstrate evolving forms of cultural expression. The state has also

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contributed significantly to Ayurveda and music, with Swati Tirunal's reign marking an "Augustan Age" for Kerala music.

The Future

This comprehensive survey denotes the illustrious cultural heritage of Kerala, reflecting a dynamic blend of tradition and innovation. The narrative concludes with optimism for the future, anticipating continued vigor and creativity in Kerala's cultural expressions.

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